

# Anton Kern Gallery

## Erik van Lieshout Art Basel Art Blasé

For Immediate Release

May 20 – June 26, 2021

Anton Kern Gallery is thrilled to debut Erik van Lieshout's film *Art Basel* (2019) in his new exhibition on the third floor, *Art Basel Art Blasé*. The film is accompanied by an installation of related paintings, drawings, collages, and sculptures, as well as a second film, *Art Blasé* (2020), a companion film to *Art Basel* that was made as a result of the pandemic, lockdown, and the cancellation of cruise ships, art fairs, travel, and normal life.



*Art Blasé*, 2020

HD video, color, sound with carpet and furniture

Video: 14 minutes

Installation: Dimensions variable

In 2019 the artist was invited to be part of a special curated exhibition to take place in 2020, celebrating the 50th anniversary of Art Basel.

Van Lieshout flew to Hong Kong in March of 2019 to start planning with the curators. One of them, Kaspar Koenig, suggested that he begin by going on a cruise, so the artist made his maiden voyage on the Holland-America line's *New Statendam* ship in the summer of 2019, sailing up the coast of Norway for two weeks. The cruise made sense as a parallel to art fairs: the promise of wealth and leisure; a passenger's only tasks to consume food and drink, walk around, and spend money; the impersonal nature of the ship resembling the booths and coffee stands that line a fair's aisles. The original intent was to book three cruises around Europe, thus depicting the chaos of the area with Brexit, and especially the ecological protests against the omnipresence of cruise ships. Van Lieshout soon realized that the budget of the project was too limited for such an undertaking, and in the end it was the single cruise on the Holland-America Line's newest ship, which housed a large art collection and had been baptized by Oprah Winfrey.

The edit of the film was finished in February of 2020, and van Lieshout watched the news unfolding slowly...and then that cruise ships were one of the first places of corona infections. He immediately revisited the film footage and began shooting more in his studio. Van Lieshout remembered the towel animals that populated the cruise ship and began making them himself: elephants, swans, and monkeys, that the workers of the ship would leave in guest's rooms. There had even been an event to teach people on the cruise how to make these towel animals, and an instructional book that van Lieshout had purchased. He made the towel animals, stop motion animations, performances, and collages as he contemplated the lockdown and isolation, and the environmental impact and consequences of all of those flights he had taken—4 days in Hong Kong, 2 days in Venice, 1 week

in New York, 1 day in London—and felt ashamed. The resulting footage became a separate film, *Art Blasé*, a companion to the first film.

First the 50th Anniversary exhibition was postponed, as Hong Kong, Basel, and Miami were cancelled. Then the project was cancelled entirely. The gallery is proud to debut the film here instead, in an immersive installation that resembles those art fairs. Says the artist, “It was all fucked up, and now the pandemic is still going on, but in no time the ships and Art Basel will be on track again.”

Erik van Lieshout’s work has been internationally exhibited and collected. Large solo and group shows include MMK, Frankfurt (2019), Albertina Museum Vienna (2019), the South London Gallery (2017), Hannover Kunstverein (2017), Wiels Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels (2016), TENT Rotterdam, Pauluskerk, Rotterdam (2016), Tessaloniki Biennale, Tessaloniki (2015), Manifesta 10 St. Petersburg (2014), Center for Contemporary Culture - GCCC, Moscow (2014), Moscow Biennale, Moscow (2013), 55th Venice Biennale, Venice (2013), Manifesta 9 Genk (2012), Art Unlimited, Basel (2011), The Museum Boijmans van Beunigen, Rotterdam (2006) and many others. He was the recipient of the Heineken Art Prize in 2018 and a finalist for the Daniel & Florence Guerlain Contemporary art Foundation Drawing Prize 2021.

**Gallery Hours**

Tuesday through Saturday  
10am – 6pm

**Press Inquiries**

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