

Atelier Van Lieshout



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AVL for Dummies

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Welcome to the world of Atelier Van Lieshout (AVL). Founded in 1995 by Joep van Lieshout, the Rotterdam collective has produced a veritable cornucopia of works which straddle art, design and architecture. Beyond facile categorizations, AVL's oeuvre can be daunting for both the absolute beginner and the hardcore aesthete. But whatever your background, expertise and tastes, 'AVL for Dummies' lets you get a grip on the atelier, which makes its own designs and fabricates them to boot at its base on the Rotterdam harbour. This easy-to-use essay is organized in ten simple steps, which offer an effective guide for understanding AVL's vast output of over 1000 works, from the discreet *Personal I Faecal* (2004) to the giant *BarRectum* (2005). To save time, readers can start with any step and read them in any order to understand how the AVL process is manifest in a multitude of gestures: starting a farm, setting up a Free State, sculpting a Michelangelo, recycling for energy, sexual pleasure or organ transplants. Another significant ease-of-use feature: each step functions independently while referring to many AVL works so readers decide what they can read and then leave out what they don't need to do. Whether you're an established artist, an aspiring architect, a frustrated critic or somebody who's curious about composting, this essay lets you get a handle on the AVL basics and use them for yourself with confidence and control. Free from jargon and footnotes, the ten steps are packed with handy insights that readers can put to use right away in real-life situations: adding history and mobility to a design; packaging without waste; adapting ready-mades such as the female reproductive system for architecture; playing with critical truisms about form and function, modularity and ecology. Travelling from classics like *La Bais-ô-Drôme* (1995) to the latest *SlaveCity* (2005), 'AVL for Dummies' maps out a leisurely route through AVL's world while pointing out the bumps that can always show up along the road: city planners, inspectors and police.

AVL works fit into a set of circumstances. Of course, every design is contingent upon certain factors. Consider the architect who must take account of the client, budget and site, even natural light. However decisive, these factors often operate as an invisible frame around the final product: an autonomous 'object'. While AVL values its own autonomy as an organization, many of its designs are manifestly adaptive and ad hoc. In contrast to architecture's realm of autonomous objects, AVL's works function as parasites that latch onto larger architectural hosts, often in an aggressive way that cannot be compared to the building extension. Take *Toilet Unit Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen* (1998) created for the Rotterdam museum's pavilion: shaped like a penis, the unit penetrates a glass passage leading from the main building to the museum's pavilion. The camouflage print covering the exterior suggests that the toilets are part of a military invasion, if not an occupation. *Clip-On* (1997) a reading and relaxation unit installed on an exterior wall of Utrecht's Centraal Museum, provides another example of a parasitic cohabitation: the cube floated down from a crane and latched onto the third floor of the museum, like a tick floating from a tree and firmly lodging itself into a human head. Beyond its parasitism, *Clip-On* shows how circumstances – including chance – can determine the design and the appearance of an AVL creation. *Clip-On's* skylights take their curious shapes from automobile floor mats: the remains of Joep's crashed car, which happened to be sitting around the AVL studio when the unit was being built. By deciding to use the floor mats to shape the skylights, AVL made the fragment of a wreck into the crowning element of a new structure; part of a moving floor into part of a stable roof; protective coverage into translucent illumination. As this chance addition suggests, AVL parasites can become hosts for other parasites. While *Clip-On* housed spare auto parts, *Alfa Alfa with Chicken Run* (1999) fit a chicken coop into the shell of Joep's old Alfa Romeo; its trunk doubled as a secure portal for the chickens to lay eggs and for the farmer to collect them with ease. AVL places the circumstances 'behind' every work – the invisible

frame of determinant factors – firmly into the foreground: *Alfa Alfa* is visibly a sports car and a chicken coop while *Clip-On's* windows bear the traces of their automobile origin. To give rise to these new forms and functions, the car was not recycled – reduced to scrap metal, melted down and then reshaped into window frames or chicken wire – but rather maintains traces of its past, as skin holds wrinkles and scars. Parasite or host, an AVL work can preserve in a legible way the parts of other stories, from the personal memory of a car crash to the collective history of a car's design. Paradoxically, by making objects that fit into a given set of circumstances, AVL manages to make space for more history. Far from a variation on 'form follows function', AVL's approach liberates design from a master plan: urban, architectural or even divine. By extension, this approach frees the temporality of design from duration, which imprisons one form and one function together forever. In AVL's world, form and function follow fate. A car could end up as a roof or as a nest without losing its original appearance; there is a visible process of adaptation, as an object follows its fate and discovers new uses that were never anticipated in the original design. Again: the car must not be reduced to raw and reusable materials to serve different ends or to fulfil an unpredicted destiny. Other AVL works resist any manifestation of planning, whether in space or in time. Consider AVL's *Favela House* (2001), a free-standing façade inspired by the organic housing structures that have evolved in the São Paulo slums. While AVL provides the basic fibreglass structure, each *Favela House* will be built in an unforeseeable way, depending upon the found 'waste' materials that each dweller can collect around the building site. *Favela House* never reaches completion but rather expands indefinitely, according to the site's conditions, the dweller's needs and the available materials. By breaking the firmly-sealed fate of an autonomous object – whether a car or a dwelling – AVL takes the inherently social dimension of architecture and design one step further. Both parasites and hosts, AVL works need not only people but also other buildings and objects to survive. Fitting into circumstances, AVL explores the possibilities

of cohabitation for designs, whatever their origin.

Of course, AVL may choose to stick to a more predictable set of outcomes by fitting its designs into the spaces provided and predefined by others. There are the many bathroom-and-kitchen-in-one fibreglass units made for private homes, and the fibreglass façade that replaced the garage door at the Fons Welters Gallery in Amsterdam. While placed in small confined spaces, these units tend to stick out through their striking colours and shapes, as *Clip-On* and the *Boijmans Toilet Unit* are conspicuous additions to otherwise stately museums. Always open to collaborative cohabitations, AVL provided *Modular Bathroom Units* (2004), *The Classic Music Room* (2003) and *Rock Music Room* (2003) for Amsterdam's Lloyd Hotel, which was refashioned by the architectural team MVRDV. Yet there is one restrictive space that many architects tend to overlook, but that AVL has mastered to utter perfection: the package. Working alone in 1994, Joep van Lieshout already designed a housing unit in a way that would facilitate its delivery on a standard transport truck; the various pieces of the unit were prefabricated, not only for easy assembly but also for easy transportation to the construction site. Good things – and others – come in small packages when these are prepared by AVL. *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly* (1998) triple building unit was made to fit into a truck trailer, which also doubled as *The Good* building when the work reached its destination at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Similarly, *Pioneer Set* (1999) is a made-to-measure farming set including everything from the farmer's house to the hoe, which all conveniently fit into a 40-foot shipping container, like a Lego farming set fits into its box; once unloaded, the container serves as the barn to store hay and animals. Usually, the means of transportation for building materials is treated like an obstacle, which, once overcome, is forgotten in the final building; the package is an ephemeral element that tends to be discarded. By making transportation and packaging into a decisive and lasting element of design, AVL gives many of its creations a memory of their travels, just as *Alfa Alfa* becomes a chicken coop while recollecting its past life as a car.

AVL aims for mobility in its designs, far beyond the demands of packaging and transportation. This quality is most evident in the wide range of AVL works on wheels. While the Alfa Romeo behind *Alfa Alfa* lost its tires in its radical metamorphosis, *Mercedes with 57mm Canon* (1998) kept the tires and gained a canon for luxury-class warfare. These works reinvent the role of the automobile, but AVL's vans add even more creative options: consider *Modular House Mobile* (1995/1996), *Mobile Home for Kröller-Müller* (1995) and *3M Minimal Multi Mobile* (2002). The trailers – like *La Bais-ô-Drôme* and *Autocrat* (1997) – make AVL's ideal of rest and relaxation mobile. The truck and trailer combinations include the farm tractor and the wagon of *AVL Transport Trailer* (2001), which shuttled visitors around the Free State AVL-Ville (2001), and *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*, which could shuttle part of the Walker Art Center around Minneapolis. And if the chickens in *Alfa Alfa* ever wanted to hit the road, then they could always board the *Caldenborgh Chicken Coop* (2002), a Chrysler Voyager outfitted with an electro-hydraulically motorized chicken run. Other works roll around on smaller wheels, such as those under the wheelbarrow that carries food stuffs to *The Feeder* (2003) in *The Technocrat* (2003/2004) and *Dirt Cart* (2002) in *The Total Faecal Solution* (2003). Last but not least, there is the *Bonnefanten Cart* (2002) made for the Bonnefanten Museum in Maastricht: The high-end wheelchair carries one visitor in total comfort around the museum while expanding upon the notion of aesthetic taste with a mini-bar on deck.

Beyond the wheel – large or small, rubber or steel – there is a form of mobility inherent to the AVL works that can be easily moved from one location to another. To make sure that migration is always a swift option, AVL simply does away with building foundations. The living units – from the modest *Fisherman's House* (2000) to the vast two-storey *Sportopia* (2002), from *Utopian Doghouse* (2002) to *Hall of Delights* (2001) – have no foundations, nor basements. In contrast to most septic tanks and compost toilets, AVL's sewage works can be installed and used without any digging. Indeed, a visit to *Compostolet* (2000) involves

climbing a one-storey set of stairs, since the toilet bowl sits over a 3 m tall collecting container. Even the plants in *Pioneer Set* will never take root in the ground because they grow in a shallow bed of earth on a plastic sheet; the trees of the AVL *Tree Planters* all flourish in moveable pots. While avoiding anything subterraneous, AVL favours building materials, such as scaffolding, that can be easily assembled and quickly taken apart. The first floors of *Compostolet* and *Sportopia* are made from scaffolding, along with the staircases to reach the upper levels (needless to say, elevators are not part of the AVL programme). Shipping containers – which can be transported by sea, truck or train – are another staple material. *Workshop for Weapons and Bombs* (1998), *Darkroom* (2001), *Edutainer* (2003), AVL *Spital* (1998) and *A-Portable* (2001) were all originally shipping containers, subsequently refurbished into spaces for working, living and other activities. AVL has also explored aquatic architecture with structures that essentially treat the sea as a continuously moving surface. *Floating Sculpture* (2000) is a traditional Dutch houseboat with the distinctly space-age touch of a large blue orb. AVL *Suisse* (2002) and *Sonsbeek Raft* (2001), both set up on inflatable pontoons, were open floating structures, which could change locations by following the current or motoring upstream.

AVL's preference for mobility is not just a signature style but rather another expression of the atelier's desire to maintain autonomy and to explore design at the edges of the law. In the Netherlands, as in many other countries, a structure on wheels remains exempt from the building code and the inspectors who enforce its restrictions. A3 *Mobiel* (1998), a large artist studio trailer, was expressly made for a client who could not get a permit from the municipal authorities to build a studio on his property. Once placed on wheels, the studio was no longer a building and thus was exempt from zoning restrictions. Such structures may indeed look like – and last like – architecture, but, from the point of view of the law, they remain vehicles; the owner needs a driver's license, not a building permit. Other exemptions occur at sea: a floating restaurant, like the one on board *Sonsbeek Raft*, does

not require a liquor license to serve alcohol. *A-Portable*, an abortion clinic that was commissioned by the Dutch activist Dr. Rebecca Gomperts for Women on Waves (WOW), exploited the sea as both a legal limit and a legal haven. According to international law, a nation-state's laws and jurisdiction end 12 nautical miles (just over 22 km) from shore; for vessels travelling in the open seas beyond this point, the laws from the vessel's country of origin are in effect on board. Dr. Gomperts saw *A-Portable* as a way to let women around the world benefit from liberal Dutch laws on family planning (the Netherlands has the easiest access to abortion as well as the lowest abortion rates in the world). Sailing on a Dutch ship, *A-Portable* could dock in the harbours of countries where family planning is limited and transport local women out to international waters; there, they would be floating on a mobile piece of the Netherlands and could enjoy the rights long granted to Dutch women.

AVL's tactical deployment of mobility – on land or at sea – liberates architecture and design from serving a wide range of laws: building codes, zoning restrictions, liquor licenses, family planning. Yet AVL understands that laws are both territorial and temporal; structures that stand for no longer than three months – as the ones on wheels or water – escape inspection in many cities. Since exemptions may be based on time, AVL not only produces easily moveable 'objects', but also takes advantage of temporary situations that will give its creations the most freedom. Above all, AVL exploits the short-term duration of the art exhibition, which guarantees that the exhibited artworks will be moved before they must be legally inspected. AVL's *Compostoilets*, which have graced exhibitions around the world, or even *BarRectum*, which was set up for a week at Art Basel 2005, became possible only because these installations were considered to be temporary guests, passing through each site. Of course, the works did not perish but moved on to other exhibitions and jurisdictions, more like architectural criminals on the run than tourists. While many AVL works benefit from an artificial expiration date, others thrive in the twilight zone of aesthetics: a parallel world where an artwork – and

only an artwork – can break the law while remaining legal. In the AVL arsenal, *Workshop for Weapons and Bombs* is legal only as an artwork, which circulates without producing weapons and bombs, although the possibility remains open. The *Compostoilets*, which are designed to be used at each exhibition stop-over, pose a more direct challenge to most sanitation laws. While enforcing various laws, the state protects the autonomy of art as a hallmark of democracy; by censoring art, a city risks being labelled oppressive, given art's international movement and visibility. This risk has not saved AVL from censorship: In 1998, the mayor of Rabastens, France banned AVL's exhibition *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*, much to the surprise of the French and international press. Public museums collect AVL works, but other state authorities confiscate the works, taking them permanently or temporarily out of the exhibition circuit. AVL *M80 Mortar* (1999) was confiscated and destroyed by the Rotterdam authorities; *Pistolet Poignée Américaine* (1995) was stopped at the Canadian border; *Survival Knife* (1995) was impounded by the Amsterdam police. But the strangest fate belongs to *Mercedes with 57mm Canon*: Just as the Rotterdam authorities were about to confiscate the car in 2002, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen acquired the work and placed it in the safe haven of the museum's permanent collection. For AVL, mobility is not the mere capacity of movement – just add wheels – but rather a critique of architecture's compliance, if not total complicity, with the law and the state. For AVL, staying put is a liability, which limits design along with the possibilities for exploring alternatives. Permanence, the goal of much architecture, means that the architectural blueprint must also function as a plan and as a legal document. While the state justifies laws as protecting the public – from safety measures against injury to hygiene measures against infection – many laws are grounded, not rationally, but morally and sometimes even aesthetically. AVL's arsenal is deadly since all the AVL weapons are functional; yet confiscating them is an attempt, not to eliminate a threat to public safety, but rather to maintain the state's monopoly on weaponry

and violence. *Compostolet* defies many standard sanitation regulations, such as the stipulation that toilets be flushable; yet AVL's compost toilets, despite their flagrant illegality, pose a sustainable alternative to the fresh drinking water wasted by the flush toilet. *Boijmans Toilet Unit* – with their doors ajar – take advantage of the museum to disobey building regulations that call for toilets to be hidden from public view by a double set of doors. Yet this measure is a purely aesthetic one; neither the sight of the toilet bowl, nor the smell of faeces, poses a threat to public health. While questioning the law, AVL's approach to mobility implies – and serves – a broad set of moving users whose needs have been largely ignored by architecture's drive for the permanence and for property: slum dwellers, migrants, refugees, even ravers.

3 Make It Human

The distinction between the human body and its built surroundings dissolves in the AVL oeuvre. Humans are not just the ultimate users whose needs determine a design; the human body is itself a design. This approach is exemplified by the watercolour *Self-Portrait* (2002), which depicts Joep van Lieshout, slumped over a table, from the classic perspectives used in an architectural blueprint for a building: We see the artist from above, at various side angles and through a cross-section showing his interior structure of bones, organs and veins instead of support beams, air ducts and electrical wiring. For AVL, both the body's interior and its exterior can double as blueprints for a wide range of works, which get under the skin. After making freestanding anatomical sculptures – the magnified *Womb* (2003), *Liver* (2003) or *Kidney Bladder Combination* (2003) – AVL enlarged certain body parts even more to produce (almost) anatomically correct spaces, which can be occupied and used by people. For example, the impenetrable sculpture *Womb* swelled into the crawl-in *Wombhouse* (2004). This facility unit comes with all the core functions of a house and can be placed inside any set of walls to make a complete living unit. Along with heating and ventilation, *Wombhouse* appropriately adds a cosy bed to the uterus, along with a minibar to one ovary and a toilet to the other, which also sprouts a cyst-like showerhead. The female torso determined the outline of the *Bodytables* (2005-2006) while a giant 3-D version of the torso – clad in a bikini – materialized in *The BikiniBar* (2006), an activity centre for the elderly. The human digestive tract – from the tongue to the anus – grew into the 16-m-long walk-in *BarRectum* with plenty of brown seating cushions for guests. Even *The Brain* (2002), a sculpted model, was enlarged again and then hollowed out to become the three kiosks *The Heads* (2005). Of course, the male genitalia remain an AVL favourite: from the early freestanding *Biopricks* (1992), which inspired deviations like *The Pitiful One* (1996) and *Pricktree* (1997), to *Prick Medical Model* (2002), the first AVL medical model in the series of anatomical sculptures and installations. A super-size version of the penis materialized in the *Toilet Unit*

Boijmans Van Beuningen, which penetrated the museum building while transforming the glans into a doorway; the two testicles into the men's and the women's room. In *SlaveCity* (2005-2006), the model of a brothel for women slaves magnifies one single sperm, billions of times over, into the form of a gigantic fight club: hundreds of male slaves battle it out in the sperm's tail, only to reach the stadium in the head where they must catch the fancy of female slave spectators. Since the body can be architecture, anatomy, sculpture and device, it's often hard to tell where the body parts end and where the built parts begin. Early AVL works expressed this desire for a total fusion between the biological and the architectural by enveloping the body like a second skin. Installations such as *Study Skull* (1996) hermetically sealed off the studious individual from the world while the cramped *Tampa Skull* (1998) – with the living amenities packed into the smallest space possible, like brains inside a skull – created a claustrophobic living space. Later AVL works tend to manifest this bio-architectural fusion, not by enclosing, but by extending the human body, especially its many orifices. *Funnel Man* (2005) has a generous funnel mouth for handy liquid feeding in *The Alcoholicator* (2004) section of *The Technocrat*; *Arschmänner* (2004) have tubes hooked up to their anuses, which are connected to *The Total Faecal Solution* for the efficient recycling of faeces. These installations plug directly into the body, like a cord into an electrical outlet, and harness the body's energy potential by transforming its by-products into resources. *Composttoilet*, while less intrusive, is essentially an elongated anus funnel, which sucks faeces from the rear end through the curved ring of the toilet seat into the compost canister below. Beyond treating human waste, AVL adds an intimate touch with installations for eating (*Hall of Delights*), sleeping (*Modular Multi-Woman Bed*, 1998), working out (*Sportopia*) and bathing (*Outdoor Shower*, 2001). Above all, AVL has divided and specialized sexual activities, beyond the differences of gender. *Sportopia's* ground floor comes with a sex area, including a faecal corner, a cage, a *Turkish Chair* and SM equipment. AVL's installations not only multiply the ways of

having sex but also expand the body's borders. Whatever one's preferences and orientation, penetration of one body by another – the sensation of skin touching skin – is overshadowed by *Accessories* (2002): a wooden storage frame with plugs, gloves, clamps, dildos, leashes, muzzles and many more tools. Beyond basic needs and functions, the human body has a capacity for physical exertion. AVL's quest for total self-sufficiency – manifest in survivalist living units like *Autocrat* and the Free State *AVL-Ville* – puts the emphasis on manual labour and manual leisure. The realm of leisure includes the weight-lifting and exercise area in *Sportopia*, which also offers an antidote to the assembly line. While the factory alienates workers with specialized repetitive tasks, the AVL weights 'perform' the same kind of specialized and repetitive tasks on the various muscles of the worker, who immediately enjoys – and gets to keep – the fruits of his or her efforts. Like a dynamic anatomical drawing, the weights make the muscles inside the body visible by stimulating them from the outside. The realm of hard labour runs from the idyllic existence in *Pioneer Set* (with hoes, rakes and pitchforks for farming) to apocalyptic imprisonment in *The Disciplinator* (2003) (where inmates must use metal files to reduce logs to sawdust). Like AVL beds and toilets, these hand tools stay close to the skin and involve the entire body; compare the rake with the tractor, or files with a shredder, activated by a button. *SlaveCity* breaks away from this intimate proximity with *CallCenter* (2005), where slaves outfitted with headsets are deprived of the possibility of even holding a telephone receiver. While slavery is usually associated with hard physical labour, AVL finds slave labour in the socialized tasks of the service economy, which reduces the possibilities for physical exertion. *CallCenters* radical reduction of the body's forces – only to speaking and to listening – reflects the fate of the slaves, who are eventually killed off so their organs can be extracted for transplants to non-slaves. Long before *SlaveCity's* macabre organ trade, AVL explored how medicine passes the border of the skin. In addition to *AVL Spital* and *A-Portable*, AVL also designed examination rooms for

a Dutch general practitioner. Built according to the doctor's orders, *The Practice* (2003) has no sharp corners, nor angles – just like the body – and thereby acts as a smooth interface between the doctor and the patient. By intimately fusing the body with its surroundings, AVL dethrones the human being as the ultimate user for every design, be it interior or architectural. The claim may sound paradoxical, yet AVL's intense focus on the body – along with its needs, functions, capacities and resources – has a profound levelling effect: The body becomes just one more cog in a much larger system. The active proximity of many AVL works – from the farmer's rake to the sadist's clamp – seems to eliminate the distance that would allow the human subject to emerge as the unchallenged master of its servile surroundings. As the master and the slave depend on each other for their identities and roles, it's not clear if the compost toilets are used by humans, or if the toilets are using humans to realize their goal of producing compost. As the watercolour *Self-Portrait As Seen By An Architect* demonstrates, even the originator of a design can end up as the blueprint for another building while slaving away at the drawing board. The watercolour *Artist's Dream* (2001) adds another dimension to this bio-architectural vision: As the artist sketches on the drawing board, his designs are being built at the same time, just beyond the studio. Far from an artistic will to power, this dream depicts an absolutely immediate relation between the body's movements – the hand drawing on a piece of paper – and an architectural construction on a piece of land; the dream realizes the wish that even a large complex of buildings might be handcrafted; the body's gestures are architecture. *SlaveCity*, whose vast operations run without a boss, suggests that there is no privileged position of power outside a system; even when architecture sustains gross inequalities between individuals, every single person still remains a cog in the machine. By blurring the role of the master in relation to the designer, the user and the slave, AVL works question the assumption that design and architecture are social goods that always serve the best interests of humankind. AVL dives into the 'hidden' history of both practices by

exploring the abject (compost toilets), pleasure (sex equipment) and even human exploitation (slave camps). Finally, there are the endless humanoid figures, from the early *AVL Men* (1999) to the later *Burghers* (2003), which express the ends of anthropocentrism. *AVL Men* – whether the big pitiful *AVL Man* (2000) or the human-sized *AVL Man* (1999) – were made in the image of the ideal employee. While these geomometrically shaped fibreglass figures do not eat, nor complain, they are lacking hands and feet with which to work, and they have no genitalia. The best AVL worker is absolutely useless for both production and reproduction. *Pitiful Man* (2002), the first human-like sculpture after the standard *AVL Man*, takes this dystopian vision even further, albeit with softer white fibreglass edges that make the face look like a landscape buried in a snowdrift. *Burghers* – the textile figures in *Pile of Burghers* (2003), silently haunting *The Technocrat* – are superfluous, non-functional white citizens, who come in clumps like unpackaged bulk goods; organized in sets of one thousand, the *Burghers* consume booze from *The Alcoholicator*, provide faeces for *The Total Faecal Solution* or snooze away in *Big Bunk Bed* (2004). *Funnel Man* and *Arschmänner* are close relatives who take the evolution of man and machine one step further. When the fibreglass figures are engaged in activities – from *Bad Man Trio (Kicking, Hitting, Fisting)* (2002) to the three *Scientists* (prehistoric, modern, depressed) (2002) – they remain anonymous faces without any distinguishing features. Even the figures inspired by art and religion – *Pietà* (2004), *Jezus* (2005) or the *Michelangelo* series (2002), showing *Michelangelo* vomiting on a table, lying splayed on the ground, hanging on the wall – become generic. In contrast to the historical figure on a pedestal in a public park or even the sculpted nude in a museum, AVL figures are indistinct and interchangeable, like so many nuts and bolts in a larger construction.

4 Make It Modular

AVL explores all the manifestations of the modular: from repeatable standard units to interchangeable parts. Joep van Lieshout began to make modular works based on standard units when he was still toiling alone. Around 1988, the artist discovered by chance that Rotterdam sidewalk paving stones were about the same size as two beer crates; he stacked the forms together, like building blocks, to make perfectly fitting configurations. The establishment of AVL allowed for a broader exploration of the modular construction, although the results have been just as surprising as the combination of paving stones and beer crates. Who expected that the common bed – readily available in double, king- and queen-size – could become a modular construction? AVL's *Modular Multi-Woman Bed* dwarfs existing beds by offering sleeping spaces for up to an unlimited number. The core design of the bed can be expanded not only lengthwise but also vertically; *Modular Multi-Woman Bed* comes as a double-decker and as a three-storey bunk bed. The upper level for rest and relaxation in *Sportopia* holds AVL's largest bed to date with room for thirty snoozers, although its size has been determined by scaffolding units. Beyond super-sized beds, another novel manifestation of the modular can be found in the penal installation *The Disciplinator*: AVL treats architecture, time and the body as standard units that fit together, despite their radical material differences. All the elements in this macabre prison are intended to be used 24 hours every day by a slave force of 72 inmates: 24 sleep, 24 work, 24 recover by eating and showering. Since all the facilities are always occupied, there is no extra space, nor time, for the prisoners; they fit the space and the time, just as the beer crates fit the paving stones. AVL has explored more traditional standard units, which duplicate themselves like cells. This self-reproduction can continue endlessly; the resulting multiples fit nicely together in stacks or clusters, depending on their shape. *Mini Capsule Side Entrance* (2002) – a no-frills sleeping unit, reminiscent of Japanese hotel capsules, albeit for two guests – comes as a six-pack, which can be set up in any combination: 1x6, 2x3, 3x2 and so on. The bar grip on each capsule's façade doubles

as an exterior ladder, so the users can climb up a stack of *Mini Capsules*, just as they might ascend a hotel through the stairs or the elevator. *Mini Capsule Front Entrance* (2002) – which stands slightly above the ground on four legs – can be grouped together in a cluster formation only, just as the *Mini Capsule Front Entrance Square* (2002). In *SlaveCity, A Lone Star Brothel (Mini Modular Brothel 1 unit 1x1x1)* (2005) is designed for the shortest stays with the fewest frills but for many more guests and hosts. While creating such core designs that function like Lego, AVL envelops other structures with scaffolding to make them modular. *Compostolet* – with its unique and irregular shape – can never fit with another toilet; yet once set inside a one-storey frame of scaffolding, *Compostolet* can grow into a row of two, three, four or more toilets, by simply joining the frames. Scaffolding acts as a universal adaptor that allows incompatible shapes to match each other in a modular fashion and to fit into other structures. Thanks to scaffolding, *Compostoilets* could easily adorn other AVL structures on land (*AVL Franchise Unit* (2002)), at sea (*AVL Suisse* (2002)) and moving in between (*Darkroom* (2001)). Of course, scaffolding realizes the modularity of interchangeable parts, which can fit together in a variety of ways. While working with standard units that can be easily repeated and joined, AVL has also penetrated these units to make them function like an electrical outlet: a gigantic freestanding outlet capable of holding many different plugs. Consider *Mobile Home for Kröller-Müller*. The Master Unit forms the central block while the Slaves are custom-made extensions, which can be clicked or screwed into the openings in the walls of the Master Unit. Each Slave Unit has a specific function – bedroom, sanitary space, kitchen, office – and can be easily moved from one of the Master Unit’s openings to another, despite their vastly different shapes. Here, modularity allows for rapid changes in the physical layout of the living space and how the entire space is used; like the master’s relation to the slave, the design is never final. Even AVL trailers are modular: *La Bais-ô-Drôme* has an extendable section, which slides out of the back of the trailer; this extension

can be removed and reattached to a side opening, thus making the trailer into an L-shaped living unit. While shipping containers are made to be stacked, AVL likes to transform them into massive outlets. *Hall of Delights* was constructed from joined shipping containers; some walls were cut to hold different plugs, like a secluded dinnette. The watercolour *Collision* (2001) imagines the modularity of interchangeable industrial parts like the organic hybrids of plant grafting: a van, a Mercedes and a compact car are cut and welded together so their interior spaces are linked into the one expansive space of a chicken coop. AVL’s method allows for flexibility while destroying the finality of a design. Even the design of a shipping container can take on another form of modularity. While AVL has created surprising standard units with beds, the atelier has come up with some unexpected plugs and outlets. The watercolour *Love, Hope & Belief* (2001) takes an utterly modern modular approach to the traditional symbol for hope (an anchor), belief (a cross) and love (a heart). In AVL’s version, the anchor, cross and heart have been replaced, respectively, by a bottle of wine, a woman and a pig; moreover, these three symbols are interchangeable with the three verbs. One may hope for wine, believe in women and love a pig; or hope, believe and love these symbols in any other combination. Of course, the body offers many modular opportunities since AVL continually crosses the border between the anatomical and the architectural. While the watercolour *Modular AVL Man* (1998) creates a new simplified standard, the watercolour *Exploded View Organs* (2003) shows the major parts of a human body and how they fit together, like the pieces of a toy construction. Both the chest and genital areas on the body have two different optional plugs: breasts for the chest and either a vagina or a penis for the genitalia. Just as the Slave units plug into the Master core, the anatomical signs of gender difference can be plugged into the body. AVL’s SM tools – in *Accessories* (2002), the *Mini Sadist* (2002) or the sex area of *Sportopia* – are designed to be used in a modular way and thus can be attached to any one of the body’s orifices and surfaces. AVL’s modular body

often serves to create new ‘layouts’ with several bodies. The watercolour series *Untitled* (2002) shows a playful pair and a threesome exploring the many possibilities for connecting. One man enjoys fellatio from a woman as he cooks and fists a man. The cook’s left hand is attached to the handle of a frying pan, frying a brain; his right hand is hooked into the other man’s asshole; and his penis is plugged into the woman’s mouth. As the modularity of the interchangeable parts dictates, this layout and its connections could always change, given the multiple combinations: fist to anus, vagina to penis, mouth to anus, penis to mouth, foot to hand, fingertip to nipple.

5 Make It Grow (Or Shrink)

After the modular world, the world of metamorphoses is not far behind. Many AVL installations appear to grow in a chain reaction, with one part setting off another with a completely different shape, function, material. *Floating Sculpture* begins as a traditional Dutch wooden boathouse, only to culminate in a conspicuous blue fibreglass bulb; the golden wooden *Utopian Doghouse* sports a curious red fibreglass growth with a brain-like texture. Even when AVL sticks to a one colour and material, the construction seems to be caught in a process of radical transmutation. *Alesco Interior Design for Daros* (2001) – a reception area built into the staircase at the exhibition space Daros Collection in Zurich – appears to have morphed into a doorway and a secret crawl (and crawling) space, with unexplainable bulges and bumps. While *Tampa Skull* is cast in a harmonious shade of blue, its shape recalls the irregular curves of a crawling caterpillar; each curve reflects the shape of one isolated living facility, from the kitchen to the bedroom. Trailers, which beg to be connected with other vehicles and vessels, offer more possibilities for novel expansions. *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly* evolved into an immense trailer-home triptych, over 20 m long, with an aluminium, a wooden and a fibreglass section for ethical, unethical and unspeakable activities. Used shipping containers may get a new extension and a new life in AVL’s hands. *Workshop for Weapons and Bombs* starts as a refurbished shipping container (the freedom fighter’s workshop), mutates into a muddy green fibreglass cube (the office for writing manifestos) and then ends in a fat sphere on two supporting legs (the bedroom). Beyond metamorphosis, AVL exploits changes in scale. *Prick Medical Model*, itself an enlargement, comes in a full range of sizes: *Penis XL* (2003, measuring 350 x 175 x 205 cm); *Penis M* (2003, 260 x 80 x 123 cm); and *Penis S* (2003, 70 x 180 x 90 cm). Unlike clothing, the penis does not come in extra-small. All of the AVL sculptures and installations inspired by the human anatomy have been vastly enlarged, from *Wombhouse* to *BarRectum*; most of the organ sculptures are built on a scale of 1:1, 5:1 and 10:1. Throughout the AVL

oeuvre, the prefixes ‘mini’ and ‘maxi’ regularly appear to mark yet another changing scale. The humble versions of the *Mini Capsule* (2002) gave rise to *Maxi Capsule Luxus* (2002), a luxurious self-supporting hotel unit whose plush red interior holds a couch, a spacious bed, storage areas, an entertainment centre and, of course, a well-stocked minibar. *Mini Sportopia* (2002), *Mini Disciplinator* (2004), *Mini Biogas Installation* (2004), *Mini Alcoholator* (2003) and *Mini Technocrat* (2003) are the diminutive doubles of *Sportopia*, *The Disciplinator*, *Biogas Installation*, *Alcoholator* and *The Technocrat*. Exploring the vocabulary of commercial brands, AVL miniaturized *Total Faecal Solution* with *Personal I Faecal*. While more mobile, *Personal I Faecal* was primarily constructed because *Total Faecal Solution* – which transforms human faeces into biogas – requires one thousand people in order to function. Since AVL could not find enough volunteers, a tinier solution simply had to found. *Personal I Faecal*, which processes the faeces from two humans, demonstrates how *Total Faecal Solution* might actually work. By contrast, *Sportopia* shrunk into *Mini Sportopia* for a much simpler reason: to fit the massive installation into a smaller space (the scaffolding frame facilitated the down-sizing process). *AVL-Ville* led to the spin-off *AVL Franchise Unit*; this more compact and flexible version included all of the major features of the original Free State – from the constitution to the energy plant – and could be set up at any location in the world, like the fast-food outlet in an international chain. As these examples suggest, AVL’s small and large are not just different sizes, but can bring together vastly different pairs: the humble and the luxurious; the experimental and the actual; the ready-made and the tailor-made; the head office and the franchise. AVL’s works also tend to grow into total systems. In contrast to the expanding container or trailer, these works may exist as autonomous units, which come to be linked, not just physically, but also functionally and even symbolically. Once placed together, the works have the cumulative impact of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. *AVL-Ville* is such a system; the Free State is composed of several installations, which reflect services

in a nation-state, from sanitation to education. While the installations may stand alone, they gain a new meaning and interdependency in *AVL-Ville*. *AVL-Ville Money* (2001) is not just a signature currency but was designed to be used for purchasing alcohol in the Free State (and to bypass Dutch liquor-licensing laws). *AVL Transport Trailer* (2001) shuttled visitors back and forth between downtown Rotterdam and the Free State in the harbour. *AVL Constitution* (2001) is not a mere accessory, but was drawn up in consultation with a lawyer as a legitimate bill of rights and obligations. Some works in *AVL-Ville* predate the Free State’s declaration of independence. The fully functional field hospital *AVL Spital* became part of the health care system within the *AVL-Ville* territory. *Pioneer Set* put down some temporary roots to produce food for the Free State, its citizens and tourist visitors in the *Hall of Delights* restaurant. *Workshop for Weapons and Bombs* – originally designed for a lone freedom fighter – became part of the *AVL-Ville* national defence system: a powerful symbol of the Free State’s desire to fight for its existence as the totally self-sufficient total work of art. *The Technocrat* forms another total system for one thousand burghers to eat, drink and produce biogas with their waste. In addition to *Pile of Burghers*, *The Technocrat* complex includes three major parts, each marked by a particular style and function: *The Feeder*, which nourishes the burghers; *The Alcoholator*, which keeps them happy with booze, flowing all day long; and *Total Faecal Solution*, which transforms their faeces into biogas. *The Feeder* breaks down into yet another set of subparts: *Cleaning Equipment*, *Cooker*, *Large Sinks*, *Steam Boiler*, *Storage Unit for Liquids*, *Washing Machine for Tuberosus Plants*; there is even a *Water Tower* (all 2003). *Total Faecal Solution* takes on various forms, providing a wide range of answers for making human waste into a valuable energy resource. *Large Biodigester*, *Biodigester*, *Septic Tank* and *Autocomposter* (all 2003) are staples for biogas production. Older works such as *Dirt Cart* (2002) or newer works like *Vacuum Tank* (2004) can be added to *the Total Faecal Solution*. The solution also emerges in an array of toilet units: *Compostolet*,

6 Make It in Fibreglass

Il Primitivo (2003) or the toilet triptych *Mirror Toilet, Urinal Female* and *Urinal Male* (all 2003). True to its name, *Il Primitivo* is a simple construction of wood and steel; by contrast, the toilet triptych is a high-tech creation, which is designed to separate faeces from urine – the first step in biogas production. While men and women enjoy their own custom-made urinals, they share *Mirror Toilet*, which is outfitted with a surveillance camera to ensure that each user, whatever the gender, uses the amenity for shitting only. AVL's latest total system is *SlaveCity*, the labour camp where inmates are forced to work in telemarketing at *CallCenter*, only to be deprived of their organs for transplants to non-slaves. Made for 200,000 slaves, *SlaveCity* includes models for 18 nine-storey buildings, an educational centre, a self-sustaining energy plant, brothels, a spa, a lake, a public living area with a range of welfare state services and a calculation centre for number crunching and statistics, which bring it all together. *Business Plan of SlaveCity* (2005) – a gigantic Excel sheet – gives a financial overview of all of the *SlaveCity* elements while allowing for totally interactive calculations: what happens to profits if the life expediency of the slaves is increased by five years? How much extra food and land for producing the food will be needed? What will be the impact on the energy plant if there is an increase in the number of guards and prostitutes working in the compound? Whatever the AVL system – from the liberatory to the macabre – there are links between the parts, beyond the mere fact of expansion. A version of the *Biodigester* can be found in *AVL-Ville*, *The Technocrat* and *SlaveCity*, albeit in an ever-expanding form to match each system's growth: from the 30 employee-denizens of *AVL-Ville* to *The Technocrat's* 1000 burghers, to *SlaveCity's* 200,000 population – and growing.

Apart from the wheel, fibreglass is the most constant material in AVL's oeuvre. Fibreglass has been used to create a wealth of freestanding works: from humanoid figures to study tables, from toilets to trailers, from a grave monument to a totem pole, from assholes to chairs for sitting them down at a grand feast table. Size does not seem to pose any obstacle to AVL's explorations: The sculpture *Victory Light Pole* (2005) measures over 11 m while *Dirt Cart* come in under 2 m. Shape is no obstacle either; consider the variations between the smoothed cubes *Clip-On*, the curves and twists in *Wombhouse* and *BarRectum*, the facilities built onto the red box *Maxi Capsule Luxus* or the playground of *Satellite des Sens* (2003). While most of the fibreglass works have smoothly-rounded surfaces, AVL may decide to dive fully into the intricate details. The generic *Biopricks* evolves into the didactic *Prick Medical Model*; the blank blockhead of the *AVL Man* eventually gives way to the facial features in *The Heads* or the cross-section anatomical view of *The Brain*, which shows the nerves connecting to the eyes, nose, ears and tongue. While often freestanding and hermetic, fibreglass also becomes an integral part in many AVL installations and constructions since the material is used in combination with other elements: wood (*Floating Sculpture*, 2000), metal (*Workshop for Weapons and Bombs*, 1998), an entire truck (*Modular House Mobile*, 1995-1996). The fibreglass parts may be autonomous, like the massive *Septic Tank* for treating black water in *the Total Faecal Solution*, or dependent, like the little Slave appendages that attach onto the Master Unit in *Mobile Home for Kröller-Müller*. In contrast to the wheel or even scaffolding, fibreglass takes on the most final form in AVL's oeuvre. The fibreglass *Composttoilet* may be joined with other compost toilets or constructions – like *AVL Franchise Unit* or *Sonsbeek Raft* – but *Composttoilet* remains an unalterable unit, with its bowl and long canister cast forever. The fibreglass forms often appear as pre-fabricated wholes, like plastic shapes that have been cast by a die. In fact, the fibreglass is melted onto an existing shape – a wooden table, a trailer wall, Styrofoam – and then sanded down to create a uniform

surface. The material harmoniously unites the malleability of paint, which can cover any surface, and of sculpture, which can take any form. The finishing process – similar to polishing – tends to make hard corners into soft edges: a trade-mark of AVL designs. Like skin, fibreglass forms a watertight seal, which accounts for its wide use in AVL's sanitation, bath and kitchen units. Unlike skin, fibreglass is far more durable and solid: the perfect medium for an outdoor public sculpture like *Germination* (2001), a survivalist life in the *Autocrat*, a slum dwelling like *Favela* or for hitting the road in *3M Minimal Multi Mobile*. Finally, the material has the advantage of being light; *Biopricks* weighs little in relation to its super size because its yellow surface hides nothing more than a Styrofoam phallus. Fibreglass is the realm where AVL explores the full spectrum of colours. There are the muted creamy tones in orange, yellow and green; intense mineral-like blues, reds and oranges; muddy military shades of grey, green and brown; neon-like pale mints along with pure white and black. Most AVL fibreglass works come in one solid opaque colour; exceptions to the monochrome standard include the anatomical sculptures, which are naturalistically-shaded or come in different artificial colours to distinguish various parts in the human design. AVL has also left fibreglass in its natural semi-transparent shade for windows. Consider the bulging portals that let in light while gently protruding out of the façade of the Gallery Fons Welters, and the skylights in the *Clip-On*. While adding windows to architectural installations, AVL has also created massive stained-fibreglass windows for existing buildings, from *Façade for 'De Kriekelaar'* (2003) for a community centre to *Recreation Space Façade* (2000) for a prison. The stained-fibreglass – combining a wide range of colours and finishes, from transparent to opaque – features groups of human figures, fused on the surface of the window, just as the sinks and bathtubs are joined into one unit in the *Modular Bathroom Units* which AVL created for the Lloyd Hotel in Amsterdam. AVL's fibreglass units – where diverse elements, such as the sink, the counter, the door, the garbage bin and the toilet become one single surface –

deserve further consideration. In their formal continuity, these units would seem to contradict the principle behind the many AVL works built with heterogeneous and random materials. Compare *Toilet Unit Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen*, which combine all the amenities of a women's and men's bathroom into one single mint-green interior form in fibreglass, with the diversity of *Alfa Alfa with Chicken Run*, the Alfa Romeo coupled with a chicken coop. Moreover, the solidity of fibreglass as a final form would appear too static with respect to AVL's drive for flexibility and mobility. Of all AVL works, the fibreglass units are the most built, the most architectural in a traditional sense, because they cannot be easily taken apart and because the shapes and the colours endure. But, in contrast to the building made with a host of different materials – wood, steel, brick, cement – into an enduring form, AVL's fibreglass works evidently end up as one material with one set of properties and, often, in one solid colour. By uniting different elements – from the sink to the toilet – the fibreglass units mimic the human skin, albeit turned inside-out. Just as the skin contains many bodily functions and fluids in the same body – from eating to defecating – AVL's fibreglass epidermis creates one smooth continuous surface where all of these bodily-related processes might take place. If AVL compromises on flexibility and mobility with fibreglass, it is to reflect the original unity of the body, even inside the womb. In general, diverse materials are used to set apart, if not to segregate, bodily functions; the bathroom counter acts as a 'border' to separate the toilet bowl and the sink – along with their activities – from the counter top. In AVL's world, there is no border but a continuous surface of fibreglass, where all bodily fluids and all fluids contacting the body might flow, meet and evolve.

