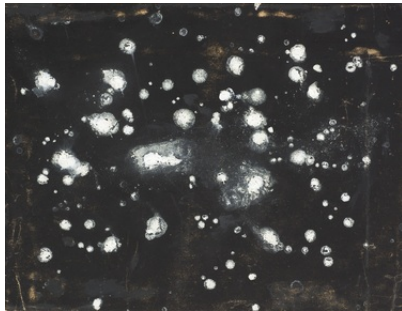


Museum van Bommel van Dam presents this  
autumn:

## Eugène Brands and Gabriel Lester on a Cosmic Journey

*On view from 6 September 2025 to 4 January 2026*



Eugène Brands  
Dynamic Universe, 1944  
Collection Eugénie Brands



Eugène Brands  
Mystery, centre of the universe, 1973  
Collection Eugénie Brands



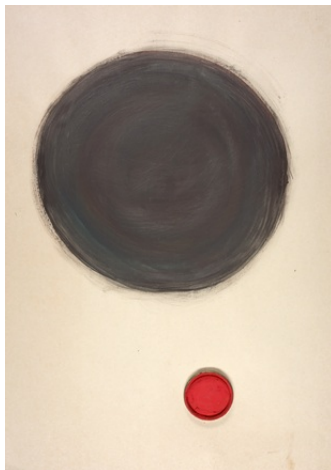
Gabriel Lester  
Big Bang Pang, 2013  
Sifang Museum, Nanjing, China

From 6 September 2025 to 4 January 2026, museum van Bommel van Dam presents *Mysterious Universe - Eugène Brands / Gabriel Lester*. This exhibition, a collaboration between the museum and guest curator Eliane Odding, brings together two generations of artists—Brands and Lester—who both explore the mysteries of the universe: how do we relate to it?

Eugène Brands (1913-2002) was one of the most well-known and beloved CoBrA artists in the Netherlands. A sense of cosmic wonder runs like a thread through his work. With this exhibition, the museum—home to a significant collection of Brands' work—presents the first museum-wide overview of his cosmic paintings, assemblages, and works on paper. Contemporary artist Gabriel Lester (b. 1972) shares Brands' fascination with the invisible and the unknown. Especially for this occasion, Lester has created an immersive setting that allows visitors to experience Brands' work like never before. *Mysterious Universe - Eugène Brands / Gabriel Lester* bridges past and present, bringing together generations in a shared spiritual search for answers to life's great questions.

**Director Rieke Righolt:**

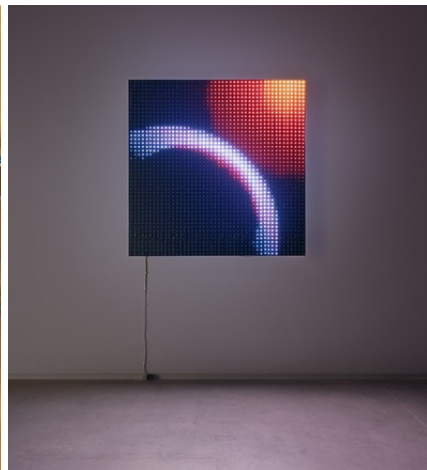
*"Even today—and especially among younger generations—the fascination with the vast, unfathomable universe remains strong. This exhibition reveals how that deep-rooted curiosity has been expressed in art. It shifts the visitor's perspective—from an intimate connection with the stars to the immeasurable space that surrounds us."*



Eugène Brands  
Black Sun, 1994  
Collection Eugénie Brands



Eugène Brands  
Falling Moon, 1951  
Collection museum van Bommel van Dam



Gabriel Lester  
Cosmic Call, 2015  
Collection G+W Nederland

### A Lifelong Fascination with the Cosmos

Eugène Brands, one of the great post-war painters of the Netherlands, held a lifelong fascination with the cosmos. At the age of eleven, he learned in school that Earth is a continuously moving sphere in an infinite universe. The dreamy, childlike wonder this evoked is reflected throughout all phases of his creative life—from his early CoBrA period to his final gouaches. For Brands, everything in the universe was interconnected.

