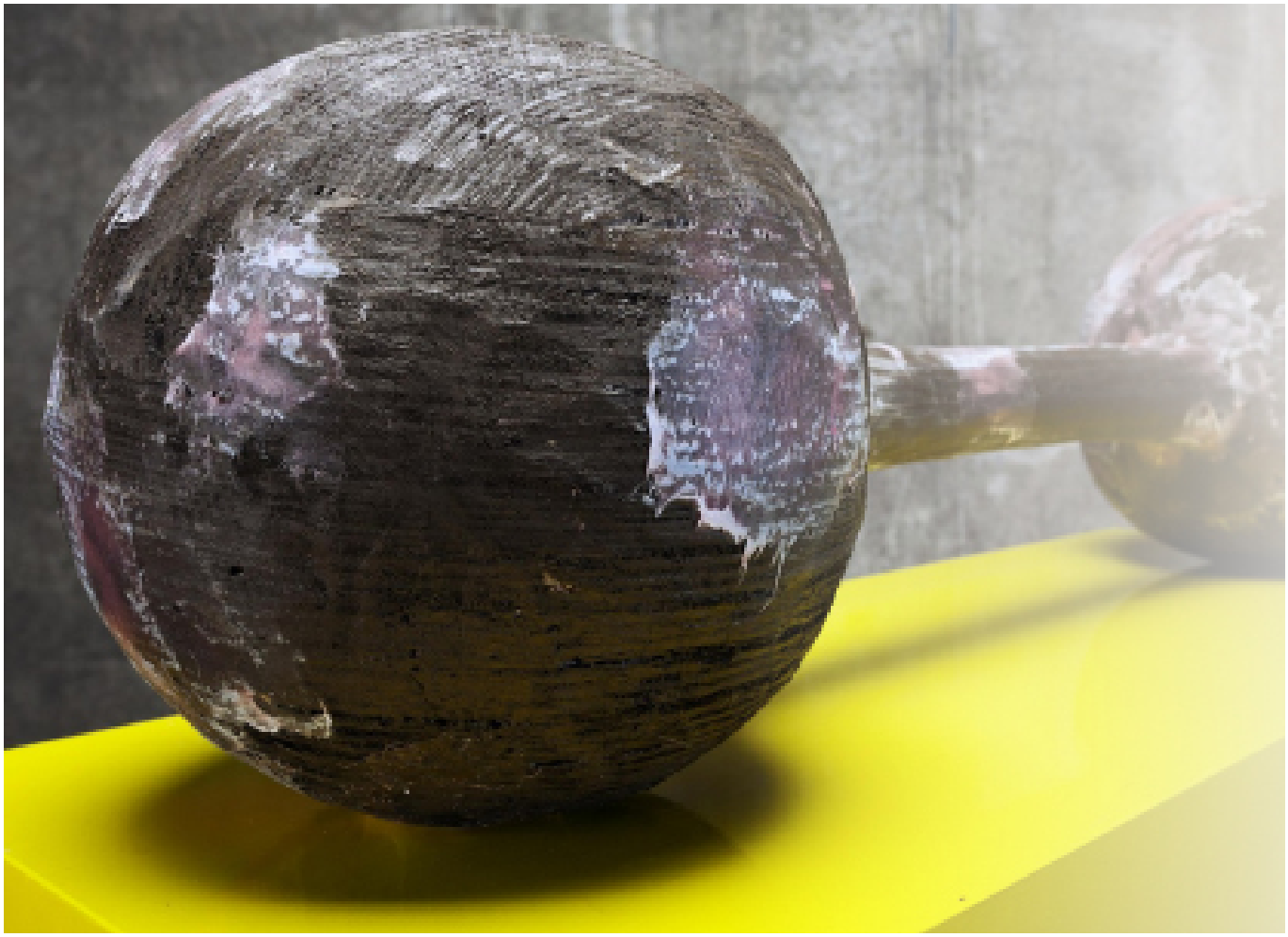
TLMagazine : ‘Joep Van Lieshout: Primitively Modern’, by Heini Lehtinen, November 2015



Joep Van Lieshout: Primitively Modern

Nov 19, 2015

Dutch artist Joep Van Lieshout’s solo exhibition at Almine Rech Gallery in Brussels investigates tribal rituals and futuristic utopias through two series of sculptures.

Text by Heini Lehtinen

Almine Rech Gallery presents a solo exhibition of Dutch artist Joep Van Lieshout in its premises in Brussels. The exhibition 'Primitive Modern' fathoms paradoxical utopian desires and future visions on the development of the world, and presents a transition between Van Lieshout's two key projects: the new project 'Neo-Futurism' and recent works from the 'New Tribal Labyrinth.' In total, the exhibition consists of 14 sculptures.

The series 'New Tribal Labyrinth' focuses on the world of rites and rituals, and is made of agricultural, industrial and ritual objects. The series embraces the industrial revolution and depicts a longing to become one with both machine and matter. The world of the sculptures is populated by fictional tribes with a desire to return to agriculture and industry and to re-evaluate ancient rituals.

The pieces from the series 'Neo-Futurism' investigate technology, big data, acceleration, conflict, aggression, robotics and recycling, and mix them with poetry and romanticism. In the footsteps of the Futuristic art movement of the early 20th century, 'Neo-Futurism' translates the elements of Futurism into 21st century society.

"These works show a new direction in the *oeuvre* of Van Lieshout, but they also offer us a glimpse of a possible future under construction, based, on the one hand, on destruction and deconstruction," reflects Jan Boelen, a curator and director of Z33 House for Contemporary Art, on the exhibited sculptures. "Yet on the other hand, the work depicts the optimism of reconstruction, construction and new energy."

"The coming together of Neo-Futurism and the New Tribal Labyrinth challenges the viewer to set in search of a new image of the future as a new mental point of reference," he continues. "In this way, Van Lieshout creates new systems and worldviews on the ruins of the past."

As part of the exhibition, Almine Rech Gallery will host an artist talk between Joep Van Lieshout and Jan Boelen on Saturday 21 November 2015 at 14.30 at the premises of the gallery in Brussels. ·

Joep Van Lieshout's 'Primitive Modern' at Almine Rech Gallery in Brussels on 19 November–19 December 2015.

Joep Van Lieshout. Dutch Stove (2015). Aluminium, wood. Size 102 x 54 x 40 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Almine Rech Gallery.

Joep Van Lieshout. Untitled (2015). Acrylic Resin. Wood. Size 145 x 130 x 75 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Almine Rech Gallery.

Joep Van Lieshout. AVL/GK (2015).
Wood. Size 126 x 105 x 40 cm.
Courtesy of the artist and Almine
Rech Gallery.

Joep Van Lieshout. Untitled (2015). Acrylic Resin. Wood. Size 145 x 130 x 75 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Almine Rech Gallery.

Joep Van Lieshout. Black Madonna (2014). Acrylic Resin. Size 186 x 122 x 50 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Almine Rech Gallery.