7 Make It Visible

Visibility is central to the AVL oeuvre. Processes that usually remain hidden (bodily, organic, technological and architectural) all become evident. Apart from the fibreglass forms, there are no 'black boxes' in AVL's designs, not even for their ultimate human users. The body is treated with the same transparency as a blueprint or a design. The silkscreen *Machine Gun Exploded View* (1998) undoes the classic Sten gun into its components while the watercolour *Exploded View* (2003) takes apart a male-female body. The design for the *Lone Star Brothel* in *SlaveCity* is a cross-section that cuts into one room of the building and into one body sitting on a bed in the room. The watercolour *Maxi Capsule Luxus* (2002) even takes a peek inside the minibar to show its stock of wine, champagne, liquor and beer, along with the indispensable tool for all drinking: a bottle opener. Magnification is another AVL method for visibility, most evident in the models, drawings, sculptures and installations based on the human anatomy: outside (the sculpture *Man with Prick* (2002)), inside (the watercolour *Male Reproductive Organ Cross Section* (2002)), isolated organs (the sculpture *Liver*, 2003) and isolated systems (*Wombhouse*, an adult live-in version of the female reproductive system). Openings – flaps, doors, scaffolding (or no walls at all) – constitute yet another tried and true AVL method. The survival trailer *Autocrat* and the vehicle *3M Minimal Multi Mobile* are outfitted with flaps: large sections of the fibreglass walls that open up, like a kiosk, to reveal activity spaces inside the core cube. The bathroom doors of the *Toilet Unit Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen* remain ajar, unless they are closed and locked by a user. *Sportopia* – and its diminutive offspring *Mini Sportopia* and *Bonnefantopia* – shun traditional divisions between each activity area (sports, sex, relaxation) by using bare scaffolding instead of solid walls. While the toilet and shower are enclosed in *Sportopia*, *Sonsbeek Raft* proudly displays its *Composttoilet* in an open scaffolding frame, without any seclusion, on the end of the boat. For AVL, concealment is an option, either to strike a contrast (the camouflage exterior of the *Toilet Unit* against the museum's brick and glass façade) or to get around the law (*Ideal Caravan*, 2005)

uses a tarp to conceal an illegal living space under a common transport trailer). AVL strictly avoids all displays of modesty, restraint and prudery, especially in relation to bodily activities: from defecating to having sex. The watercolour *Recycling* (2001) combines both options with a threesome masturbating while engaging in faecal sex. Another watercolour, *Vomiting Trio* (2003) explores the bodily abject with three men throwing up into a large funnel fitted to another man's mouth. The watercolour *Hanging Man* (2002) shows the extremities of pain with a man suspended by various body parts, including the penis, while the SM paraphernalia in *Sportopia* bring such extremes within practical reach. Often, an array of weapons adds an accessory of violence to otherwise happy domestic scenes: the axe lying on the red carpet in *Maxi Capsule Luxus* (2002), the machine gun on the bed-for-six in *Bedroom* (1999), the Kalashnikov leaning against the counter in the watercolour *Kitchen* (1998), and the hammer in *Butcher Equipment* (1997). Life is pushed to the edge of extinction in the installation *The Disciplinator* and the plans for *SlaveCity*, which openly display the possibilities for human exploitation and degradation. AVL's drive for visibility tends to blur the very distinction between life and death: from an absolute border (and taboo) into one step in a greater process. The processes of decay and decomposition that are usually hidden are unveiled in their full splendour, especially those hidden underground. AVL's refusal to dig foundations takes on a new meaning in the *Composttoilet*; its collecting canister comes with a window for observing the composting process in all its stages and with a trap door for removing the fertile results. Denying the subterfuge of the subterranean, *Total Faecal Solution* shows the transformational steps for black and grey water: from the toilet and the sink, through the *Septic Tank* and *Reed Filters*, to purified water. Although the fibreglass tanks are opaque, the move from waste water to drinking water becomes a complete process – with a definitive beginning and a final end – instead of waste water disappearing into underground pipes and magically re-emerging as drinking water from the tap. *BarRectum* reveals

a similarly total process, albeit hidden under the skin: the entire digestive system from the tip of the tongue to the anus. AVL's visibility is removed from the spectacle and its incumbent sensa-tionalism. Many works seem to have been made to shock their viewer, due to their explicit nature. Yet the focus remains on an active or a potential process, not on a spectacle to be pas-sively observed. *Sportopia* offers the tools for experiencing SM, not images of SM sexual relations; the camera in *Mirror Toilet* is there to deter users from urinating and thereby destroying the composting facility; even *Joepie de Poepie* (2002), a video featuring scenes from scatological porn videos, unveils the action of shitting, not the mere sight of shit. With its focus on reveal-ing processes, AVL gives visibility both a didactic and a democratic dimension. Viewers can see how something works and see how it has been made (so they can make it for themselves); all viewers can eventually become users or even creators. This double imperative – see how it works and see how it's made – marks the book *Atelier van Lieshout. A Manual* (1997); this publication presents not only the obligatory images and descriptions of works but also the detailed instruc-tions for making them at home. Along with directions for using fibreglass, *A Manual* included instructions for the entire process of cooking pork sausages: from slaughtering the pig on the farm to stuffing the sausage skin in the kitchen, with every step illustrated by drawings and photographs. Like AVL works, *A Manual* treats illustration as a manifestation of education, as a lesson that must be highly legible and easily reproducible. Yet AVL's didactic-democratic visibility does not always come with an explicit set of instructions. Many works do not need a set of instructions because their mode of production is obvious. There is no mystery behind *Alfa Alfa with Chicken Run*: take an old car, remove the wheels, add some chicken wire. No guide is required to mimic the scaffold-ing structure in *Sportopia*, let alone the barbells in the exercise area, which have been made out of scaffolding tubes set into poured concrete. Other AVL works have a raw appearance; wood creations, from tools to beds, remain unfinished instead of being

stained and painted. The traces of the production process lie on the surface like the pages of a manual. AVL works can always become doubly useful: *Sportopia's* barbells can be used for weight lifting or for learning how to make barbells at home. AVL's self-explanatory visibility – a combination between 'Just Do It' and 'Do-It-Yourself' – provides a corrective to the spectacle of commodity fetish-ism. In Marx's diagnosis, the fetish table dances of its own accord, mes-merizing consumers into purchasing it while making the labour that went into its production magically vanish before their eyes. As an atelier, AVL does not remember the narratives of individual labourers; yet since many products openly display how they were made – much like a didactic illustration – labour becomes a gift, from one group of labourers to another, who can always make the work for themselves. Unlike commodity fetishism, AVL's visibility replaces the alienation of labour with a gratis transfer of practi-cal know-how. In many cases, one needs merely to see the work, not to purchase it, in order to make it for oneself. Beyond the gift, AVL's visibility serves to highlight the labours of the human body, which are at the heart of many installations. Unlike the table made by one worker (or 21 workers) and then sold, these bodily tasks are not easily subject to division and specialization, let alone to exchange. No one can sleep, defecate or eat for you. *Modular Multi-Woman Bed*, *Compostolet* and the restaurant in *Hall of Delights* – serving a meal made with the produce of *Pioneer Set* – all pay visible homage to the inalienable labours of each individual body.

In the realm of design, AVL practices moderation. 'No design' could be the atelier's motto, which is manifest in the blank faces of the *AVL Man* or the rudimentary toilet *Il Primitivo*. To quell the urge to design, AVL reduces an object to the absolute essentials. *3M Minimal Multi Mobile* has been made in the most straightforward way possible: the plain box is mounted on four wheels, without any extra automobile parts or accessories. *3M* might be the first minimalist vehicle, yet even the bare minimum – a driver's seat – is missing; the driver and any passengers must bring along their own chairs. Beyond objects large and small, AVL takes other creations back to their basics. The watercolour drawing series *Ursoup* (2003-2004) shows a scientist pouring all the chemical ingredients of the human body – calcium, sulpher, iron, and so forth – into a blender, which suggests that a human might be produced with the same ease as a milkshake. But the shining star of simplicity remains *AVL Constitution*, which governed *AVL-Ville*. Written in collaboration with the Dutch lawyer Gerard Spong when AVL declared itself a Free State, *AVL Constitution* has only 12 laws, including the right to freedom of artistic expression and the right to an education. Yet unlike the charter and rights of a democratic nation-state, *AVL Constitution* knows no exceptions – a clause that allowed for yet another reduction: The absolute nature of the constitution eliminated the need for police, lawyers, judges and government to reinforce, interpret or mediate the laws in *AVL-Ville*. Often AVL restrains design by simply arresting the production process: nipping design in the bud before it has a chance to blossom and spread through pollination. Many AVL works – from *Favela House to Sonsbeek Raft* – have a crude and raw, if not incomplete and underdeveloped, appearance. *Sportopia* and its offspring – *Mini Sportopia* and *Bonnefantopia* – look like buildings in progress at a construction site, due to their scaffolding structures. By using scaffolding, AVL foils design, not once, but twice: the prefabricated material has already been designed; when used as a structural support, scaffolding eliminates the necessity to design walls along with the possibility of decorating them. Unfinished wood is

another AVL construction constant and offers a strong contrast to the rainbow of fibreglass works. Toilets – whether the sole *Compostolet* or the triptych *Mirror Toilet*, *Urinal Female*, *Urinal Male* – tend to be encased in plain wooden shelters. A similarly rough finish can be found in the inmate facilities in *The Disciplinator* and the *Big Bunk Bed* (2004) for 1000 burghers in *The Technocrat*. But plain wood also graces far more luxurious and lascivious slumber facilities: all ver-sions of the *Modular Multi-Woman Bed*, the communal bed that covers the second floor of *Sportopia* and even the more diminutive six-pack bed in the *Bedroom* (1999). An unfinished look dominates the model *Lone Star Brothel for SlaveCity* just as easily as other work places. Consider *Clubhouse 8* (2002), the installation created for the offices of the Dutch insurance company Interpolis, which also boasts a bare steel staircase frame around several activities centres: library, dining area, internet café. *Prototype Shaker Table and Chair* (1998) in *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*, the sex facilities in the *Sportopia* family, the farmer's tools in *Pioneer Set* all come in plain wood. AVL may also take the opposite ap-proach: not arresting the production process but rather extending this proc-ess in the most intensive and laborious way. The handwork of craft is another method that allows AVL to control the spread of design, which can be made anywhere, for anyone and for any func-tion. In contrast to design's omnipres-ence, craft is the organic product of a continuity between the craftsperson, skills and materials, often taken from the immediate surroundings. Design belongs to time through the historical period of a style (whether an original or a revived design style); craft belongs to time essentially by manifesting an incalculable amount of handwork that has gone into making it. Much like the tree branch gradually smoothed by the sea into a piece of driftwood, the crafted creation is both repetitive and unique, its surface openly displaying traces of a prolonged encounter with a natural organic force. In an age domi-nated by design and its industrial mass productions, craft has been reduced to yet another historical design style, which carries the nostalgic promise of authenticity. The crafts of indigenous

peoples – whether Dutch wooden shoes or Inuit soapstone carvings – are produced, not to be used, but to be sold as souvenirs. AVL, faced with both the omnipresence of design and the obsolescence of crafts, attempts to revitalize handwork while avoiding a nostalgic or even a reactionary return to the past. When AVL renews crafts from earlier times, these objects are explicitly made to be used – often in a specific environment – so they cannot become decorations, nor souvenirs. *Fisherman's House* is a good example. Unlike a lifestyle designed to be lived out anywhere with the right clothes and accessories, *Fisherman's House* evolved from a particular practice and place. Such structures were originally built along the Zuiderzee until the 1950s and used by Dutch fishermen for drying and smoking fish as well as for temporary rest and shelter from the elements. Underscoring its own site-specific functionality, *Fisherman's House* found a home at the shore near the atelier's compound on the shores of the Rotterdam harbour. *Bad Furniture* (2004) is another example of AVL's critical use of craft. AVL chose to make them by using traditional meth-ods at the atelier instead of creating a prototype that might be produced in a far-away factory. For each piece of *Bad Furniture*, the designer and the fabricator are one and the same. The steel support bars were forged by hand while beeswax was used to give them their intense black shade. The wood was shaped and shaded by hand, including the transparent fibreglass protective surface; the use of an unconventional material such as fibreglass links the crafts of the past to the present. *Bad Furniture* is not a design that could have been manufactured and was handcrafted instead for a nostalgic touch; rather the handiwork itself was the blueprint that determined the ultimate appear-ance of the furniture. *Sport Nouveau* (2003-2004) – the progeny of *Bad Furniture*, albeit for body building – exaggerates the organic fusion between craftsperson, materials, skill and site. After shaping the steel and wood into an exercise facility, the craftsperson can use a similar physical force to shape his or her own body with a total workout.

The benevolent 'green thumb' of the ecological movement takes on some unexpected shades in AVL's oeuvre. However environmentally friendly, AVL's works are primarily driven by the atelier's desire for self-sufficiency from the state and mass organizational systems. Why not save the planet at the same time? Of course, the two goals are often completely compatible; AVL's recycling installations, from the lone *Compostolet* to *Total Faecal Solution*, liberate the atelier from being reliant on public sewage treat-ment systems while doing away with the wasteful flush toilet. AVL's early forays into self-sufficiency – mobile trailer units like *Autocrat* for life in the backwoods – are autonomous from the state but dependent upon the sur-rounding ecosystems for dealing with waste and finding resources of food and energy. Despite their mobility, many AVL installations are ecologically site-specific; greener solutions arise from the need to survive in a particular habitat, relatively isolated from the state and from the market. Recycling human waste into compost, biogas or drinking water solves two problems: eliminating a perpetual toxin while producing a constant source of energy. As composting would suggest, farm-ing is yet another path to autonomy that AVL has given a green touch with installations that serve the independ-ent farmer, whether environmentalist, freedom fighter or pioneer. Indeed, *Pioneer Set* – as a one-person set to manage agriculture and livestock – avoids the environmental degradation of mega-farming, such as pesticides and over-production. But there are also some surprising results when ecology meets self-sufficiency. Since AVL makes its own weapons – for defence and for hunting – pacifism and vegetarianism are two hues of green that are missing from the atelier's eco palette. More contrasts occur in the realm of energy produc-tion; compare the watercolour plan for the heavy-duty industrial *Blast Furnace* (1998) with the gentler *Energy Plant of AVL-Ville*, which uses renew-able resources, efficient incinerators and hot water storage, all housed in a recycled shipping container. The primacy of self-sufficiency accounts for AVL's interest in the living practices of closed communities and individual outsiders. Despite their great differ-

ences, these practitioners all combined autonomy with a high degree of ecological efficiency, due to the community's relative isolation. *Prototype Shaker Table and Chair*, as the name suggests, are inspired by the economical craftsmanship of the Shakers, the religious agricultural communities that sprang up across the USA in the late eighteenth century, only to dwindle through their strict vow of celibacy. Shakers might well object to comparisons between their simple furniture and the plain *Modular Multi-Woman Bed*, although these frugal individuals would likely appreciate that the AVL copy-cat table and chair were made with wood that had been salvaged from the interior of a used shipping container. With his feminist sympathies, Charles Fourier (1772-1837) might have also objected to *Modular Multi-Woman Bed*, but AVL's other sex-friendly installations could well have found a home in the utopian socialist's vision of class-sexual-communal life in the Phalanstères, which were eventually built in the USA in the mid-nineteenth century. *Favela House* comes from the impromptu architectural practices of the contemporary São Paulo slums, where 'garbage' is immediately recycled into valuable building materials. AVL's series of individual isolation units *Orgone Helmet* from 1997 – recently revived in *Dickhead* – channel a naturally-occurring energy into a healing force for the body's immune system; orgone was first discovered in 1940 by Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957), who was ostracized and persecuted for his beliefs, including an unprecedented attempt to combine Freudian with Marxian theories, sexuality with economics. The Una Bomber Theodore Kaczynski – who survived alone in the woods – played an inspirational role in *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*. AVL has an on-going interest in the ingenuity of criminals – in hiding or on the run – and prison inmates, whose forced isolation abets thrifty recycling and discourages squandering. Most environmentalists and conservationists would balk at the idea of incarceration as an environmentally-friendly alternative to the consumer society. And yet AVL's urban plan for Almere called for the new city to become self-sufficient by hosting a prison where inmates could double as cheap labourers

and as consumers of alcohol (locally produced with organic methods and without artificial preservatives). Ultimately, *AVL-Ville* realized the atelier's dream of self-sufficiency, minus the detention centre. Some proposals are better on paper. Prison designs, models and installations are the most contentious part of AVL's exploration of self-sufficiency. After proposing the profitable prison for Almere in 1998, AVL took this unlikely vision one gruesome step forward with the installation *The Disciplinator*, which seems to be modelled on a concentration camp. Far from commending the Nazi's murderous efficiency, *The Disciplinator* shows how horror can accompany a search for efficient solutions; rationality can easily work against human beings. *The Disciplinator* also marries total efficacy with total futility: the facilities are used exhaustively, just like the prisoners, only to produce worthless sawdust. *The Technocrat* is not a prison, yet the installation offers another marriage of efficiency and futility: burghers drink alcohol all day and produce shit for biogas; the collective existence of this spreading consumer class is measured only by its circulation of toxins. By contrast, the plans and models for the incarceration installation *SlaveCity* take efficiency to a new extreme by running on 0 per cent energy; there are only profits to be made – to the tune of 7.8 billion euro annually. Cost-effectiveness rules over any other consideration, especially ethical. While *SlaveCity* may recall the death camps, the project's proximity to the present is as disturbing as its recollection of the past. Instead of qualifying the Holocaust, *SlaveCity* suggests how many Nazi practices have persisted in our current global economy and how many lessons were never learned from their systematic murder of the Nazi victims. In *SlaveCity*, recycling organs reflects the reality of the black market trade in organs as well as the practice of 'donating' the organs of executed prisoners; moreover, prisoners have long been used as a cheap, if not free, labour force for the telephone service centres of corporations, whose customers remain blind to the identity of their incarcerated interlocutors. The most ecological element of AVL's self-sufficiency appears to be its desire to eliminate waste. There should be

absolutely no waste. No garbage. No pollution. Everything can be used again and again. Every element has a generative value – an afterlife – whether a car or a kidney. After all, what has not been recycled by AVL? Some of the atelier's most opulent installations began as someone else's trash. *La Bais-ô-Drôme* was an abandoned old trailer – missing some walls – which was plucked from the street and then lovingly converted into a sleek caravan. *3M Minimal Multi Mobile* used to be a delivery truck in its former life. *AVL Spital, Workshop for Weapons and Bombs, Workshop for Alcohol and Medicines, Pioneer Set Container, AVL Canteen, Darkroom, Hall of Delights* and *A-Portable* all began as shipping containers, which were salvaged from a rusty fate. While an old Alfa Romeo found a second life as *Alfa Alfa with Chicken Run*, the car's engine became *Generator 80 KW* (1999). Old metal tubes have found their way into guns and canons, just as fruit juices have fermented into alcohol. Even the livestock that populated *Pioneer Set* in *AVL-Ville* ended up, not only as meals, but also as the stuffed sculptural series *Animal Farm* (2001). AVL's recycling is so fanatical that the distinction between production and consumption, resource and waste, tends to disappear. The most tightly-closed circuits of self-sufficiency revolve around the human body; thus, recycling human faeces and urine into various resources was not efficient enough for AVL. For the atelier, faecal sex is a much better solution since shit is directly converted into food – a shortcut that bypasses the entire composting process, whereby human faeces first becomes fertilizer and then nourishes crops that are later eaten, digested and eliminated. The watercolour *Recycling* – three figures eating faeces – suggests that there is no need for 'conversion.' Along with shit and urine, even vomit can become a meal. The watercolour *Vomiting Trio* depicts three men throwing up into a funnel-feeder which is attached to a fourth man's open mouth. In AVL's ecological Eden, waste is eliminated along with the abject. Inhabitants 'work' by simply following their own bodily functions, whose secretions provide a source of food.

AVL tends to resist generalizations because the works are filled with exceptions. Expansive live-in installations like the restaurant *Hall of Delights* suggest an architectural oeuvre, if not an interactive one, but these classifications do not explain the traditional figurative sculptures of *AVL Men, Michelangelo* and *Jezus*. Even the term *Gesamtkunstwerk* seems incapable of capturing the many facets of a living open-air museum like *AVL-Ville*. While confounding traditional media, AVL's works do not create a unified impression in terms of ideology, politics or even purpose. *Pioneer Set* may appear as a nostalgic desire to go back to nature and to live off the land, except the set comes in a shipping container, the ultimate tool of globalized trade. *The Technocrat* looks beautiful and operates ecologically, but the installation facilitates human exploitation and slothfulness. *The Disciplinator* runs on a super-efficient production schedule, only to churn out useless sawdust, while *SlaveCity* shrewdly follows the rationality of profit-making, all the better to harvest the slaves' organs more effectively. And *Sport Nouveau* may be as finely crafted as a traditional rocking chair made by hand, except that the installation functions as a modern weight-lifting machine. AVL's world is filled with many complex encounters, beyond the convergence of architecture and art. The old meets the new; the ecological mixes with the scatological; plain wood is contradicted by coloured fibreglass; rationality is forced into cohabitation with irrationality, the natural with the synthetic, the efficient with the inefficient, the moral with the immoral, the human with the inhuman. Considered from a wider perspective, AVL builds for the state of exception. The atelier's most significant legacy is to build, occupy and operate in spaces that are created by the law and yet remain to a certain extent outside its jurisdiction. Like the state of emergency declared during a political crisis, wartime or in the wake of a natural disaster, the state of exception is filled with both danger and freedom. Since the norm of law and order is temporarily suspended, you could be shot as easily as you could construct a make-shift house around a public monument. AVL began to explore the state of exception by exploiting the

relative autonomy of art in democratic states where artists enjoy a greater degree in freedom of expression. The strategy is simple and ingenious: producing canons, guns or alcohol is illegal without the state's permission, but artists may create these items as art, which is generally assumed to have more symbolic value than real use (although the police have not always been convinced by AVL's explosive approach to aesthetics). Beyond relying on the autonomy of aesthetics, AVL takes advantage of every exception to the rule, especially in the realm of state and municipal regulations. In relation to architecture, AVL's works constitute a negative reading of the law because these installations are often the result of what has not been included in the building code. While AVL occasionally breaks the law (for example, by building without a proper permit), the atelier is more likely to produce constructions that are simply not explicitly prohibited. Familiar examples include mobile structures (*Mobile Home for Kröller-Müller*) and temporary ones (*BarRectum*), which fall outside of the law because they are not treated as permanent buildings, legally bound to inspection. The provisional (*Compostolet*) and the improvised (*Alfa Alfa with Chicken Run*) are other liminal legal cases; even the state of emergency is covered with a fully-functional field hospital in an easy-to-move container (*AVL Spital*). AVL's preferred sites include the slum (*Favela House*), the open sea (*A-Portable*) and the rural frontier (*Pioneer Set*) since these zones tend to escape inspection. Target clients are those who move too quickly or too stealthily to be picked up by the sluggish inspector's radar: criminals on the run (*The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*), freedom fighters (*Workshop for Weapons and Bombs*) and the new mobiles, from high-end tourists (*Maxi Capsule Luxus*) to low-end ravers (*Mini Capsule*), vagrants (*Ideal Caravan*) and migrants (*Modular House Mobile*). Unlike most architects, AVL reads the building code and every other code, not to learn the rules by heart, but rather to discover what is not covered by the rules and then to enjoy the most freedom in design, production and use. If a *Wombhouse* is not in the books, then that's the best reason to make one. Made in the space of

exception, many of AVL's works are unexpected and wondrous hybrids, if not curious rarities that could occur only outside of the norm. The most striking exceptions can be found in AVL's explorations of community life. Like Dante, AVL has thoroughly explored both heaven (*AVL-Ville*) and hell (*SlaveCity*). Joep van Lieshout denied that *AVL-Ville* was a utopian undertaking because utopia is never realized but continually postponed to an idyllic future. Yet the Free State certainly looks like paradise when compared with *SlaveCity* and the other penal colonies that are implied by *The Disciplinator* and *The Technocrat*. However contradictory, AVL's many manifestations of community life all thrive in the exceptional space created in relation to the law of an officially recognized nation-state. Like the Free State – or even the isolated communities of the Shakers and the Phalanstères – a penal colony maintains an autonomous outsider status with respect to the nation-state. Taken out of civil society, prisoners are literally forced to live according to a more oppressive set of rules, to which law-abiding citizens are not subject. While more restricted than the criminal on the run, freedom fighter, raver or vagrant, the prisoner remains an ideal AVL user: by living directly under the eye of the law, prisoners become intimately acquainted with the law's force as well as its limits and flexibility, if any. *SlaveCity*, which is inhabited by both slaves and non-slaves, goes even further into the state of exception by following the Nazi concentration camp's division between the full citizens who ran the camps and the non-citizens who suffered and died in them. It will be remembered that victims like European Jews murdered by the Nazis were deprived of their citizenship before they were deported to the death camps; although imprisoned, the concentration camp inmates simply cannot be compared to prisoners in a state jail. While prisoners live outside civil society, the camp inmates were forced to subsist in an exceptional state beyond any law, since they could be murdered with complete impunity. Again: the state of exception is filled with danger and freedom. While *SlaveCity* reflects the dangers inherent to state of the exception, if not its inhumanity, AVL-

Ville explored the freedoms beyond the rule of the law. The Free State declared at the Rotterdam harbour became an exceptional city within the Netherlands while criticizing the official nation-state on two levels. First, *AVL-Ville* questioned the Dutch state's monopoly in certain communal realms by proposing alternatives to the national and municipal norms for health care, currency, weaponry, sanitation and other public services. As an art work, *AVL-Ville* could realize such alternatives, which are illegal, while reaping their benefits; take AVL's *Compostolet*, which is more environmentally-friendly than the wasteful flush toilet required by building codes. Second, *AVL-Ville* challenged the Dutch state by writing its own *Constitution*. The Free State's foundational document guarantees many of the rights already guaranteed by the Netherlands (such as freedom of expression). But AVL did away with all other forms of legislation and government along with the people who enforce them: police, judges, lawyers, politicians. Moreover, AVL eliminated any exceptions to its own laws. Judged by its *Constitution*, *AVL-Ville* was not exactly a break-away city, nor a parallel city, but claimed itself as the state of exception to the Netherlands and Dutch laws. The Free State was the only place in Holland where there were no exceptions; the exception was the rule; everything was possible. By eliminating the state of exception to its laws, AVL challenged the Dutch state's right to declare one. Whether anticipating the dangers or exploring the freedoms in the state of exception, AVL has created planning and architecture for a community life based upon bare life. Originally coined by Walter Benjamin and more recently developed by Giorgio Agamben, the term bare life does not refer to a naked body but to a human body that has been stripped of legal rights, whether the basic human rights guaranteed by the Geneva Convention or the rights enjoyed by citizens in a democratic nation-state. As Agamben noted, bare life is bred wherever the state of exception has been declared; in the state of exception, bare life can be extinguished with impunity, whether the Jews in a Nazi concentration camp or today's refugees who are left to drown in a sinking boat. *SlaveCity*,

where slaves are legally murdered for their organs, reflects yet another horrific form of bare life. Inside *SlaveCity*, the 'bios' of each individual slave's life is no longer protected by a set of civil, constitutional or universal rights but rather subject to the laws of supply and demand in the free market. If there is no legal mediation by the state or an international convention, the difference between biology and economy disappears. Human life can be immediately calculated and realized as pure profit; moreover, in *SlaveCity*, the slave's body must be profitable both in life (as a cheap source of labour) and in death (as a set of organs). *AVL-Ville* offered a slightly more positive manifestation of bare life not only by exploring the freedoms in the state of exception but also by eliminating all forms of legislation and government beyond the basic *Constitution*. Inside *AVL-Ville*, there was no further mediation to protect, control or represent the inhabitants. Human physiological functions came close to pure politics, driven primarily by bodily needs and desires along with ecology (economy also played a role, albeit less decisive than in *SlaveCity*, since *AVL-Ville* could not escape the market as easily as it could work around the Dutch state). The Free State's installations – from the open *Compostolet* to *Modular Multi-Woman Bed* – codified and collectivized the most intimate biological functions: defecating, sleeping, eating, having sex. Just beyond its *Constitution*, *AVL-Ville* glimpsed a collective organization of human life based upon bare life. Since *AVL-Ville* ran according to biological functions specific to the human species, this manifestation of community challenged symbolic ways of belonging, whether via citizenship or via identity politics (whereby the nation-state must legally recognize micro-communities among its citizens). AVL – responding to the state of exception and to bare life in all of its forms, both positive and negative – may operate at the edges of the law. Yet its creations are instructive for our present era, which is caught between terrorism and globalization. On the one hand, nation-states fighting terrorism have increasingly declared a state of exception, where citizens can be freely killed by accident as terrorist suspects or be imprisoned without

a fair trial. On the other hand, the liberalization of markets and the rise of free trade has forced nation-states to give up, not only their monopolies on public services, but also their ability to use legislation as a buffer against pure economy. Indeed, communal life cannot always be profitable. As AVL's oeuvre suggests, our exceptional states bring great dangers and great freedoms. Bare life may be imprisoned and subject to the market or be determined by the twin desires of sexuality and ecology. Everything is possible: from harvesting organs to recycling shit for faecal sex and biogas. AVL has already built the facilities; it's up to us to inhabit them.

The Deformation of Everyday Life:
A Short History of Joep van Lieshout's Architecture

Aaron Betsky

Joep van Lieshout has constructed a complex edifice within the realm of contemporary art. It is not made up of paintings or sculptures, nor of performance pieces, installations or body art. Instead, it is an amalgamation of many of the elements taken from these traditions and fused into something that one can use or inhabit. It is a deformed architecture of everyday life.

To make sense of such a deformed structure, it might be useful to trace its origins. Van Lieshout, who is roughly my age, grew up in the Netherlands as an orderly, organized society where everything and everyone was in its place. His art traces and tracks the ways in which we reacted to the knowable and predicable architecture of everyday life.

When we were growing up in the Netherlands in the 1960s, there was a strange phenomenon called ‘bermtoerisme’, or ‘verge tourism’. City dwellers would pack up that symbol of their new-found wealth, their car, get on the highway, go to a spot an hour’s or so drive away, and then park to watch the other cars go by while enjoying a picnic lunch seasoned with exhaust fumes. I have a strong suspicion that Joep van Lieshout, who denies ever having engaged in this activity, would have loved to do so. The world of cars and movement, from its bulbous shapes to its hard colours, but also to its culture of drag racing and the freedom the car provides, and especially the tacky culture surrounding the emblem of consumer culture, provides him with endless fascination. By the 1970s, we were all going out in ‘caravans’, trailers that the Dutch took to France or, if they were really daring, Italy. Again, van Lieshout claims never to have been part of this mass summer migration south, but he certainly loves his trailers, having turned them into what was for at least a decade (starting with the *La Bais-ô-Drôme* in 1995) the central vehicle for his art. In this case, however, it seems that what interests him is not so much the forms and the culture of camping, as the kind of perversion of social relations that take place in these close, but nomadically free, quarters. Though I have not dared to ask him this third question, I would love to imagine that van Lieshout lost his virginity somewhere on vacation in a tent, cabin or camper.

In the late 1970s, a strong reaction towards this kind of consumption of exotic places in mechanical objects made the Dutch develop a culture of what they called ‘goat hair socks’. Plastic and its colours were out, while organic forms, wood and wool were in. The aim was to have a self-sufficient community that would exhibit a good stewardship of the land while setting itself off from capitalist society in everything from sexual mores to the rough textures and fluid shapes with which it surrounded itself. No member of a commune was Joep van Lieshout, at least not in those days, but he has certainly built one of the most successful entities of that sort in the Dutch art world – even if one has to raise questions about the conviction with which its anti-capitalism is carried out. Now he is proposing veritable autarkic communities (*The Technocrat* series, 2003 and onward) in which the collective and collected effluent produces the food that keeps the no doubt goat hair sock-wearing inhabitants going. Such idealistic ways of living proved unsustainable then – and will probably do so now – and in the 1980s greed was good. The bravura with which symbols of power were adopted, from drugs to corporations, was an accepted way to live out one’s desires. The ability to manage a large company or group of people, to buy anything one might want, and to live large in every sense of the word became popular in the otherwise rather reticent Netherlands. The government began to think about privatization, and popular culture, mainly generated in the USA, threatened to drown out whatever locally produced cultural artefacts might still be surviving. Joep van Lieshout, then just embarking on his career as an artist, was hungry for it all. He travelled to the USA and rented American cars. He raced cars and dressed like a businessman or a hoodlum, depending on his mood or the occasion. And he turned his art-making practice into a multinational corporation geared to ever-greater production. If Bill Gates can boast of being the richest man in the world, Joep van Lieshout can claim to have more exhibitions a year than anybody else.

Finally, starting in the mid 1990s, a new culture crept into the Dutch consciousness. It was the Polder

Model, a particular manner of adapting all these foreign imports and local traditions into a collage of institutions, ways of behaving, and forms. It produced great art and architecture, such as that of the Office of Metropolitan Architecture, that spiralled out of a knowing reuse of popular culture and a tendency towards bigness while proclaiming its anarchic, autarkic principles and covering itself in the nostalgic images gleaned from the moment when the new was still exciting. Verge tourism had finally produced art. It was then that Joep van Lieshout, collaborating with OMA and others on projects such as *Euralille* in 1995, came into his own. He had absorbed the past and was now of and about his age. Even the trickier sides of this highly self-aware culture, such as its playing with fascism as a way of criticizing prejudice and pointing to holy cows, as was the working method of the assassinated filmmaker Theo van Gogh, became part and parcel of van Lieshout’s work, leading to the design of concentration camps (*The Disciplinator*, 2003) rendered with the innocence of a child survivor’s drawings.

Thus it is easy to see van Lieshout’s whole career as nothing more or less than a palimpsest of the last four decades of Dutch culture, filtered through the refined sensibilities of an artist and presented with the showmanship that is these days proper to that avocation. The result is startling. The bad boy artist has now carved more than a niche for himself in the international church of contemporary art. He has turned himself into a complete industry of art, including disciples, rules, and a well-oiled machinery supporting a clear and effective organization.

This is in itself not surprising or that exceptional. These days, many artists operate in this manner (though van Lieshout has been at it longer than Matthew Barney, Damien Hirst or Olafur Eliasson) and it would be easy to argue that this is the destiny of art if it is going to survive in a world of ever larger and more complex institutions and collecting communities, as well as a popular culture more productive and savvy than ever before. If so, then van Lieshout is, if not the Rembrandt, then surely the Rubens of twenty-first-century art. In fact, AVL (Atelier Van Lieshout) might be the first truly

effective art-making entity since Andy Warhol's Factory, and is a lot more productive than that drug-addled moment in New York cultural ephemera. The basis for AVL's success is not just organizational or generational, although one does wonder whether future generations will respond as empathetically to some of van Lieshout's earlier work as those of us who grew up with more or less the same culture. Van Lieshout is a successful artist because of his ability to plug into the basic elements out of which our culture is made: food and drink, violence, sex, exercise and health, commerce and tourism. These are the categories of culture with which we concern ourselves when we are not making money, feeding ourselves, procreating or doing other useful things. They are the palimpsests of all those activities that provide meaning, value or merely escape and let us understand where we are and who we are. To make us aware of that culture, we need, in short, art, and van Lieshout is the artist for us. He has managed to create art out of those aspects of our consumer culture that are the core elements by which capitalist systems of production manage to make us take part in their systemic logic while giving us our own world. Joep van Lieshout fashions something called art, in other words, out of the reality of our social and economic system. By doing so in a logical and attractive manner, as befits anybody working in a consumer culture, he can appeal to a large audience and still claim to be an artist in the model of the academy, producing singular pieces worthy of collecting, criticizing and even enshrining in a museum. Joep van Lieshout makes sure to hit the hotspots. First, there is sex, always a good topic if you want to make art that will appeal to a large audience. Van Lieshout has been engaged with this subject from the beginning of his career, and has managed to use it as a subject, as a way of presenting his work, and even in its formal qualities. His *Bioprick* and *Bedroom-Slave Unit*, both of 1992, are explicit in this sense. To this day, he revels in drawing and making pricks. Photographed on a bed that would be, if looked at in another manner, rather unremarkable, he makes sure that the legs of a naked woman are on the background.

Not that the act of sex is without consequences: van Lieshout has created *Wombhouse* (complete with alcohol dispensers to assuage the pain of either father or mother) and the interior of the *A-Portable* (2001, abortion container) that cruised along the coast of Ireland in 2002. And then there are the forms themselves, which range from the womb-like to the phallic, and are meant to either contain one or be worn as a kind of prosthetic to enhance one's (appearance of) abilities. Sex is central to van Lieshout's work as a generator of forms if nothing else. Even exercise, another topic that van Lieshout introduced in his entry (*Sportopia*, 2002) for the 2002 São Paulo Biennale, is related to sex: the platforms he designed are meant to tone the muscles and provide the machine-based titillation he seems to think is an integral part of the sexual act (though his own appearance does not give much evidence of this discipline – it is perhaps just a question of art, not conviction). Van Lieshout seems fascinated by the machinery of self-discipline, but also by the medical machinery into which we must, at times, plug ourselves. In *Sportopia*, all three fascinations merge into drawings that go from *Kama Sutra* to carnality in every sense of the word. If one were looking for an intellectual explanation, it would be that van Lieshout is illustrating either Foucault's lessons about discipline and punishment or Deleuze and Guattari's ramblings about 'bodies without organs', but in truth the work seems to come more from a cross between a delight in the medical manuals and (the artist's?) love of bodies sweating for whatever reason. This is not to say that exercise and health as a topic in van Lieshout's work is tied only to sex. It also pervades his work in an almost invisible manner, leading to forms that are continually bulging out from, but constrained by, the containers in which they occur. This is the case whether these constraints come in the form of institutions for which van Lieshout has designed toilets or the many caravans he has outfitted with cancerous protuberances. Exercise and health shade off almost inevitably into violence, the third grand subject in van Lieshout's work. They can do so benignly, as in *A-Portable*, or they can do so with directness that is, at

least to this observer, rather chilling. In the drawings for both *Sportopia* and the *The Technocrat*, mutilated bodies having sex, sexual organs taken out of context, castrated and tied up, and other forms of extreme sadomasochism are of course artistic elements that have august precedents from classicism to Caravaggio, but van Lieshout does tend to take things a bit farther. Only occasionally has the artist taken violence as a topic in and of itself, as when he has portrayed himself in 1995 as a latter-day revolutionary standing ready to mow down the bourgeois (his collectors?) with a machine gun. When violence is not tied up with sex in van Lieshout's work, it becomes part of how we produce food. Van Lieshout learned how to butcher pigs, did so as an art performance and installation (*Slaughter*, 1997), drew and turned into art the necessary implements, and then produced a manual as an artist's book that showed us all how to do it (1997). This is the most extreme case of the ways in which he has highlighted the violence (it is a way to show how to deal with food and food production in a respectful and crafty way . . .) inherent in food production and consumption. In the *AVL-Ville* commune of 2001 and the subsequent commune-like proposals he has made over the last five years, assembly-line production of food – though he would claim in a bio-agricultural way – is a central theme. The machinery it takes to feed us is shown in all its beauty, but also in all its naked power and violence. This food production is also part of a cycle of production and consumption that highlights the less polite aspects of the human body. Van Lieshout has long had a fascination with defecation and other bodily effluents. Such natural results of the other activities out of which he has made his art produce images and forms to which he seems attracted and which, I must confess, I find to be the most juvenile part of his art. And yet it is exactly this that makes him more popular, perhaps because it shows that he is not just an abstract manipulator of imagery, but somebody who is in touch with the reality of life – or perhaps just because his audience is juvenile as well. It is through van Lieshout's portrayal and manipulation of commerce, includ-

ing his awareness of the popularity of sex, violence, food and excrement, that he has found a way to not only become a more successful artist, but also to tie together many of the other themes in his work. Thus the hogs he butchered and turned into sausages became not only the origins of works of art, but also of a commercial enterprise that had as its highlight the short-lived AVL-Ville van Lieshout proclaimed during the 2001 Rotterdam Cultural Capital of Europe events. Though the artist sold the enterprise as a political gesture and relished the closing down of his little dominion by the police (for health reasons, they claimed), he actually operated it as a restaurant and bar that was meant to sustain itself and AVL-Ville more than anything else. Today, he calls himself a 'anarcho-capitalist'. That method of operation is typical for Joep van Lieshout. He produces art that, like that of many contemporary and historical artists, is made up of components and themes that he can recombine and reuse, and that he can also make in multiple versions. Because he works with materials such as plastic, polyurethane and other highly malleable, highly mechanized elements, and because his forms are elemental and, one might even say, cartoon-like, he can produce and reproduce them with great ease. While other artists might hide the business-like aspects of their ateliers behind the veneer of craft and one-off masterpieces, van Lieshout relishes the look and feel, if not always the actual fact, of mass production and cheapness. The image he presents is that of the artist as a used car dealer. That play with mass production, a-human seeming materials, sleaziness and illegality has recently reached a further extreme in his dangerous toying with memories of concentration camps. Here it is not so much commerce itself that is his subject, but rather the commercial impulses taken to their illogical extremes. People here are 'citizens', who produce effluent and consume food cheaply produced in *The Feeder* and are kept happy and quite with *The Alcoholicator*. They make methane gas that is used as fuel to cook and distil. Human beings are thus consumables as well as consumers. They are part of a closed-loop system in which the loop is the art itself that

finds, builds and articulates the order that binds them to each other and to the system. *The Technocrat*, *Disciplinator* and *SlaveCity* projects of the last few years are the most complete and most disturbing summing-up of his art that van Lieshout has presented to us thus far. It shows a kind of art for arts sake, in which art is a closed-system technology that binds us to each other and reveals both the beauty and the futility of sex, violence, exercise and commerce themselves. It is a kind of ironic utopia in which all the objects the artist has made until now can have a place. It is a form of built verge tourism, a voyeuristic assimilation of technology as a spectacle one consumes while producing it. This ironic utopia is finally, however, one that remains outside of us. It is, in the end, a work of art, a project and not a proposal for a real situation. Van Lieshout is always careful to stay on this side of sanity and high art by presenting his violent rendering of pigs, his prosthetic penis, his hippy concentration camp and his sadomasochistic gym as proposals, drawn in ink on paper or built in fragments that can and are sold as precious objects. They are dreams and nightmares, not blueprints for real places. All of which makes it even more interesting that today Joep van Lieshout increasingly sees himself, or is presented by museums, as a kind of architect gone haywire. He certainly has designed a few structures and has collaborated with architects, but his art more and more takes the form of an integrative project whose utopian and dystopian overtones are spelled out in ink on canvas drawings, cut-away models and other fragments of what could be the presentations of an architectural office. The model of the architect as somebody who is at the same time a handmaiden of those forces who have the power and money to commission him (almost never, still, her) and a subversive dreamer who seeks to build a perfect world and in the end creates nightmarishly rational constraints with and in which we all have to live is perhaps the perfect model for Joep van Lieshout. After fashioning himself as everything from a race car driver to a butcher, and from a commune guru to a subversive capitalist, he has

perhaps finally found the right way in which he can unify his various artistic tendencies. This does not mean that he necessarily wants to or should build. It is exactly the proposal quality of his work that keeps it as art, while its form becomes more and more truly architectural. Is it any coincidence that the best work that the Dutch have produced in the last four to five decades has existed in the world of architecture and design or, as in the case of Constant in his *New Babylon*, has mimicked it? Is there something about the architectural quality of the Dutch landscape, or the pragmatic attitude towards visual art, that leads the visual arts in this direction? Or is it merely that, living in a world in which everything is already ordered, regulated and designed, you can only escape from it in caravans, speed racing, communes or corporate gulags, or can deform it into something one might call art. In the end, Joep van Lieshout has not yet built his architecture, and perhaps never will. Instead, he does remain an artist. He lets us take a trip through his own mind and the worlds that shelter within that strange place. He allows us to be a tourist to the mechanical sites that are usually off limit to us. We can see a slaughterhouse and we can see a concentration camp, fantasize about being either prisoner or keeper, victim or perpetrator, or both. We can inspect a gym without doing any exercise. We can watch sex without even getting aroused. We are only tourists taking in the show at whatever museum is presenting this art. It is no coincidence that the caravan or camper is the most basic element of van Lieshout's art. It is an emblem of the artist and tourist as well as the viewer as tourist. It is a deformation of our popular culture and particularly of that part of that culture in which viewing landscape, sporting events and cultural artefacts are all jumbled together and subordinated to the act of travel itself, in which one reduces one's ties to the world around one to the compacted, free-floating, but plugged-in mobile home. These days it seems as if the real world is catching up with Joep van Lieshout. Most of us no longer travel in campers, and sex, violence and exercise have been so thoroughly assimilated into popular culture that

we barely notice them anymore. The comics kids read and the skating they do a little later are so much more adventurous than van Lieshout's art that the latter looks very much like polite high culture. Van Lieshout has wisely not engaged himself in a race to the bottom by trying to keep up with these trends. Instead, he is becoming, however strange that might sound, more mature. His forms are becoming smoother, more abstract and more polyvalent. In the later versions of his human figures, produced as giant gunby-like statues for museums, parks and squares in the last two years, one can read a number of different scales, sexes and attitudes into shapes and compositions that are almost iconic. He is also more clearly separating the work he does himself, as an artist, from the near-mass production that takes place in his atelier. He is even extending himself into a brand, producing highly successful and simple furniture through the Van Lensvelt Company.