The exhibition *Mysterious Universe - Eugène Brands / Gabriel Lester* spans his entire career: precise pencil drawings from the 1940s, painted assemblages from the 1950s and '60s, and monumental abstract cosmic landscapes from the 1970s and '80s. Together, they demonstrate his lifelong engagement with the infinite universe of which we, as humans, are just a tiny part. Highlights include works such as *Falling Moon* (1951) and *The Painter and the Stars* (1959), both part of the museum's own collection. A historically significant piece is *Deep Universe - First Step on the Moon* (1969), a nearly three-meter-wide canvas created after Brands watched the first moon landing live on television.

### A Total Immersive Experience

Gabriel Lester—internationally renowned for his light art, spatial installations, films, and public space projects—shares Brands' curiosity about the cosmos. For *Mysterious Universe*, he has created an immersive exhibition experience where cosmic paintings, light projections, and spatial interventions merge into a vibrant journey through the universe: from the infinite black of space to a visual explosion of light. Through his cinematic use of space, light, and movement, Lester brings the dreamlike atmosphere of Brands' paintings to life like no other. The result is a total experience that shifts the visitor's perspective and invites contemplation.

Eliane Odding:

*"Lester 'excavates' in his monumental sculptures—like an archaeologist—searching for the invisible and the unknown, whether buried beneath the earth or beyond our galaxy."*



Eugène Brands  
Meeting, 1954  
Collection museum van  
Bommel van Dam



Eugène Brands  
Milky Way 10, 1966-1967  
Collection Gerhard Hoffand



Eugène Brands  
Girl and the Cosmos, 1954  
On loan from Lily & Henk van Mulukom

### Masterpieces from Across the Country

Museum van Bommel van Dam has a special connection with Eugène Brands: his work was part of the original collection of founders Maarten and Reina van Bommel-van Dam. Today, the museum holds one of the most important collections of Brands' work in the Netherlands. This strong foundation forms the basis of the upcoming exhibition. Key works on loan from other institutions—including the Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, Museum Cobra, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, and Museum Het Valkhof—as well as from private collections, complement the museum's holdings. The exhibition has also been created in close collaboration with Eugénie Brands, the artist's daughter, from whose family collection many works will be shown.

### Spiritual Urgency in the Public Programme

The exhibition responds to a contemporary need for spiritual meaning. While major corporations and wealthy individuals set their sights on colonizing space, many young adults are turning inward—seeking guidance through spirituality, astrology, and ancient philosophies. "In a world growing ever more complex, we look to the cosmos for direction," the museum observes. This shared search for transcendence and understanding unites Eugène Brands and Gabriel Lester, despite the decades that separate them.

These themes are also reflected in the museum's wide-ranging public programme. Through lectures, workshops, and other in-depth activities, the relationship between humans and the cosmos is explored. The programme offers space for reflection, engaging with modern spiritual practices such as the use of crystals and cacao ceremonies. It brings together different generations in a shared exploration of life's big questions and the universal desire for connection.

### About [museum van Bommel van Dam](#)

Museum van Bommel van Dam is the leading museum for modern and contemporary art in North Limburg. It is housed in the beautifully renovated former main post office at the Keulsepoort in Venlo. The museum's foundation lies in the collection of Maarten and Reina van Bommel-van Dam. Today, it holds an extensive collection of post-war and contemporary art and presents a dynamic programme of exhibitions and public events.

[museum van Bommel van Dam](#)

Keulsepoort 1 | 5911 BX | Venlo

On view: 6 September 2025 - 4 January 2026  
Opening hours: Tuesday-Sunday, 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
Tickets via: [vanbommelvandam.nl](#)

**Not for publication:**  
Press preview: Friday 5 September at 13:00  
RSVP via: [arabella@coebergh.nl](mailto:arabella@coebergh.nl)



[www.vanbommelvandam.nl/en](http://www.vanbommelvandam.nl/en)

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