



## Art

### Erik van Lieshout, "I am in Heaven"



**Anton Kern Gallery**, through Feb 28 (see Chelsea)

After 20 years of exhibiting internationally, Erik van Lieshout, a Dutch artist who lives and works in Rotterdam, Netherlands, is still an artistic agitator. This show represents his Anton Kern debut and offers a video titled *Work*, sited within a crazily built structure surrounded on the outside by a compelling display of drawings and collages.

A film about filmmaking, *Work* is a documentary peppered with Van Lieshout's typical psychological and visual twists. It begins by taking us through the making of *Ego*, a sort of drive-in movie about his eccentric family created for the 2013 Venice Biennale. *Work* proceeds from there to revisit another production, *Basement*, which appeared in the Manifesta 10 biennial in St. Petersburg, Russia. Shot in the tunnels beneath the Hermitage Museum, *Basement* captures a chaotic realm overrun by cats, depicting a comical engagement



between high and (very) low culture. Van Lieshout also seems to be echoing *Basement's* mise en scène with the tentlike configuration of his installation, which snakes around the gallery like a berserk, elongated yurt.

*Work* is really a mini-retrospective, providing New Yorkers with a dose of the artist's sense of humor. The works on paper, however, are anything but funny. Alternating between large-scale charcoal renderings and others done with ink on patches of brightly colored vinyl, the images re-

create newspaper photos of demonstrations in Holland brought on, in part, by the war with ISIS. We see opposing mobs of Muslims and Dutch nativists, but Van Lieshout doesn't pick sides. Rather he focuses on the clamor of protest, of voices crying for very different ideas of freedom. A provocateur fascinated with the dynamics of provocation, he's interested in the medium, not the message. —Paul Laster

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