Multiples have long been a part of his art (literally, as a series in 1987 and 1990 with that name, and figuratively, throughout his work), and for me that goes to the heart of what makes his art so attractively disturbing. They show that van Lieshout works in and with our shared memories and goods, which is to say our shared culture. They show him not trying to refine that commonplace vernacular into something we might call art, but attempting to produce art through the refraction, deformation and reproduction of what is most base (in every sense of the word) about our world. The heart of all Joep van Lieshout's prodigious output for me still is the simple gesture of the 1987 *Untitled* piece, now owned by the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. Three beer crates are sandwiched between eight concrete tiles. The art lies in the illicit appropriation of standard goods to make a new object for presentation in an art setting, the discovery of the geometric concurrence between these disparate materials that together make a solid object, and the crafting of these into a thing of great clarity, measure and purity. It is a pop-culture version of a Sol LeWitt. Yet it is also a bench, or a table, a thing to be used. Fragments of mass production, the arrangements proper to art, and the ambivalence

between use and observation, consumption and admiration come together in a singular piece that evokes the smell of beer and the street. It is a van Lieshout *haiku*, proper to the place and the age out of which this artist makes his art.

**The Socially Oriented Art of
Atelier Van Lieshout**

Rudi Laermans

Art turned modern the moment it ceased striving only for beauty and focused on *everyday life*. This began with the Impressionists, who attempted to capture the new cosmopolitan existence as well as the vitality of physical perception in their paintings. A few decades later, Duchamp and Dadaism chose the more direct path of the ready-made or the banal utilitarian object, while Breton and the Surrealists wanted to hotwire art to the subconscious . . . This history of modern art is still unfolding, even though there has been talk of post-modern art for some time now. Perhaps a portion of art production has managed to connect so successfully to everyday life that it is no longer identifiable as autonomous art. This ‘post-art’ goes through life as fashion, design, advertising, film, architecture . . . In all of these fields of commercially based cultural production or creative economy, the *Kunstwollen*, the artistic volition (Alois Riegl), has imploded in lifestyles and life forms that are lived effectively and play a part in structuring society. In the work of Atelier Van Lieshout (AVL) art, design and architecture intertwine. Their work is based on the observation that contemporary capitalism has made the avant-gardist dream of a fusion of life and creativity a reality, resulting in a drastic evolution in the relationships between art, life and politics. The very extensive oeuvre of AVL, in the form of countless artefacts and designs, as well as in the way in which it is produced, shows the basic contours of the anonymous order in which our lives are presently shaped: what this existing order generates within the domain of production, what physicality it directs, how it disciplines and regulates us. AVL does not make political art, in the usual sense, but its work undeniably deals with the interlacing of life, creativity and politics in our time. I wish to clarify this identity in the following text, in the cheerful knowledge that any interpretation is as much an artifice as a coup d’état, as much a hard construction as a soft form of symbolic exercise of force.

In 1995 Joep van Lieshout (JVL) decided to group his diverse activities within AVL and to use this collective call sign as his signature. Within AVL, design and production are explicitly *socialized*, according to a logic both of division of labour and of cooperation that has been predominant outside the realm of art for a long time. In the art world, however, the model of the Factory à la Warhol still elicits resistance. It severs the practice of art from the notion of the *auteur*, models it on the business world, and in so doing desecrates the Romantic faith in the genius of the artist and the uniqueness of the art object. Art is created individually, not produced collectively according to a business model, says the still-dominant creed. By forging ahead nonetheless, AVL is remonstrating the art world for its de facto commercialization and the negation of this in the prevailing doctrine of art. Yet the work of AVL cannot be reduced to such a critical mindset in any way. AVL’s production is wide-ranging, from artworks to design artefacts (furniture, interior design, residential units) to commissioned works (‘You ask, no design or art is involved’, says JVL). AVL is therefore less an artists’ enterprise and more a *creative venture* that incorporates a broader social trend. Art is creativity, but the arts have long ceased to hold a monopoly on the conception and construction of ‘new worlds’, the exploration and actualization of new possibilities in media such as image, text or sound. Innovation, playfulness and imaginative power also characterize the diverse forms of the cultural economy, from film and rock music to advertising and the writing of software. AVL is acting out this evolution, therefore operating on the boundaries of art, design and architecture, and implementing the collective logic of immaterial labour (as described by the heirs of the Italian *operaismo* movement: Toni Negri, Paolo Virno, Maurizio Lazzarato). In contrast to the arts, research and creation have been forms of non-individual, socialized labour in the cultural economy from the very beginning. Making a film or a television programme, designing a car or a clothing line, or conceiving an advert, are all teamwork. The fusion of cooperation and labour division has now been generalized by the general

penetration of digital networks within which information can be instantly exchanged and modified. Productive labour had already been socialized for some time, but post-Fordist capitalism condenses human capabilities such as interaction and communication, thinking and imaginative power, into a single collective factor of production that also embodies a ‘general intelligence’ (Marx), a socialized creativity. In this way, a *creative production communism* has crystallized within the framework of private property and wage labour. It encompasses creative production, and thus the conception and design of objects, images, information, and so forth, through the linkage of divergent individual creative capabilities on a project-by-project basis. Mutable work communities organize around diverse tasks or commissions in an informal and relatively egalitarian fashion, based on consultation, cooperation, collective brainstorming and so on. The resulting product cannot therefore be credited to one single *auteur*, even if it carries a (brand) name, but is instead the outcome of a collective decision-making process. In the creative sector this non-political, primarily production-focused communism is most prevalent in design-centred practices, such as architecture and design. AVL extends this evolution to the conception as well as the production of artefacts scaled as art, in which the variance from objects ascribed to design is sometimes paper-thin. The socialization of the capacity for creativity buttresses activities within AVL, and this in spite of the ‘brand name’ linked to an individual (in this regard as well, AVL is committing to its economic environment: creative production communism goes together with private property and individualization). This transforms the artist JVL into a collection of functions and positions, the organizational weight of which varies according to the sort of project involved and the phase it has reached. He is no longer a genius auteur continually confronted with himself in his lonely work, but the director of a collective intelligence. He proposes projects and also bears ultimate responsibility, and he is primarily a coach and source of inspiration, mental and social manager, controller and activator of a collective capacity

or social potential within certain economic outlines. Given a budget, he applies it to ensure that a concept or potential ‘new world’ is translated in a motivated, non-mechanical way in materials and operations. Conceptual art institutionalized the division between conception and execution, design and realization, concept and object; within a creative venture like AVL these activities do not come together in the person of the ‘creative director’, but in his or her punctual and project-driven cooperation with associates. *AVL-Ville* (2001) was an attempt to stage this genuinely existing creative communism in a public setting, and simultaneously to broaden it. The Free State-in-operation was open to visitors, but was also the harbinger of a social community not regulated by laws and prescriptions. Before and after *AVL-Ville*, AVL was and is a fusion of collectivity and individual enterprise, communism and capitalism. In the *AVL-Ville* project, AVL turned itself inside out, as it were, and the underlying communal logic of its production communism was made autonomous and generalized. *AVL-Ville* marked the transition from a working community into a mini-society and liberated the group productivity from its relation to particular tasks. The enterprise became the collective it always had been and thus revealed the real social foundation of the existing production communism. Work is now cooperation, with as its engine an affective commitment that can never be wholly rationalized. The existing creative economy and its modulated captivity of life forces is predicated on a broader libidinal economy – that was the sociological and political lesson of *AVL-Ville*. The AVL working community changed in potency into a living community within which the ever-present ambiguity of mutual trust and distrust, sympathy and antipathy, attraction and repulsion was unhitched from the concentration on the objects to be produced. At the same time, the content of the collective labour extended to all activities necessary for living – growing food, cooking, cleaning, and so forth – because *AVL-Ville* wanted to be as self-sufficient as possible. It had something of a commune without communist doctrine.

Almost no artefact designed and produced by AVL up to this point looks like an art object in the usual sense. Whether they be mobile homes or compost toilets, large organ sculptures or the model for a gigantic call centre, the artefacts of AVL practically never refer to art history, not even to current artistic developments. They do not allude, directly or indirectly, to the formal idiom of the autonomous artwork, or, more recently, of installation or site-specific art. The objects do not even stand on their own; they are anything but monads. Rather they derive their meaning from their potential use within an everyday living context, without appropriating it directly, as in the tradition of avant-garde art. AVL makes actual or potential utilitarian objects; it critically plays the concrete *use value* of the objects it produces against the abstract exchange value (the price) and the coded symbolic value (status, fashionability, etcetera) of the countless things that populate everyday life. At the same time most of AVL’s products presume a very specific user. They are not geared to a self-aware subject out to purchase a ready-made lifestyle, but to general vital functions – not to ‘somebody’ but to ‘anybody’. To a pre-individual, primary corporeality we share as living beings: in the work of AVL a conscious production communism goes hand in hand with the production of objects that refer to a ‘communal’ body. The *generic body without a face or particularity* is in fact the presumptive user of most of AVL’s artefacts and blueprints. In the oeuvre of AVL, this is symbolized by the little *AVL Man*, the often pure-white polyester body reduced to a trunk plus appendages that is not only faceless but also relatively genderless (it connotes masculinity, but has no male genitalia). Some objects are enlargements of organs, but far more often they refer to generic bodily functions, such as sleeping, defecation, sex, eating and drinking, and personal hygiene. They come together in the mobile home: a temporary abode machine in which housing is reduced to a purely corporeal configuration, an efficient composition of physical operations, without much decoration or status symbolism. This reduction also pervades – but then permanently – in colonization or poverty. The *Favela Houses* designed

by AVL are, down to the smallest detail, an enlargement of the fusion of provisionality and permanence, intimacy and publicness, that characterizes life below the poverty line and is mimicked as a deliberate state of exception on any summer campsite. The generic body seems quasi-animalistic, and has been relegated backstage in the course of the civilization process, as described by Norbert Elias. Civilization is synonymous with increasing impulse and affect control, an expanding management both of spontaneous emotional urges (to strike, to embrace, to run away) and of primary bodily functions (needing to piss, eat, drink, sleep). The civilized body neither wolfs nor bolts down food but rather eats in a disciplined manner, with a knife and fork, can control the urge to relieve itself until it finds a toilet, and fights the inclination to get bigger and fatter. The biological generic body is sublimated and disciplined, and at the same time made publicly invisible, banished to such private spaces as the toilet and bathroom. Countless design objects and installations by AVL imply it as an unshown premise – once in a while, incidentally, it is symbolically evoked by means of, for instance, little *AVL Men* in a squatting position. The work of AVL shows nothing directly; it is full of allusions to the generic human body. AVL pulls the basic bodily functions out from backstage, not with hard images but through the peculiar design of the apparatuses and technologies with which the biological body has long since become intertwined. In modernity, bodily functions gradually turned into structural linkages between body parts and objects: arse-toilet, penis-bed, hands- and mouth-table. The objects or apparatuses in question were long seen as mere instruments, then they were given considered colours and shapes, and now their appearance changes with the prevailing trend or fashion. This made allusions to the generic body even more indirect, even more sublimated: in the age of generalized design body technology tries to remind one as little as possible of bodily reality. AVL’s artefacts and installations deconstruct this evolution. AVL deploys its design practice against the dominant tendency in design and architecture to conceal,

to prettify – to ‘lie’. Instead of the ‘cosmetics’ of colour or form, AVL opts for truth and honesty. Shitting is shitting, so a simple and preferably sustainable, environmentally responsible toilet suffices. AVL champions the values of Adolf Loos after the implosion of bourgeois culture and its bent toward curlicues within the new context of the anonymous design culture of consumer capitalism. AVL’s design work seems rough, because of its combination of harsh colours and hard materials (scaffolding elements, untreated wood, very often fibreglass). It is never really cosy; not infrequently it looks *unheimlich*, sometimes plainly abject. AVL opts for life as a biological reality and against the pressure of lifestyle, for the truth of the body and against modelling according to a body style. The creative venture rejects the logic of the current experience economy, its promise of a comfortable life and its related addressing of the body as a neutral medium for pleasing sensations. To this end AVL does not return to the functionalist dogma of ‘less is more’. The designed ‘stimulacra’ (JVL) testify to the realization that in today’s consumer culture, functionalism in design and architecture too is merely a specific symbolic value or connotation. AVL therefore does not produce purely utilitarian objects, nor pure use values, but flashy design objects the distinctive symbolic value of which is perverted by a mix of rectilinear and organic forms, proletarian materials, and colours that are ‘not done’. AVL does *low-profile design*, and the result of this *direct body design* is often a bizarre combination of the ascetism of the post-war Eastern European look with the garishness of gadgets produced in Asia.

The sociability with which AVL’s work has signed a pact is a corporeality present in all social relationships, the biologically specific weight that all action and coexistence carries: ‘the flesh of the world’ (Merleau-Ponty). This generic corporeality is always a collection of strengths and physical possibilities as well, which have been, since the advent of secularization in the modern West, the object of cultural civilizing offensives via the family, the school and the media. They also form the target of various forms of political control and canalization (laws and campaigns, identity cards and files, police and army), and of a direct economic instrumentalization through labour discipline in all its variants. Modernity is synonymous with democracy and capitalism, but this political and economic order is in turn founded on an all-encompassing biopower, as the work of Michel Foucault teaches. Biopower regulates and standardizes the body as the carrier of life, through laws, divisions of time or health regulations and – more contemporarily – lifestyles, happiness models or environmental standards. The generalized life control aims to train the body, make it docile and efficient, and at the same time control sexuality, mobility, productivity, etcetera at the population level. The societal colonization of body and life continually elicits resistance, just like the dream of a fully liberated, ‘authentic’ corporeality. The work of AVL, especially the more recent work, thematizes this dialectic of the occupation and liberation of life in dual fashion. It protests against modern state power as a prescriptive and anti-life tyrant, and it enlarges the grip of global capitalism on life into a contemporary form of slavery. *AVL-Ville* and its direct forerunner, the plan for the *Almere Free State, Happy Forest* (Kröller-Müller, Otterlo), *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly* (Rabastens, France) and *AVL Franchise Unit* (Middelheim Museum, Antwerp) are, directly or indirectly, designs for a community liberated from state and law. They protest against state power as a regulator of violence through the ban on the possession of guns, of sexuality through the ban on prostitution, and of physical or mental mobility through identification requirements (the identity card) and the regulation of alcohol and drug

use. The modern state and the figure of the modern subject do in fact form a pair, for the state cannot function without the fiction of the rational and disciplined citizen with a pure self-awareness untainted by any stimulant. AVL’s blueprints do not pay attention to taxes or social benefit payments, but show the modern state precisely as pure biopower, as the medium of a maximally goal-oriented control of individual bodies that endorses and commands the ideal of civilized vitality. AVL’s vitalistic anarchism may at times seem naïve, and it undeniably has a hard macho component (JVL as a sponsored race-car driver or posing would-be terrorist, the numerous penis sculptures). But it is also paired with a both Machiavellian and materialistic view of the state and politics that is averse to the belief in the structuring power of ideas or arguments. In AVL’s vision the power of modern governments is based not on ideology but on various forms of direct body and population control. AVL’s designs show the modern state in a photonegative: they are always blueprints for a Free State. The Free State is the crossed-out state, literally: the ~~state~~. It may still assert itself as a territorial entity, but no longer as a political and legal entity with a cultural identity (the national community) and with a monopoly on the right to life and death (the state as Sovereign) that at the same time wants to train life to the model of the rational subject who uses his or her life force primarily to tame and control him- or herself (the state as government, as holder of biopower). How should we understand this ~~state~~? AVL’s projects are equivocal. One the one hand they show the ~~state~~ as the origin, as predating any actual state – as a pure colonists’ community that has not yet organized itself as a sovereign state. On the other hand they allude to the ~~state~~ as a desired objective – as the future society, posited in today’s production communism, of people who need neither law nor state to govern themselves. But can the ~~state~~ be effectively realized? Even the Free State, suggests *AVL-Ville*’s charter, cannot do without a minimal constitution. This is needed in order to block further statification, to . . . outlaw the transformation of the ~~state~~ into a State. This is why, for instance, there is a clause mandating

that conflicts be resolved through mutual consultation, without the intervention of any police or legal apparatus. AVL's Free State is, in other words, a paradoxical fusion of law and lawlessness. *AVL-Ville* was also the state as ~~state~~ within the state. The project came down to a symbolic declaration of independence, which was, however, not possible without an actual dependency on a context, both legal and administrative, like the art space in part regulated and subsidized by the Dutch government. The dependency undermined the independence, the Free State of *AVL-Ville* constantly had to deal with the state context surrounding it, which does not permit unlimited possession of guns and simply forbids everyday activities like the running of a restaurant or a little bit of farming if the necessary permits are not obtained. Any Free State soon risks degenerating into the political pendant to an amusement park. *The Technocrat, Sportopia, The Disciplinator, Teutopia* and *SlaveCity* are not allusions to the ~~state~~ but hard depictions of the biopolitical functioning of capitalist production. They show the underside of creative production communism in the capitalist West and thematize the harsh factory logic that typifies the production of goods in 'the new East.' Its enlargement is synonymous with an eco-capitalist utopia: a total management, simultaneously profit-oriented and ecologically sound, of body capabilities and excretions, of the life energy and time embodied by every individual on a generic, pre-individual level. The installations and scenarios imply a fusion of state and market logic, political and economic rationality, biopower and productivity in an all-encompassing, total rationality that even manages to recuperate the excrements of the body, that which productive life sheds as dead matter (as 'shit'), in a logic that reconciles ecology and profit. We are once more confronted with an oxymoron, that of a capitalist planned economy that proliferates without limits and therefore efficiently socializes piss and shit. The actual pendant to this economy is not so much the concentration camp in which every individual is reduced to 'naked life' (Giorgio Agamben), to mere *zoé* without rights, and as life in an institution geared toward extermination always embodies the

potential of non-life as well. The installations and designs of AVL rather refer to work camps for delinquents or lawbreakers. They represent a total prison in which the body is merely exploitable life force, in a way that is related to slavery. Yet where does the construction of a 'new world' end and reality begin? There are countless labour situations in global capitalism that come close to AVL's scenarios. In the average corporation in authoritarian, state-capitalist Thailand or China, there may not be slavery as such, but the combination of long working days, extremely low wages and the requirement to live within the walls of the factory (and often to consume there as well) approaches that of a *SlaveCity*. Free State or totalitarian state capitalism: taken together they point to a double lawlessness – and it is in the negation of the Law, both in the symbolic sense (the ethical 'thou shalt') and in the legal and political sense (the official 'power of law') that the installations and designs of AVL find their dual apex. Either there is the ~~state~~ without a Sovereign and Government that comes '*before*' or '*after*' the Law, or there is the fusion of authoritarian state power and capitalism that completely appropriates life and therefore, in a legal way, places it *beyond the Law*. In both situations this is the imaginary enlargement of actual historical situations. This is exactly why AVL makes political art, but in a non-emphatic way: the implicit imaginary matrix of the logic of the modern state and contemporary capitalism is publicly staged and presented. This matrix is two-dimensional. On the one hand it refers to the anarchic management of life, emancipated from the Law and communist in tendency, by 'the multitude' (Negri and Hardt) or 'the community of singularities' (Agamben); on the other hand it presents the possibility of a globally regulated social space with an architecture that speaks of a total control of life and society down to the smallest detail. Free State and capitalist totalitarian state, libertarian community and biopolitical governance, communism and totalitarianism are imaginary sides of the same coin, the modern biopower and its rationality of total life management. AVL's work explores both possibilities, but not without explicit ethical and political choices based on the reality of its 'own' production communism. In this regard

it is indeed self-referential: the work refers to the collective activity that precedes it and objectifies it.

Coda: Blueprint Art

What are the stakes of the models and quasi-installations of AVL? Why does AVL, for instance, not make video documentaries on the current political system instead of opting for schematic representations, in cheap materials, of the architecture and apparatus through which power is exercised? One initial possible reason has to do with the receptive effect of the artefacts produced. By showing a primarily technical and architectural framework, much is still left, unlike in a video documentary or computer simulation, to the viewer's imagination. The spectator still has to guess and to think; he or she can even take deliberate action and input his or her own body as a generic corporeality by starting an exercise programme in *Sportopia*, for example. In other words, the simulation does not think or act in his or her stead, nor does it immediately fill in possibilities. This makes for greater engagement and oddly enough also sorts out a harsher effect. By showing only the potential hardware of a hyper-rational biopolitical order, alternatively in combination with the generic corporeality of the *AVL Men*, this system acquires a sort of material cruelty that an image inevitably lacks. But the greatest stake is perhaps a different one. As a rule, not just the installations, but also the furniture, mobile homes and other artefacts by AVL have something of the *prototype*. This impression is of course related to their rough and simple exterior, their reductionist and primitive-looking character, as well as their utilitarian orientation. Like the scale models, these are artefacts that explicitly affirm their status as blueprint or design, and thus immediately claim unicity in a way very different from that of an autonomous artwork. Like real prototypes they inhabit the grey area separating the conceptualization of an object with its materialization as standard product or finished artwork. The thinking and production work involved is still sticking to them, as it were; the objects are not cooled off commodities with a primary mission to titillate. This peculiar identity constitutes the critical strength of the artefacts AVL produces. With their quasi-identity as prototypes they break with the dominant commodity fetishism, with the design logic of the self-enclosed, narcissist object

or image from which any allusion to labour, material or immaterial, has been meticulously erased. In their prototypical character, AVL's objects emphasize that they have been conceived, constructed, invented, etcetera. But one prototype is not like the other; the design can follow radically divergent logics in practice. One can, for instance, explore possibilities and produce with a slick product and a large or small audience in mind. There is another attitude, common among engineers, that views the conception and construction of 'new worlds' as a learning situation. By schematizing, one can try to understand how something works, what, for example, is involved in habitation, shitting, having sex, sleeping . . . or exercising power. This *analytical rationality* of dissection and innovation, first unfolding and then recombining, first conceptually reducing and then synthesizing in a new proposition, is the hallmark of AVL's work. At the crossroads of art, design and architecture, AVL places quasi-prototypes, objects and scenarios that are the expression of a collective conceptual labour as well as invitations to reflect along further on today's interlacing of our bodies with all manner of machines, lifestyles, consumer goods and, in a broader sense, with a biopolitical rationality that is tending toward a total control of life. Only within a thinking collective, and not for an individual spectator, will the artefacts of AVL ever become decipherable and transparent.

Sade, Fourier, van Lieshout?

Wouter Vanstiphout

At least they’ve done the math. According to Atelier Van Lieshout (AVL), one human being can do seven hours of office work and seven hours of hard labour, sleep for seven hours and have three hours left in which to relax, eat, or visit a prostitute. Exactly 72 human beings are accommodated in a steel and timber construction containing bunk beds and a table for computer screens behind which, wearing headsets, they work in a call centre in three shifts: office work, sleep, hard labour. With 72 of these subdivisions on each floor of a nine-floor building, the total comes to 28,512 people living and working in one building, or unit. Each unit is allotted a certain amount of land on which to grow foodstuffs. Eight units create a total working populace of about 200,000 human beings. On average, one in five of them is fit to be trained and put to work. The rest can be ‘recycled’. On average, a human being is a productive member of the unit for three years before having to be recycled. One human body yields six litres of blood, an average of 2.6 organs for transplants and 35 kilos of meat for consumption by other ‘participants’. Located next to the ‘camp’ – where participants work and are recycled – is the public sector, a compound consisting of a museum, brothels, a hospital (for transfusions and transplants), a sports centre and an airport. A working staff of 5,437 is required to guard, care for, kill, harvest and manage the participants. Staff members need their own living quarters. Such housing consists of a range of dwellings, from 350-m² villas to 70-m² ‘type D’ dwellings, amassed in a meticulously planned settlement outside the camp where participants work and are recycled. In its entirety, the city is wholly self-sufficient in terms of food, energy and water. Food is either grown and harvested on site or provided for by eating the flesh of recycled participants. Energy is supplied by biogas obtained from human excrement (0.4 kg of gas per participant per day) and other sustainable sources. Water is supplied by natural sources and a closed circuit. This setup needs 49.37 km² to function. Because it is independent of existing infrastructure the land can be purchased cheaply, for only

331,301,070 euro. The entire initial investment – buildings, infrastructure, security – is 1,540,000,000 euro (PM), but with the income from callcentres, transplants, transfusions and brothels, the annual yield would be 7,500,000,000 euro (PM). The immense financial gain is accompanied by other, more sociopolitical effects. Recycling human beings is one solution to the global problem of overpopulation; the minimal ecological footprint of such call centres helps relieve the stress on the environment; and the call centres’ public sectors introduce culture, entertainment, sex and medical solutions to far-flung regions. That’s the concept. Atelier Van Lieshout believes it will take ten years – the time needed to get the necessary permits and to influence political opinion – before the first call centre can be built. Like the financial investment, the political decision to go forward will also yield enormous profits. Thanks to huge financial gains, call centres are expected to have a direct impact on the geopolitical and political situation. *SlaveCity* is an ever-growing series of pieces by AVL that together describe a fictional city ‘inspired’ by Second World War extermination camps in Eastern Europe. It has been exhibited in galleries as two giant ‘paintings’ on the wall: one with a plan, the other with a spreadsheet showing all kcals, km²s, kgs and euros, as well as a collection of architectural models of brothels, education centres, call centres and museums featured in the complex. Van Lieshout has even created an entire dinner service for the call-centre board of directors; highlighting the individual sets of beautifully glazed porcelain plates and glasses are the various activities that take place in the complex. Is *SlaveCity* a searing attack on a society that commodifies people for pure profit, split into ‘users’ and ‘the used’? Is it a Cassandra-like warning against the megalomaniacal ambitions of modernist town planners, radical ecologists and other social utopians? Or should we be more critical and expose Joep van Lieshout as an artist who plays on the hypes and erogenous zones of the art industry, a man even capable of using the Holocaust to create the shock value needed to sell his work?

The answer, which *could* be ‘all of the above’, offers both writer and reader a much-desired escape from this truly frightening project. It explains away van Lieshout’s operational interest in the precise mechanics of extermination camps. It glosses over the artist’s ambiguous view of the project. (On television, he has stated, in all seriousness, that it’s a mirror to be held up to society and that it should not be built at all, of course; in other contexts, he enthuses about the possibilities of its realization.) Analyzing *SlaveCity* from various perspectives is a way to mitigate the real threat of the piece. Focusing the analysis on the position of its author before contextualizing or rationalizing the project allows us to accept the work as a slightly edgy piece of art, floating on a bed of critical and theoretical analogies, and in a sea of art fairs, magazines and galleries. Maybe that’s all it is anyway. Nonetheless, I would like to try something a little bit different, something a little closer to my profession: history.

De Sade à Fourier, ce qui tombe, c'est le sadisme; de Loyola à Sade, c'est l'interlocution divine. Pour le reste, même écriture: même volupté de classification, même rage de découper (le corps christique, le corps victimal, l'âme humaine), même obsession numérique (compter les péchés, les supplices, les passions et les fautes mêmes du compte), même pratique de l'image (de l'imitation, du tableau, de la séance), même couture du système social, érotique, fantasmatique.

(This is the first sentence of a small book by French philosopher Roland Barthes, published in 1971: *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*.)

In *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, Barthes focuses not on the distinguishing qualities of the three authors but on what they have in common, identifying this communality as what it's all about: instead of sex, happiness, God, and a compulsion to count, categorize, classify, systematize, organize and present. Barthes describes the crazy sequences of perverse acts recounted before a committee of libertines in a theatrically staged room in de Sade's *Justine*; Fourier's limitless listing of categories of love, food, money, work and so on – and their reordering in his *phalanstères*; and Ignatius of Loyola's minute-to-minute, hour-to-hour, day-to-day, week-to-week manual: his attempt to get closer to God by mentioning His name, praying to Him and thinking about Him during every single act in his Exercises. By discussing the authors' works side by side in a slim volume, Barthes removes the focus otherwise placed on a single author, his historical context, his philosophical position, his professional discipline and his personal obsession. What seemed to be the main subjects of their books becomes nothing more than an attribute, a vehicle for the true obsession: taxonomy, order and organization.

It would be tempting to see Joep van Lieshout's recent work as the perfect combination of de Sade's perverse microcosm and Fourier's social utopia, but concentrating on what they share in subject matter would be missing Barthes' point. I would like to follow Barthes in separating the subject matter of van Lieshout's project, including possible references and meanings, from the methods, the instruments and the structures of the work. Such

an analysis reveals what van Lieshout really shares with Sade, Fourier and Loyola: the crazy cybernetics of their approach, the spreadsheet attitude, the savant-like focus on the minutiae of their constructions. With these similarities in mind, we can imagine that Barthes, had he lived, might have written an extended version of his original book, this time with the title *Sade, Fourier, Loyola & van Lieshout*. There is one major difference separating the cosmologies of Joep van Lieshout and those of Sade, Fourier and Loyola, however: that difference is the twentieth century. Sade's, Fourier's and Loyola's systems were unique for their time, islands of order in a realm of contingency. Their 'worlds' were cerebral and radically different from the world they lived in; we could describe them as 'parallel worlds', introverted alternatives to the reality that dissatisfied them. They were also truly new: no one before had ever thought or dreamt of such places. *SlaveCity* could not be more different. Joep van Lieshout was able to crib from an entire century in which the rage for classification and categorization – as identified by Barthes in *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* – had become incarnate in thousands of built villages, towns, cities and entire landscapes. Seen from this perspective, van Lieshout's work, distilled from a century of ubiquitous reality, is old. From the very beginning of the century, radical alternatives for laissez-faire industrial cities were being put together by a worldwide cabal of anarchists, communists, Christian socialists, enlightened capitalists, nationalists and fascists. These groups had several common objectives: to create brand-new, stable communities outside existing cities; to divide, classify, order, count, measure, list and present these alternatives as universally applicable models; and to apply them. Before we return to van Lieshout's *SlaveCity*, it seems appropriate to quickly revisit the twentieth century: the age of the *communitarian spreadsheet that actually existed*.

The first and most famous model of this type of city appeared in *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (London 1898), a book written by Ebenezer Howard, an impoverished shorthand writer from London. Howard believed the solution to the world's urban problems was to retain all that is good about cities (employment, culture, shops, public life), to discard all that is bad (poverty, anonymity, debauchery), to combine the former with the good qualities of rural living (health, intimate relations, quietude) and to eliminate the bad (lack of work, lack of public life, isolation). The result would be the perfect garden city. Howard's garden cities were made up of houses that formed neighbourhoods called 'wards'. Each ward had 5000 inhabitants, an abundance of greenery, and its own schools, shops, churches and other communal facilities. Six wards formed a city of 30,000 inhabitants: the maximum size of a town with a good balance between births and deaths, the correct number of communal facilities, the right climate of social intimacy, an adequate amount of greenery, the desired social profile and the ideal scale. The result was Howard's garden city, a unit requiring 4,05 km². Six of these units – plus a centrally located city twice as large, with twice the building density – combined to form a 'social city' of 250,000 people. This was presented as a cartwheel of towns and infrastructure in a huge green area, with asylums for alcoholics, factories, hospitals, farms and cemeteries hidden away in the greenery. Other charts explained the principle of the 'vanishing point of the landlords' rent'. Howard counted on using depressed land prices far away from the cities to buy the land cheaply, and on eventually turning the cost of the land from a small cost factor into a profit factor for the benefit of the inhabitants. Howard's scheme was quickly picked up by an ever-growing movement of architects, social reformers, politicians and the like. His concept led to the creation of entire and partly built cities and towns from Letchworth, England, to Radburn, New Jersey; from new towns in fascist Italy to Communist settlements in Siberia. It launched a worldwide consensus on how to build a town. The largest wave came after the First World War, when modernist and socialist-realist towns across the

globe exhibited completely different underlying ideologies and an even greater diversity of architectural forms, while all relying faithfully on Howard's basic scheme. Interestingly, the scheme was not simplified to meet the requirements of varying political views, regions or economies, but became denser and more precise, as if the molecular structure of Howard's atomic diagram had been augmented by super-controlled, urban-social components. Socialist or capitalist, neoclassicist or highly modern, these urban models were all based on the same type of hierarchical diagram of house, neighbourhood, town, city; and all based on a neighbourhood of 50 to 100 dwellings, a town of 15,000 to 30,000 people, a city of 200,000 to 250,000 inhabitants. They all offered a green alternative to the city, converted depressed rural land prices into cheap rents, and compressed the entire complexity of urban life into hermetic diagrams and schemes. Their highly schematic layout makes them direct descendants of the manic ordering of Sade, Fourier and Loyola. Howard's sense of order, however, not only led to living environments for hundreds of millions of people, but also had an underlying super-logic which has become so ubiquitous that it has disappeared behind the different forms of the cities and behind the divergent political ideologies from which they emerged.

One very strong example of this camouflaged technocratic urbanism is the New Urbanism Movement. From the 1980s on, the Florida-based office of Duany Plater Zyberk has been building towns that seem to offer the only alternative for suburban sprawl. These small-scale towns have communal facilities and public transport within walking distance of residents and a traditional, coherent architecture with mixed-income neighbourhoods and safe, simply designed public space. In an effort to help cities at home and abroad create New Urbanist cities, Duany Plater Zyberk distributes *Smart Code*, a kind of urbanist shareware. This nearly 100-page PDF file consists of hundreds of detailed models that show how to build a town, starting at the centre and moving out to the rural surroundings. The file includes strict rules covering relationships between densities and distances. *Smart Code*

discusses communal facilities, public transport, the number of inhabitants per neighbourhood, the time it takes to walk from home to school, and so on. It describes a comprehensive financial system that touches on everything from fiscal incentives and land prices to property taxes and tax-relief benefits for first-time buyers. Here, too, is the hierarchical logic of house, neighbourhood, town and city. We recognize the same land-price economics we have seen before, as well as the familiar spreadsheet attitude with which the architect has made a complete and hermetic microcosm of urban rules and regulations, numbers and distances, buildings and people. The idea that beyond its existence as an artificial construct, the city touches on each minute detail of urban life and urban form is still very much alive. Indeed, *Howard, Duany, van Lieshout*, could be the working title for the sequel to *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*. In it would be revealed that behind all the seemingly contrasting world-views and architectural styles that have determined the living environments of the twentieth-century urbanite lies one, and only one, hidden code – or should we call it an 'obsessional ordering mechanism' – which is so deeply ingrained in human society that we are hardly aware of it. It is as if the cerebral constructs described by Barthes have managed to escape the brains and books of their authors, have become real, and have taken over the world.

Still, it would be interesting to identify more closely where and how Joep van Lieshout gained access to the hidden code he follows so faithfully in *SlaveCity*. As he has stated repeatedly, his first inspiration for the work came from a careful study of Eastern European extermination camps used in the Second World War. In the meticulously managed economy of bodies (dead and alive), barracks, railway lines and gatehouses; and in endless lists kept by the Shoah managers, van Lieshout found a way to unite his previous themes and to raise them to a new level. Earlier projects include *The Technocrat*, *The Disciplinator* and *Total Faecal Solution*. In these installations, human beings are used as raw materials, or as cogs in machines for the production of biological gas, and remixed in installations that are virtually autarchic. Food gets pumped in and faeces pumped out; to keep the people content, alcohol is pumped in, too. *The Disciplinator* features humans inside a wood-and-steel cage, where they toil for hours a day, doing useless but heavy work – making sawdust from logs – before being fed and put into bunk beds to sleep. The polar opposite of this treatment of human beings is exemplified by autarchic communities like *AVL-Ville* or the Almere project. Volunteer participants in AVL settlements produce art, food, drugs and weapons and are not subject to national legislation. One such community actually existed for a few months in a Rotterdam harbour area. It was shut down after an endless barrage of inspections from Dutch governmental institutions. The influence of Holocaust literature and visits to camps was already visible in these earlier installations, especially *Total Faecal Solution*. At a certain point, however, van Lieshout seems to have shifted his attention to the bureaucracy involved in planning camps and to the way in which these camps can be seen as comprehensively planned communities. We see his interest in creating new communities merge into ideas on using human bodies as raw physical produce. This is where spreadsheets that had listed amounts of faeces, ammonia, alcohol, food, water and the like expanded to contain the entire inventory of a community of 250,000 people. And with no evidence of Joep van Lieshout

having immersed himself in the history of garden cities or twentieth-century urbanism, somehow the resulting project is eerily close to the ideal cities of Ebenezer Howard and his successors. There is a simple but uncomfortable reason for this similarity. The concentration camps whose workings Joep van Lieshout has been studying were designed with the same logic and the same depth of organizational structure as twentieth-century new towns, garden cities and New Urbanist communities. Fritz Ertl, an architect educated at the Bauhaus and the designer of Auschwitz, constructed the camp from the bunk upwards. One brick ledge held four cots, three of which were stacked above the lowest level to make bunk beds. There were 62 bunk beds in one barracks building, and 174 barracks buildings formed one sector of a camp for Soviet prisoners of war. The extermination camp could house 200,000 people, a population distributed over four *bauabschnitten*, each of which comprised six camp units. One unit held 10,000 people, or *participants*, as AVL would insist. Dutch architecture historian and Holocaust scholar Robert Jan van Pelt remarked that the interior logic of Auschwitz was a crucial part of the regional plan for the annexed areas of western Poland and, ultimately, for the Lebensraum stretching out beyond the Ural: the Generalplan Ost. This area was to be cleansed of the last human and topographic traces of Polish and Slavic inhabitation and transformed into an ideal cultural landscape of National Socialism. Himmler, who oversaw the planning of this entire region, mobilized Germany's best minds and planning engineers. Walter Christaller, a famous geographer who is widely quoted as the father of the central place theory, projected his methods on the region. According to Christaller, an ideal region has six small villages, which require one market village; six market villages, which require one town; six towns, which require one city; and so forth. The result is a pattern of overlapping hexagons that divide the central spaces at each level of scale. Part of the concept utilized Gottfried Feder's theories on the ideal spatial-economic structure of towns. While serving as a professor of urban planning at the Technical University of Berlin, Feder,

who was a major economic ideologist within the Nazi Party, wrote *Die Neue Stadt* (1939). Presented as the perfect combination of countryside and town, his new city was to be built on cheap rural land, to accommodate 20,000 people, and to cover an area of 2.78 km², of which 1.13 km² were to be forest. The total cost was estimated at 50,000,000 Reichsmarks, or an investment of 2,500 Reichsmarks per person. The smallest unit of the city was the family dwelling. Such dwellings were to be combined in blocks, which were to be combined in urban cells, which would form groups, which would form districts, which together would form a region. At every level of scale, an entire inventory of facilities, infrastructure and party leadership was described. Feder's ideas were further developed by architect and planner Carl Culemann, who used multiplication (to the decimal) to create three to four jumps in scale. Neighbourhood units were to contain three to four houses; ten houses would form cells of 30 to 40 houses; ten cells would create a district of from 300 to 400 houses; and each town would have ten districts with 3000 to 4000 houses. The average population of a town, however, was still projected at 20,000 people. According to Himmler, the Generalplan Ost would permit German colonists to build perfect National Socialist communities – step by step and scale by scale – even in times of intense ethnic strife. The interesting aspect of the Generalplan Ost was that it not only provided for the gradual colonizing of the region, but also integrated in its logic the means to evacuate the area. More than simply a regional plan, it showed an understanding of the process of violent transformation. The town of Auschwitz (Oswiecim), for example, was one of the first ideal towns built according to the system; its parallel extermination camp, which created space for German settlement structures, operated on the same logic and featured the same basic diagram. Do we see Joep van Lieshout's *SlaveCity*, then, as a work of art *about* extermination, exploitation and totalitarianism? No, no and no; or maybe, maybe and maybe. But that is not the point. We can read it as an ode (though perhaps not meant as one) to the twentieth century, to a

century whose passion for classification, obsession for numbers, fury of dissection, love of diagrams and exact tailoring of the social system escaped the utopian fantasies of the few and became the living (and dying) environment of the many. Looking back at Barthes' trio of protagonists, we recognize the intense semiotic *plaisir* that the three authors invested in their world-replacement systems; looking at Ebenezer Howard, we see the fervently optimistic and ideological fervour with which he imagined leading the masses to the Promised Land. Nazi planners were filled with an equally ideological fervour, which led to an atavistic, genocidal desire for expansion. And making a 50-year leap in history to the New Urbanists, we find an organizational logic that is still very much intact but that has become completely invisible and essentially meaningless. In the case of Barthes' examples, as well as of Howard and the Nazis, the aesthetics of each system expressed the ideas of its author, whereas Duany Plater Zyberk covers the system with a different aesthetic, that of traditional dwellings and public spaces: the comforting and beautiful environment of the small town. At this point, thinking in terms of systems loses all meaning; it becomes a tool, a form of bureaucracy, a way to get things done. It has no particular flavour or emotion of its own. Roland Barthes would *never* have written his book about the model-makers of our times. Drawing up a huge spreadsheet of numbers, spaces, functions and rules has become just as banal as the use of a computer, or a pencil. Such banality does make this type of thinking or ordering an innocent pastime. The danger of this thinking lies in its pseudo-rationality, its depersonalized and depoliticized omnipresence, with which it clouds our judgment and distracts us from thinking in a truly free manner. Relegating the spreadsheet method to the back burner allows us to assume that it is an inevitable way of working and a guarantee for order. It provides the bureaucrat with the reassurance that everything is in its place. Andres Duany conceals his spreadsheets with the aesthetics of the small town, and Joep van Lieshout seems to do the opposite. The beautifully strange and sexual

elements of *SlaveCity* – spermatozoal and uterus . . . brothels for women and men, revspectively; wonderfully ramshackle class-B brothels made of wood; a university building half-covered with earth; busts; drawings of labouring participants; a dinner table set – all seethe with the same joyous caveman aesthetic of van Lieshout's earlier work. Here, however, we are constantly forced to view them in a certain order, as elements of a bureaucracy consisting of eating, shitting, transplanting, slaughtering, fucking, working, living and dying. We are prevented from simply fantasizing about these elements as activities we might or might not consider doing, as we once contemplated the *Bais-ô-Drome* and the sensory-deprivation helmets. Even worse: in retrospect, Atelier Van Lieshout's earlier work now seems to have a meta-order and to be part of a systematic way of thinking and ordering. It becomes simultaneously technocratic and anecdotal. But what does the system add to the individual elements? What does *SlaveCity* add to the objects and designs other than a reference to the Holocaust? Where is the joy, the fervour or the ideology in this example of thinking based on a system? I think these factors were lost somewhere in the second half of the twentieth century. There is no longer any added value in the creation of a super-order such as this one; on the contrary, the individual elements are reduced. By allowing the spreadsheet attitude to take centre stage, Joep van Lieshout seems to have stripped his own work of the freedom to induce in his viewers the intimate and endlessly unpredictable effects of fear, lust, wonderment, disgust and intellectual interpretation. It should not come as a shock that the controversial artist Joep van Lieshout has chosen to be inspired by concentration camps and the Holocaust; it is much more surprising that this self-proclaimed harbinger of total personal freedom sees the need to embed his work in the bureaucracy of interpretation that is *SlaveCity*.





