Carpenters Workshop Gallery opens a thematic solo exhibition of works by Joep Van Lieshout

NEW YORK, NY—Carpenters Workshop Gallery | New York is presenting The Good, the Bad and the Ugly, a thematic solo exhibition of works by the visionary Joep Van Lieshout / Atelier Van Lieshout.

Curated by Natalie Flowers, the exhibition brings together sculptures, video work, and functional artworks, revealing the full scope of transformative artist Joep Van Lieshout's experimental and multidisciplinary practice. The presentation delivers new and recent works that exemplify Van Lieshout’s ongoing commitment to exploring boundaries and inventing new ways to shape the future.

World-renowned for his immersive and visionary projects, Joep Van Lieshout gained international recognition for pioneering a practice that straddles the boundary between art, architecture, and design. Since the beginning of his career, Van Lieshout has continued to explore the borders of what art can be, and when this approach was unprecedented or taboo. From using sculpture installations that assert or question independence, to invented species and thematic bodies of work that push all limits, Van Lieshout disrupts and invents systems—be it society as a whole or the human body—to explore power, self-sufficiency, politics, identity, life, and death.

A precursor drawn from Italian filmmaker Sergio Leone's epic Western of the same name from 1966, The Good, the Bad and the Ugly has become an engaging experiment through which to view Van Lieshout's thematic bodies of work. The title can be seen as a thread throughout Van Lieshout's career—the artist has complicated problems from multiple angles, negotiating ethical and social issues, examining alternative worlds, and, at the same time, emphasizing their interwoven effect. His work probes questions that give pretexts and new perspectives, highlighting ethical or practical issues.

The exhibition at Carpenters Workshop Gallery includes new sculptures from Van Lieshout's ongoing and transforming bodies of work, including: Crystal Utopia. The End of Everything. The Beginning of Everything. The Last Tribal Labyrinth, which demonstrates his ever-evolving lab for experimentation with sculpture while inventing a new material vocabulary.

Van Lieshout's crystalarium reveals the Italian Futurist's century-old take on aesthetics with emerging Marxist tendencies today, using his art to reveal the hypocrisy and chicanery of today and tomorrow. Van Lieshout embraces emerging technologies—from genetic manipulation to robotics and AI data—to draw parallels between the societal threats faced in the early 20th century and the circumstances we face today. Starting his research by building huge machines in order to destroy or recycle all possible materials, Van Lieshout constructs systems of sustainability with techno-motorised speed.

The End of Everything/The Beginning of Everything, began by inverting solutions to problems that we face across the fields of climate, energy, and food in order to save the world. The work unfolds through a series of circular, destruction, creation, and entertainment, the artist even destroys his own work in order to construct new pieces.

The new Tribal Labyrinth, an ongoing "Gejamenschap" agreed in 2010, reflects on consumerism and the effects of our globalized economy. Driven by a romantic longing to return to the origins of our contemporary culture and wealth, the project aims to deeply renovate the industrial revolution to rematerialize contact with raw materials. The new Tribal Labyrinth presents a vision of a possible future—an alternative society inhabited by imaginary tribes who dedicate themselves to tools and industry, creating new settlements to "become one with the machines." This project focuses on the real parts of this new way of living, trading, industry, modernism, and new values—connected by works such as The Leader and The Waking Sleeps.

Van Lieshout's latest sculptures are being presented in dialogue with his historic works, such as The Technoctl, which makes the first bronze sculpture by the artist. The edition was completed in 2017 in collaboration with Carpenters Workshop Gallery's founders as part of the artist's rare and famously cohesive project Slave City.

This exhibition reflects Carpenters Workshop Gallery's deep commitment to championing artists who innovate within—and blur the boundaries between—contasting disciplines.