

**Wallpaper\*** : 'Primitive Modern: Joep Van Lieshout's work arrives at Almine Rech Gallery', by Yoko Choy, November 2015

More than ever, the world needs a new perspective to bring sanity to humanity's future; and we might find inspiration – and even some answers – from the Dutch artist Joep Van Lieshout's new show at the Almine Rech Gallery in Brussels, Belgium.

We are no strangers to Van Lieshout's paradoxical ideas of Utopia, which can easily be seen in the artist's earlier works of imaginative human dwellings and living units. The new show, 'Primitive Modern,' displays the development and the transition between the two recent bodies of work 'New Tribal Labyrinth' and 'Neo-futurism.'

In 'New Tribal Labyrinth,' his first vision for the future is a journey back to the past: 'I foresee the emergence of a new tribal world, a primitive society where production takes centre stage. This world will see a return to farming and industry – both of which have currently been banished from our society – and a re-establishment of our relationship with materials, which has been lost. In this new world, ethics will be of less importance; instead, rituals will be re-evaluated, and will offer guidance to the tribes of the future,' he says. Van Lieshout has created all the necessary equipment for his fictional tribes, ranging from items of worship and sacrifice to objects for daily use, dwellings and machines to make the huge Gesamtkunstwerk.

From his labyrinth Van Lieshout emerges into an advanced future. In Neo-futurism, Van Lieshout's world developed from crude production to technology and progress and the 20th century art movement that promoted the idea of Futurism, but he also contemplates radical change, conflicts and even aggression as necessary components of inspiration. Look at the functional sculpture Les Brutalist, which borrows the geometric shapes from the modernist movements of the early 20th century whilst focusing on man's most primitive needs.

Looking at the past and future, the primitive and the modern, art and science – as well as utopia and dystopia – to be discussed as ways to build on the ruins of the past.



Joep van Lieshout's work is currently on show at Almine Rech Gallery Belgium in an exhibition called 'Primitive Modern.' Left: *Les Brutalist*, Right: *Dutch Stove*, 2014. Photography: ©Atelier Van Lieshout



The show displays the development and the transition between the two recent bodies of work 'New Tribal Labyrinth' and 'Neo-futurism.' Courtesy: Joep van Lieshout, Primitive Modern, Almine Rech Gallery Brussels, ©2015 Sven Laurent - Let me shoot for you



*Black Madonna, 2015. Photography: ©Atelier Van Lieshout*



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Left: *AVL/GK*, 2015. Shaped like a dumbbell, this sculpture can be seen as a tribute to Austrian artist Guenther Kraus, who used similar designs in his work. Right: *Untitled*, 2015. This work references both Michelangelo's Pietà and his sculpture group of the sorrowful Virgin Mary in Rome's St. Peters Basilica. *Photography: ©Atelier Van Lieshout*