

Atelier Van Lieshout

Huis, 2017, Middelburg

Huis

Huis presents the audience with a deconstructed, distorted cage; a disfigured prison that symbolizes the human longing for freedom.

The cage in origin is a construction of thick-walled tubes, that has been welded into a structure measuring about 2,5 x 3,5 x 2,5 meters. This cage-like room has all the recognizable characteristics of a prison: bars for windows, a door, a bed, a washbasin, a toilet, handcuffs and chains.

This straight-edged cage preceded to be pushed apart with the use of heavy, self-made machines. A large drop hammer and hydraulic press with pressure cylinders, that can push up to 300.000 kilo's, were used for this. The disfigured tubes and pipes of the cage were then strengthened and welded once again; where after the process is carried out again from the beginning. Because of this more bruises and plasters are formed, more distortions and reparations on the construction that was originally geometric in shape. The work symbolizes a process of destruction and recovery, again and again, until all that is left is a distorted steel construction.

The artwork *Huis* refers to the fight of humanity, the individual, freedom against society, ethics and morals. The longing for freedom and the human need to survive often come into conflict with the rules and regulations society oppose on us and the ethical intuition we as humans have.

Aside from that the work can also been seen as a symbol of resistance against the oppression placed on society in times of domination, and refer to the changing norms in our society. In the past, slavery was permitted and people were persecuted based on their faith, actions we in the West have left behind us.

Will there be a time in the future where society is freed from all oppression, crime and punishment?

Or will digital surveillance, mass data and populism place us all in a cage?

About Joep van Lieshout

Joep van Lieshout (Ravenstein, NL, 1963) is a Dutch sculptor who lives and works in Rotterdam. At sixteen, Van Lieshout got himself accepted at the Rotterdam Academy of the Arts. After graduating, he rose to fame quickly, with projects that travelled between the world of easy-clean designs and the non-functional area of art: sculpture and installations, buildings and furniture, utopias and dystopias.

In 1995 van Lieshout founded his studio, Atelier Van Lieshout; ever since, he has been working under the name of the studio to undermine the myth of the artistic genius. Over the past two decades, Atelier Van Lieshout has produced a veritable cornucopia of works which straddle art, design and architecture. What these works have in common are a number of recurring themes, motives and obsessions: systems, power, autarky, life, sex, death. The human individual in the face of a greater whole. With this body of work, he has exhibited at museums and galleries worldwide.

With this body of work, comprising both autonomous and commissioned artworks, he has gained a strong international reputation. The Atelier has exhibited at museums and galleries worldwide, with shows at PS1, New York, the Hayward Gallery, London, and Centre Pompidou, Paris. Additionally, the Atelier has worked on numerous commissions for both public and private clients