

POWER HAMMER ATELIER VAN LIESHOUT

January 10 - March 07, 2015

Opening: Saturday, January 10, 2015 from 5 pm till 8 pm
at the Frans Halsstraat 26 in Amsterdam.

Power Hammer shows new sculptures based on machines and tools as an extension of the *New Tribal Labyrinth series* which Atelier Van Lieshout (AVL) aims to start a Neo-Industrial Revolution with. AVL wants to reinterpret and revalue factories, manual labour and installations of the Industrial Revolution by creating sculptures made in an improvised style with contemporary materials. In our contemporary Western society it seems that physical labour is reserved for 'others', leaving us solely occupied with form. AVL states that as a society we cannot just consume and use; real products should be made and grown around us. AVL wants to see a return to the idealism of production, where the shape and character of the material determines the design.

The new sculptures in this exhibition not only refer to the romantic longing for a return to Industry, but further to this, Industry is honored by emphasizing the fact that it brought our Western society freedom, wealth and prosperity.

The focus on social utopia and alternative models of life can be traced throughout the work of AVL. While the focus of production at AVL could initially be found in the motif of freedom (the most radical implementation of which was the declaration of a free state AVL-Ville in 2001 at the port of Rotterdam), an intense exploration of restrictive systems has followed in subsequent years. This new series of work, *New Tribal Labyrinth*, reflects on our complex contemporary society in which inordinate consumption meets limited resources.

In this ongoing 'Gesamtkunstwerk', AVL suggests an alternative world order in which imaginary tribes constitute a new society, thus facilitating a return to a simple and self-sufficient way of life.

Joep van Lieshout explains: "*Industry used to play a vital role, as it enabled societies based on farming to reach a higher level of development and prosperity. Nowadays how-*



The artist's studio (2014)

ever, everything that reminds us of physical production has been banned from our society, and has subsequently been removed from our sight. Our role is only to design, no longer to produce. In fact, all the things which we find undesirable seems to have been banished. Farm animals disappear into anonymous mega-stables, prisons and mental institutions get moved out to remote business parks. The only thing left in our sanitized world is consumption: retail, recreation, restaurants. This reinvention of the industrial revolution wants to make a link with, but at the same time transcend, the utopian socialist Arts and Crafts movement that tried to close the gap between designer, producer and user. Just like the Arts and Crafts movement wanted to protect craftsmanship against the effects of industrialization, AVL wants to protect Industry. Industry and production should be a part of our society, as should be manual labour, pollution and hardship. As a society we cannot just consume and use, real products should be made and grown."

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Atelier Van Lieshout, *Vetnippel* (2014)

ATELIER VAN LIESHOUT

Joep van Lieshout founded Atelier Van Lieshout in 1995, a multidisciplinary studio based in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Over the years Joep van Lieshout has attained international recognition by creating objects that balance on the boundary between art, architecture and design: The often-provocative oeuvre ranges from sculptures to furniture, mobile homes, and autonomous communes. All these projects combined form an extensive research into recurring themes such as autarky, power, politics and life and death.

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