Custom-made for relaxation, enjoyment and sex, *La Bais-ô-Drôme* is equipped with a minibar, sound system and upholstered tables; the bed for resting is situated in a slide-out section while the toilet is a simple hole in the floor.





Mobile Home for Kröller-Müller is also fondly known as The Master and Slave Unit. The Master Unit forms the central block; the Slave Units can be clicked or screwed into any one of the five modular holes in the Master Unit. Each Slave Unit has a specific function – bedroom, sanitary space, kitchen, office – and can be easily moved from one hole to another in the Master Unit. With no fixed layout, no foundation, nor final form, The Master and Slave Unit breaks all the rules of traditional architecture. The absence of an overall design makes any rule infinitely expendable and flexible.



The Dutch like caravans. This one was made for a nice man called Adri who wanted to have a studio next to his house but was unable to get a building permit for an extension. That's why he came to AVL. The atelier's solution was to produce the largest possible mobile home, one measuring 3.5 x 15 m, which Adri parked in his garden. A few weeks later, the police and the mayor came by to complain, insisting that the caravan was illegal. But Adri simply pointed his finger to his neighbours who all had caravans and mobile homes parked in their gardens. Adri got to keep his studio caravan, although it is three times bigger than the neighbours' caravans. The moral of the story: if you build on wheels, the structure doesn't need a building permit.



An AVL classic, this mobile home consists of three major parts: a chassis, a functional unit, with all the facilities needed by the driver/user (kitchen, heating, sleeping areas), and a cargo space. The cargo section can also be cleared and used as an office or as a dining room if extra guests arrive for a feast. The doors of the cargo section can be replaced by a toilet and shower unit with hot and cold running water. Mobility meets modularity.



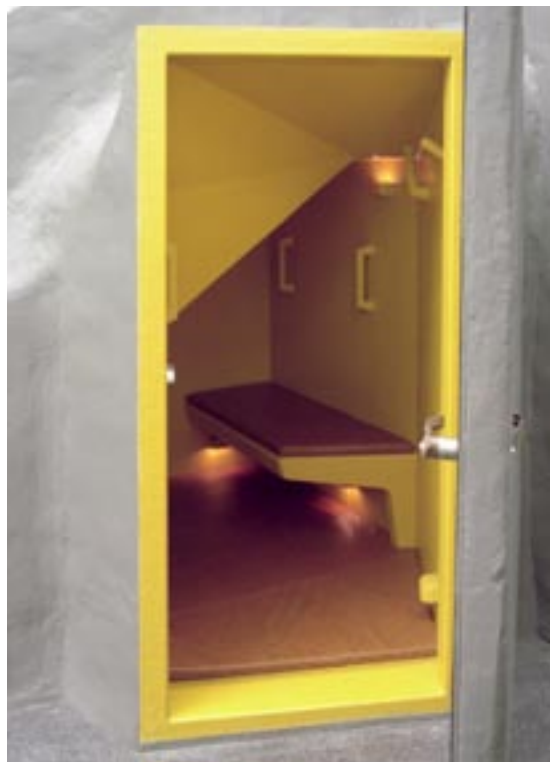


The director of the Centraal Museum in Utrecht wanted a small extension in which to work, sleep and relax. AVL's solution was to devise a piece that is mounted with large bolts onto the museum's outside wall. Since AVL tends to build without detailed drawings, the works evolve inside the studio and often change in unforeseeable ways during the construction process. In this case, AVL began with the three basic elements of the extension – a table, a bench and a bed – and then started building the space around them. The final piece on the outside of the museum was not designed; its appearance is the result of the coincidental form of the space needed inside the structure. During the construction process, AVL discovered that there was not enough light inside; skylights were required. What shape would they take? Squares, triangles and circles were all drawn on the ceiling as possible shapes, but none worked. The solution arrived when Joep van Lieshout had a drunk driving accident on the highway and totalled his car. The only things left were the floor mats, which were lying around in the studio and suddenly appeared as the ideal form for the skylights. As *Clip-On* demonstrates, AVL's design process allows for coincidence and the infiltration of random elements.





For the Daros collection in Zurich, AVL designed this reception area and added a soundproof bunker under the staircase. Normally, museums have cold surroundings; there is no space for love. Inside the bunker, which includes a bed, handles and other equipment, one can retreat without being disturbed and without disturbing anyone else.

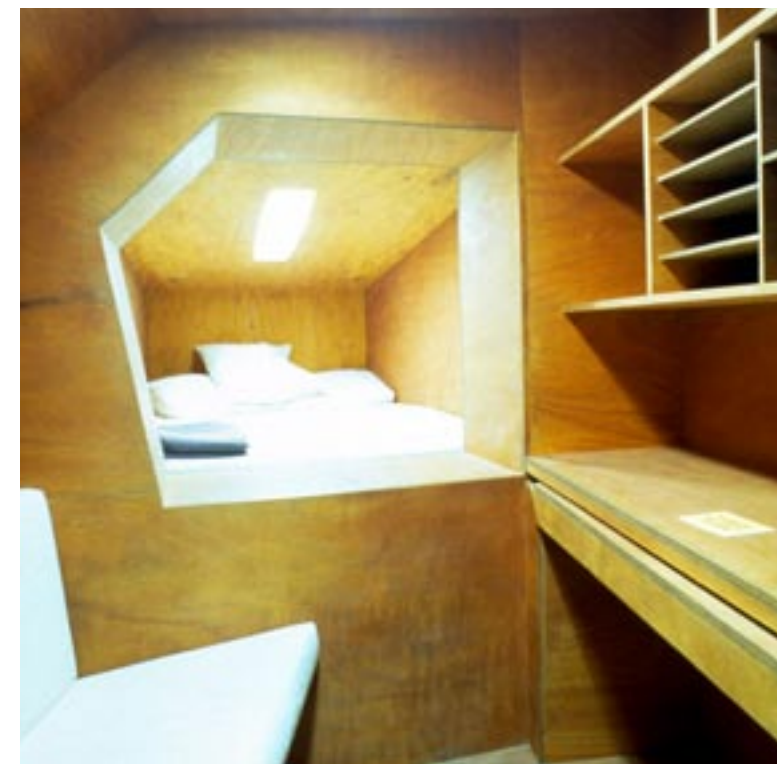
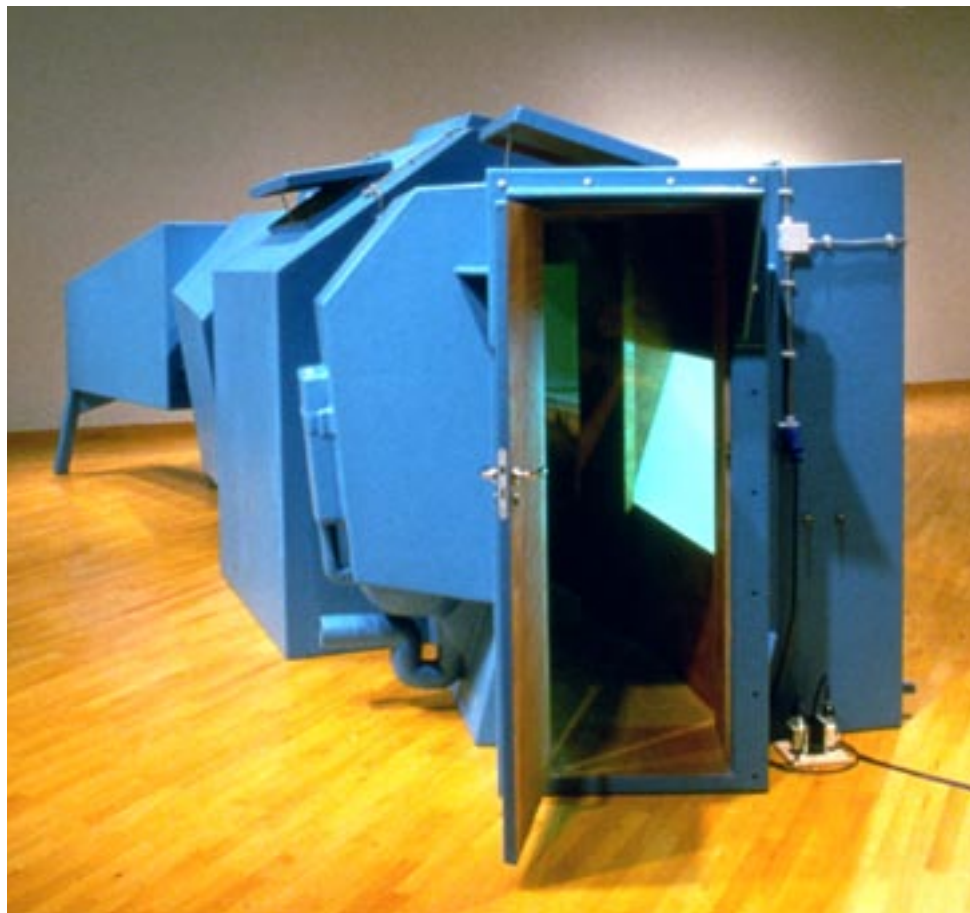
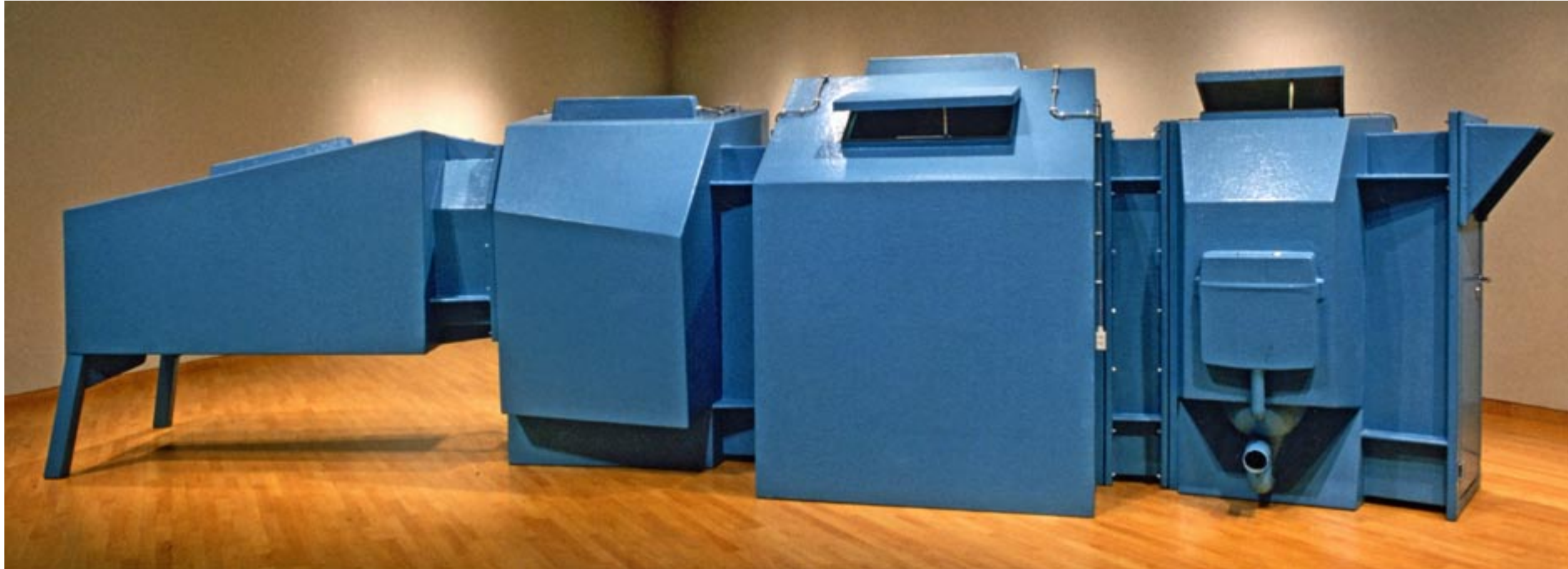


Butcher Equipment, 1997

This set includes all of the necessary
butcher equipment, including a
hammer to kill pigs.



Tampa Skull, 1998



Tampa Skull is a claustrophobic living unit. Its dimensions were determined by the absolute minimum amount of space that a human body needs in order to move from one section to another and use its facilities: a toilet, a bathroom, a kitchen with a deep frying pan, an office, a living room and a bedroom. Compact yet complete.

Schiphol Skulls, 1999

For Schiphol Airport, AVL designed two cabins, for people to relax, sit down, hang out or just sleep in. Although the cabins were installed, they were never allowed to be used, since the structures were deemed both unsafe and capable of promoting undesirable behaviour.



3M Minimal Multi Mobile, 2002

3M is an exercise in design restraint. AVL made every element as simple and as straightforward as possible in this mobile unit. Most of the parts are simple materials from the hardware-store, fixed on the body; thus, the headlamps are not built in but rather screwed on to the vehicle's surface in a crude and minimal way. The driver's seat is an *AVL Shaker Chair*, which can be removed once the *3M* has reached its destination.



Mini Capsule Side Entrance, 2002
Mini Capsule Front Entrance Square, 2002



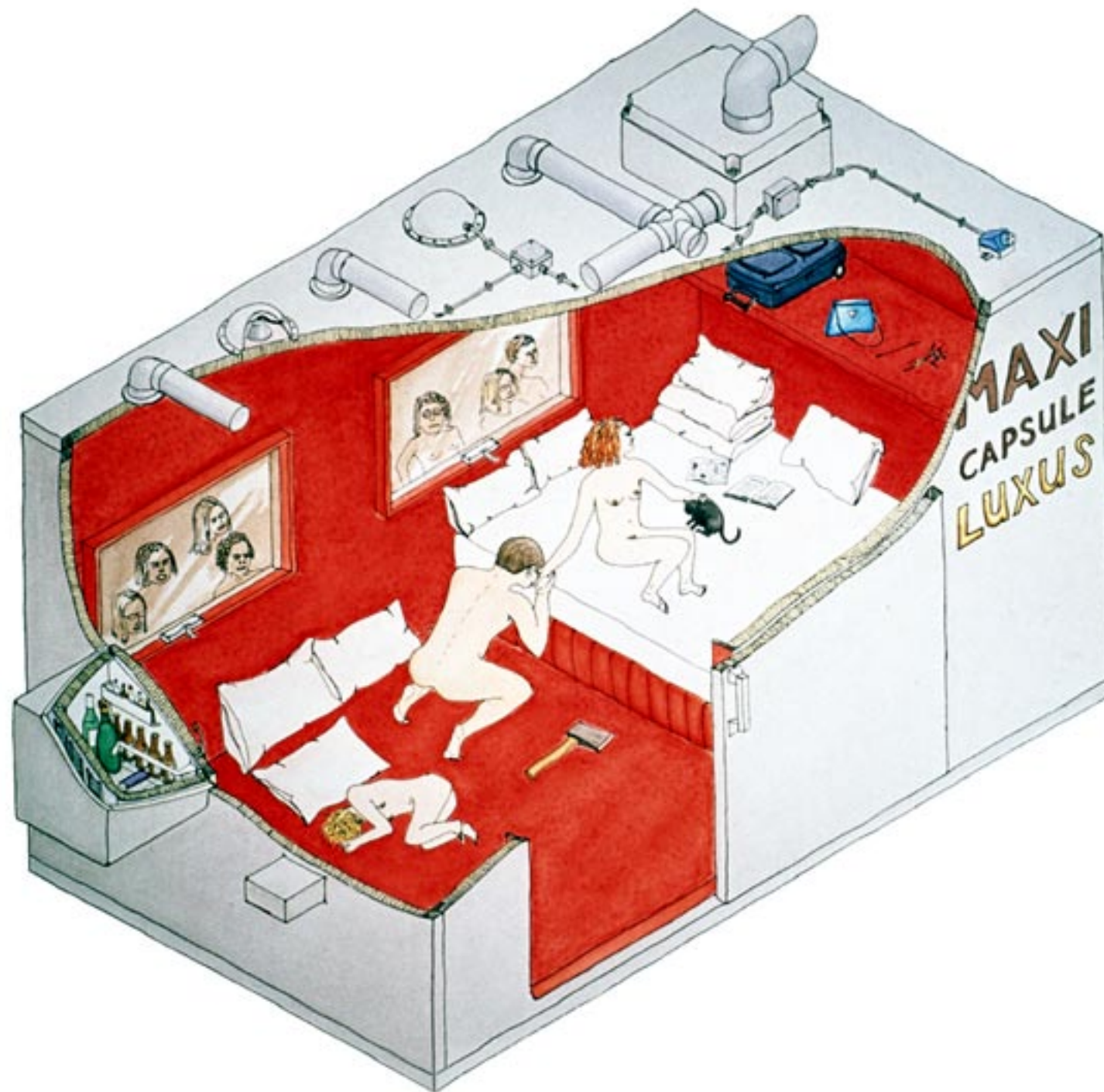
Mini Capsule Side Entrance (6 units), 2002



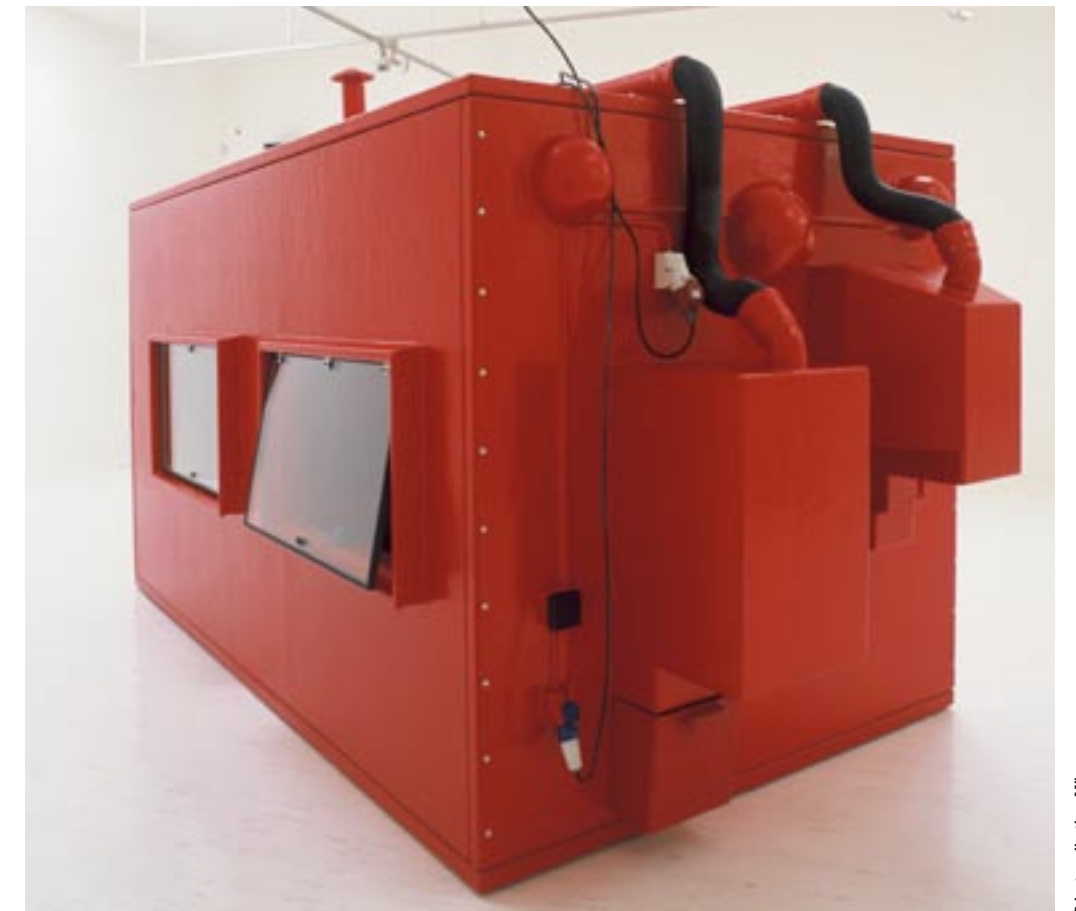
Like *Mini Capsule Side Entrance*, *Mini Capsule Front Entrance Square* is a rectangular version of the capsule hotel unit, designed to be used as an unmanned budget hotel and offers two guests the bare minimum of comfort.



Mini Capsule Side Entrance (6 units) can be viewed as a people farm. Stacked together, the units look like a large fibreglass rabbit hutch, if not the hutches of the mobile *Pioneer Set*. Each of the six hotel units has space to sleep two people; the interior is not much larger than a double bed and is equipped with the basics: a mattress, sheets, blankets, a nightlight, clothing hooks, an electricity outlet and a shelf. A modest version of *Maxi Capsule Luxus*, the *Mini Capsule* is made to function as a budget hotel without staff.



A larger version of the *Mini Capsule*, *Maxi Capsule Luxus* is an entirely self-supporting unit that functions as a mobile hotel room. Its luxuries include a king-size bed, a minibar, an entertainment centre for listening to music and watching films, a heating and ventilation system along with storage facilities for luggage and clothing. Everything is sealed with the shade of love: red fibreglass, red leather, soft red carpet upholstery on the floor, walls and ceiling. The red cube is a machine for concentration and retreat, which contains its comforts inside while carrying its equipment on the exterior surfaces. The technical capacities outside of the cube provide a contrast to what's happening inside.



AVL Canteen, 1999



This kitchen and dining area for 16 people was originally made for an exhibition in Bourneville, UK. Bourneville is a village built in the early twentieth century by the Cadbury chocolate company for its factory employees. The purpose of the company's founders was to provide good homes with large gardens: spacious, dry and light. Common facilities were also made, such as the men's recreation grounds, whose austere athletic fields are marked by the occasional dressing room. By contrast, the women's recreation grounds consisted of an idyllic park with brooks and hills, which was hermetically sealed off from the men and only accessible through a guarded tunnel. Bourneville remains an idyllic place, and the ban on alcohol is still in effect.



Floating Sculpture, 2000

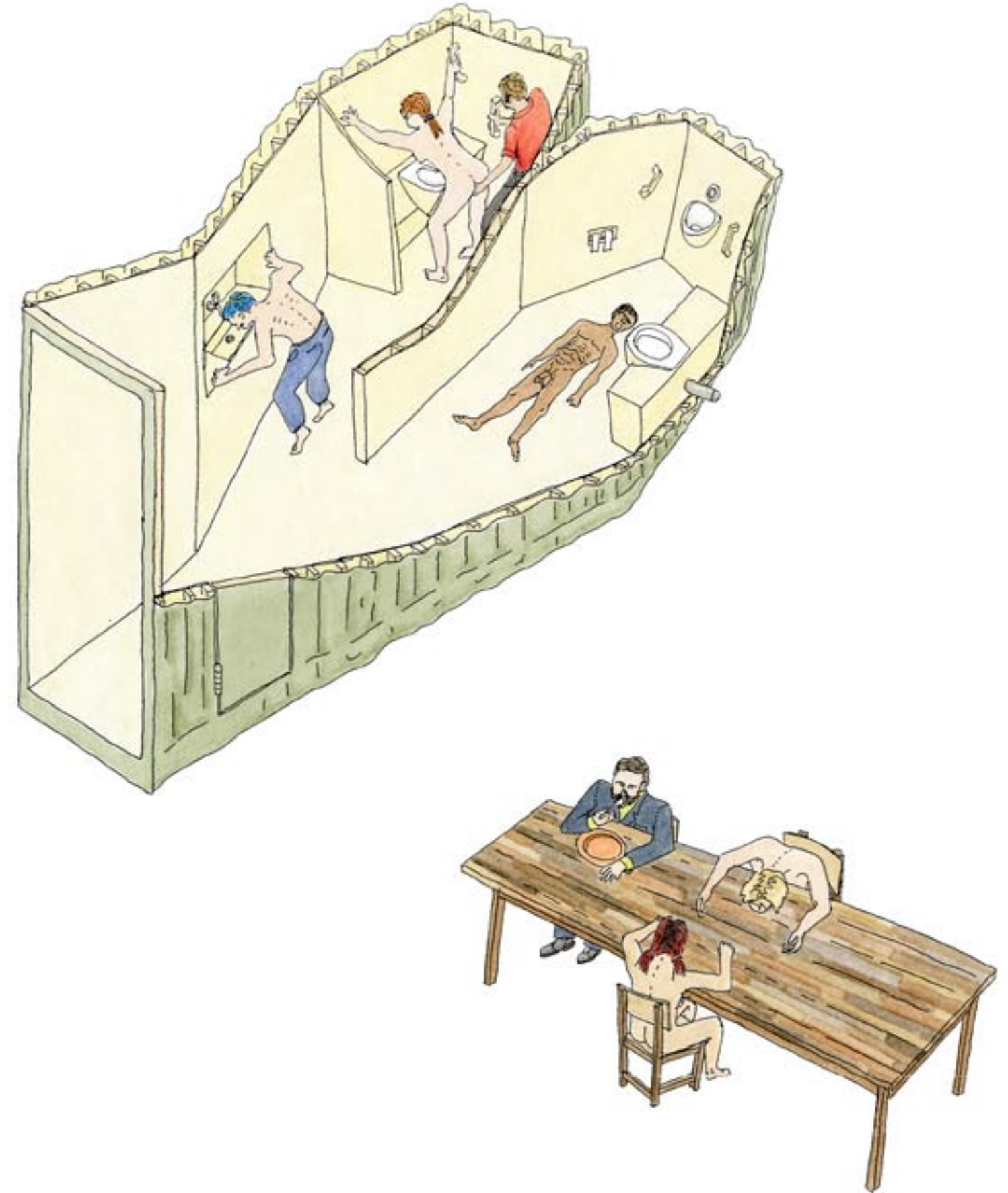
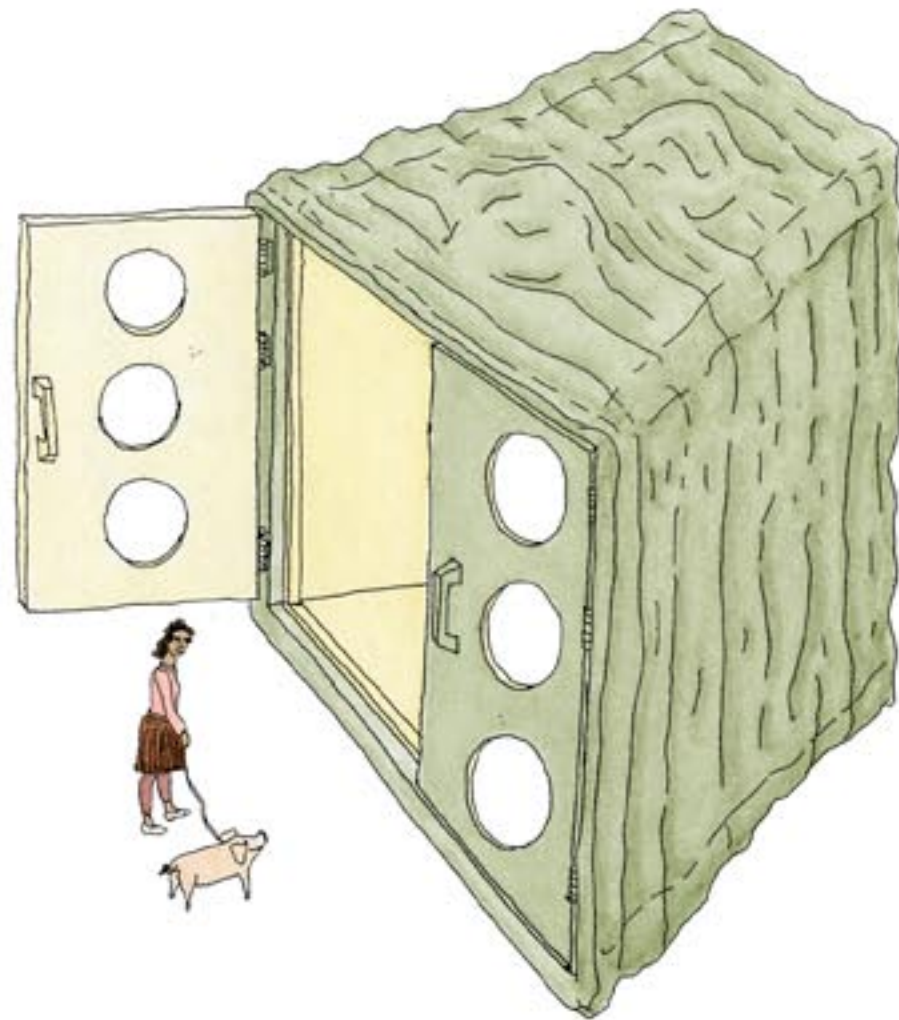


Mix and match: the longer side of *Floating Sculpture* is based on the old-fashioned architecture of the 'Zaan' area. The attached blue bulb with windows (transparent eyes) has a large round bed inside.



The master bedroom with food, guns and booze for six people.

Placemat for the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum. For the inauguration of the toilet unit at the museum, AVL designed these placemats to be used in the restaurant. The drawing shows alternative ways of using the toilets: having sex, vomiting and passing out. Despite its explicit nature, the placements garnered no complaints, nor protests.

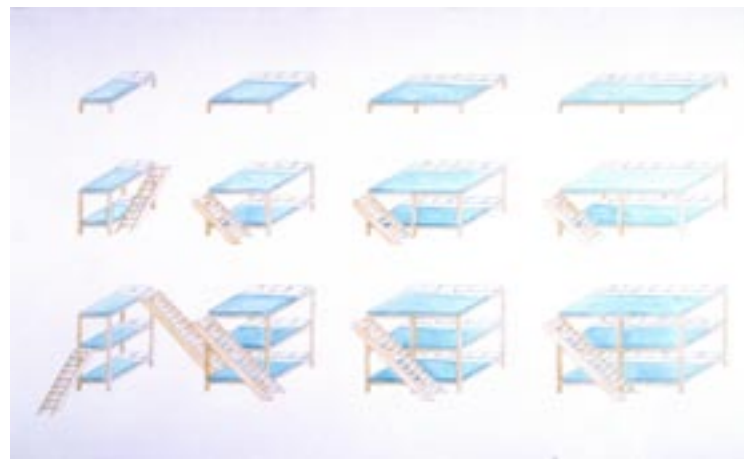




AVL does not take kindly to museum architecture. Fortunes are spent on the building and then there's no money left with which to make the exhibitions. AVL believes that a museum is all about interior space and should be as simple as an industrial or even an agricultural building with large sliding doors.

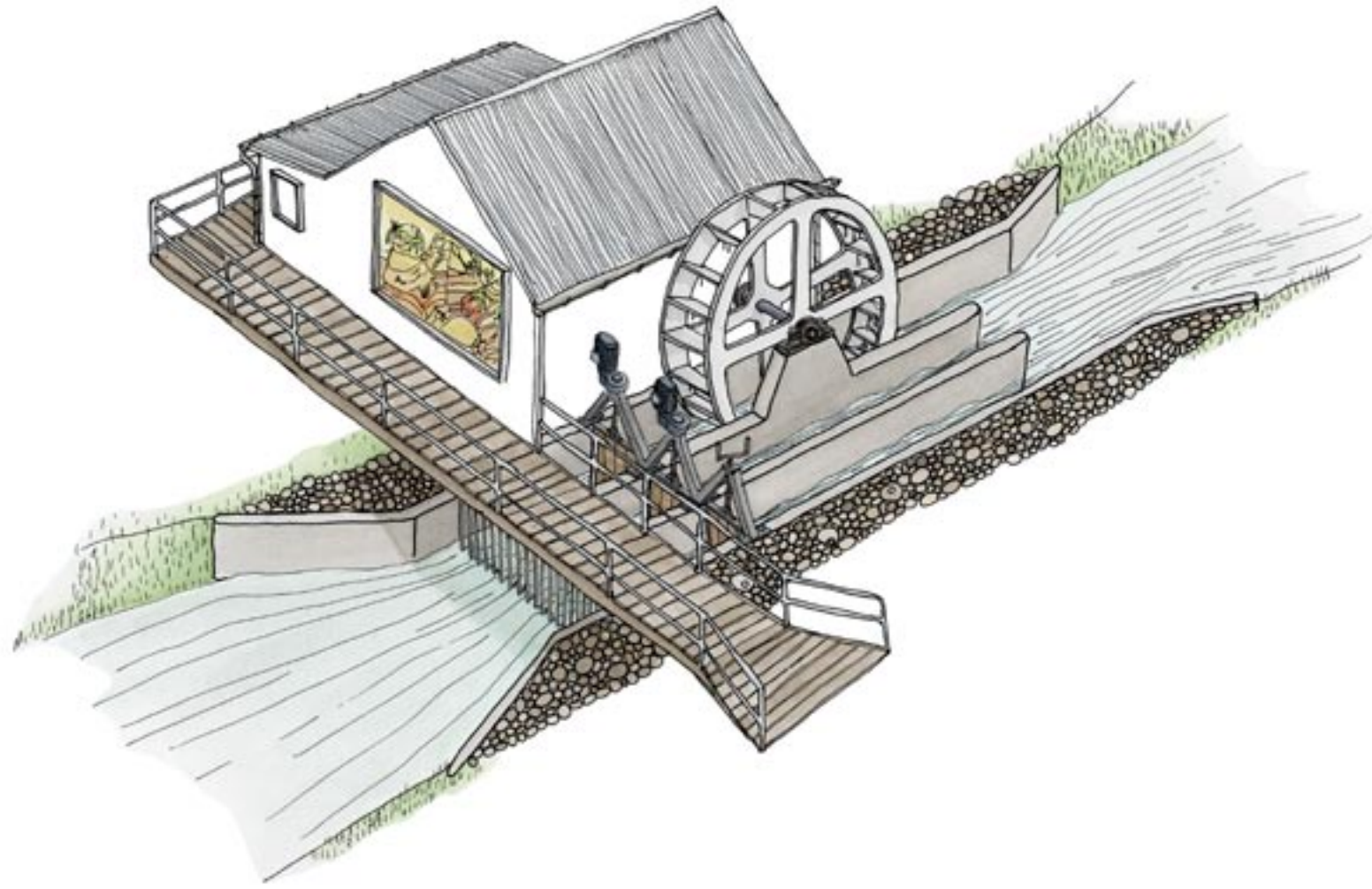
Despite its adversity to museum architecture, AVL took on the challenge of building an extension for sanitary spaces at Rotterdam's Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. Located in the glassed-in passage that links the main building to the museum restaurant, AVL's toilet unit takes the shape of a large penis, which appears to penetrate the glass passage. The penis head, which provides an entrance to the restaurant pavilion from the museum garden, is on one side of the passage; on the other are the two testicles, one for the women's room and one for the men's. While the interior is a light shade of green, the exterior has been covered in an army-like camouflage print, which blends into the surrounding museum and gardens. While hiding the toilet unit, the camouflage expresses AVL's adversity to the law, in particular the legislation governing architecture. While the laws for building codes were written to protect people from bad and unsafe architecture, rules can become ends unto themselves that limit design, creativity and invention. AVL believes that the freedom of architects and artists begins with finding a way around the rules.





King- and Queen-size look like poor cousins to this bed, which can expand horizontally and even vertically into multilevel bunk beds. The simple modular system is infinitely reproducible with a multiplication of the basic 1.2 m frame. Like desire, this bed knows no limits.





A design for a public space in Muttentz Botanical Garden near Basel, this house stands next to a stream and has been completely redesigned and combined with a watermill. There is a special biotope inside with desert plants; the waterwheel generates the heat and the light needed to maintain the dry climate for plants. The turning wheel provides the energy for a permanent, eternal piece of desert in the botanical garden. On one side of the house there is a window that shows all the mechanics; on the other side there is room for a prostitute waiting for clients. The climatic extremes of the stream and the desert meet in energy, beauty and sex.





The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis commissioned AVL to make a mobile art lab: a youth centre on wheels that could bring the good word of art and culture to schools and people from poorer neighbourhoods throughout the state of Minnesota. While the goal was a noble one, the project seemed over-determined as a design. AVL took on the task, with one condition: to add a darker side to the museum's good intentions. The result was *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*, a triptych structure composed of a trailer, a house and an extension. The good things are concentrated in the trailer, with its

child-friendly activity areas for making art, music and theatre on the road. After touring the state, the trailer can come back to the museum's sculpture park where it has a permanent place, docked into the Black House. Bad things live in the house; its imaginary ideal dweller is the Una Bomber, a prototype terrorist who survived alone in the forest and recycled materials to manufacture his bombs. The house's extension holds a laboratory, where ugly things – and other things – are possible; the attic includes a cage, a single bed and a small study table.



The Good, The Bad and The Ugly, 1998



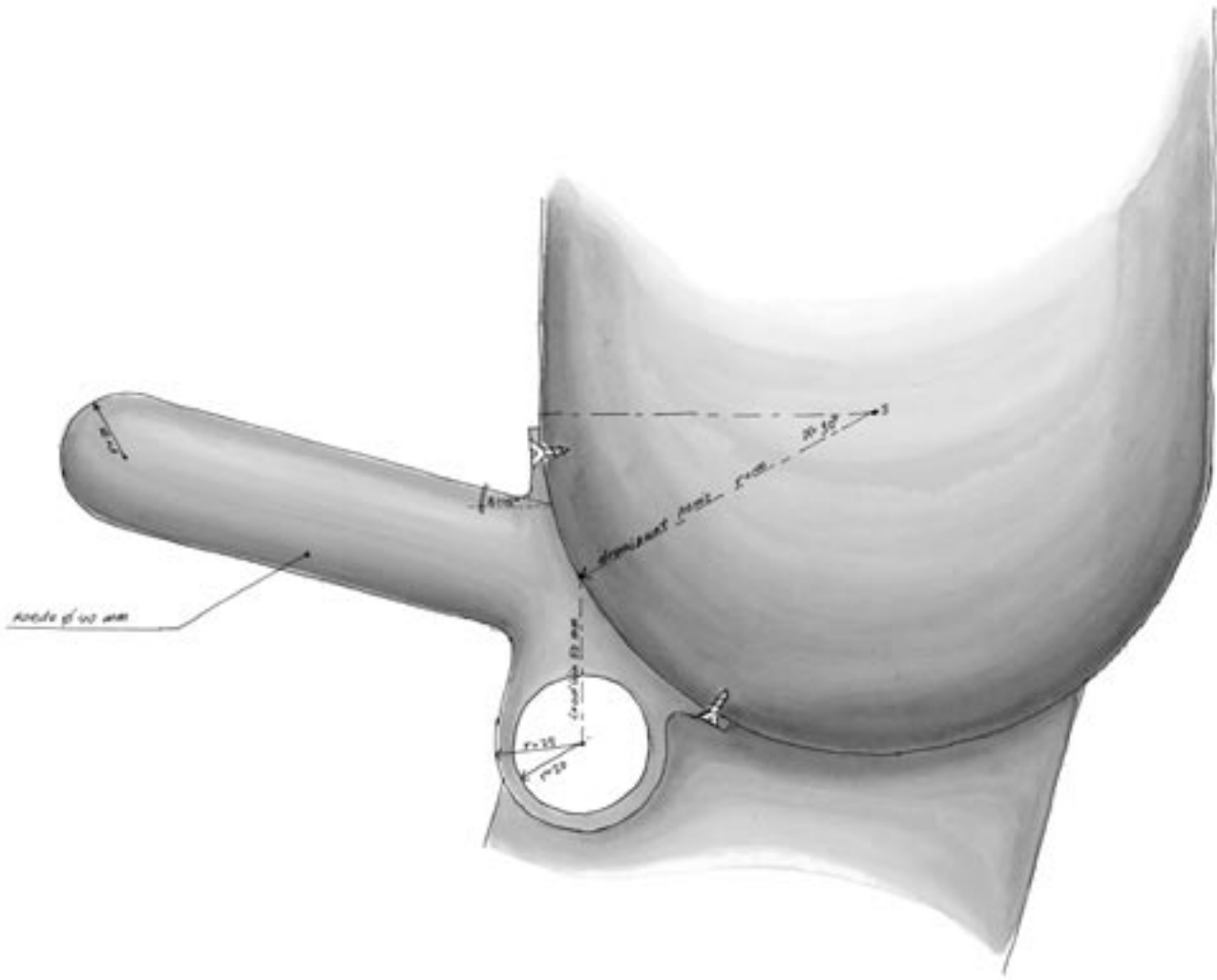
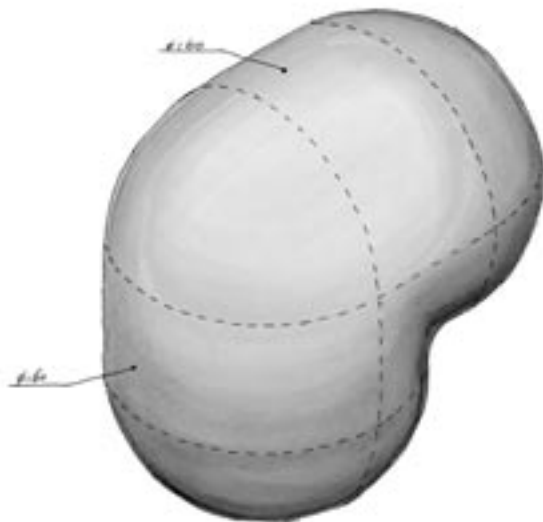
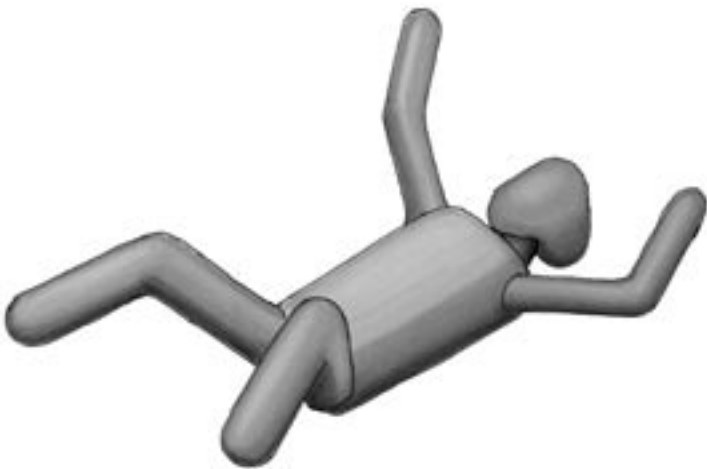
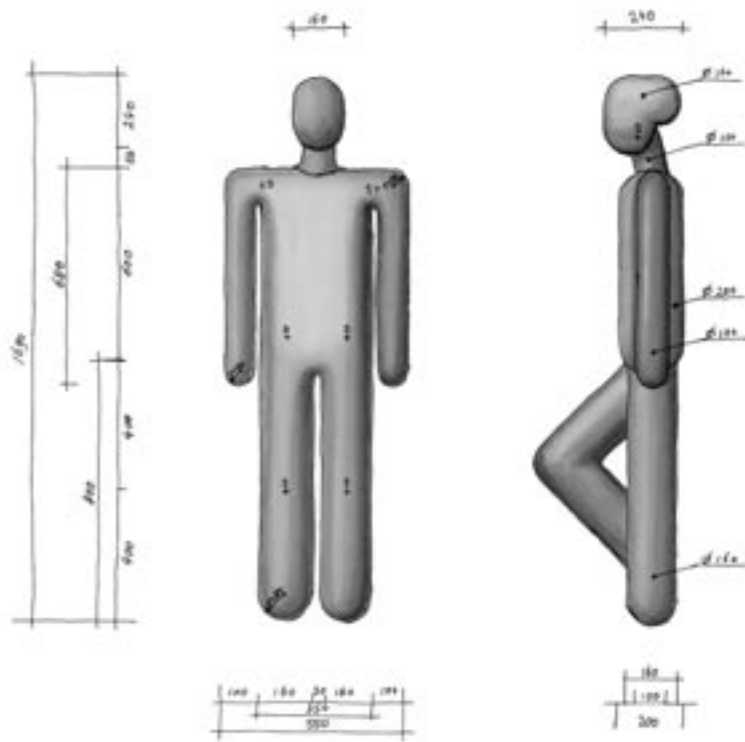
Prototype Shaker Table and Chair, 1998



One of the pieces of furniture that AVL has developed is the *AVL Shaker Chair*. A religious movement from England, the Shakers began to build their own villages in America towards the end of the eighteenth century. Their lives were dedicated to ecstatic worship, hard work, self-sufficiency and celibacy. Their many inventions include the circular saw, the washing machine, the clothespin and seed improvement. The furniture developed by the Shakers was highly innovative for its time; they considered perfecting the final product as one of their life tasks. AVL has produced crude versions of chairs and tables according to the traditional designs of this exceptional community. This prototype set was originally made for *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly* project and constructed out of leftover materials from the project. Joep van Lieshout has visited many Shaker villages and even met the last remaining Shakers: eleven women and two men living at Sabbathday Lake in Maine. Their strict rule of celibacy – and a lack of good leadership and public relations – has pushed the Shakers to the brink of extinction.



