

ATELIER VAN LIESHOUT

EXPO CHICAGO

For ExpoChicago Grimm Gallery presents an installation by Atelier Van Lieshout, the studio of Dutch artist Joep van Lieshout. Van Lieshout founded Atelier Van Lieshout in 1995 for conceptual reasons. His work explores ecology, ideology, organic philosophy, human existence, life and death. Combining Surrealist and Minimalist forms in his sculpture, Van Lieshout creates controversial thematic bodies of work which might be interpreted as sinister, while also conveying humour. Van Lieshout's installations experiment with different media, the boundary between art, architecture and human constructions, exploring the position of man in society, autarky, organisational systems and relationships with reproduction and power.

The installation in Chicago is part of a series entitled CryptoFuturism. In this new body of work Joep van Lieshout revisits the Italian Futurists a century later to look at resonances between emerging Fascist tendencies today, using his art to reveal the interplay between Utopia and destruction. Van Lieshout embraces emerging technologies from genetic manipulation and nuclear power to robotics and big data to draw parallels between the societal threats faced in the early 20th century and the perhaps graver circumstances we face today. Starting his research by building huge machines in order to destroy or recycle all possible materials, Van Lieshout deconstructs notions of sustainability with techno modernist speed, playing a dangerous game with nostalgia for bygone political theorems.

Specifically, the presentation at ExpoChicago reflects on our contemporary society, on the juxtaposition between advancing technology and the longing for nature, primitivism, the past. The Beginning of Everything embodies science, technology, the modern age, but also represents the primary source of our existence – energy. Henri, Carl and Mother Earth Constructivist address our primal need for tribal sculptures out of our primitive past, yet at the same time also refer to modernism, geometry, progress.

The Beginning of Everything, 2016 represents glucose, a key element for human life and its primary source of energy. Without glucose, nothing would function: neither the brain, intelligence, thought, muscles, movement or sports. Without energy, not only our lives but also our machines and our cities would come to a standstill – with great, empty, eternal stillness as the result. Energy is the vital force which drives our world, brings it its color, its joy, its

vibrancy, its life. It is literally 'the beginning of everything'. Henri, 2015 and Carl, 2015 are part of Les Brutalistes, a body of cubist, functional sculptures. With their abstract, geometrical shapes, Les Brutalistes hold a clear reference to the utopian modernist movements of the early 20th century, yet at the same time they address man's most primeval needs. These works couple the pursuit of progress with a longing for the primitive past, highlighting the contrast between primitivism and constructivism – a theme which they share with Mother Earth Constructivist.

Mother Earth Constructivist, 2015 marks a return to the origin of sculpture, to primitive totems and fertility statues. The artworks' creative process was expressive and intuitive, not driven by any premeditated plan. The artwork is placed on an abstract, geometrical pedestal, reminiscent of Modernist sculpture from the early 20th century – an era of great Utopian movements, not unlike our own.