



ATELIER VAN LIESHOUT  
RENEGADE

Gió Marconi, Milan

March 21 – April 18, 2019

‘I want to be a hobby artist ‘ or ‘I’m fed up with all of that professional art’

Having participated in the art world for over three decades, Joep Van Lieshout is starting to get fed up with its mechanisms. He strongly feels that there is a misbalance in the present art world in which fashions and speculation, art fairs, auctions and fast money have become more important factors than an artistic vision.

Ever since his beginnings, Van Lieshout has disagreed with the establishment and chose the route of the art renegade. From early on, he grabbed any opportunity to create: tools, machines, sculptures, functional objects, furniture, custom made bathrooms and kitchens. His early works were never completely planned out, he allowed them to be determined by external factors. His Beercrate series is a good example of this. After discovering that beer crates happen to have the same size system as standard concrete pavement slabs, he assembled the two and made sculptures out of them, thereby letting chance and coincidence decide on their shape.

With his Hard Edge hyper minimalist modular furniture design and the Soft Edge bathroom and toilet units where the client (much rather than the artist) would eventually decide upon the look of his future bathroom, Van Lieshout chose to have as little influence as possible on his artworks and thereby erased three art immanent features: uniqueness, authenticity and non-functionality. This questioning of art in general and the artist’s role within the system, finally led to the foundation of Atelier Van Lieshout in 1994. With this step the artist removed his own name in order to create space for a non- authorship.

With *RENEGADE* Van Lieshout defines art on his own terms. He challenges the market while giving it what it wants: Van Lieshout, the artist sometimes referred to as designer, will make or take an artwork and turn it into design by just adding a lampshade. Like one of the lamps in the exhibition reads: fuck you very much. With incredible speed Atelier Van Lieshout sculpts a multitude of lamps at a time, thereby quickly accumulating an amount that can spread through the art world like a virus. By adding a lampshade, Van Lieshout presents this new group of works to the public as if it were quickly assembled DIY furniture: large quantities, functional and very accessible.



1/4

*RENEGADE* consists of an arrangement of differently sized lamps which are created, assembled, put together and produced from found objects and simple materials. Some of the lamps even refer back to Van Lieshout’s own historic work exhibited in museums: balaclava masks dangle from metal lampshades; a bust with a gas mask strapped to its head embellishes the lamp pole of a floor lamp; a single, red forlorn lightbulb dimly illuminates the roughly cut out wooden words “GIRLS-GIRLS-GIRLS”; tall, sausage-like organic- looking objects taper into a single burning lightbulb, whereas two beer crates -one of Van Lieshout’s defining iconic sculptures in combination with concrete slabs- build the solid base for a sturdy lamp with a steel shade.

Anything, Van Lieshout gets his hands on, can potentially become the base for a lamp: his own artworks, debris, random utensils, toilets, valuable materials, everyday objects, catchphrases. In times of hyper consumerism, the artist engages in the art of recycling. By making every new object as valuable or invaluable as the previous one, the works become on the one hand more democratic and accessible to the public while questioning the meaning, creation and the value of art on the other.

CREDITS

Courtesy of the artists and Gió Marconi, Milan

Photo by Armellin F.