The *AVL Man* as a modular man. This simplified design is based on standard materials and sizes. The *AVL Man* appears to be the ideal employee, because he never eats, nor does he ever complain. Yet he doesn't have hands and feet with which to perform work. He does, however, have a screw-on penis for pleasure.



Knokke Men, 2000



Friendship.

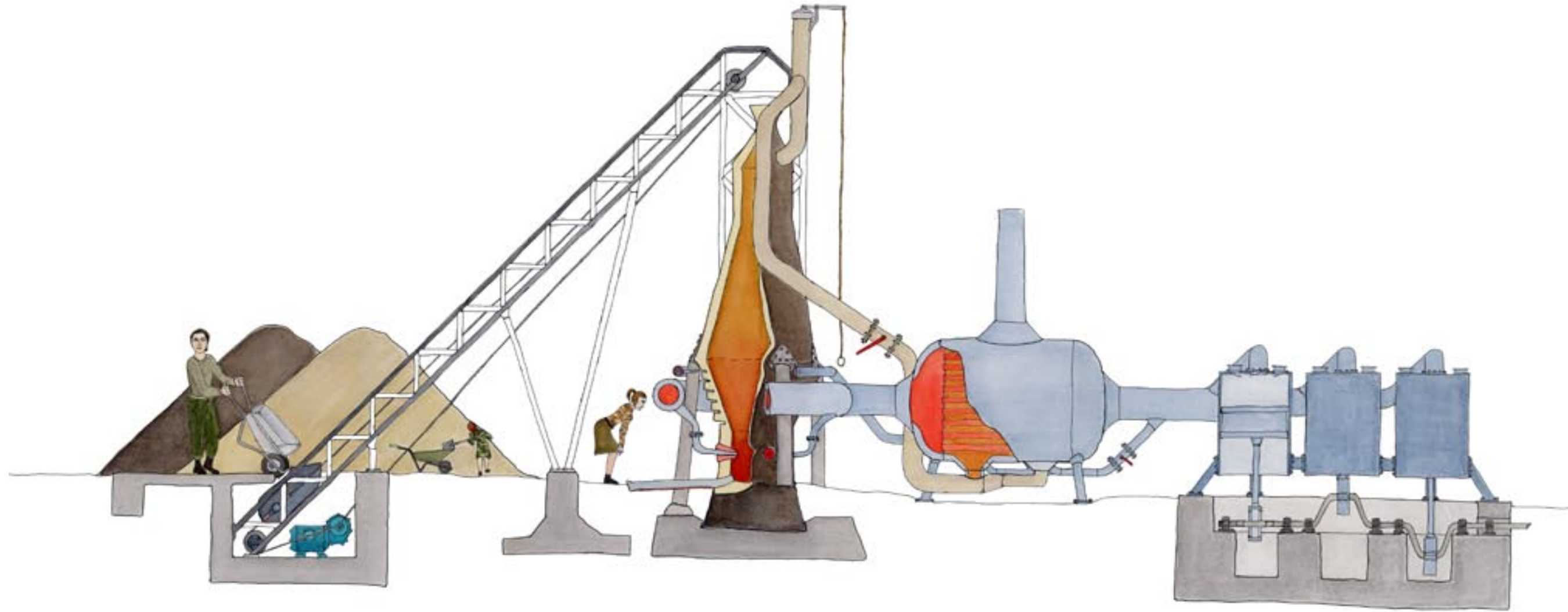
Fist-Fucking AVL Men, 2002



AVL Men have their needs too.

A wise man overlooking AVL-Ville, 2001





These drawings tell the story of the birth of the Free State of *AVL-Ville*. Once upon a time, the city of Almere asked AVL to make a proposal for an urban plan for 30,000 new houses. Artists, architects and philosophers were asked to make proposals. Almere is a special place because it is a piece of reclaimed land – an island measuring 60 x 20 km – that used to be under the sea. The founders put up a dyke and started to pump out the water. Everything in Almere (founded in 1969) is less than 40 years old; the buildings, the streets, even the trees. It's a completely new country, like a pioneer's city. One would expect that such a new country could be a place for experiments and inventions. Unfortunately, Almere became a typical suburban town; its 150,000 inhabitants live on the island but

work in other cities, like Utrecht or Amsterdam. AVL had a plan to revive Almere's lost pioneer spirit and came up with these drawings. Instead of building 30,000 houses, AVL proposed to make 30,000 mobile homes, which could be produced in a factory on the island. In that way, Almere would be able to develop its own economy instead of being completely dependent on the surrounding bigger cities. The owners could park their mobile homes wherever they wanted: in the forest, along the beach, in the city, in the park, in the neighbour's garden. Since there were no zoning rules, anything could go anywhere in Almere. The drawing *Autocrat* (p.096) shows the happy owner, coming back from a hunt while his multiple wives work the land. Being self-sufficient is hard work but ultimately satisfying.

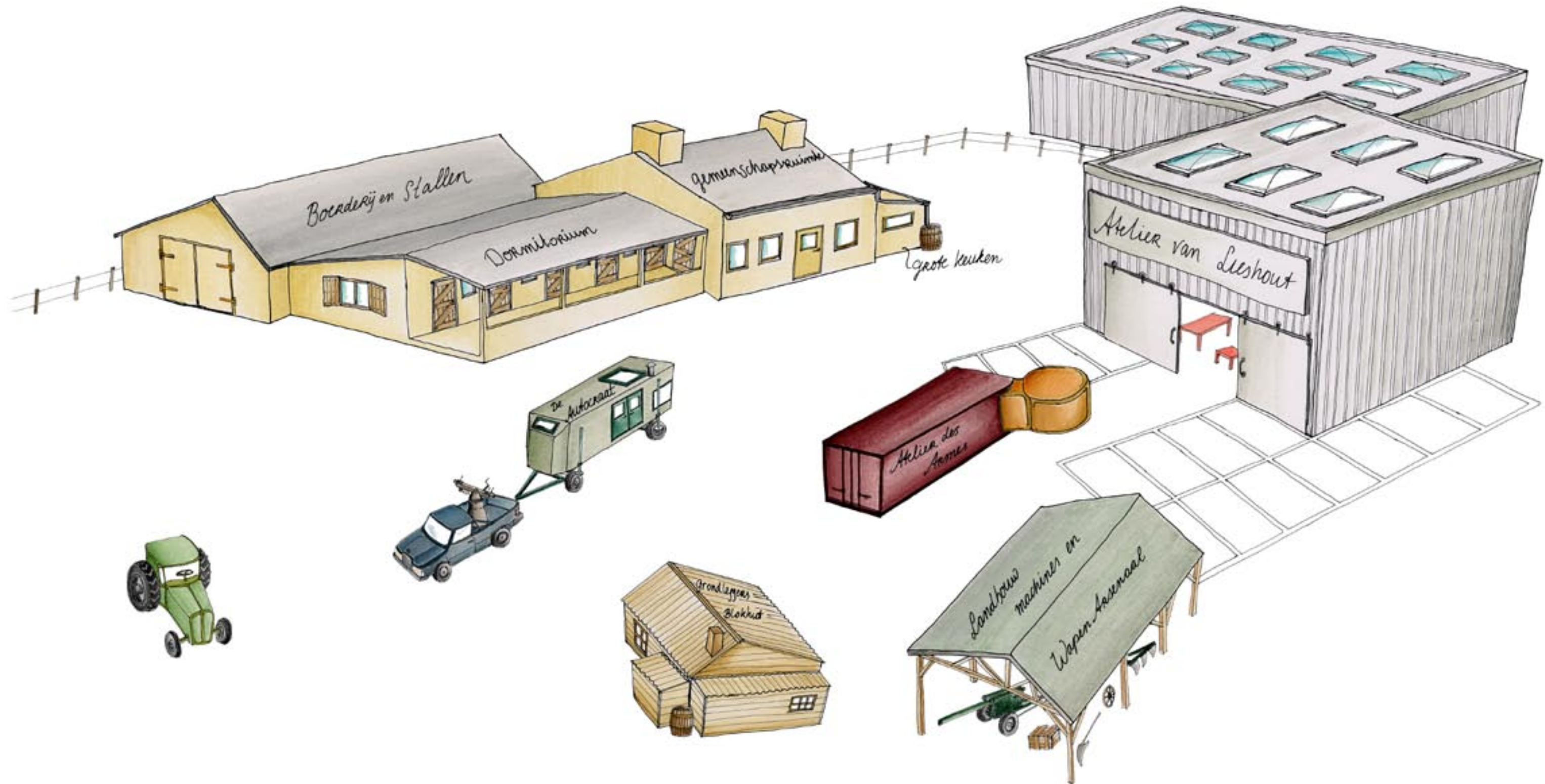
The drawing *Atillery Farm* (p.098) drawing shows the same family five years later: *Autocrat* is being pulled by a Mercedes with a canon. The family also started a little factory called Atelier Van Lieshout, where they make pieces of furniture. There is a big stable, a big farmhouse, a dormitory, a communal space, a large atelier, a workshop for weapons and bombs, a storage space for agricultural machines and for weapons, and a founder's log cabin. Another drawing (p.100) shows an exploded view of the farmhouse with its sleeping units, a large bathroom with dual toilets, the communal space with a generous sit-pit dining table, office spaces and a large kitchen. The drawing *Kitchen* (p.102) shows some women preparing a healthy meal with organic vegetables and herbs,

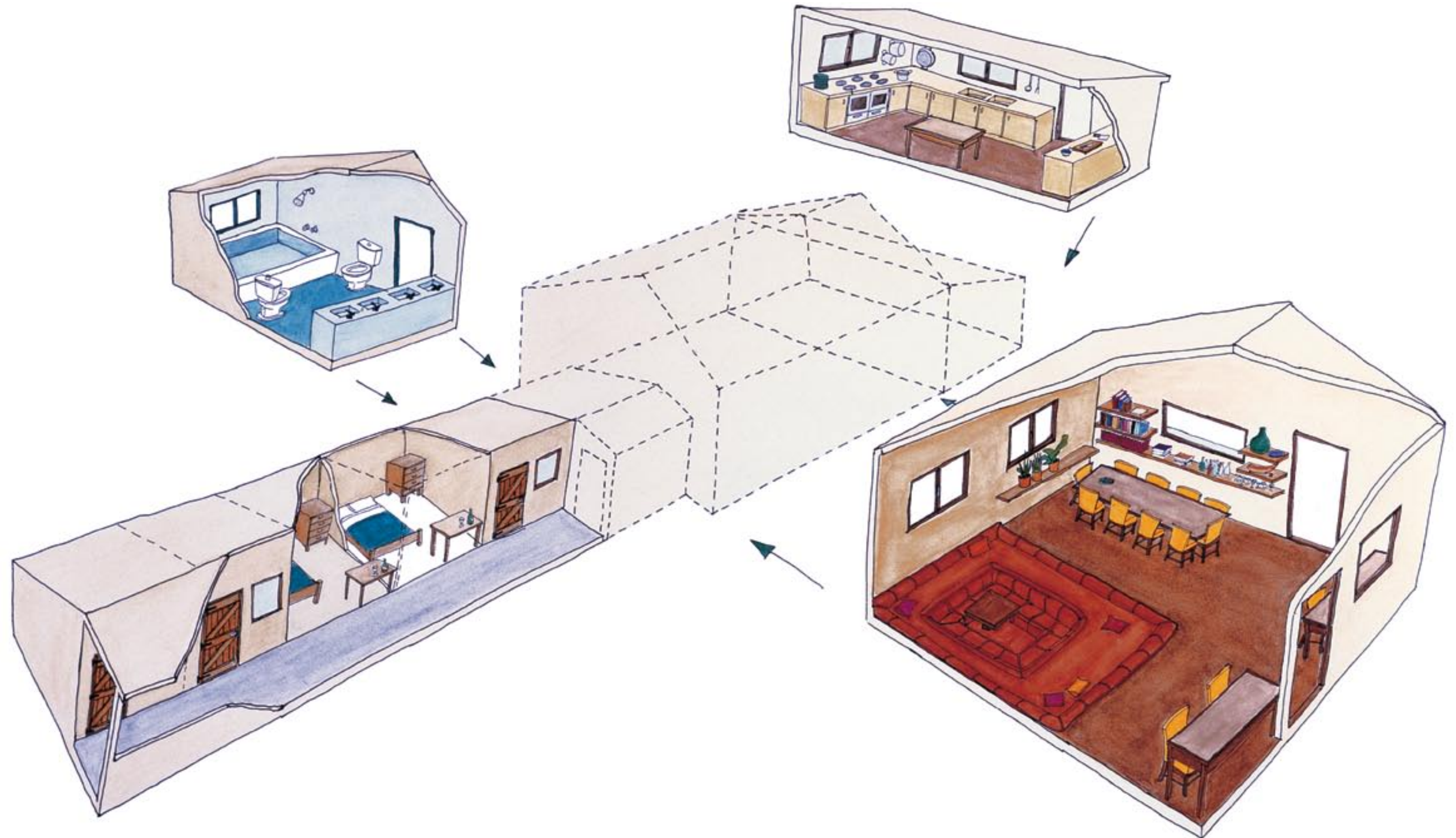
garlic and potatoes. Beside the good food there are knives, grenades and machine guns. This domestic arsenal indicates that the people who live here are very idealistic and prepared to die for their ideals. The drawing *Settlement After 10 Years* (p.104) shows a further development. One can still see the farm and the *Autocrat*, next to the factory there is a blast furnace; heat and carbon dioxide is recycled and used in the green-houses. There is also a large arsenal, a watermill to supply electricity and a sawmill where the wood on the island is made into lumber for building furniture and barracks. There are also a tank, watch towers and a fence. In the back, there are the prison camps. In AVL's plan, Almere would become a Free State with a prison. The city would cut the three bridges that con-

nect them to the mainland and start their own independent state within an unified Europe. To be independent, the Almere economy would be based on illegal goods and services – weapons, drugs, alcohol, prostitution – produced and consumed by the prisoners. In Europe, many complain that there are not enough prison cells to lock up all the criminals; or the prisons are too expensive. It costs about 50,000 euro to incarcerate one prisoner for one year. Almere would offer the same services for half the price: 25,000 euro per year per prisoner. All of Europe's prisoners could come to the Free State and live in the barracks. During the day, the prisoners would work in the weapons, alcohol and drug factory; at night, they return to the barracks or spend the money they have earned on site. Unfortunately – or fortunately – the city

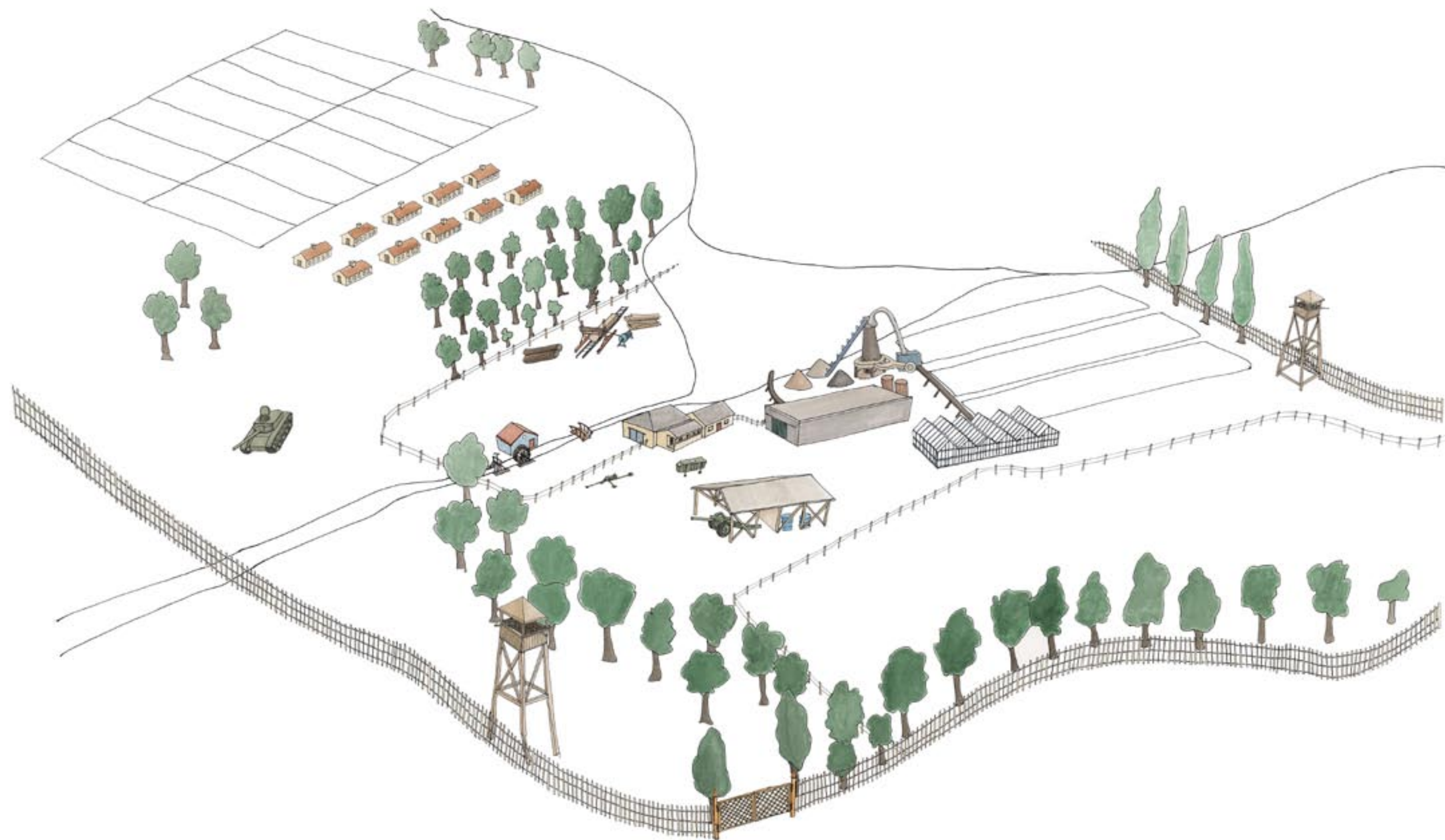
of Almere rejected the proposal. AVL decided to realize its pioneer city on the atelier's terrain in the Rotterdam harbour (minus the prison). In 2001, AVL declared itself the Free State of *AVL-Ville*. The atelier's largest and most controversial work of art. The Free State created a pleasant mixture of sanctuary and art site filled with AVL work. The *Autocrat* and *Workshop for Weapons and Bombs* found a home along with new works like the *Pioneer Set* and *AVL Transport*. *AVL-Ville* also created its own flag, its own constitution and its own currency. Unlike the drawings, everything in *AVL-Ville* was fully operational. Not art to look at but art to live in, live with and live from.

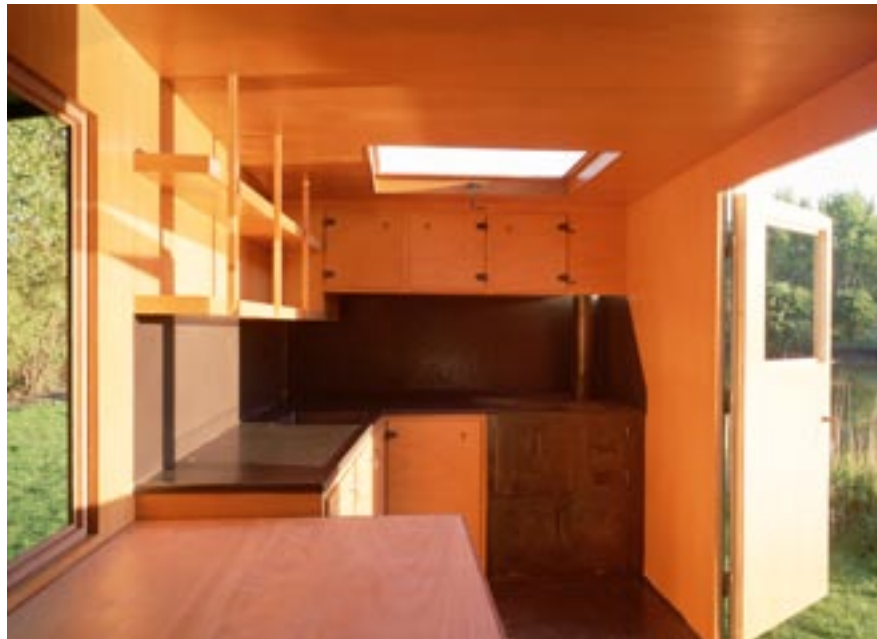












Autocrat is a survival car for living in remote places – far away from civilized society – without being deprived of its comforts. There's a large kitchen and a sleeping area on the inside and another kitchen outside for heavier culinary work, like slaughtering animals. The car was designed and manufactured with the utmost autocracy in mind. Every effort was made to use homemade items and to avoid ready-made products. The hardware, water taps, the locks and the stove

were all made from scratch. *Autocrat* plays a key role in AVL's evolution, since the vehicle gave rise to the slaughter project. For this project, pigs were slaughtered on a farm according to traditional methods. All the parts were immediately used or preserved by drying, salting, smoking, pickling and other methods. The guide book *A Manual* (1997) shows more about the slaughter process, specifically how to kill a pig at home.



Before becoming a Free State, AVL wanted to make sure that the atelier was well-armed. *Workshop for Weapons and Bombs* was the unique result. Designed in 1998, the workshop was built from a shipping container and expanded with a fibre-glass structure that ends in a sphere. This spherical space is the bedroom for the freedom fighter; the middle passage features an office space for writing manifestos; and the container holds a metal workshop and chemical laboratory where weapons and bombs can be made from simple household chemicals. The homemade weapons and bombs can be used for defence as well as attacks.



Mercedes with 57-mm Canon, 1998

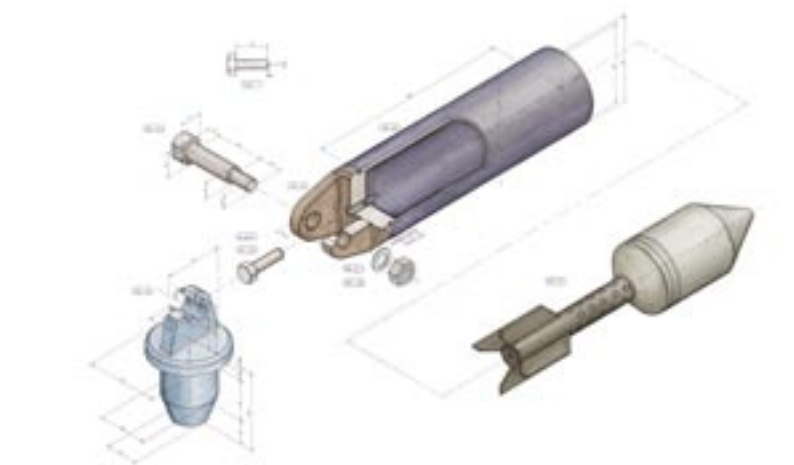
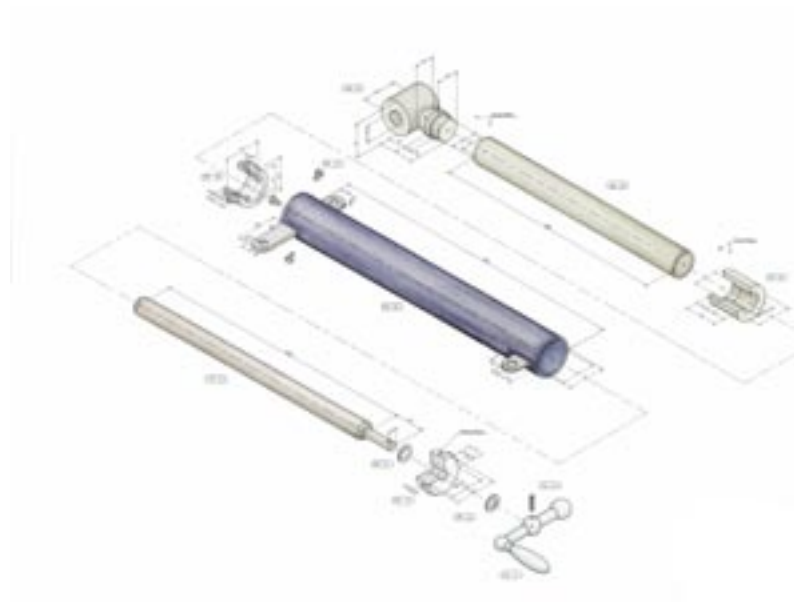
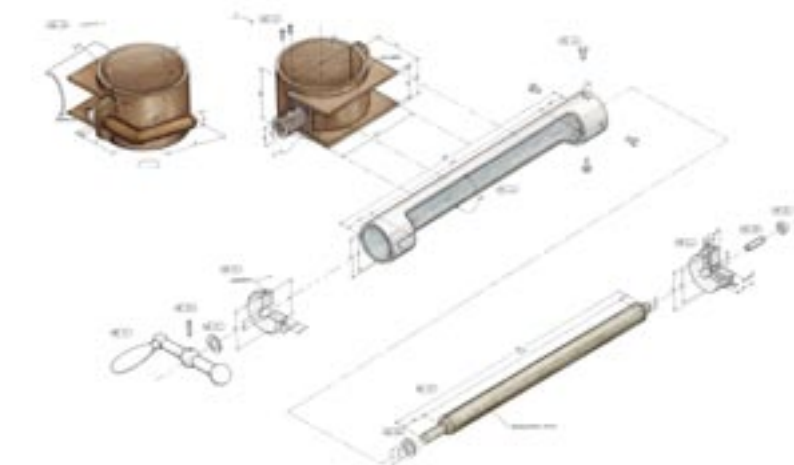


AVL's old company car, an ordinary Mercedes, was converted into a pick-up truck and equipped with a 57-mm canon designed by the atelier and made from everyday materials. Part of the exhibition presented in Rabastens in 1998, the Mercedes with the canon gained notoriety when the mayor banned the show. In 2002, the work was almost confiscated by the Rotterdam police, who started to impound artworks shortly after the Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn was murdered. Twenty Dutch state officials showed up at AVL: ten policemen, five customs officials and five tax officials. They took *AVL M80 Mortar* but decided to come back the next day for the Mercedes. The car was transported to the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen which decided to acquire the work for its permanent collection and save it from being destroyed.



An original AVL design, *AVL M57 Houwitzer* can be made with simple materials and tools. The canon was installed on a customized Mercedes pick-up truck



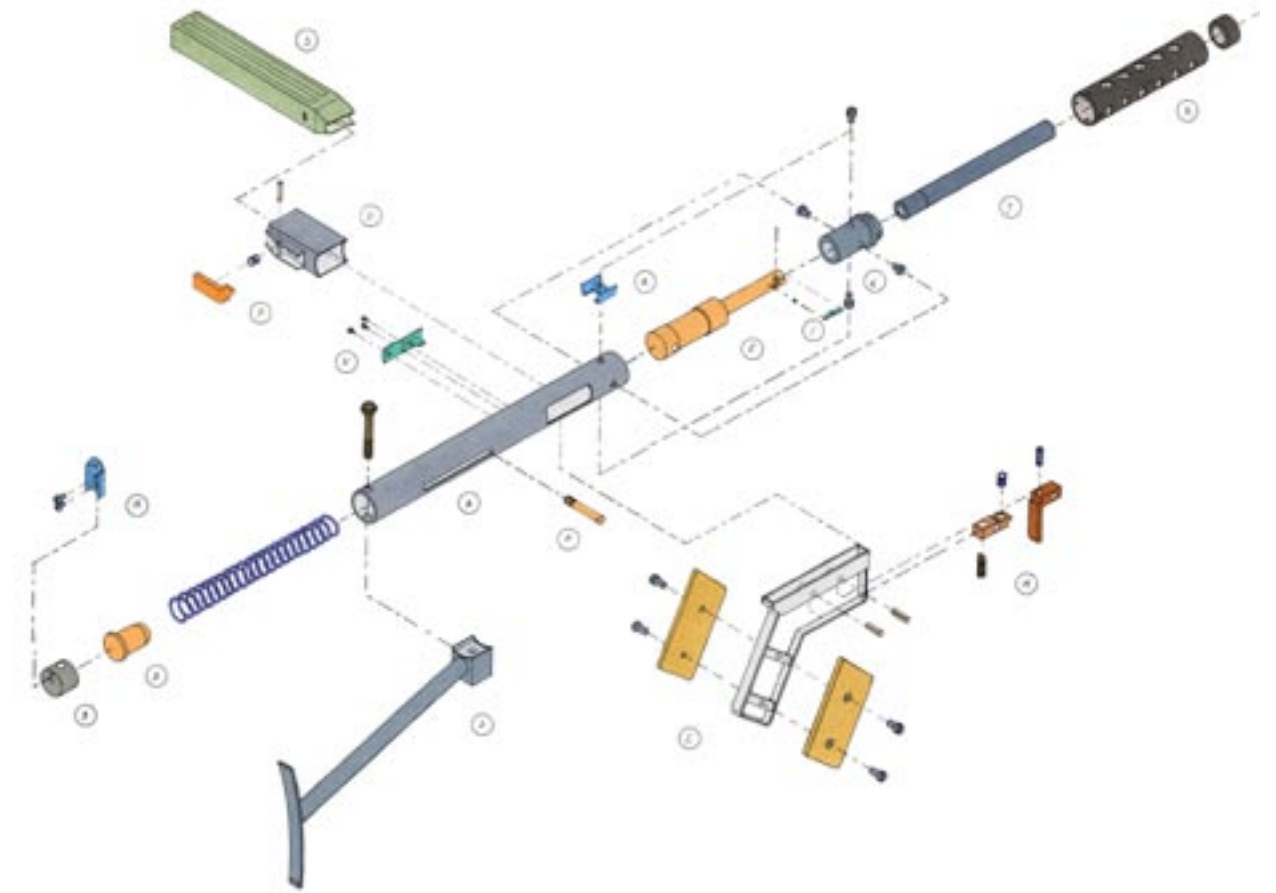
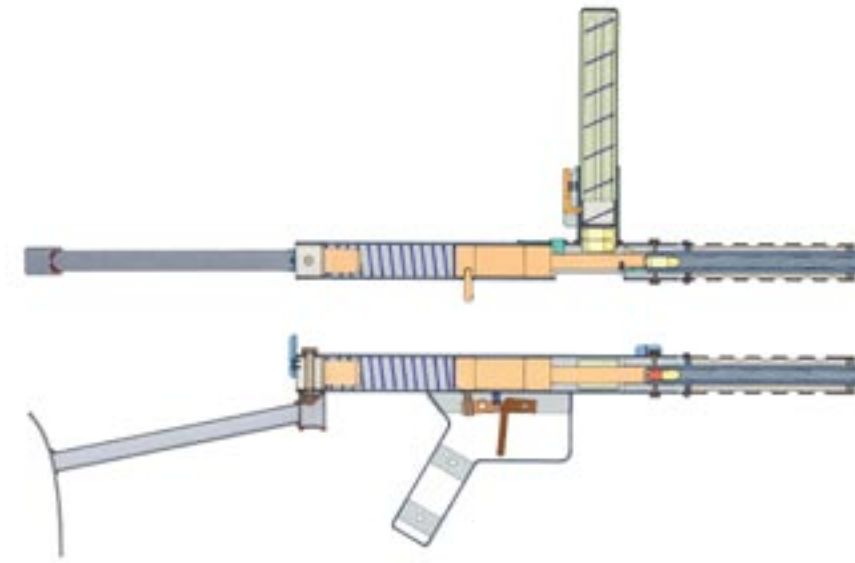


AVL M80 Mortar is a simplified design of an existing mortar, which can be built with widely available materials, like ready-made tubes and simple tools that can be found in any metal workshop. This piece was made in an edition of ten, but one no longer exists because it was confiscated and destroyed (the other remaining nine are safe abroad). After the Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn was murdered in 2002, the Rotterdam police began to confiscate artworks with a destructive potential. *AVL M80 Mortar* fit the criteria. Other AVL works that have been confiscated temporarily or permanently by state officials, both inside and beyond the borders of the Netherlands, include: *Pistolet Poignée Américaine* (1995), *Survival Knife* (1995), and *Jewellery* (1995).

Bad Pistol, 2004
Pistolet Poignée Americaine, 1995



Machine Gun Exploded View, 1998



An adaptation of the Sten gun based upon another adaptation made by an obscure American group. An English submachine gun, the Sten is easy to manufacture and was used extensively by the British army during the Second World War. The American adaptation made the gun even easier for any skilled metal worker to produce. AVL added yet another improvement by drawing the gun with metric measurements. The designs are not readily available and can be illegal in some countries.



Workshop for Alcohol and Medicines was created in 1998 shortly after the *Workshop for Weapons and Bombs*. This container can produce alcohol from sugar, fruit or cereals and juices, which are then distilled. The pure alcohol that results can be mixed with medicinal herbs, spices and other natural ingredients to produce friendly drugs and sedatives. The workshop confounds the distinction between right and wrong since the same alcohol can be used for illegal distillation or to produce medicines for treating physical and mental ailments.

Alfa Alfa with Chicken Run, 1999



Alfa Alfa with Chicken Run began its life as an Alfa Romeo 164. The car had put in a considerable amount of time as an AVL company car before its engine was taken out to serve as a generator. The body was lovingly restored in 1999 and converted into a chicken coop. To transform the car into a coop, AVL undertook a thorough study of chickens: habits, health, habitat and psychological behaviour. The results of the study were integrated into the final design; proper adaptations were made. The chickens have a run and feeder outside the car; their nest is located in the trunk; which can be opened to collect the eggs with ease. Human conveniences are happily united with chicken welfare in the *Alfa Alfa*.

Generator 80 KW 1999 Diesel Engine of Alfa Romeo, 1999



When AVL's Alfa Romeo 164 was transformed into the chicken run *Alfa Alfa*, the car's engine – a 150 horsepower turbo diesel – became a generator, which supplied electricity. The cooling system was connected to the hot water system reservoir. In the metamorphosis, the sexy powerful Italian engine fused with the serious Dutch Heemaf generator. In typical Dutch style, this generator is made, not of cast iron, but constructed from tubes and sheets of steel. The electronic regulation parts were improvised by AVL. While providing power, the generator holds three worlds of design: the Italian, the Dutch and the homemade improvisation that binds the former two together.



Constitution AVL-Ville

Introduction

In a constantly developing society, the artist plays an important stimulating role. Development implies breaking away from existing structures. To reach optimal artistic expression, it is crucial for the artist to be able to deploy himself or herself without being subject to the restrictions of civil morality. The objective of AVL-Ville is to create an environment where this is possible. To reach this goal, the rights formulated below are to be seen as absolute, without any exceptions. Living at AVL-Ville can be experienced as a hard and confrontational artistic life. However, this is the ultimate consequence of an honest and uncompromising existence.

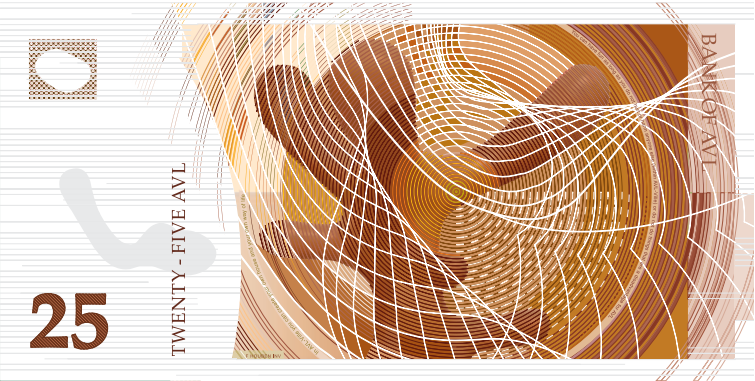
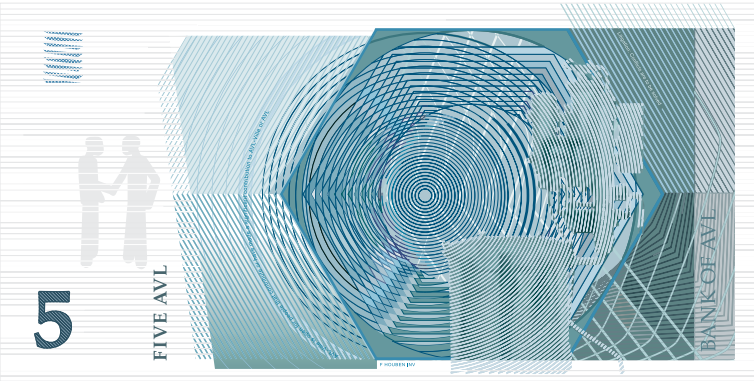
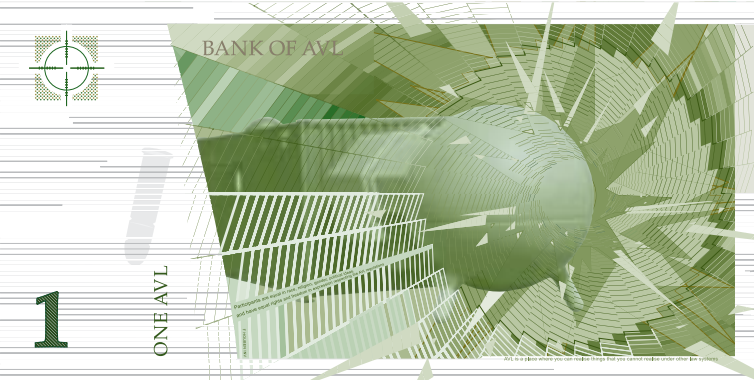
Text of the Constitution

- 1) Everyone has the right to freedom of artistic expression and design.
- 2) Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which is to say revealing and receiving thoughts or feelings other than artistic.
- 3) Every participant of AVL-Ville is equal and is entitled to be treated without discrimination on account of race, colour, sex, language, belief, political, artistic and philosophical ideas, nationality, possessions, or any other ground.
- 4) Everyone is entitled to gather with others and to demonstrate.
- 5) Everyone has the right to freedom of religious expression, including idolatry, polygamy and forming a sect.
- 6) Everyone is entitled to have an education.
- 7) Everyone has the right to immunity in privacy and artistic lifestyle, as well as communication in any way with third parties.
- 8) Everyone is allowed to wander freely within the AVL-Ville area.
- 9) Everyone is entitled to create independently his or her own housing within the AVL-Ville territory.
- 10) Everyone has the right to have immunity over body and spirit, which also includes being able to dispose of one's body and spirit according to one's own wishes, with or without help of artificial means.
- 11) All AVL-Ville participants are obliged to treat any other member with absolute honesty and respect; it is compulsory to solve any conflict within AVL-Ville.
- 12) A) All AVL-Ville participants accept that management will be decided by the general committee, which is composed of an as of yet unspecified supervising board, to be formed by members of the general committee along with others.
B) The general committee is qualified to expel participants, if no amicable settlement can be agreed upon in conflicts.

