

## Smells like art

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### Joep! Another Dutchman that isn't to be missed this month



([http://smellslikeart.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/img\\_5384.jpg](http://smellslikeart.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/img_5384.jpg))

Atelier van Lieshout's "Mexican Table" with tableware designed for their Slave City and currently on view at gallery Jousse Entreprise, rue de Seine, Paris, 6th

**Walk to the very back of gallery Jousse Entreprise this month** and take a look at an eight-person tableware set quite unlike any other. Presented on a beautifully simple rectangular table with chairs that slide right underneath (functional, minimalist forms rendered in warm wood), the whole thing is designed by **Atelier van Lieshout (AVL)**. Founded in Rotterdam in 1995 by Dutch sculptor Joep van Lieshout\*, AVL produces art on the frontiers of design and architecture with often provocative contents.

The table, chairs and ceramic ware that Philippe Jousse is currently showing, for example, are **part of an ambitious overarching concept and ongoing project by AVL called "Slave City"** a highly disturbing yet thankfully fictional proposal for urban development.

If you happened to be in Moscow at the time of its third biennial in 2009 you could have seen a rather **spectacular rendering of this dystopian model for a city** presented at the **Winzavod – Moscow Centre for Contemporary Art**. (The name may sound like something out of Harry Potter but this art centre that opened early 2007 it's actually part of an incredible complex in a former winery that's full of galleries, artists' studios, businesses in the creative industry and, of course, the contemporary art centre.) Here,

AVL's installation included **large-scale oozing sculptures** that, amongst other things, represented the "slaves" being made and recycled, with their organs displayed like spare parts of some apocalyptic science experiment. Designed to be energy efficient as well as entertaining (shopping centres, brothels and museums feature) this City is designed to maximize rationality, efficiency and profit. In other words, constitutes **a perversion of a highly modern, achievement-oriented society pushed to its extreme.**

It isn't the first time that AVL has developed an urban project, nor is it the first time that they question social and economic norms in provocative terms. **In 2001, they built "AVL-Ville", a sort of independent city-state next to Rotterdam's harbor** that had its own currency and was pretty much self-reliant, making everything from furniture to housing, keeping a bit of livestock and producing other necessary goods – like art.



([http://smellslikeart.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/426517942\\_306b35eebc1.jpg](http://smellslikeart.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/426517942_306b35eebc1.jpg))  
AVL-Ville (Rotterdam), 2001

Also in 2001, AVL presented *A-portable a fully functional surgical clinic* at the Venice biennial. It was later mounted onto a ship that belonged to Women on Waves (WoW), a non-profit organisation. Rebecca Gomperts founded WoW in 1996 to promote human rights by helping avoid unwanted pregnancies and fighting against unsafe, illegal abortions. From 2003 until 2009 their ship sailed international waters and a Dutch team of practitioners could, when necessary, carry out abortions in AVL's mobile clinic, ie in 'Dutch territory'.



([http://smellslikeart.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/eng-gomperts\\_239164e2.jpg](http://smellslikeart.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/eng-gomperts_239164e2.jpg))

Women on Waves founder, Rebecca Gomperts, standing on the non-profit organisation's

boat. AVL's mobile clinic is visible on the ship's deck. Photo by Maurice Boyer for NRC.net



<http://smellslikeart.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/bezoekwow1.jpg>

An interior view of AVL's A-portable clinic at Mediamatic's exhibition of it in 2003

But Atelier van Lieshout is not only known for this type of socially committed project. They have more of a “sex, drugs and rock ‘n roll” sort of aura to them and are generally associated with a slight tendency to the scatological and sexual. Do you, for example, remember “**Bar Rectum**” (2005) outside the Art Basel main fair entrance?



<http://smellslikeart.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/barrectum-in-use-2.jpg>

AVL's Bar Rectum or "Asshole Bar" outside Art Basel art fair in 2005



(<http://smellslikeart.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/barrectuminterior.jpg>)

The inside of AVL's Bar Rectum is furnished with brown bean bags that are definitely reminiscent of our insides' organic contents

And, of course, who could forget their extraordinary *Womb House* that Philippe Jousse presented at Art Basel Unlimited in 2004 and that was later a major feature in the design show "*Design contre design*" at the Grand Palais in Paris in the winter of 2007-2008. A sort of bedroom/bathroom/mini bar unit in bright red fibre based on a woman's reproductive organs, it's impossible to imagine. Admittedly, even if you have seen it, it remains difficult to believe.



([http://smellslikeart.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/atelier\\_vanlieshout\\_womb\\_house1.jpg](http://smellslikeart.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/atelier_vanlieshout_womb_house1.jpg))

AVL's Womb House presented by gallery Jousse Entreprise at Art Basel in 2004

\*FYI (in case you're wondering): Atelier van Lieshout is pronounced LEES-HOWT in Dutch and English, and LEES-HOOT in French. The founder's first name, Joep, is pronounced YOOP.

**Jousse Entreprise – galerie Philippe Jousse**  
**18 rue de Seine, Paris 6th**  
**Metro stops: Odéon (Lines 4 and 10) or Mabillon (Line 10)**



**Open Tuesday through Saturday from 11am to 7pm.**

To visit gallery Jousse Entreprise's website click [here \(http://www.jousse-entreprise.com/contemporary-art.php\)](http://www.jousse-entreprise.com/contemporary-art.php).

To visit Atelier van Lieshout's website click [here \(http://www.ateliervanlieshout.com/\)](http://www.ateliervanlieshout.com/).

To find out more about WINZAVOD click [here \(http://www.winzavod.com/winzavod.html\)](http://www.winzavod.com/winzavod.html).

For further images and a description of the "Slave City" exhibition at the Winzavod click [here \(http://www.designboom.com/weblog/cat/8/view/7862/atelier-van-lieshout-slave-city-cradle-to-cradle.html\)](http://www.designboom.com/weblog/cat/8/view/7862/atelier-van-lieshout-slave-city-cradle-to-cradle.html).

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FYI – ADDENDUM OF 8 MARCH 2010:

**Further Explorable Orifices by AVL in Vienna**

**VIENNA.-** This spring, as part of the OUT SITE programme, MUMOK in collaboration with the MuseumsQuartier Vienna is showing three 'walk-into' sculptures by the Dutch art collective Atelier Van Lieshout : the "BikiniBar" (2006) — a female torso dressed in a bikini; "Darwin" (2008) — a dark blue sperm; and the "BarRectum" (2005) — a multi-functional, real, oversized anal orifice.



A giant, walk-in sculpture of a woman's bikini-clad torso in front of Vienna's Museums Quartier cultural complex. The creation is the work of a group of artists led by Dutchman Joep van Lieshout. It is part of an exhibit of the city's MUMOK museum of modern and contemporary art. (AP Photo/Ronald Zak)

(<http://smellslikeart.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/vienna-museums-quartier-complex.jpg>)

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