

Press Release  
Zurich, 12 April 2007

**Kunsthau Zürich shows Erik van Lieshout 'Kunsthau Hollywood'.**

**From 13 April until 17 June 2007 Kunsthau Zürich will present the first comprehensive museum exhibition in Switzerland devoted to the work of the Dutch artist Erik van Lieshout. In it he reflects on matters of identity and directly addresses taboos such as the extreme right-wing politics, homosexuality, and racial conflict. Part of the Collection Rooms will become a studio stage for a selection of socially critical videos, drawings and paintings by van Lieshout who never shies from engaging directly with his subject matter, whether it involves crossing Germany on a bike or taking rap lessons in Ghana.**

It was in 2003 that Erik van Lieshout (b.1968) first made a name for himself internationally and Kunsthau Zürich has since acquired a number of his works for the Collection. At the time he made his mark at the Venice Biennale when he built a shed, constructed from rough wooden planks, onto the Dutch Pavilion.

IN SEARCH OF IDENTITY

In Venice van Lieshout carpeted his shed with cheap Oriental rugs, furnished it with his own home-made imitation Rietveld chairs and screened the video 'Respect' (2003) – a multi-cultural melodrama set in the streets of Rotterdam. In it the viewer can watch van Lieshout trying to find a lover for his brother amongst the young Moroccans who live in his area. Homosexuality and a culture of machismo clash as disturbingly and explosively here as do the blatantly botched fake designer chairs and the bazaar-like display of rugs. It becomes all too clear in this work that the days of clearly definable identities are long gone. Another important theme in van Lieshout's work is the question of tolerance. Marginal groups take centre stage and he is not afraid to engage bluntly and directly with social taboos. Although van Lieshout's work is both shocking and moving, he also spices topics that are otherwise hard to digest with a judicious portion of humour and self-irony.

POLITICAL AND PRIVATE IN ONE

One of the works to be shown in the Kunsthau, 'Rotterdam-Rostock' (2006), was commissioned for the Berlin Biennial. It is van Lieshout's ironic response to the idea of a 'state-subsidised artist'. Taking the part of the main protagonist, as he generally does in his videos, the artist is seen criss-crossing Germany. The viewer sees him as he meets elderly citizens who openly declare their allegiance to the Nazis and other younger people who even want to continue their work. But

troubling scenes of this kind are also interspersed with slapstick moments from the artist's life that it is impossible not to laugh at. For van Lieshout, political issues are always also personal, and vice versa.

### RAP AND RACISM

Music, especially Hip Hop, features in all his videos – be it as a soundtrack, as a rhythmic component or in its own right as content. For 'Lariam' (2001), he travelled to Ghana and took lessons from a rap artist. He based his rap text on the instructions that come with the anti-malaria medicine Lariam, that is generally beyond the means of the locals. In the video the artist raps the medical description of possible side effects in the uncool, not global, distinctly guttural Dutch language. Even although we are confronted here with the harsh reality of racial politics, the scene itself is so archetypally comic, that once again the tension is released in a burst of liberating laughter.

### PREMIERE: THE NEW VIDEO 'PART 1'

Van Lieshout also makes drawings in conjunction with his videos. These complement the video material and are ultimately exhibited as an installation. Visitors to the exhibition at Kunsthaus Zürich will see a large-scale installation conceived especially for this space. And the trick? The installation continues outside the walls of the museum.

Van Lieshout made also a new video, 'Part 1', exclusively for Kunsthaus Zürich, inspired by the television series 'Desperate Housewives'. The video was completed in Los Angeles, where van Lieshout took acting lessons. Once again, he plays the lead – a man searching for a new role. As in all his videos, sharp editing and rhythms contribute to the disquieting yet fascinating mixture of violence and poetry.