AVL designed its own money for AVL-Ville to promote the ideals of the Free State. The value of AVL money was not related to gold but to beer: 1 AVL is 1 beer, 5 AVL is 5 beers, 25 AVL is many beers and a meal and so on. AVL decided to adorn its currency with heroic symbols instead of the

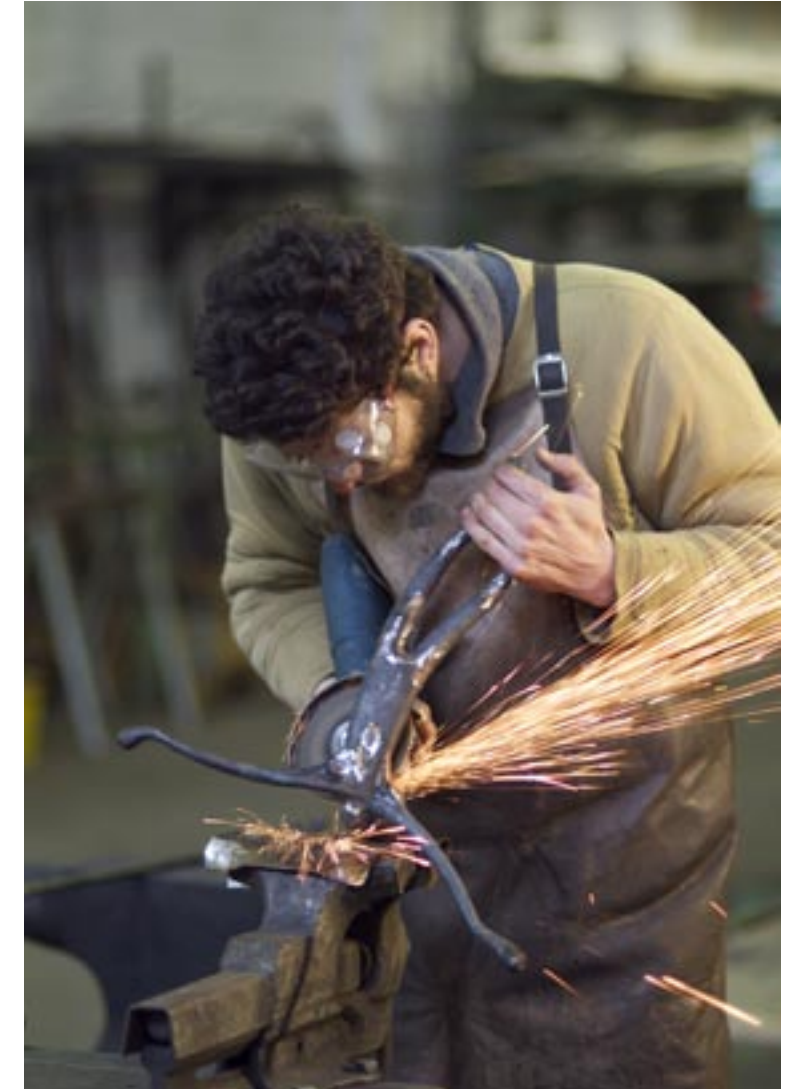
AVL's constitution was drawn up in consultation with Dutch lawyer Gerard Spong for AVL-Ville and was displayed in the Hall of Delights. The Free State's constitution guarantees many of the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the charter of a democratic state. The major difference is that AVL's founding laws are absolute and without exceptions. By removing the possibility of exceptions, AVL keeps legislation to an absolute minimum. Article 11 states that individuals must solve any conflicts within AVL-Ville or leave the compound – a clause that renders judges, lawyers and police superfluous. The constitution opens by guaranteeing each individual's right to absolute freedom of expression.

nondescript designs on the euro bills. 1 AVL is dedicated to weapons and bombs; 5 AVL to alcohol and energy; 25 AVL to sex and mobile homes; 100 AVL to the most important realms of food and farming. The money is functional while displaying AVL's belief in heroism and ideals.





A view from the water of the AVL studio in the port of Rotterdam. Artworks and a host of other products begin their lives here before travelling to points around the globe. AVL's 20 employees, in addition to interns, have different creative backgrounds and come from different countries. The designers are closely involved in the manufacturing process of each product, or they even make the product with their own hands. This approach gives rise to an intense contact between the maker and the product – one of the hallmarks of the AVL style. The atelier is organized as a business where horizontal communication is encouraged. Although money and the opportunities it offers are valued, profit is not AVL's primary objective. The chief concern is to make special, innovative and challenging products. AVL's location is ideal for its aim; the port is an inspiration for mobility, a source of used shipping containers and a platform for intercontinental shipments.







Built for *AVL-Ville*, the *Hall of Delights* functioned as a canteen, a restaurant and a clubhouse. The hall was fashioned from seven sea containers which were welded together and whose interior dividing walls had been removed. Everything that tastes good found a home here. A variety of guest cooks – artists, gourmet chefs or regional cooking fanatics – were invited to prepare the delightful feasts. AVL's plan was to pay for the costs of the Free State with income from the restaurant, where guests could eat very good food at a very good price. After a successful start, the local authorities discovered that the *Hall of Delights* did not have any licenses, no building permit, no restaurant license, no liquor license, and closed the hall down. Determined to continue, AVL opened the hall up again; they found a way around the liquor license by opening a small grocery store on the

AVL terrain where guests could buy their own drinks and bring them to the restaurant. The authorities were not amused and shut the hall down again. A plan to open a souvenir shop – where guests could purchase a souvenir bottle of wine or beer with regards from *AVL-Ville* – did not work out. The last possibility was to put the restaurant on a boat since alcohol can be sold without any licenses on water. By that time, the authorities became so angry that the restaurant was abandoned and *AVL-Ville* was closed.



In addition to money, education and weapons, *AVL-Ville* had its own public transport company, which carried people from downtown Rotterdam to the Free State. In contrast to public transportation systems, AVL let passengers ride for free; instead of a valid ticket, they had to have a cold beer. The fleet included a horse and carriage combo as well as a tractor and wagon with room for 60 passengers. The carriage was driven by the force of the *AVL-Ville* horse Kereda, a Gelderlander born in 1993 and especially trained to pull carriages in the big city. When Kereda was not on the road, she was working away at the *AVL-Ville Farm*. The tractor was a Nuffield Universal 4, produced in 1956; its 56 HP engine has a maximum speed of 35 km per hour. When off the road, the tractor was used at both the atelier and the *Farm*. Along with a hydraulic system and lifting device, the tractor is equipped with a power take-off for connecting ploughs, mowing machines, tippers, lifting masts, excavators and other tools. The tractor normally runs on diesel fuel but also has a hankering for a bit of processed frying fat; Kereda prefers hay and carrots.

Darkroom, 2001

A small, self-sufficient house inside a 20-ft container. The interior is entirely made of wood and can be securely sealed with steel shutters. Originally equipped with a sex machine, *Darkroom* now offers the familiar comforts of a bed and a working area. On the roof, there is a compost toilet with a built-in kitchen and a green filter.



Fisherman's House, 2000

Designed in 2000, the house measures only 2.1 x 2.9 m. This dwelling was inspired by the cottages that once stood around the Zuiderzee until the 1950s and served as weekday shelters for local fishermen. Although the shape of the house is traditional and small, the house provides for a pleasant stay. Like many AVL works, this dwelling is an attempt to combine simple solutions from the past with modern applications and materials.





With the *Pioneer Set*, AVL created a prefabricated farm and equipment, which handily fits into one 40-ft shipping container. Individuals and groups can travel around the world, set up the farm at any location and live self-sufficiently. In addition to the container, the set consists of a farmhouse, a stable, a rabbit hutch, a chicken coop, a pig pen, several tools, equipment and fencing. *Pioneer Set* is a sturdy construction which has been built to function indefinitely, without any need for repairs and extensions. The only things that have to be added and replaced are the farm animals. AVL considers the *Pioneer Set* to be a milestone artwork, which improves

upon the autonomy of the *Autocrat*. AVL's goal was to make a farm set for survival – not to create a farm driven by profit or in competition with other farms. *Pioneer Set* is a fully functional farm that appeals to the imagination in its concreteness. The set fulfils a nostalgic, utopian and even romantic idea of living: longing to go back to nature, to be independent or even not to be a part of this world. The good things from the 'old world' meet the good things from the 'new world' in a feasible way.

The farmer's house in the *Pioneer Set* is a very sturdy building with the same size, layout and empty design aesthetic of the stables. After all, humans and animals are somewhat equal. But the farmer's house does come with some extras: a multi-woman bed, a wood stove and a kitchen. All design decisions were made with only one goal in mind: the structure must be strong, and if it breaks down, anyone should be able to fix it.



The Dutch stove from the Pioneer Set demonstrates an old AVL adage: food is so important that it does matter what means are used to cook it.



This 40-ft shipping container is the 'box' for transporting all of the pieces of the *Pioneer Set*. Once the set is unpacked, the container functions as a barn in which to store fodder and tools. These tools are traditional ones; their ergonomics, designs and materials have been perfected by generations of farmers. The ideal tool has stood the test of time. It is the best design.





In the *Pioneer Set Rabbit Hutch* a single pair of rabbits can produce up to 200 kg of meat per year. Rabbits prove the old saying true!



AVL's stable is a good place for cattle. Like the other parts of the *Pioneer Set*, the stable has been built to be functional and solid, reliable and indestructible. These qualities are essential for the buildings if this set is going to be used in remote areas.





In *AVL-Ville Greenhouse*, vegetable and herbs are cultivated according to organic principles and without artificial heating. The greenhouse was not made by AVL, but it fully complies with the atelier's style on mobility: the inexpensive structure can be easily transported from one location to another.



In their natural setting, pigs are family creatures. They build their own homes and keep them clean. They care for their children and pay visits to their family and neighbours. It's important for the animals' well-being, and for the flavour of the meat, that they be allowed to live as 'close to nature' as possible. With these simple *Pioneer Set Pig Pen*, the pigs live quite natural lives; the stables can accommodate a pig family, provide shade in the summer and sufficient shelter in the winter. The shape of the roof prevents piglets from being accidentally crushed by their wallowing mother. On the *Pioneer Set*, all of the animals have more room than the norms stipulated by the Eko mark of quality.





These animals lived on the farm in the *Pioneer Set* at AVL-Ville. After the Free State was forced to close, AVL had the animals stuffed so they will live forever as art objects, and the AVL workers ate the meat.

Utopian Doghouse, 2002

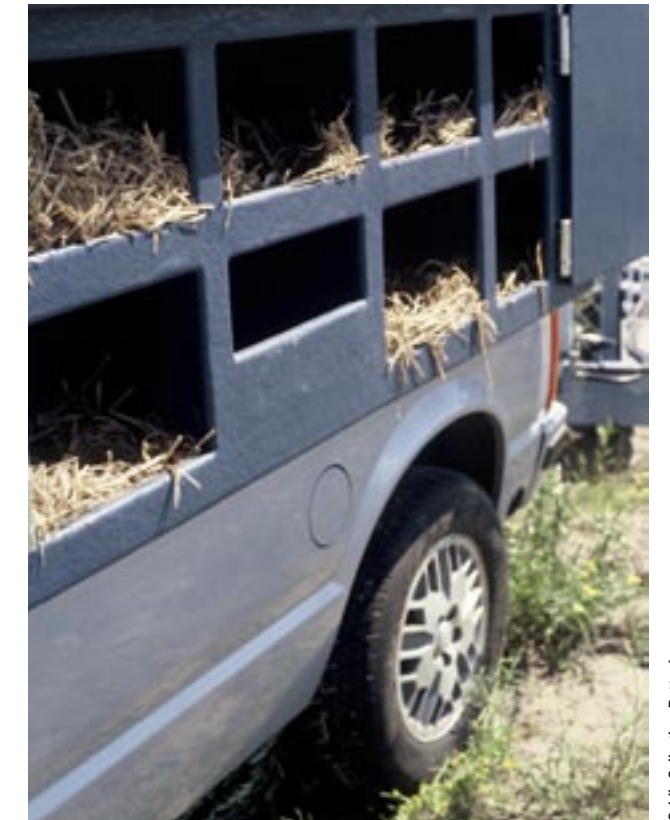


This ideal home for dogs has a living room, a bedroom and a porch with an unlimited supply of fresh water and dog food. A canine utopia, the doghouse was made for the biennial of Bussan in Korea (2002), where dogs are on the menu; the unit's storage place also holds the butchering equipment.

Caldenborgh Chicken Coop, 2002

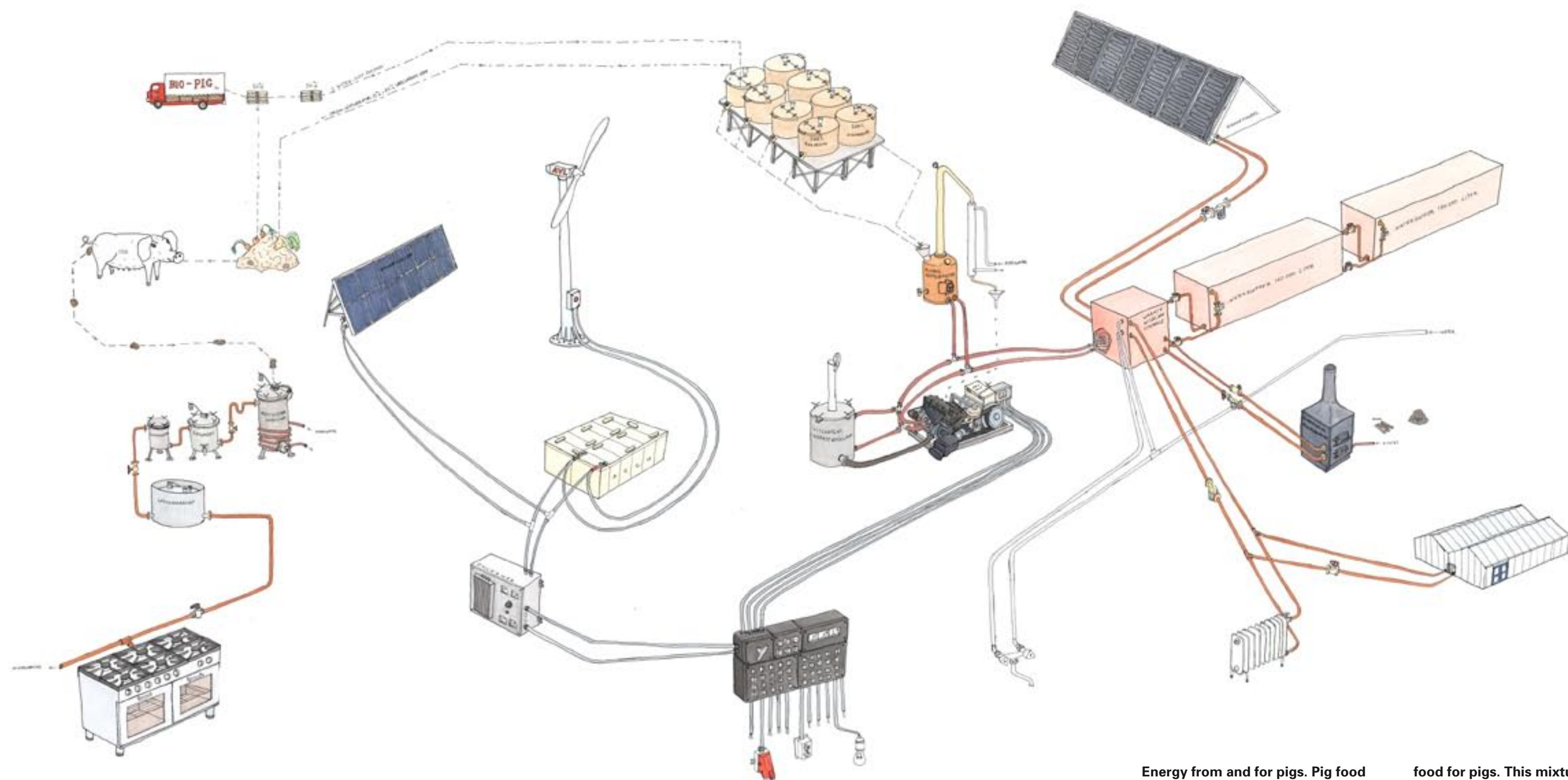


Chickens can really hit the road with this minivan, which has been outfitted with a high-tech, electro-hydraulically motorized chicken run.





After several visits to the slums of São Paulo, AVL developed the idea of establishing a working relationship with the favela dwellers. Five façades with windows and doors were made for this purpose in typical AVL style. The plan was to give the façades to the future inhabitants and let them finish building the house on site with locally available materials. The organic way of building that is characteristic of the favelas is appealing; the houses are built on top of each other and next to each other in a haphazard fashion, with no concern for the streets, infrastructure or accessibility to the building. Ultimately, the form of the houses and the city is determined by acute need, available materials and money.



Energy from and for pigs. Pig food is mixed with water and made into alcohol, which can power a generator to produce electricity. The excess heat of the generator is used to distill the alcohol and/or stored in huge buffer tanks. Solar panels, wind power and the incinerator are other sources of heat and electricity, that can heat water and greenhouses. The waste products from the distillery end up as a good low-carbohydrate, high-protein

food for pigs. This mixture is combined with regular pig food and organic vegetables. On this diet, the pigs are healthier; they also taste better and still contain some alcohol as pork chops. Pig excrement becomes biogas that can be used for cooking and for generating electricity. With 100 pigs, AVL could provide the entire Free State of AVL-Ville with energy.



For *AVL-Ville*, AVL developed an energy plant, which uses renewable energy sources, such as windmills and solar energy, in case there is no wind or sun. The plant has an efficient incinerator where all waste products can be burned to heat giant insulated water tanks, which can keep the water warm for extended periods of time. Within the compound, AVL created an infrastructure of electricity and heating and hot water.



A mobile generator with a little chicken ass on its back.



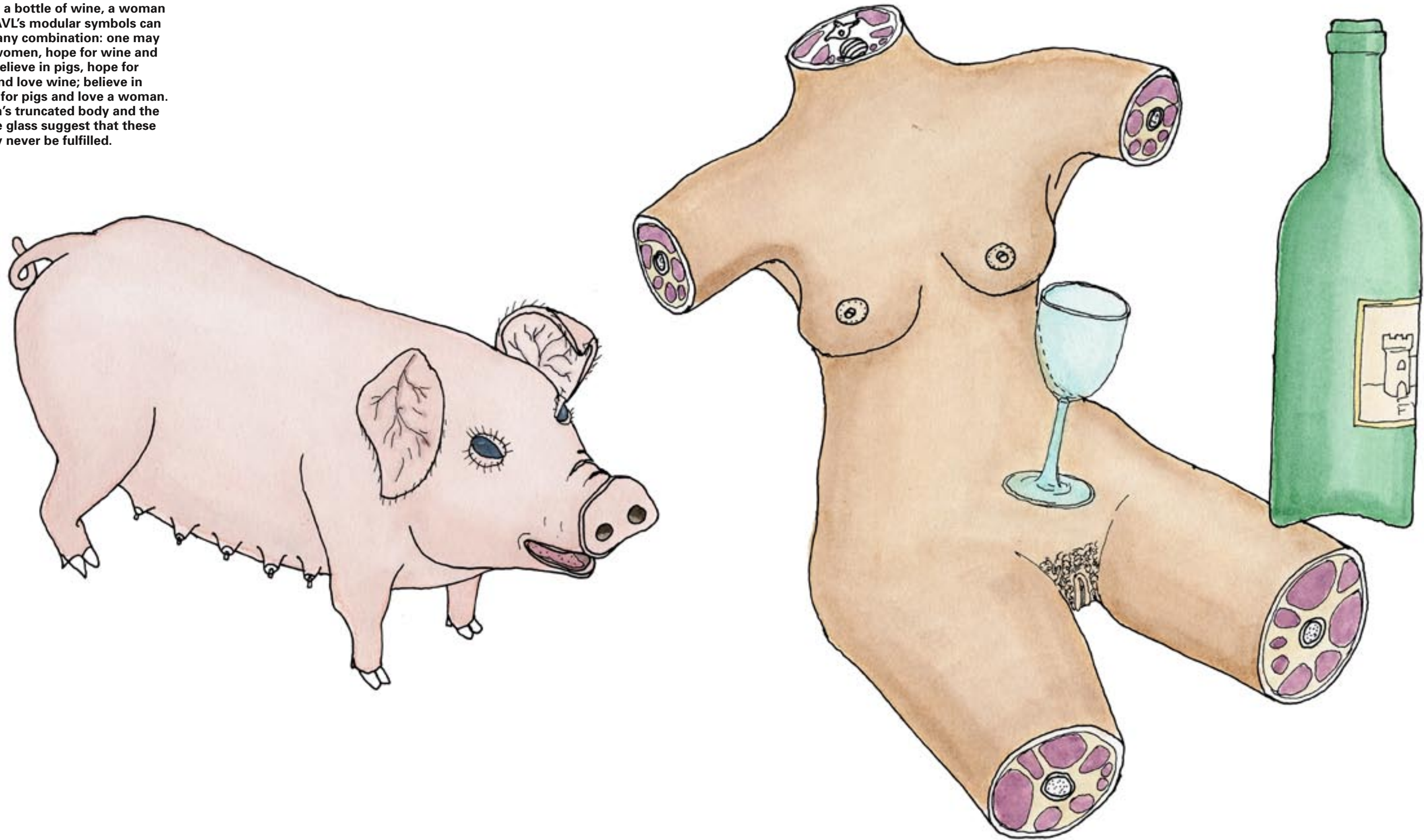
Septic tanks were originally part of the infrastructure for AVL-Ville. The tanks provide a simple and conventional way for treating black water (human waste). The unit includes a faecal pump, which breaks up pieces of excrement before pumping them into the first septic tank. Heavier parts in the waste water sink to the bottom of the tank; more volatile lighter parts float on the surface; while the middle layer of cleaner water goes to the next tank, where the same process of floating and sinking continues. While the sewage remains in the tank, the water is purified by means of fermentation and bacterial culture. Grey water, mildly contaminated water from the kitchen and bathrooms, goes to the fat separator. Coarse particles and fat are separated. After a period of time, the fat can be skimmed off, filtered and added to the tractor's diesel oil or simply incinerated in the boiler.

Finally the water is pumped to a reed filter. This organic filter works according to two principles. Impurities are filtered through the sand. The reeds introduce a great deal of oxygen into the soil through their hollow stems and roots; oxygen helps the bacteria to convert harmful substances. The reeds also absorb a variety of waste products as fertilizer, which encourages the plants' growth. At the end of the filter, clean water is produced that can be released into the surface water. A well-constructed reed filter is able to produce drinking water.



Made from the engine of Joep van Lieshout's old Honda motorcycle, the *Sawing Machine* can be used for lumbering trees into planks. The saw was originally made to function within AVL-Ville.

A modern version of the traditional Dutch symbols for hope (anchor), belief (cross) and love (heart). While the anchor, cross and heart have been replaced by a bottle of wine, a woman and a pig, AVL's modular symbols can be used in any combination: one may believe in women, hope for wine and love pigs; believe in pigs, hope for a woman and love wine; believe in wine, hope for pigs and love a woman. The woman's truncated body and the empty wine glass suggest that these wishes may never be fulfilled.



Sonsbeek Raft, 2001



AVL decided to make a floating restaurant. Built of scaffolding and inflatable pontoons, the raft has a kitchen, a dining area, sleeping spaces, a *Compostolet* and an outdoor shower. The front of the raft sports a large penis, *The Pitiful One*.

Compostolet, 2001
The Pitiful One, 1996



Totally seaworthy, AVL's *Compostolet* travels on the front of the *Sonsbeek Raft*. At sea or on land, composting remains a simple and direct way of recycling and reusing excrement and other waste. The composting process turns organic waste into compost with the use of aerobic bacteria. During the process, the temperature rises, speeding up the composting process while killing harmful germs present in the mass. A flush toilet is dependent on large sewage systems that are not environmentally friendly because they waste clean drinking water. With the *Compostolet*, the waste problem is solved locally and without wasting water. The toilet can be used not only for urinating and defecating but also for disposing kitchen and garden waste. The urine automatically flows to the bottom of the container where it gathers before being evacuated to the septic tank. The faeces must be covered with straw, sawdust, grass clippings or other organic matter. The bacteria use oxygen, the waste and the covering material to produce a fresh smelling potting ground that can be used on the land or in the garden.

No pity for the pitiful one.





After the closure of *AVL-Ville*, AVL decided to go into franchising to explore its ideas for alternative living with more ease and less hassle from the Dutch authorities. As a franchise, *AVL-Ville* became an international brand, which could be purchased along with the services and hardware needed to start a new Free State. *AVL-Ville*, from the constitution to the infrastructure, could be exported anywhere in the world, much like a fast food branch. This franchise was set up at the Middelheim Museum in Antwerp.

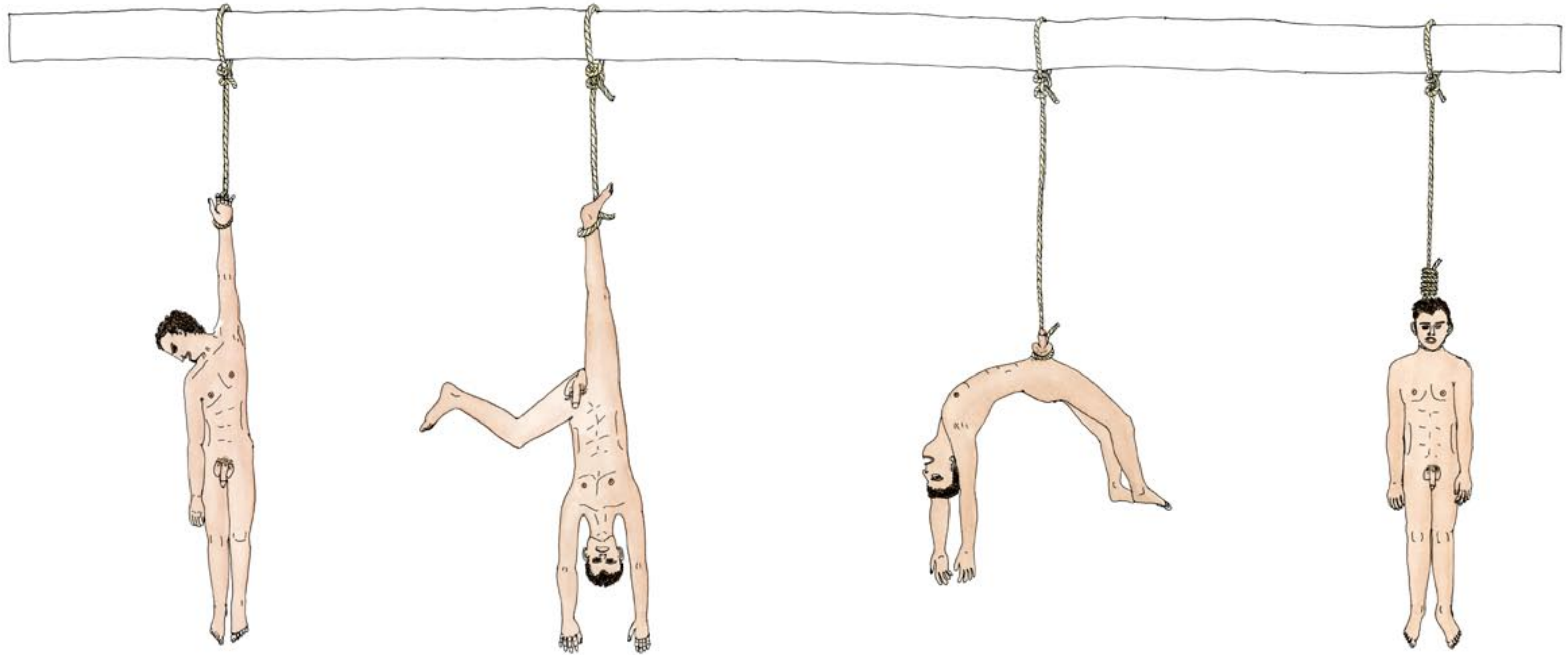
The unit features two converted containers in which the basic equipment is concentrated: a large kitchen, sanitary facilities with *Composttoilets*, solar energy panels, heating and electricity. AVL also provided an ecological infrastructure for dealing with waste water: green filters and fat dividers, pumps and composters. Everything was connected to a cheap industrial hall. The franchise units can be coupled or connected to an existing building or a new structure.





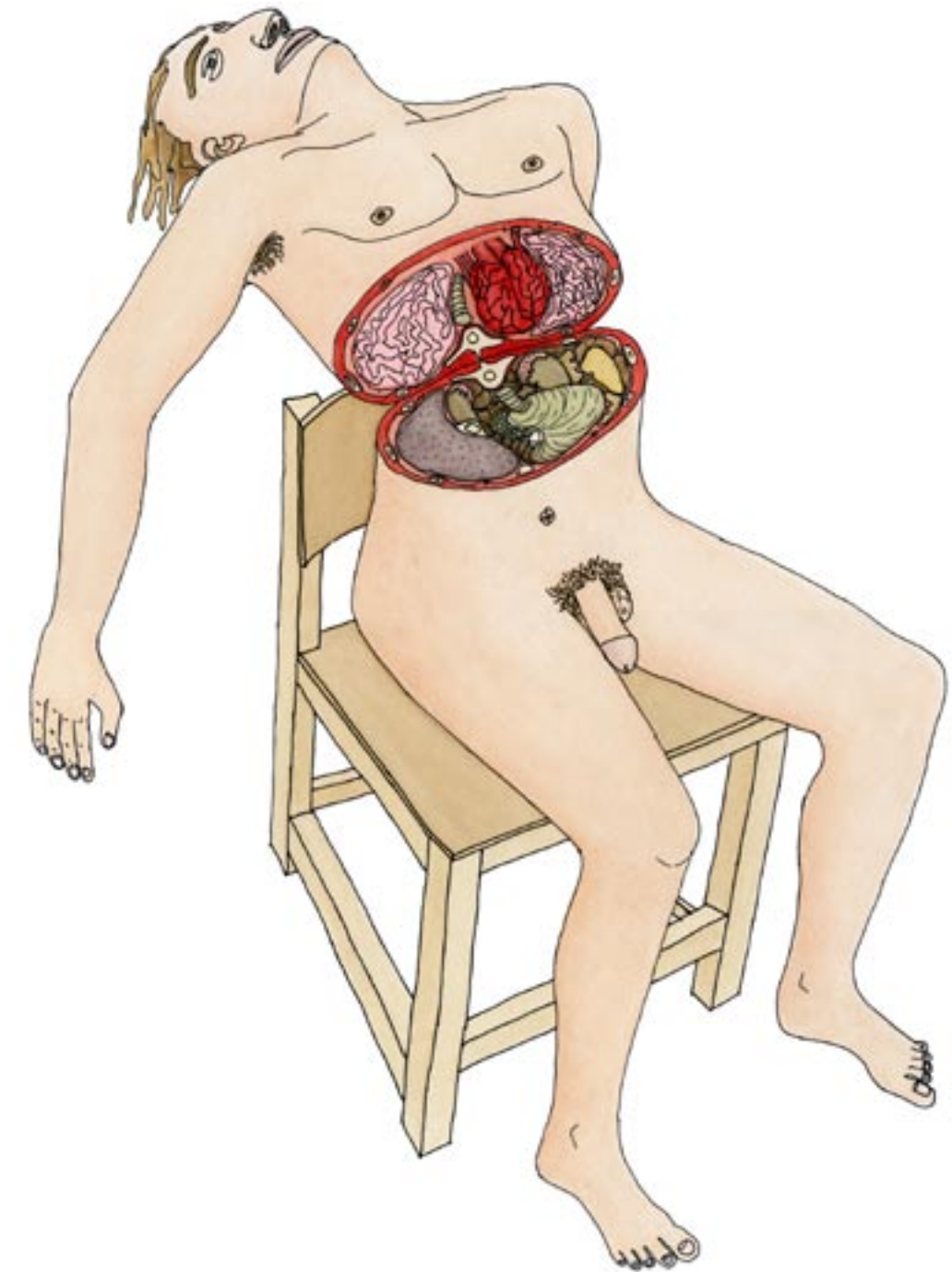


AVL Suisse hits the seas for the exhibition Expo '02, a modern-day 'country' fair that took place in Switzerland in 2002. Many Swiss companies and organizations represented their identity in a cultural way; renowned international architects built the pavilions to present ideas about products as culture; the Swiss Army made a theatre play about safety and peace instead of presenting guns and canons. Since art was clearly being utilized to lubricate a wealthy society, AVL decided to go against the flow and set up a Free State on a raft. After docking the *AVL Suisse*, AVL invited architecture students from Berlin to add their own structures. In addition to these makeshift houses, the raft sported a conspicuous 'For Sale' sign, alongside two inflatable sex dolls. Nothing was designed, unless it was designed in bad taste.

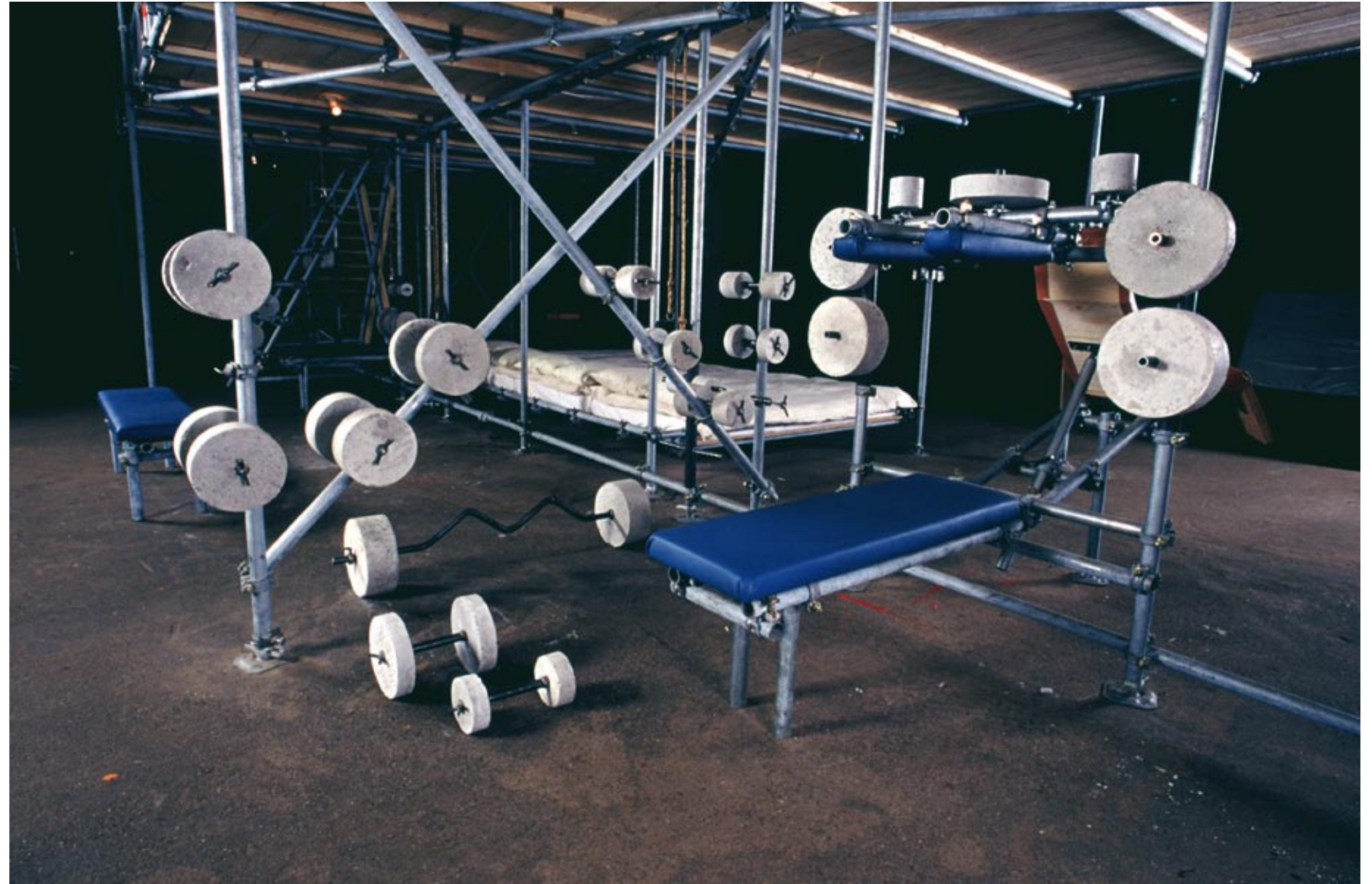




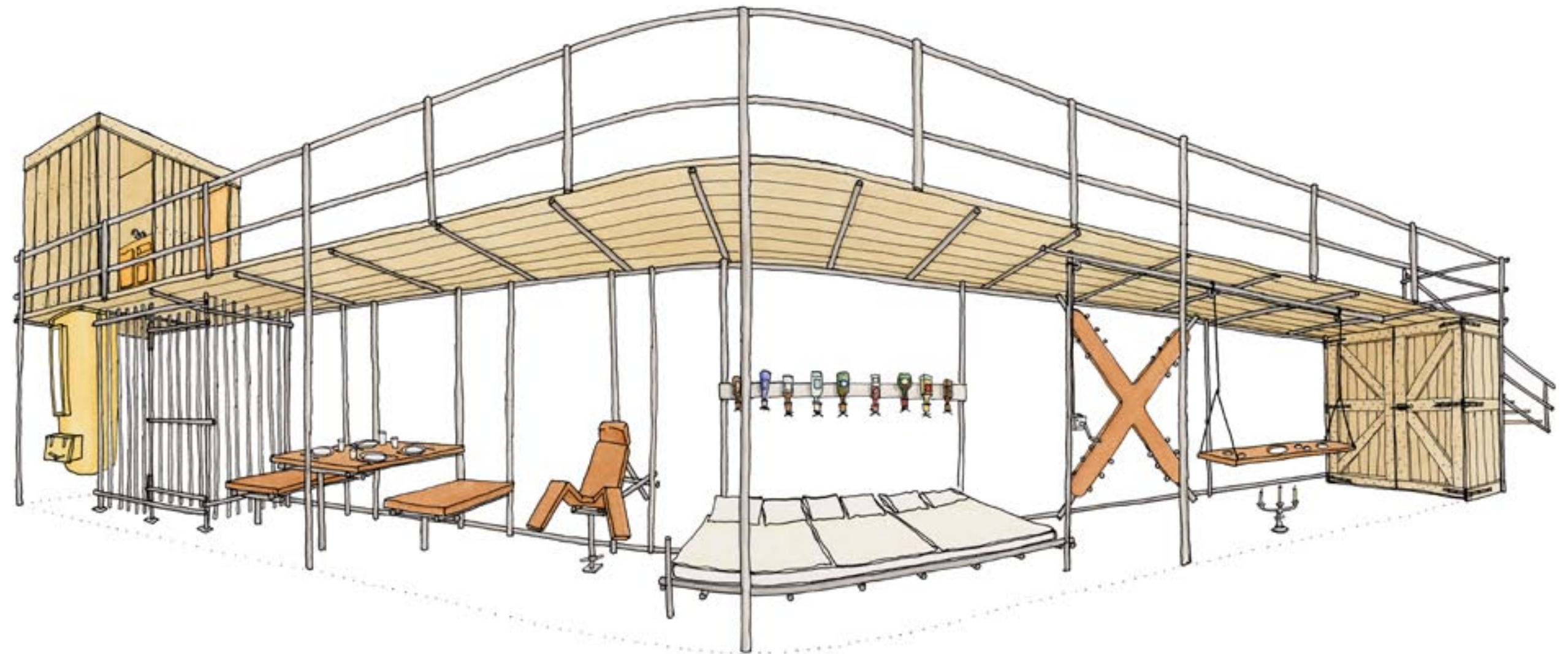
Portrait of a man sitting at a table, drawn as an architect would draw a building: with a plan, a view, a section and in 3D.



Cross-section of a man sitting on a Shaker chair.

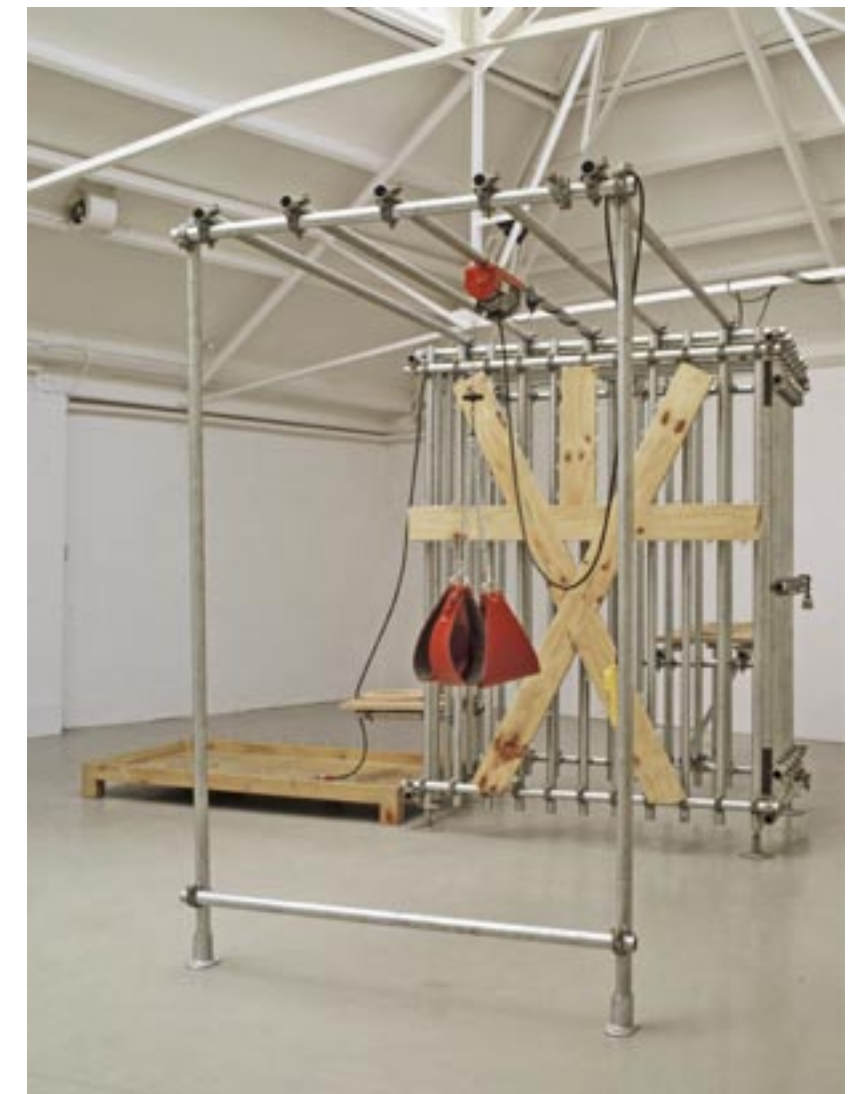


Sportopia provides physical and mental excitement as well as relaxation with three activity areas on two storeys. The ground floor has facilities for sports and for sex; the first floor features a rest and recovery area with a bed for 36 people, a shower and a *Compostoilet*. The entire structure (23 m long and over 6 m high) is made from scaffolding, a simple non-design material. Scaffolding – unlike other products, which are designed in order to sell – has no actual design, because no consumer cares how scaffolding looks; scaffolding is built, only to be dismantled. In the sports department, the weight-lifting and fitness machines were also built with scaffolding; the weights have been made from poured concrete: simple but functional. The sex department features a faecal corner, a cage, a *Turkish Chair*, a *Multi-Woman Bed* and SM equipment. In the rest and recovery department upstairs, the bed was designed to hold the number of employees then working at AVL. Intended for a utopian community, the upper level is a space for harmony, happiness and inter-human contact. But the *Compostoilet* and shower have a double function that links both floors in a provocative way. The toilet's long collecting canister hangs down from the first floor to the ground floor, where faeces can be taken out of the canister and used in the sex department. The shower's drain empties directly into the head of another shower on the ground floor, thus mixing hygiene with waste water. For AVL, *Sportopia* manifests the contradictions that arise when the human body serves political ideologies. Visions of utopia, rest, sport or sexuality, can drive the ideals of perfection into excess; one man's utopia could be another man's hell. Sports may involve the discipline needed to be a good citizen, with a healthy body and mind, but sports have also played a central role in totalitarian regimes. Whenever the human body becomes part of a machine, for pleasure or for pain, no body can beat the machine.









Installation view of a small exhibition that caused a big commotion: *SM* at Gallery Fons Welters in Amsterdam. The show featured sculptures of a womb and a penis, fist-fucking men along with two scaffolding installations: the *Mini Sadist* for sex and the *Mini Sportopia* for sports. To create a special atmosphere, AVL added a film made with clips from footage of scatological porn movies. In seven minutes, *Joepie de Poepie* shows the best scatological sex scenes, edited one after another. Many visitors were repulsed by the movie; newspaper critics created a scandal by protesting the show.

The SM equipment on this frame follows the principle of modularity so every piece is interchangeable. The mask can be put on the face; a funnel can be fixed to the mask, a bodily orifice, handcuffs or any other piece of equipment on the frame. AVL's motto: everything is possible.

Pillory, 2002

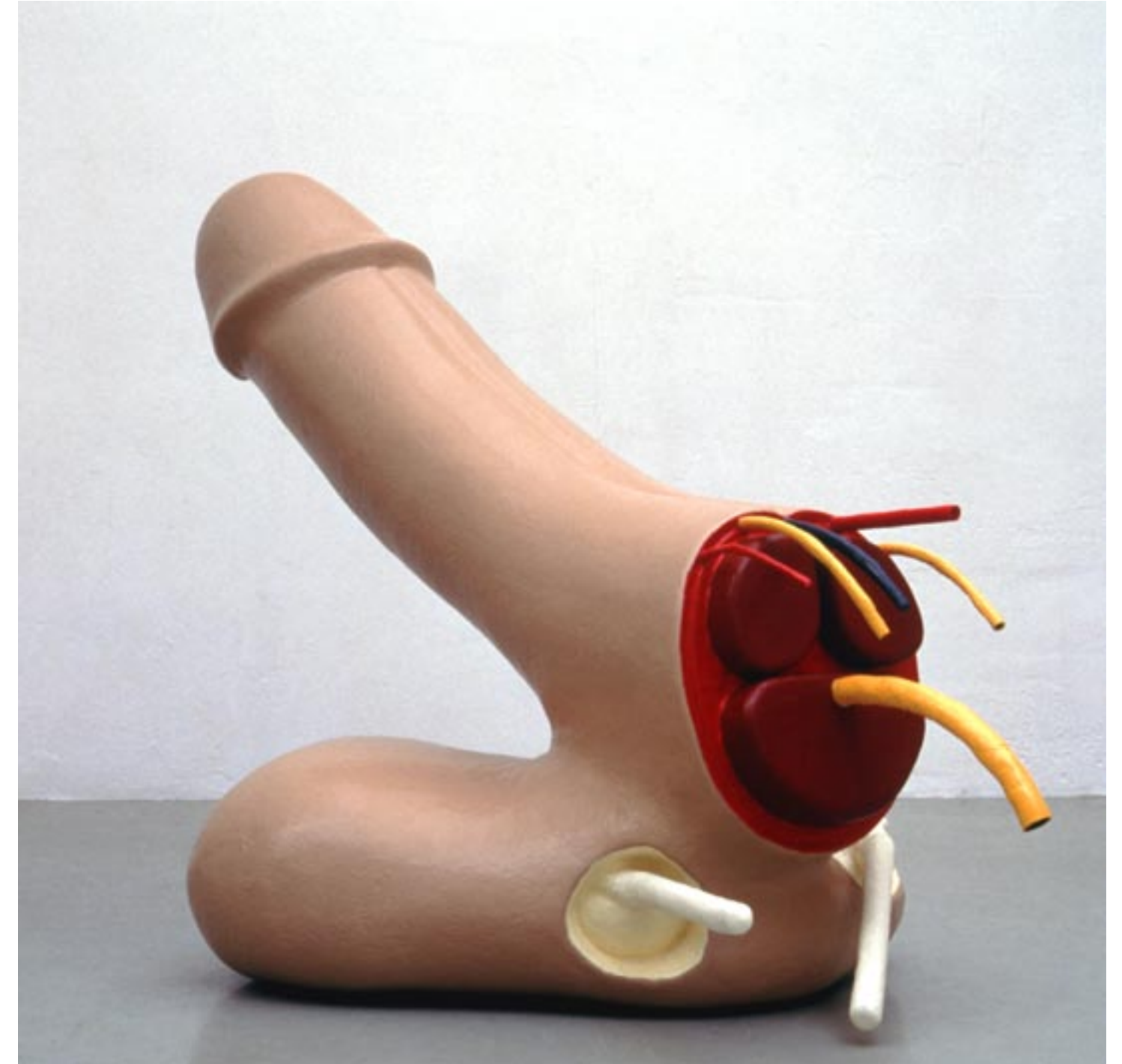


Many people can take advantage of the poor person in the *Pillory*.

Man with Prick, 2002



The penis of this sculpted man is completely out of proportion to the rest of his body. While proud of his huge member, the man is unable to move because of its staggering weight.



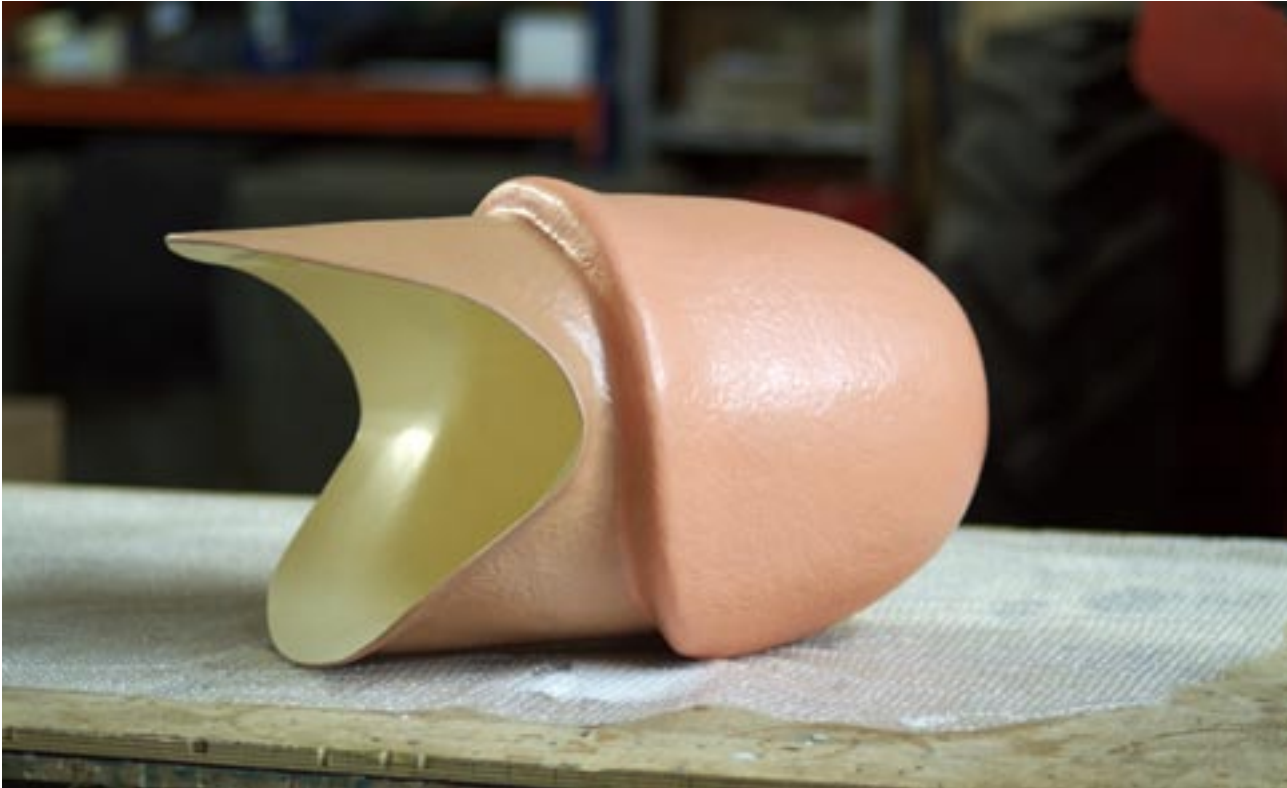
The first medical model, this sculpture of a penis heralds AVL's series of anatomical sculptures and installations.

Bonnefanten Cart, 2002



Walking around inside a museum can be tiring; there are few comforts, let alone luxuries, apart from the artworks. *Bonnefanten Carts* provide a solution: the museum visitor can sit in the mechanized wheelchair and use the joystick to tour the museum at slower or faster speeds. The cart is stocked with cold beer and champagne; the armrest has a special bowl for peanuts. The chair can automatically be raised and lowered to get a closer view of paintings. After touring around, the user can park and slumber in front of his favourite artworks. The carts were designed for the Bonnefanten Museum in Maastricht; AVL believes that all museums should be equipped with such facilities.

Dickhead, 2004



Sensory deprivation dickhead.



Man and Wagon, 2002



Bad Man Kicking, 2002
Bad Man Hitting, 2002
Bad Man with Fist, 2002



Collection Stedelijk Museum, Schiedam and Prada Foundation, Milan



Inspired by *Sportopia*, *Bonnefantopia* was made for the Bonnefanten Museum in Maastricht. Despite the similarities with its noble predecessor, *Bonnefantopia* is more domestic and features both a kitchen sink and a cosy bed. Three fibreglass *Michelangelo* figures inhabit the installation: one is vomiting in the kitchen sink, another is hanging over the scaffolding, and the third is lying on the floor. While the historical Michelangelo slaved away on the Sixtine Chapel, these fallen followers show what happens when men become the slaves of machines or systems.



Michelangelo, 2004
Laocoon, 2003



Like many other installations,
these figures are connected with
tubes and hoses.

Bacchus and His Two Assistants, 2001



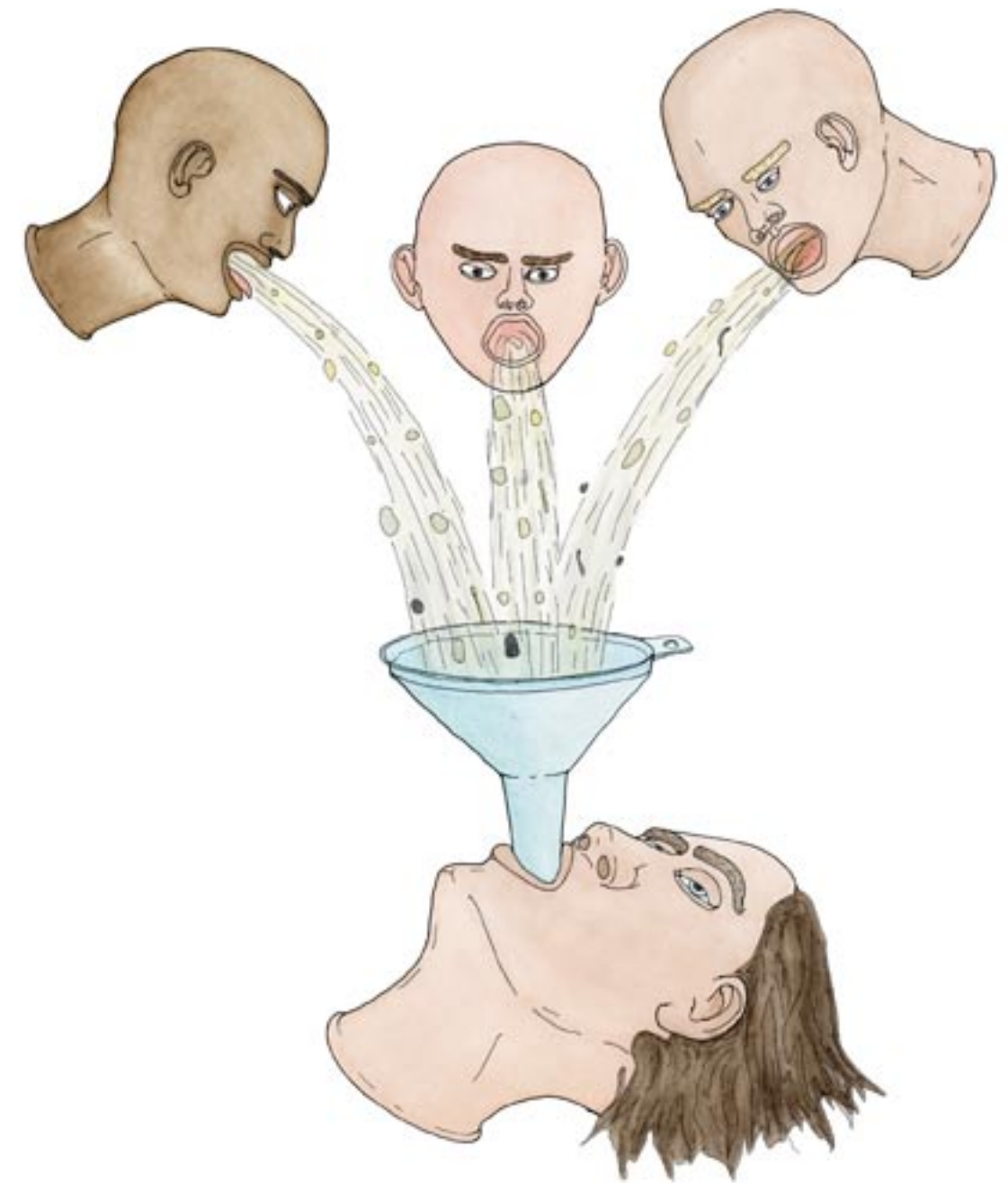
AVL's *Bacchus* comes with two
assistants, who help the demigod
drink.

The Horn of Plenty, 2003

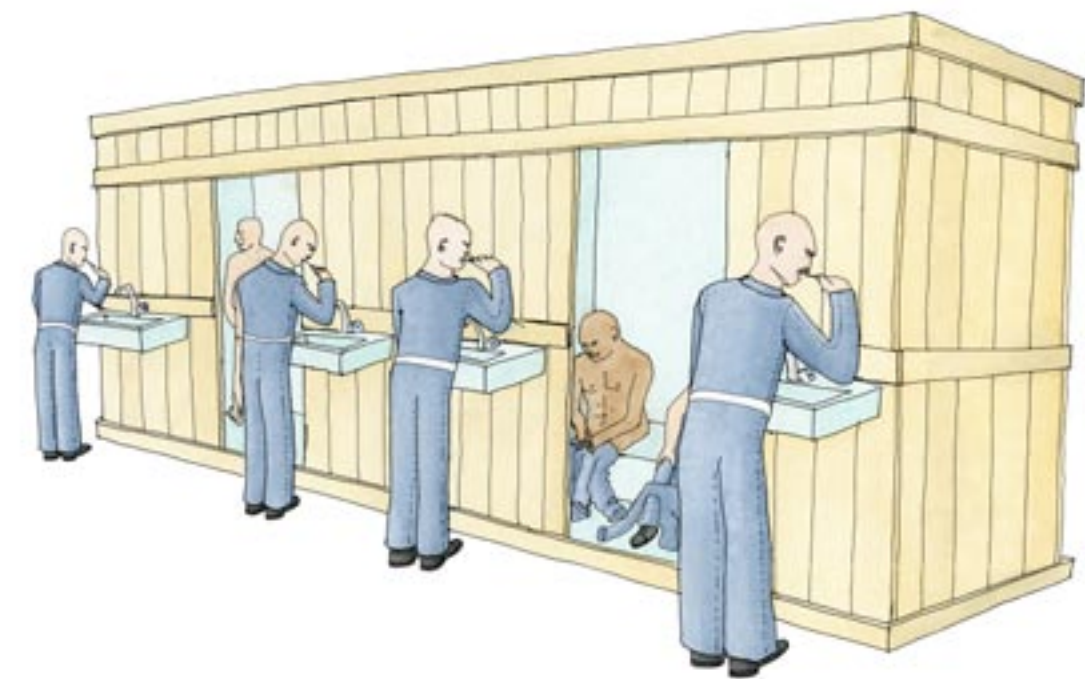
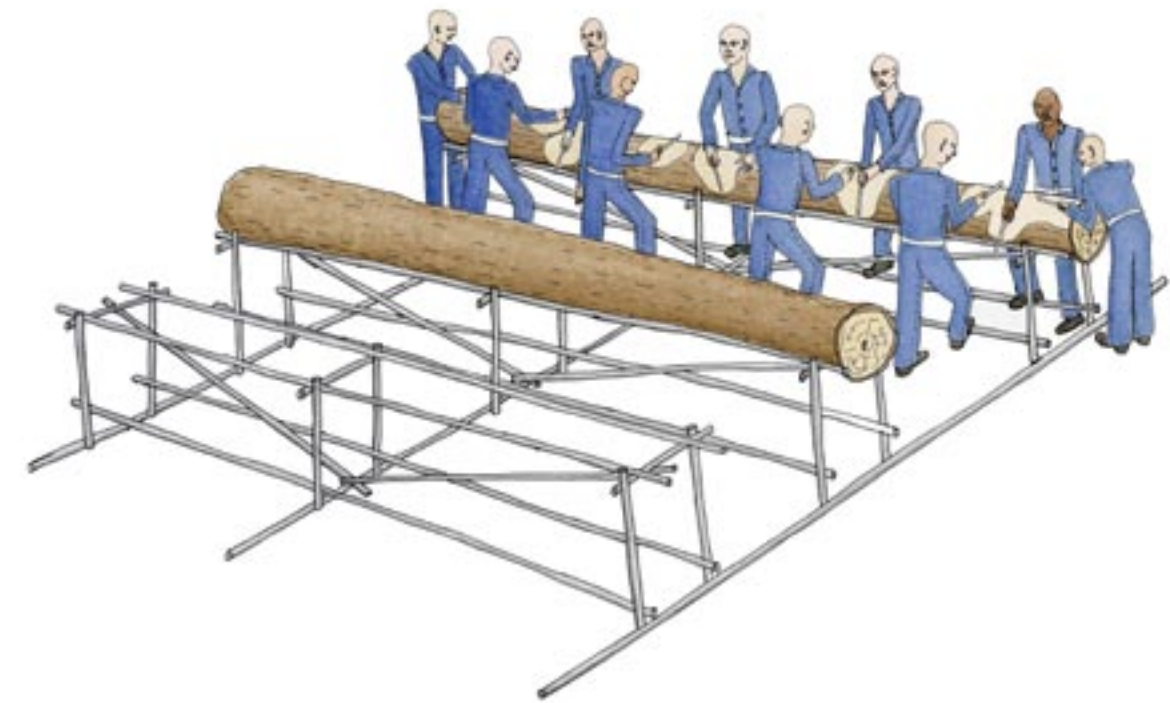
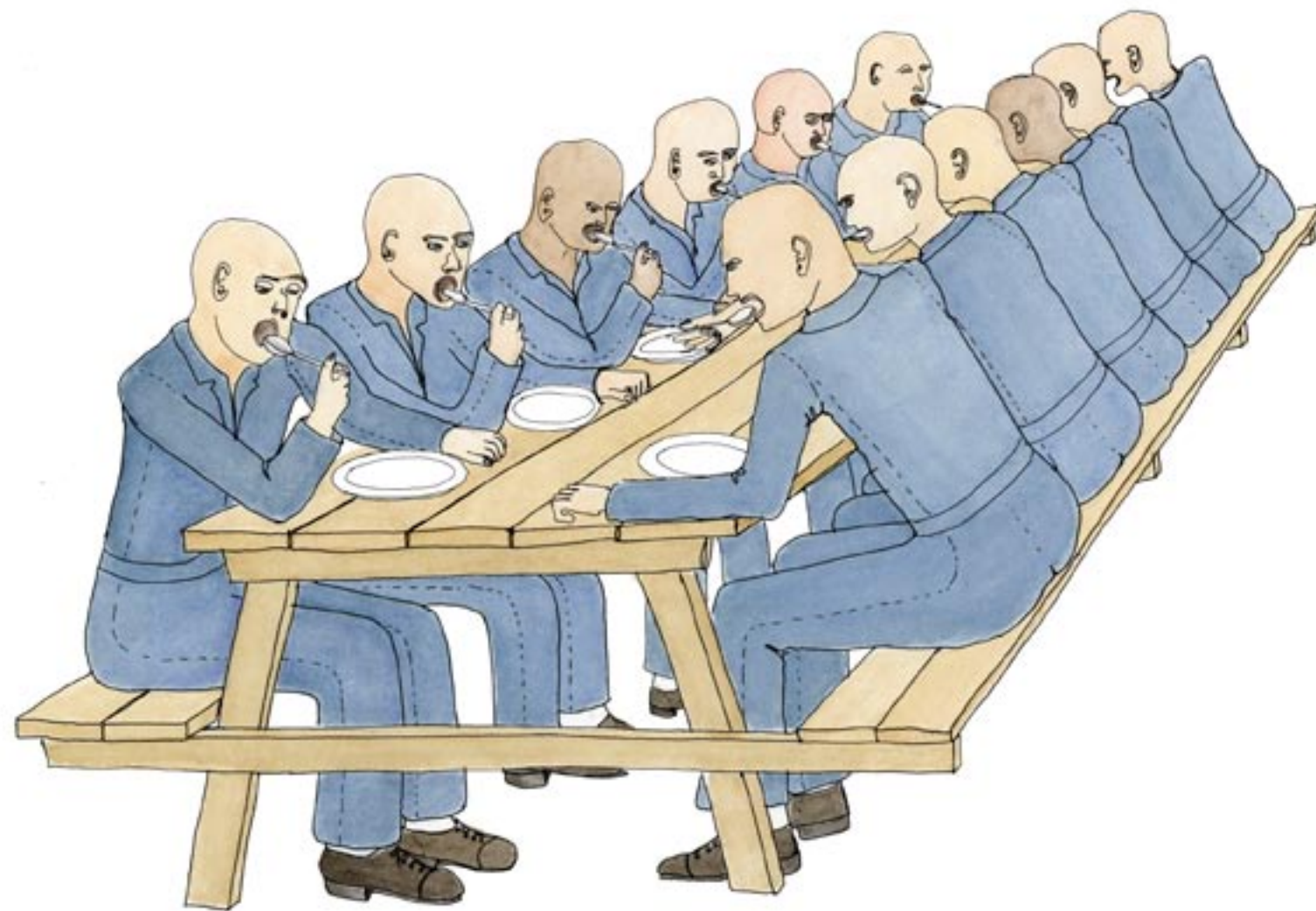


AVL likes wine and beer.

Vomiting Trio, 2003



The horn of plenty for recycling.





The Disciplinator has a mathematical precision in its design, facilities and functions. Based on multiples of four, the elements are intended to be used 24 hours a day by a slave force of 72 inmates. There are 24 bunk beds that can be occupied three times a day; 24 places to eat with 24 cups and 24 dishes; 36 places to work and 36 files with which the slaves complete the useless task of reducing tree trunks to sawdust; and four toilets, four showers, four cups and eight toothbrushes. Running like a clock, *The Disciplinator* produces little else beyond the passage of time and sawdust. In this nightmare, total functionality meets total futility. Designed and filled with the same precision as space, time becomes indistinguishable from an architectural blueprint.



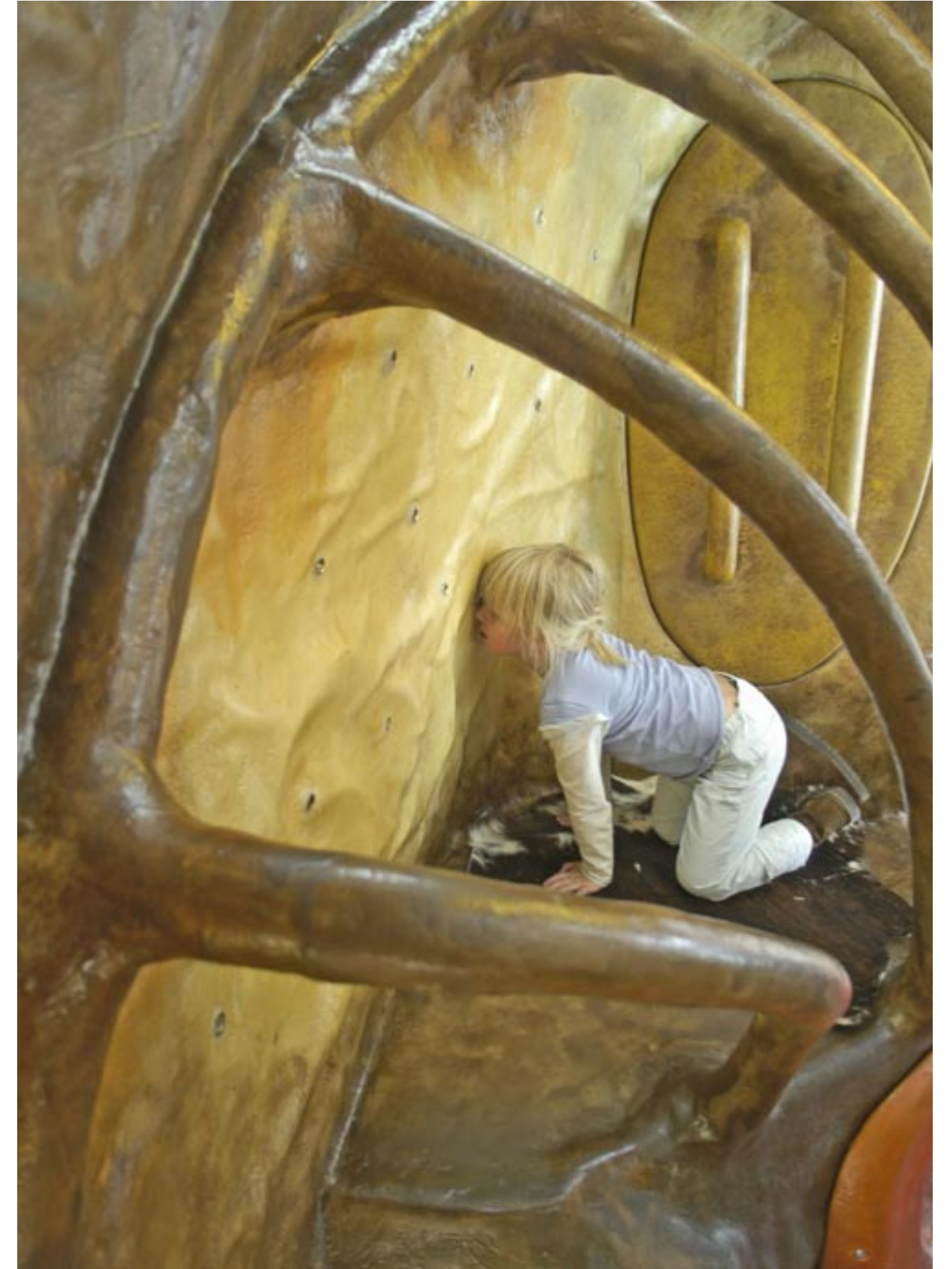
Satellite des Sens, 2003

Satellite des Sens was commissioned when the city of Lille carried the annual title of Cultural Capital of Europe (2004). Eager to include children in the celebrations, the organizers asked AVL to create a mobile unit, which could travel around to different schools. Once parked, the unit welcomed 12 children, aged three to six, along with an adult companion, and invited them to take another kind of trip: an artistic discovery tour of the five senses. The children can hear, see, feel, smell and even taste their way through the spacious green caravan to become conscious about the body's senses in a fun and informative way. The caravan's exterior – which looks like a bright green, friendly monster – is an experience in itself. Before daring to step inside, the children can listen to a collage of sounds and explore what lies beyond the monster's

skin by peeking inside its little eyes and windows. Moving inside is like being swallowed and landing in the gigantic stomach of a whale. In the central cave-like space, there are four different modules, connected by small stairs, passages and a slide. Since the measurements and proportions are all adapted to the toddler's size, adults will find themselves crouching and crawling to reach all of the spaces. In this mysterious labyrinth, the walls have ears, which emit different sounds; there are little mouths to talk to and a big nose with a smell capsule to sniff. CD players with several sound channels produce sounds that intensify the feeling of a living organism and of living inside one: the lapping of the sea, the call of a whale along with curiously funny noises. A large television screen shows a spherical collage of images while a large ventilator sends a

whirlwind through the whole space every few minutes – a touch of cool air on the face. On the walls, children feel textures and reliefs in the mixture of different materials: from the hardness of polyester to the warm softness of deep-pile carpet, sheep fleece and itchy short-haired cow hides. Created in close collaboration with a team of specialists – trailer builders, engineers, sculptors, sound artists and pedagogues – AVL's *Satellite des Sens* is a surrealistic dream object on wheels.





Compostolet, 2000



A double-decker toilet for environmentally friendly composting. Faecal matter falls into the elongated container. The *Compostolet* is a very low-tech yet very efficient way of recycling human waste. Straw, which is thrown in the toilet bowl, helps the composting process; the straw's hollow stems bring oxygen into the faeces, thus helping aerobic bacteria to grow.

Incinerator, 2006
Pig Toilet, 2005



A handy way to get rid of human faeces: defecate in the storage hole and the excrement slides into the furnace where it will be burnt.

Such pig toilets are still used in many parts of the world. People defecate in the toilet in the front; pigs happily eat the excrement from the trough at the back. The work was part of a theatre play about the different aspects of faeces and how it is dealt with. If anything, art is like shit: once an artwork comes out of the artist's body, the work usually cannot be touched or changed anymore.



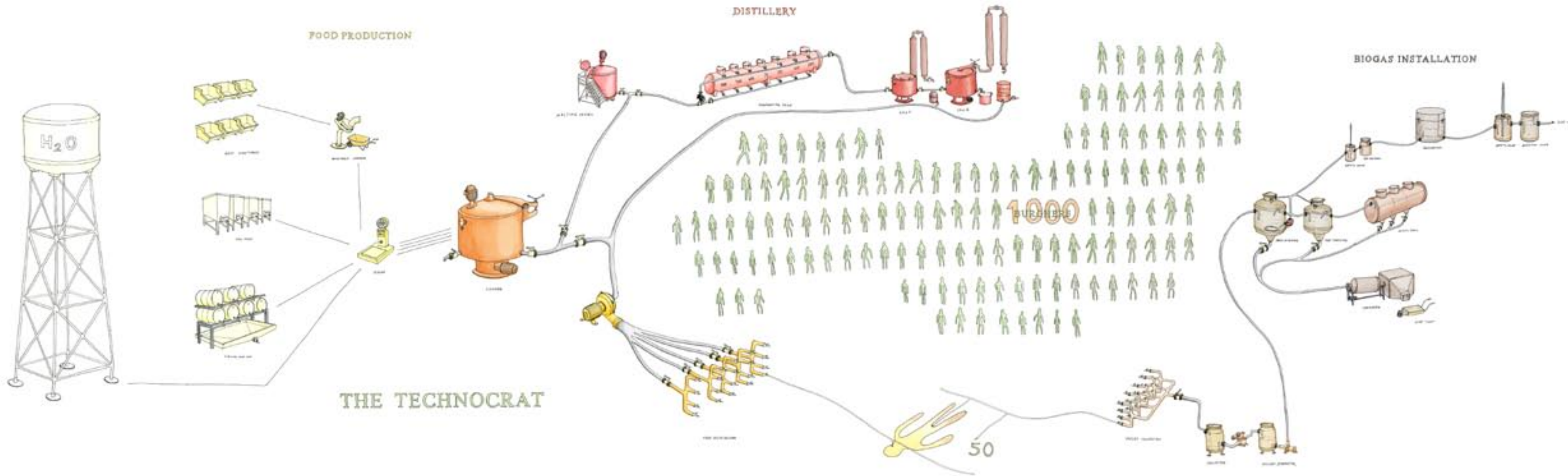
Uritory, 2003

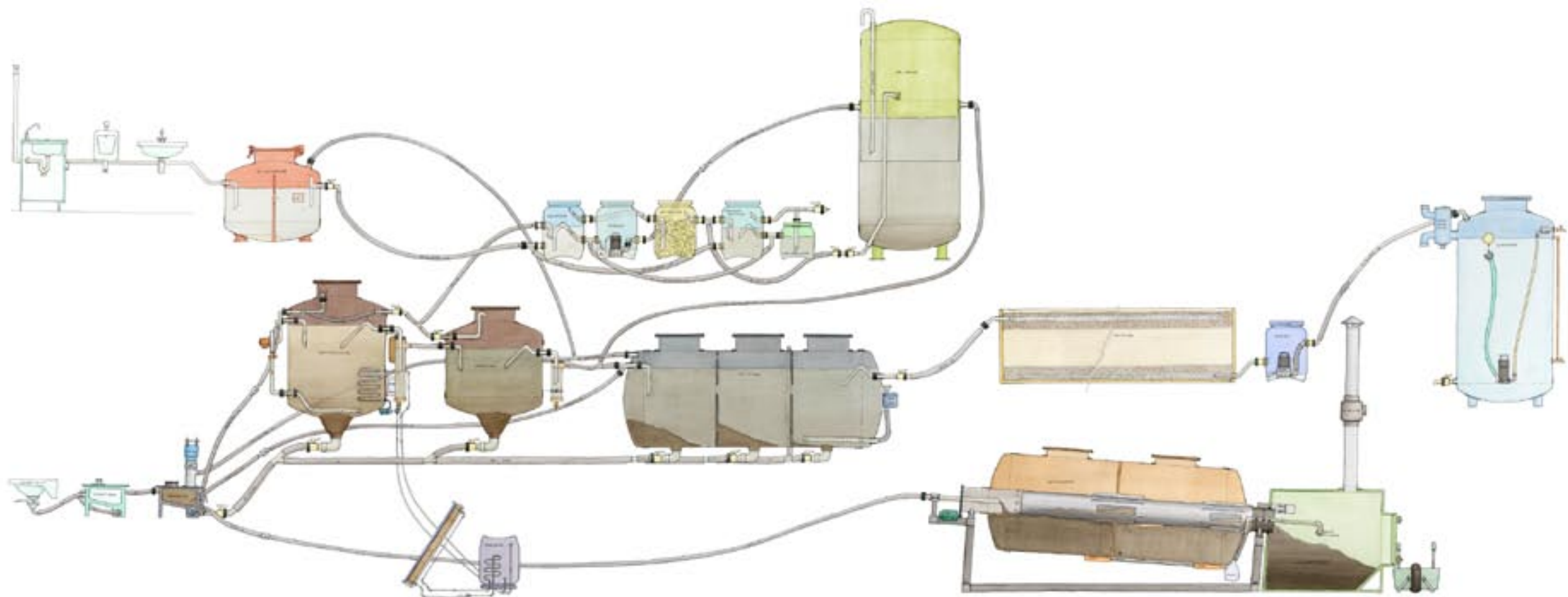


Uritory is a unisex amenity. The angle of the toilet bowl is positioned in such a way that both women and men can easily use the toilet while standing up. Ecologically-friendly, *Uritory* is linked to a small biogas installation. A storage space for the toilet brush has been built into the side of the bowl.

Toilets, 1992-1994







The section drawing of *Total Faecal Solution* shows the important design aspects of this biogas installation. Every part of *The Technocrat* has a different design atmosphere and approach. *Total Faecal Solution* features fresh modern colours and sensual shapes, combined with simple low-tech prefab products and standard applications.

The Technocrat is a closed circuit of food, alcohol, excrement and energy. In this system, the human burgher is the biological cogwheel that generates enough raw material to produce not only valuable biogas used for cooking food and distilling alcohol to keep the humans functioning. *The Technocrat* consists of four parts that come with instructions. By following the instructions, anyone can learn to operate *The Technocrat*.

The Burghers
For optimal functionality, *The Technocrat* requires 1000 burghers, who can be efficiently stored in large bunk beds. According to the supply of burghers and the availability of food, their lifespan can be manipulated. On a daily basis the following activities should be executed: Remove and recycle non-functional burghers as necessary, and replace them with new ones; Check connections of feeding and excrement suction hoses; Check cleanliness of burghers Three times per day, administer in the following order: 600 litres of food from The Feeder, 133 litres of alcohol and 600 litres of water; After feeding, the hoses should be cleaned by blowing compressed air through them to empty them completely.

Total Faecal Solution
Total Faecal Solution recycles human excrement in a maniacal way. The excrement is sucked out of the burghers by vacuum power and pumped into the two biogas digesters, where the slurry is mixed and heated. Under these special conditions, methane gas is produced by specific bacteria. The gas is cleaned, dried and stored in the gas-o-meter for later use: cooking and distilling. Everything is majestically recycled into usable products: gas, water and compost. Regularly check temperature and acidity; Control the connections and water levels of safety equipment; Pump the solid waste to the *AutoComposter* and the purified waste water to the *Water Tower*.

The Feeder
The Feeder produces and administers cheap food that generates a maximum output of faeces. Calculate the menu based on the available ingredients and the desired life expectancy of the burgher. Fill Cooker with water and open steam valve; Weigh and add leftovers from malting and distilling processes and other edible materials; Weigh, grind, and add cereals, vegetables, roots and tubers; Weigh and add fat, oil, and other liquids; Grind and add meat if available. Boil for 30 minutes; Switch on blender until a thin, smooth paste is obtained; Switch on pump to distribute food to the burghers.

The Alcoholator
In order to keep the burghers satisfied, alcohol should be administered. Making alcohol is a two-step process: first you make a mash of an ingredient with high sugar or carbohydrate content and by fermentation it is transformed into a liquid that contains approximately 15 per cent alcohol. The distillery is used to purify and increase the alcohol content to 96 per cent. Mash: Grind the ingredients to the consistency of sand, add 300 litres of water and boil for 30 minutes. Add another 300 litres of water, add 12 kg malt and switch on the mixer for 30 minutes. Fermenting: Filter the mash, bring the residue to the feeder to be reused as a food supplement and pump the liquid to the fermenting tank. Adjust the pH level to 4.5 by adding acid or base. Allow the temperature to fall to 30 °C and add 0.5 kg brewers yeast. Close

the tank and mix the liquid three times a day and allow it to ferment for three days. The alcohol percentage should be between 10 and 16 per cent. Pump the liquid to the still and clean the tank thoroughly before filling it again. Distil: The distillery has two stills: the first produces 50 litres of methanol that can be used as poison. The second still produces 400 litres of drinking alcohol. After four hours, the distillation process will be complete: the methanol is stored for later use while alcohol can be distributed to the burghers.



This set of ecological toilets is made for optimal biogas production. In order to divide faecal matter from urine, AVL developed a special toilet for shitting only that uses vacuum power, like airplane toilets, to suck out the excrement using a minimum amount of water. Urinating should be done only in the urinals, since urine is recycled separately. There is a male version and a female version since AVL believes in equal rights for men and women. While the toilets are designed for the best results in recycling, they involve an element of control. Inside the faecal toilet, there is a video surveillance camera, which allows a guard to see if anyone pees illegally in the shit toilet. Friendly ecology meets voyeuristic suppression.



In the *Biogas Installation*, faeces are pumped to the first tank or digester, where the temperature is kept at 37 °C. The mass is stirred, and the acidity of the liquid is maintained. Methane gas forms through the influence of bacteria in the first digester. After 21 days the liquid moves to the second digester to recuperate the last traces of biogas. After that, it goes into the large horizontal tank, a septic tank with an aerator that pumps oxygen through the liquid to improve purification. The next step is the green filter: the filter removes the last impurities and produces quality drinking water, which is connected and transferred to the *Water Tower*. The biogas collects in barrels next to the tanks where it is dried and washed. There is safety equipment in case of overpressure or if the system backfires.





These burghers are superfluous, non-functional citizens, ready to be transported to the composter or feeder.

These bunk beds can efficiently store up to 1000 burghers, who produce the biogas in *The Technocrat*.



The Feeder has a nostalgic design, a rounded and heavy shape that evokes German and other totalitarian designs from the 1930s. *The Feeder* is a multipart installation with containers, silos, storage for liquids, scales, steam boilers, cookers, water tanks and machines for cleaning vegetables like beets and potatoes and for cutting them.



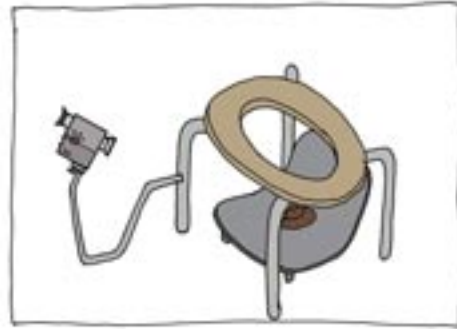


AutoComposter turns solid particles, one of the final products of the biogas installation, into compost. The particles are pumped at regular intervals into a mixing device that adds straw and sawdust. The mixture comes out at the other end and can be used as compost.

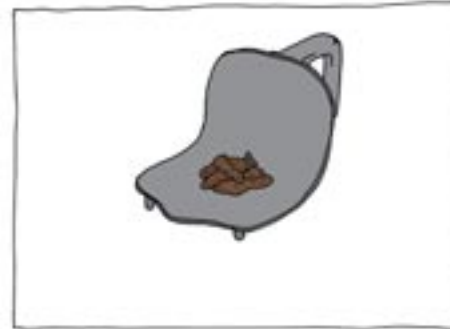


In *The Technocrat*, the *Alcoholator* keeps people happy with 1800 litres of alcohol a day, every day of the week. The alcohol is made of waste products from the kitchen and other sites. After the distilling process, 600 litres of 40 per cent alcohol remain and are distributed three times a day. Like the other parts of *The Technocrat*, *Alcoholator* has a specific style: red, sexy, voluptuous.





For the collection of the excrements I use an extended version of the "Il primitivo". This stool that is equipped with a toilet seat, has a camera that records the excrementing together with the date and time.



Under the "Il Primitivo" there is the special devised collection dish that serves as a neutral background for the video.



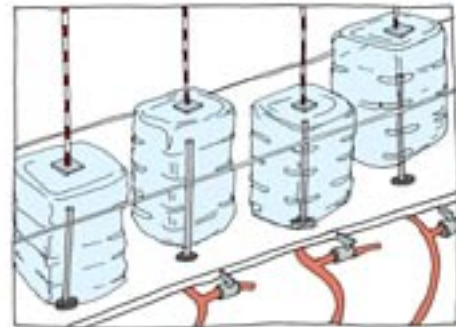
Put the blender glass on the scale and switch on. The display will show zero grams, slide the excrements in the blender together with the toilet paper since the paper itself will digest as well.



Register the weight, push another time on the on-off switch so that the display shows zero grams again. Add some water to obtain the right consistency, normally double the weight of the excrements will do.



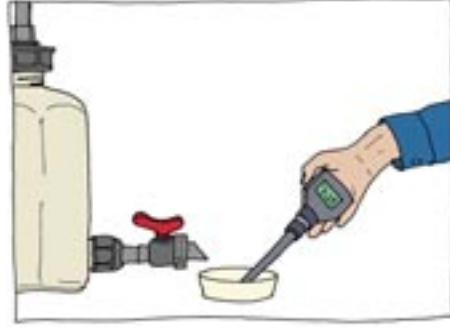
You can also add other digestible waste materials such as fruit and vegetable peels, scrap paper, fat and oil. Almost every organic material will digest eventually.



Before adding the excrements and other digestible materials to the digester check the quantity of gas that was produced in the hours before.



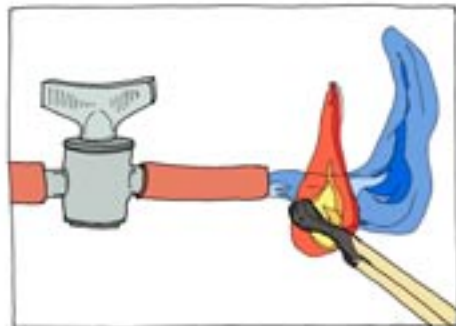
Take away the plug, put the funnel and pour in the "food" for the bacteria and swirl the jar around.



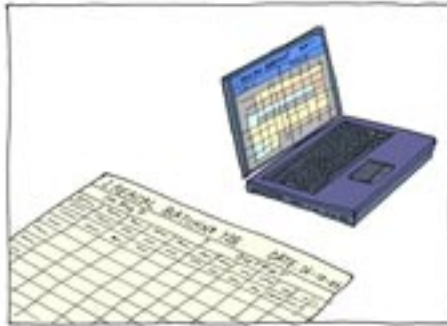
Tap some of the liquid and conduct an acidity test. The lower the number that you read on the display the more acid the fluid is. If the level drops below PH 6.5 the bacteria that produce biogas (methane) will die. You can raise the PH level by adding some backing soda.