### A COLLABORATIVE EXHIBITION PROJECT

This exhibition has been organised in collaboration with the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, and the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich. In view of the different conditions pertaining in the three venues, van Lieshout has developed a different concept for each. For example at the back side of the Kunsthaus Zürich 'Hollywood' – a reference to the special exhibition title - was installed in big letters. The exhibition is accompanied by the first comprehensive monograph of the artist, which includes a contribution by Mirjam Varadinis, who is curating the exhibition in Kunsthaus Zürich. The publication is available in both English and German in the Kunsthaus Shop (CHF 48.-).

This exhibition is supported by the Mondriaan Foundation, Amsterdam.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Kunsthhaus Zürich

Heimplatz 1, 8001 Zurich

Tues – Thurs 10 a.m. – 9 p.m., Fri – Sun 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Admission: CHF 12.–/8.– (concessions and Members)

Free entry for children and young people up to the age of 16

1 May and Whitsun 26–28 May 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Further details: [www.kunsthhaus.ch](http://www.kunsthhaus.ch)

Recorded information: Tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 97

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# Erik van Lieshout. Kunsthaus Hollywood

Kunsthhaus Zürich

13. April bis 17. Juni 2007

**Awakening, 2005**



Ali H., 2004  
Conté- und Filzstift auf Papier,  
42 x 29,7 cm  
Courtesy der Künstler/Artist  
Pension Trust  
© 2007 Erik van Lieshout

**Respect, 2003**



Installationsansicht von aussen  
Venedig-Biennale, 2003  
© 2007 Erik van Lieshout



Installationsansicht von innen  
Venedig-Biennale, 2003  
© 2007 Erik van Lieshout



Video-Still  
DV übertragen auf DVD, Farbe, Ton, 8 Min.  
Courtesy Stella Lohaus Gallery, Antwerpen  
© 2007 Erik van Lieshout

**UP!, 2005**



Ohne Titel, 2005  
Mischtechnik auf Papier, 42 x 29,5 cm  
Sammlung Kunsthhaus Zürich  
Courtesy Galerie Bob van Orsouw,  
Zürich  
© 2007 Erik van Lieshout

**Lariam, 2001**



Installationsansicht von aussen  
«Funky lessons» (2004), BüroFriedrich, Berlin  
© 2007 Erik van Lieshout



Installationsansicht von innen  
«Funky lessons» (2004), BüroFriedrich, Berlin  
© 2007 Erik van Lieshout



Video Still  
DV übertragen auf DVD, Farbe, Ton, 5 Min.  
Sammlung Groninger Museum, Groningen  
© 2007 Erik van Lieshout

**Rock, 2006**



Video-Still  
DV übertragen auf DVD  
© 2007 Erik van Lieshout



Video-Still  
DV übertragen auf DVD  
© 2007 Erik van Lieshout



Ohne Titel, 2006  
Mischtechnik auf Leinwand, 208 x 302 cm  
Sammlung Kunsthhaus Zürich  
© 2007 Erik van Lieshout

**Rotterdam-Rostock, 2006**



Video-Still  
DV übertragen auf DVD, Farbe, Ton, 17 Min.  
Courtesy Stella Lohaus Gallery, Antwerpen  
Courtesy Galerie Arndt & Partner,  
Berlin/Zürich  
© 2007 Erik van Lieshout



Video-Still  
DV übertragen auf DVD, Farbe, Ton, 17 Min.  
Courtesy Stella Lohaus Gallery, Antwerpen  
Courtesy Galerie Arndt & Partner,  
Berlin/Zürich  
© 2007 Erik van Lieshout



Ohne Titel, 2006  
Conté-Stift und Mischtechnik auf Papier, 150 x 327 cm  
Privatsammlung, Schweiz  
Courtesy Galerie Arndt & Partner, Berlin/Zürich  
© 2007 Erik van Lieshout



Ohne Titel, 2005  
Mischtechnik auf Papier,  
56,6 x 29,7 cm  
Sammlung Peters-Messer, Viersen  
Courtesy Galerie Arndt & Partner,  
Berlin/Zürich  
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