Shake the Jar!
The slurry tends to shift, the heavier parts sag to the bottom while the lighter particles will float on the surface. When gas is produced this scum can block the gas exit. I can guarantee you from my own experience that you don't want that to happen; So.... shake the jar thoroughly every 6 hours.



Now it is time to conduct the flammability test. Open the valve and look if the mixture burns.



Fill in the quantity of the materials that were given and extracted from the digester on the computer so that the information can be processed later.

Good luck!

Although *The Technocrat* and the *Biogas Installation* were made to be fully functional, these works were never tested (no burghers volunteered their services). Like the iPod, AVL's *I Faecal Experimental* exploits miniaturization, albeit to test on a small scale the production of biogas from human excrement. The process was monitored, measured and improved; the experiment was a success.





Of course there's progress on earth, so to speak, but that's only one of the many lies that business people put out, so that they can squeeze money out of the crowd more blatantly and mercilessly. The masses are the slaves of today, and the individual is the slave of the vast mass-ideas. There's nothing beautiful and excellent left. You must dream up beauty and goodness and justice. Tell me, do you know how to dream?

Robert Walser, Jakob von Gunten, 1909

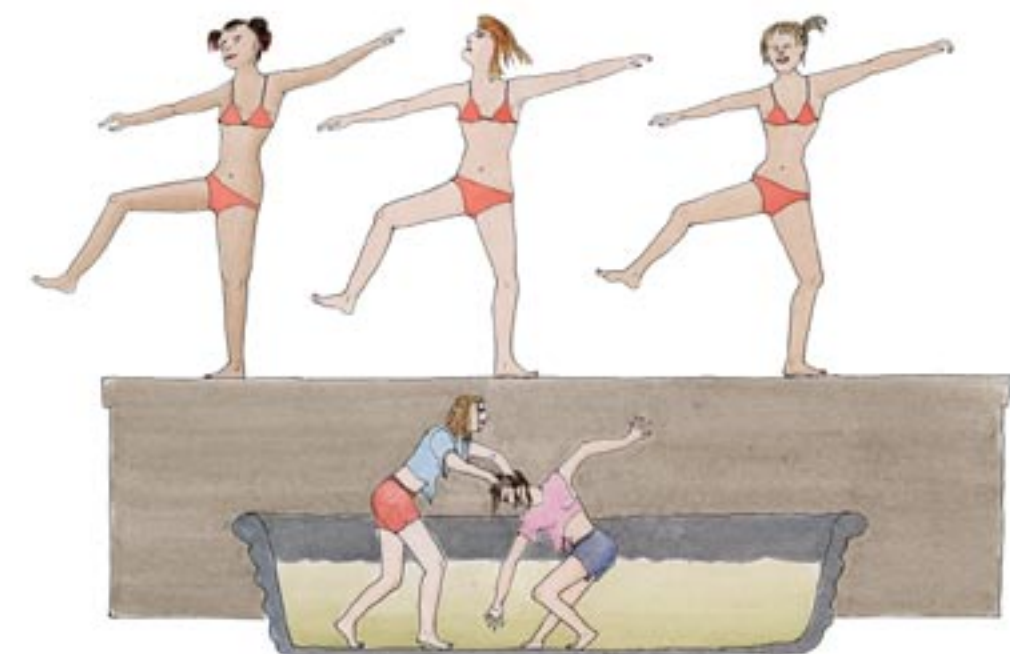
Triumph: Man, Power and Machine was an exhibition both produced and curated by Joep van Lieshout for the Boijmans van Beuningen Museum. AVL's installations provide so many proposals for 'model' communities, from AVL-Ville, a cross between a hedonistic hippie camp and an armed militia, to *The Disciplinator*, a stylized labour camp striving for maximum efficiency and productivity by means of various mechanisms of oppression. The tension between collectivity and individual freedom, pleasure and exploitation, good and evil, has always run throughout AVL's heterogeneous

oeuvre. These oppositions also form the starting point of this two-part presentation which the atelier made by choosing artworks from the Boijmans' permanent collection. Room 1 featured artists from the past and present who attempted to express universal, 'big' feelings like fear and surrender, love and suffering, belief and heroic sacrifice, vulnerability and guilt. Both classical and religious art are marked by the frequent use of certain visual archetypes or idioms such as the *Niobe* and the *Pietà*. Contemporary artists like Beuys, Kiefer and Nauman introduced other, more



personal ways of expressing these fundamental human emotions. In Room 2, the power and authority of a person, regime or ideology is made visible and palpable by means of visual forms of expression, symbols, buildings, images. Here, too, it is often a case of stereotypes, such as the heroic representation of the worker and the depiction of man as machine. Supporters of various twentieth-century ideologies, from Fascism to Stalinism and Capitalism, used and misused art and architecture to reinforce their views about life and politics along with their belief in the

power of industrial and technological progress. Artists throughout the ages either resisted or followed these forms of visual propaganda in subtle ways. The two rooms are linked by parts of the AVL total installation *The Technocrat*: a closed system in which man is deployed to produce biogas, a form of energy that is then used to manufacture food (sustenance) and alcohol (intoxication), substances intended to ensure that the man-machine continues to function optimally. A quick lesson in how to design oppression.



UR-SOUP	
OXYGEN	65.0%
CARBON	18.5%
HYDROGEN	9.5%
NITROGEN	3.2%
CALCIUM	1.5%
PHOSPHORUS	1.0%
POTASSIUM	0.4%
SULFUR	0.3%
SODIUM	0.2%
CHLORINE	0.1%
MAGNESIUM	0.1%
IODINE	0.1%
IRON	0.1%
TRACE ELEMENTS	0.5%

Ursoup has been drawn like a design for a theatre play. The scene shows a scientist using a blender to mix the basic chemical elements of which the human body is composed, from oxygen (65 per cent) to iron (0.1 per cent). The scientist will pour the mixture in an inflatable bath area with breeding lamps above where two women will perform an *Ursoup* mud fight. The mixture doesn't look at all like the human body, but it has exactly the same composition.

Mini Technocrat, 2004



Multi Funnel, 2004
Mini Feeder 2004



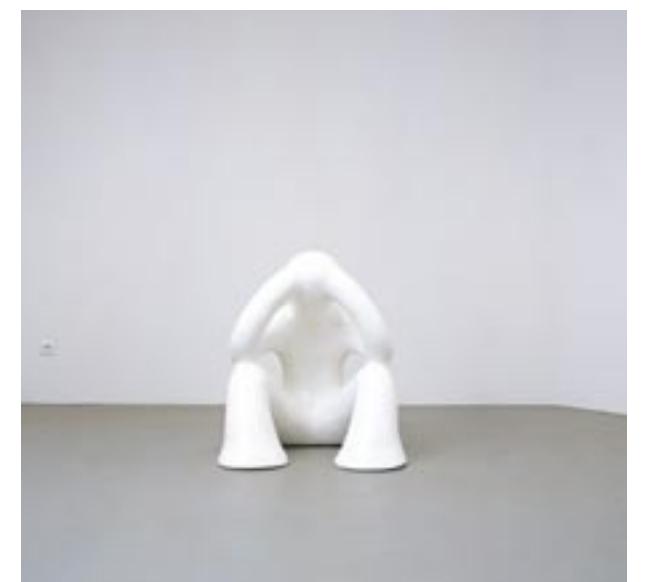
Collection Prada Foundation, Milan

Collection Martha Herford Museum, Herford / Private Collection, Sweden

Kitchen, 2006



The Scientists, 2002



The Caretaker, 2003
Happy Family, 2005
The American Caretakers, 2004



Society, 2006



Try to win, and you will be happy.

AVL's inspirations often come from classical artworks whose qualities are more hidden. In earlier days, artists were dependent on patrons and their commissions. The church and wealthy families gave an assignment to make an artwork according to a special theme or occasion. Despite the constraints, artists managed to produce superior works.

Collection Hurst, Colorado

The Caretakers, 2005



De Gedragen Man, 2005



Carried Man.

Dancing Family, 2006



The sculpture resulted from a major decision: not to have children for the next eight years.

The Emaciated, 2006



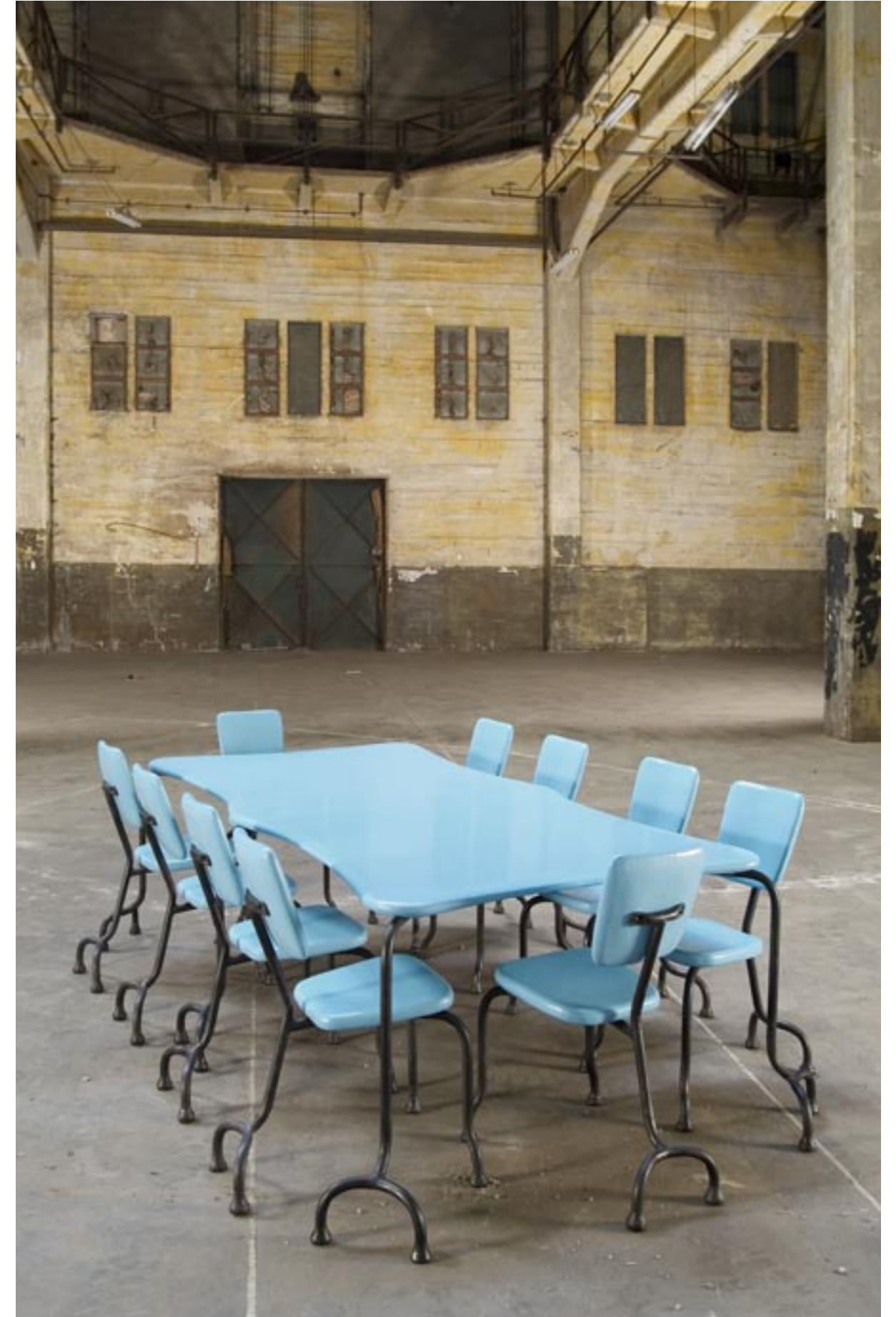
Collection Hugo and Carla Brown, The Hague

Bad Furniture, 2004

Contemporary design practice increasingly depends upon high tech. Designs are drawn on the computer and made by means of rapid prototyping. Once the prototype is complete, the object is manufactured far away in another country with cheap labour and then comes back. To counter this distant way of designing, AVL created *Bad Furniture* in the tradition of the Arts and Crafts movement and Art Nouveau style. For *Bad Furniture*, the designer and the producer are one and the same person. Both the steel and the wood have been hand-crafted. Love, tools and materials are combined; shape and passion go hand in hand.



The *Bad Crib* can be secured with padlock.



Bad Furniture, 2004



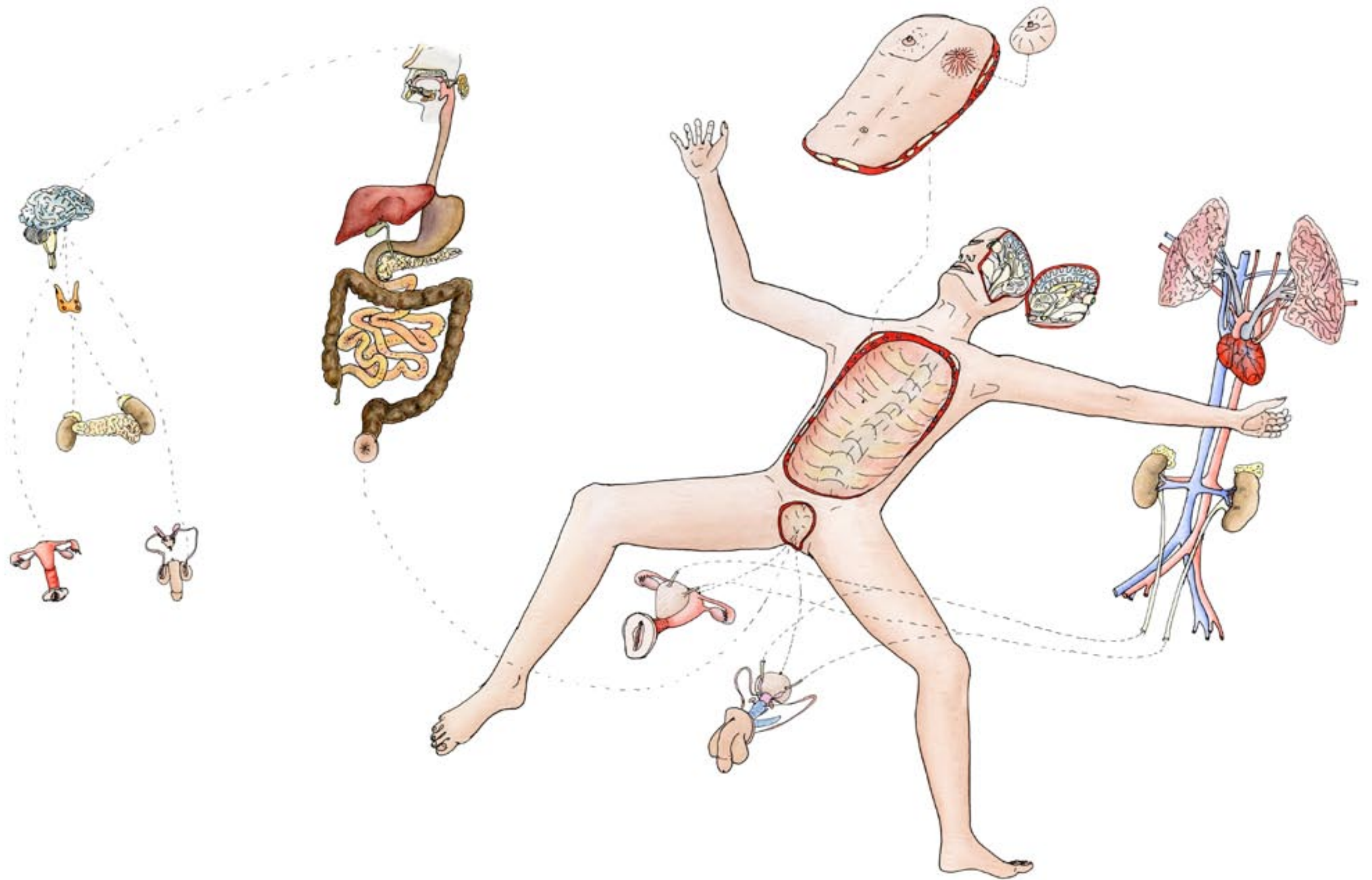
Sport Nouveau, 2003



Sport Nouveau, 2003

Sport Nouveau was created in the wake of *Bad Furniture*. This set of sports equipment has been designed with fantastic shapes, elegant forms and a noble character. The machine fits only thin people, preferably wearing silk socks. A heavier human body would break the machines, even with normal use.





Womb, Penis, Kidney Bladder Combination, Liver, 2003



Joep van Lieshout is obsessed by systems. All systems have a good side and a bad side, possibilities and restrictions. An individual can depend on a system, profit from it or be enslaved by it. Human systems, like those created by the internal human organs, add an aesthetic dimension: how organs work and how they look is magnificent. Who was the designer?

Womb, Gullet, Rectum, 2003

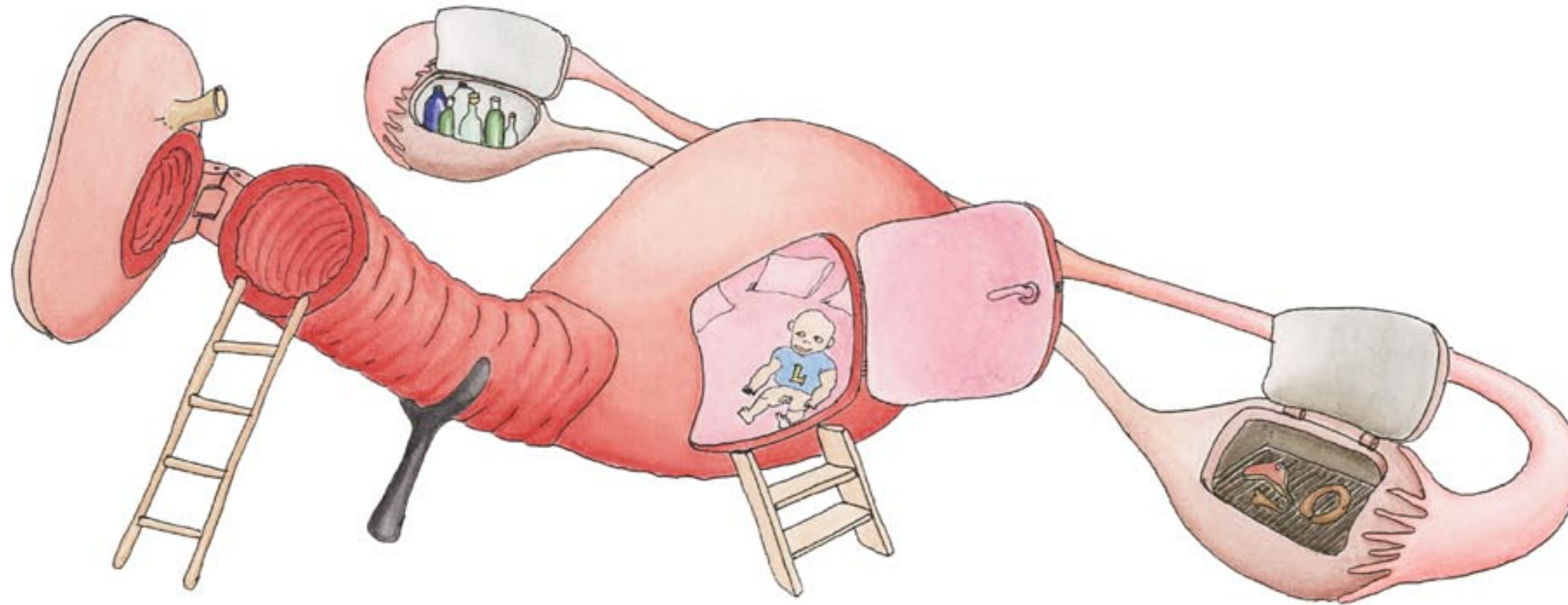


AVL developed a complete series of sculptures of the human internal organs, ranging from the heart and the brain to the penis and the womb. Some of the organs are connected in a larger system. The tongue, gullet and stomach are part of the digestive system; the urinary system has been made for both sexes (a kidney and a bladder with a penis or a vagina). These works offer a stylized reproduction of the interior of the human body: the artist turned inside-out.



Like penises, medical models come in different sizes.

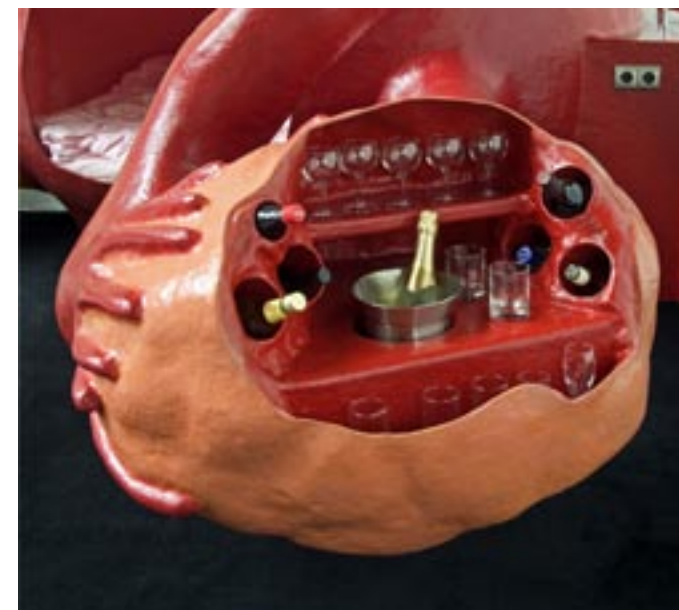




The design for the *Wombhouse* owes its origins to AVL's sculptures of the female reproductive system. One of the sculptures caught the attention of a Belgian collector and retired gynaecologist, who had spent his life examining women. Excited by AVL's magnified genitalia, the collector wanted to have a super-size version so that he would be able to go inside with his wife, children and grandchildren. AVL rose to the challenge with a new, expanded design, which is not quite anatomically correct. The womb has a bed and the vagina is an escape hatch; the right ovary holds a barbeque while the left sports a minibar containing bottles of booze instead of eggs. The design eventually gave birth to the real *Wombhouse*, an offspring with even more features.



Wombhouse is a utility unit that acts as the technical core for a house. The womb is not only every human's first dwelling, but also the only human body part that can be inhabited by another individual. The technical core is a well-known design principle invented in the twentieth century by avant-garde architects and then used many times over by other architects. Prefabricated, the technical core contains all of the essential functions of a building: sanitation, kitchen, heating, ventilation. Normally, this core is an anonymous, square object. By contrast, *Wombhouse* has an exciting, poetic and enchanting shape. The womb contains a bedroom in the uterus, the safest place in the mind of human beings, along with heating, air-conditioning, electrical systems, a kitchen and a shower. One ovary contains the minibar; the other the toilet. *Wombhouse* can make any space function as a home; the structure requires only a roof and walls to protect it from the climate. The surrounding space can take many shapes: a simple wooden shed, a concrete modernist structure, a traditional brick house or even an existing building. Put the plug in the socket, and everything will work.





BarRectum, ArschBar, AssholeBar, BarAnus. While the translations sound different, the form is universally recognizable. The bar takes its shape from the human digestive system: starting with the tongue, continuing to the stomach, moving through the small and the large intestines and exiting through the anus. While *Bar Rectum* is anatomically correct, the last part of the large intestine has been inflated to a humongous size to hold as many drinking customers at the bar as possible. The anus itself is part of a large door that doubles as an emergency exit.



The Heads, Claudia & Hermann, 2005



This sculpture group has three heads, which are hollow and can be used in different ways. The male head Hermann is a typical blue-eyed blond, the female Claudia has dark hair and brown eyes. Tom, the third head (not yet produced), is a dark-faced man, standing straight on his neck. The three of them together reflect on the diversity of humanity in a very special way.

The BikiniBar, 2006

A meeting point for elderly people: beautiful, cruel and sensual, with a nice interior space. Both art and architecture, *BikiniBar* represents a building as a sculpture and a sculpture as a building. There is a place to rest inside, where people can withdraw from the busy beach life or bad weather. It's also possible to play a very special game of darts! *BikiniBar* is the only female body you can enter without permission.

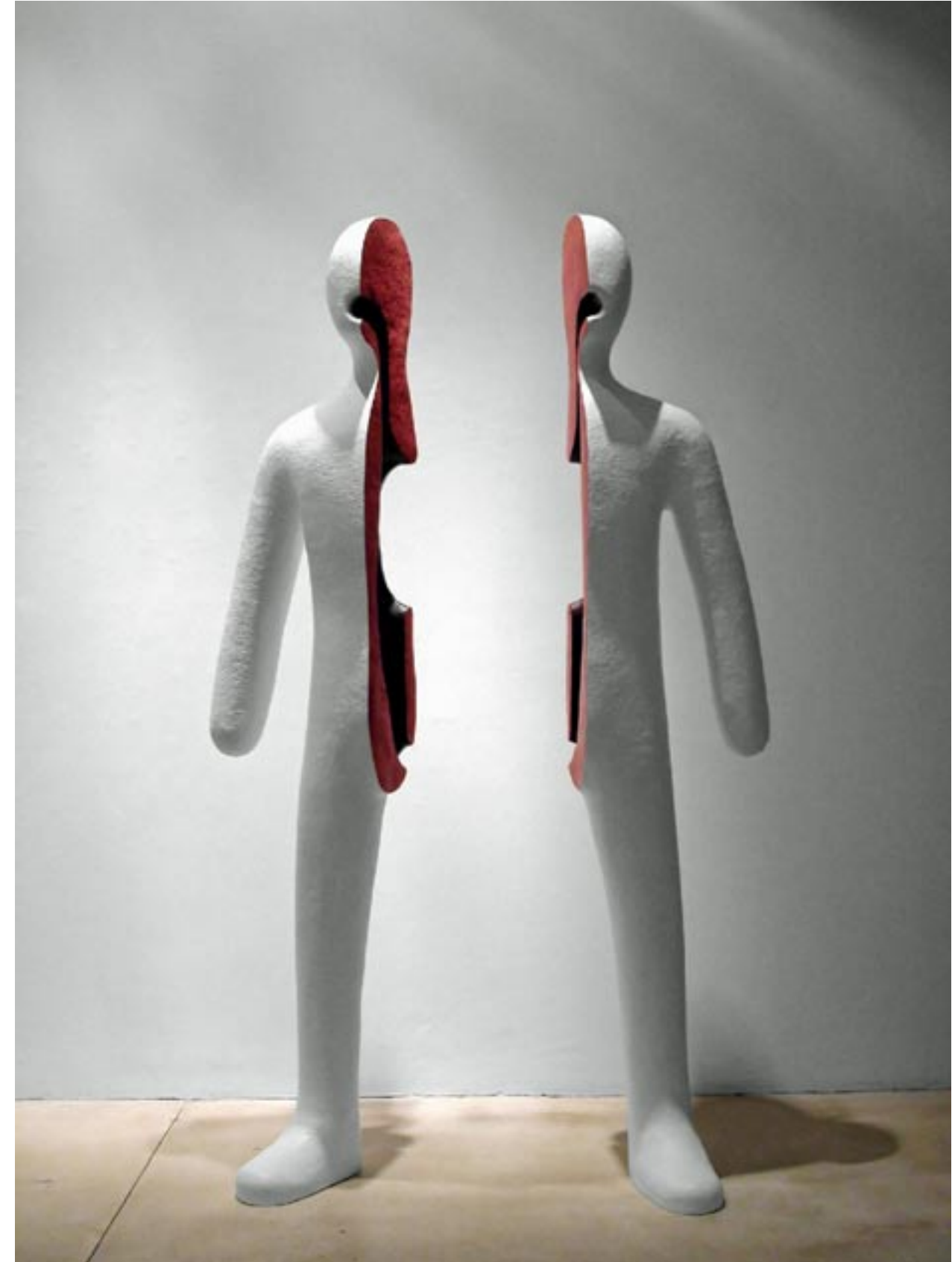


Split Hollow Man, 2005



A split man with a simplified digestion system.

Half Standing Hollow Man, 2005







For Amsterdam's Lloyd Hotel, which was designed by the MVRDV architectural team, AVL made a series of bathroom units for individual hotel rooms, along with two special music chambers: one for rock, the other for classical music. Both chambers are extra-large: family- or orgy-size.

The *Rock Music Room* is mainly refurbished with wood, hanging free inside the hotel space to muffle hard sounds. A *Multi-Woman Bed* is installed for the groupies and all kind of equipment is available to play all night long without disturbing any other hotel guests. Even the windows can be blocked with panels to make the night everlasting.





This room is about 6.5 m high with a lounge to relax in and a platform to sleep on. These separate spaces are connected by a vertical bathroom topped with stairs. The lounge refers to a baroque version of a classic hotel lounge with a grand piano and chesterfield sofas. The platform is designed for rest and sanitary use.



For the restaurant of the museum Boijmans Van Beuningen and the receptionhall of KOW architects, AVL designed tables in the shape of different female torsos. The irregular shape of the tables serves to enhance communication. People sit closer to each other at the same table – a proximity that tends to ignite a conversation.





Every day brings a new challenge to AVL. One fine day, we found ourselves invited to refurbish the practice of a family doctor and art collector, Dr Van Sint Fiet. AVL redesigned, refurbished and rebuilt his practice – the reception, the examination room, the laboratory – while adding a clip-on to the building for personal consultations. AVL took out the walls of his office and replaced them with organically-shaped partitions and furniture. These shapes create a more functional space. The furniture looks as if it has grown right there on the spot. *The Practice* forms a place where people feel welcome and free to discuss all kind of matters with the doctor. An extra parasite on the outside of the building, a crystal-like room, can be used for more intense and intimate conversations with the patients. Since this family doctor accompanies individuals from the day they are born till the day they die, one can expect health problems and a few secrets.





The Interpolis Insurance company asked AVL to design a half-open meeting place for 13 people; the company did not want to build a separate room. AVL's solution was to create a central table, surrounded by a sculpture group. The sculpted fibreglass figures represent the employees of an average company and their lives: businessmen shaking hands and discussing a portfolio; a hard-working manager, a good director pushing a disabled person in a wheelchair; gossiping office assistants; a family and a depressed worker.



This design was commissioned by the Interpolis Insurance Company, which had a restricted space and a long list of wishes. To economize on space, AVL built the requested activity areas beside and on top of each other. The resulting two-level structure has several points of access. On one side of the ground level, there is a ball with a television and relaxation room inside; on the other side, a dining and Internet area with low overhead space. On the upper level, which can be reached by an open staircase, there is a sound-proof library or meeting place.





AVL made the most beautiful windows in the ugliest building: the Kriekelaar community centre in Brussels. The stained glass, made of fiberglass and forged steel, shows scenes from the daily life of one of our AVL designers.







This office was designed for Promo Fashion in Belgium. AVL decided to make very large tables that serve as backbones at which the whole company can work together.

Egg on Stand, 2006



Skull on Stand, 2005





AVL Workskull is designed for large offices as a secluded place, where employees can work alone undisturbed, have more privacy for phone calls or retreat from the world.

AVL Shaker Chair 1999

AVL artworks form the basis of AVL design pieces, made in unlimited editions in small factories, or in special limited editions in AVL's own workshop. AVL Shaker furniture is a good example of this. Already designed for *The Good, The Bad & The Ugly* in 1998, AVL Shaker furniture is based on furniture made by the Shakers, a religious community from England that lived in the Northern parts of the USA from the end of the eighteenth century.



AVL Almost Perfect (King Kong), 2005



AVL designed the chair on a napkin and then sent the sketch to a Chinese factory to produce. The design came with no other information; the language barrier only increased the possibilities for misinterpretation. Most of the designing and detailing were done by the Chinese. Instead of the designer, random and external factors in the production process decided the chair's final appearance. Far from a slick product fresh from the factory, the chair has irregularities, a non-geometrical shape and a hand-made look – features that make for a better product.

Prototype AVL Potato Chair, 2004



AVL Interview Desk, 2005
AVL Office Chair, 2002



While designed by AVL, this chair is produced and distributed by the Lensvelt Furniture Company. AVL designed the chair after being horrified by the available office furniture. It's nice to create a temporary storage space for the backside of the body.

AVL Home Edition, 2005
AVL Crea Cart, 2005
AVL File-Apes, 2005



AVL Bench, 2006



Big Funnel Man, 2004



Big Funnel Man is 10 m long and rests alongside the A27 highway near Breda, where there are always traffic jams at rush hour. People sitting in their cars, going to and from work every week-day, might feel just like the force-fed man.

Victory Light Pole, 2005

Victory Light Pole was made for a new business park in Nieuw Vennepe. An office worker's utopia, the business park has an idyllic garden with a duck pond and bronze sculptures where employees can linger during lunch hour to be happier and more productive in the afternoon. AVL's sculpture shows a herd of managers, trying to get to the top of a lamp-post.



Woman on Bed, 2006
Les Mammifères, 2006



A mother feeding her two children.

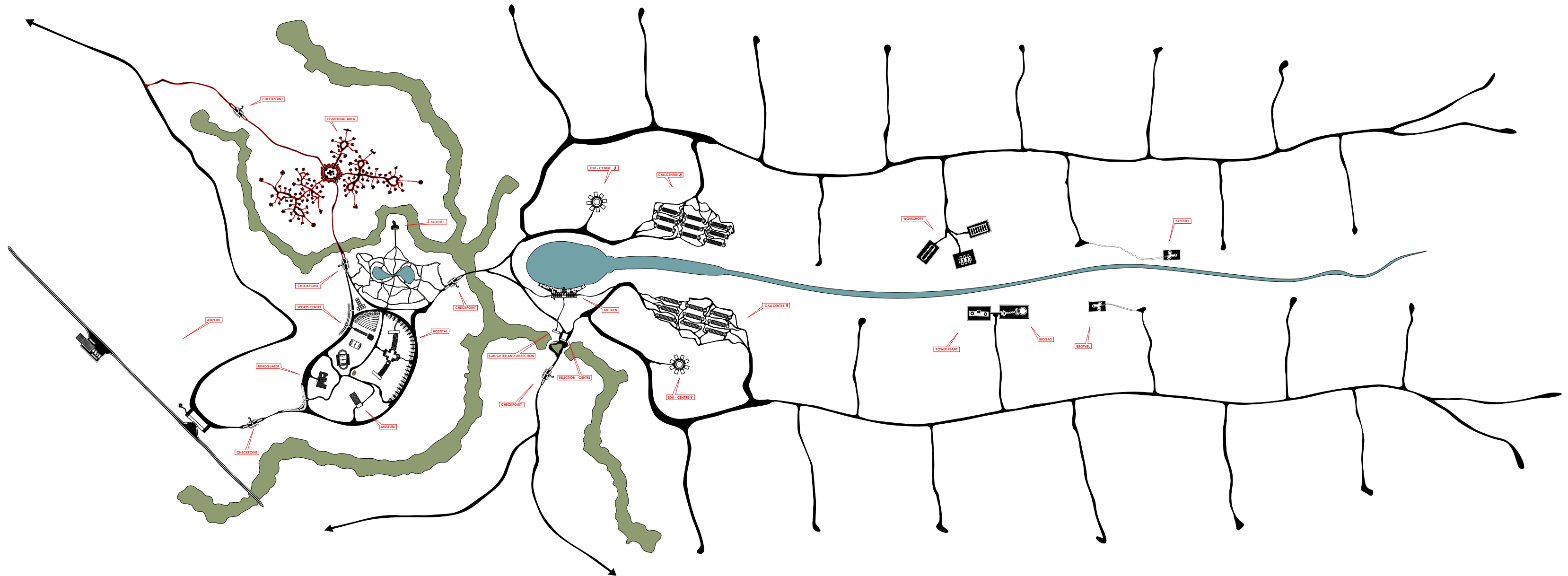


Modern Man, 2006



Modern Man, man and cage in one.





The Urban plan for *SlaveCity* has three parts. The first is the slave department, built around a lake. The black lines are the roads; the buildings include a selection area, a kitchen, a slaughterhouse, the *CallCenter*, the *SlaveUniversity*, workshops, *PowerPlant*, brothels and more.

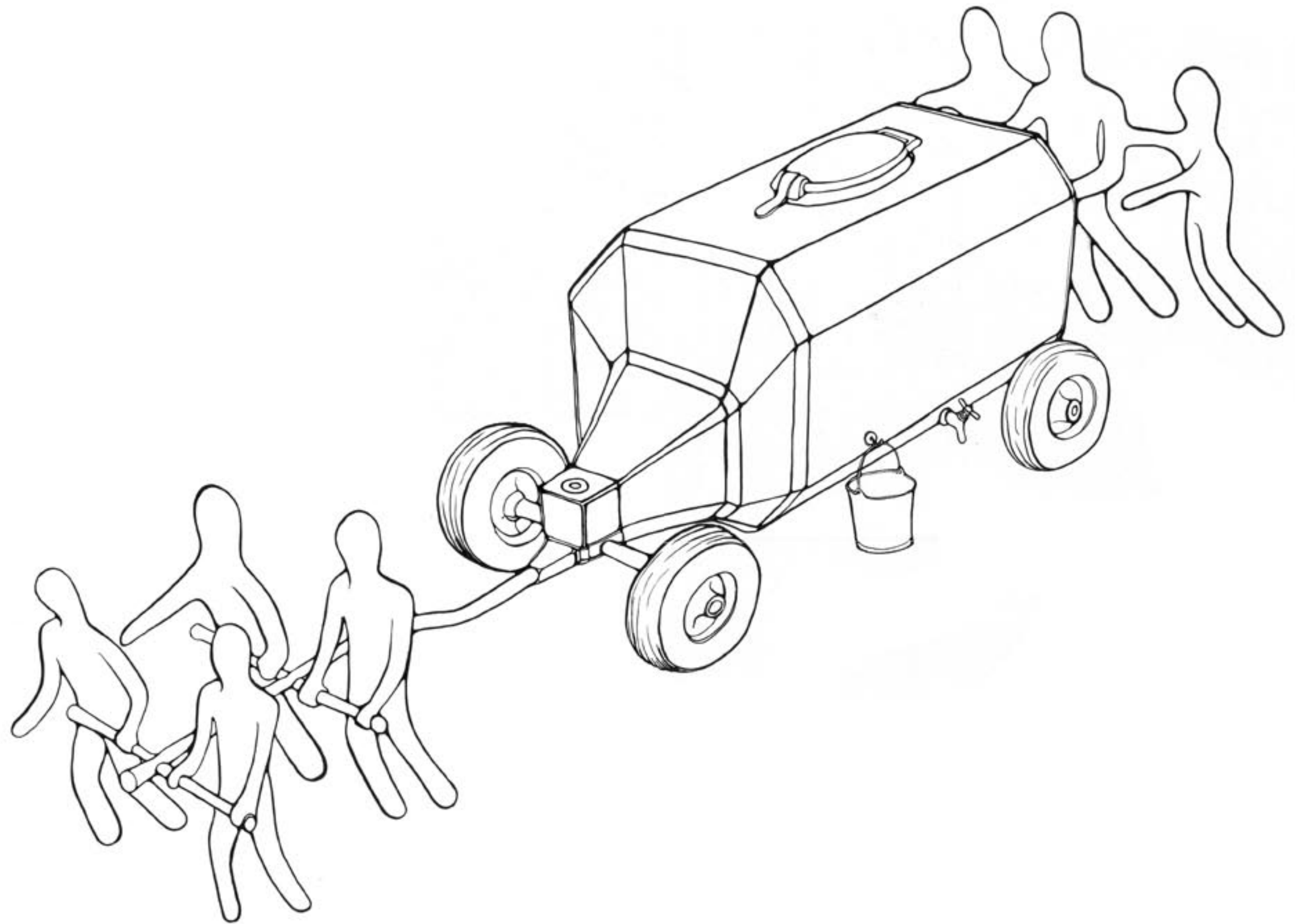
The second part is public and open to people outside of *SlaveCity*; no slaves are allowed. Located here are the headquarters, an art centre, a theatre, sport facilities, a hospital, parks and other public leisure facilities. The third part is an ideal community for the employees of *SlaveCity*, approximately 3000 people who dwell in five different types of houses.

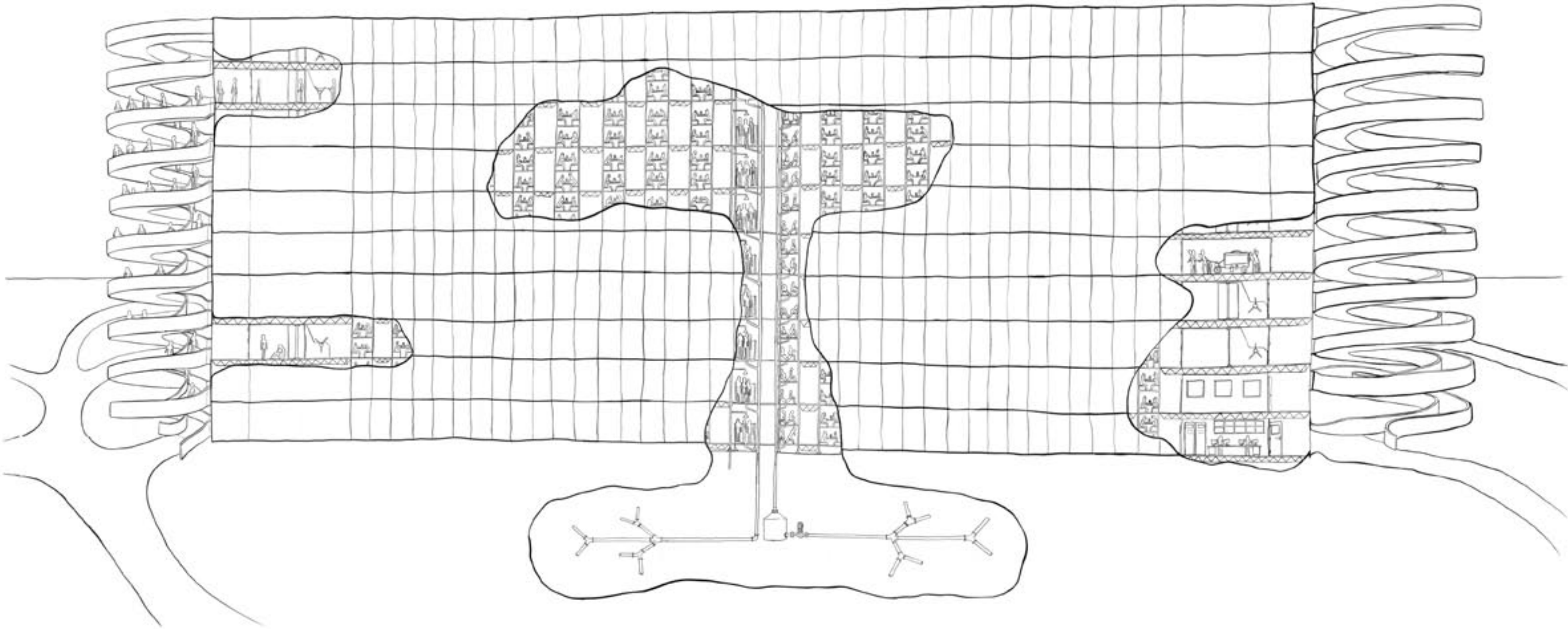
SlaveCity can be described as a sinister utopian project: rational, and highly profitable to the tune of 7,8 billion euros net profit per year. Values, ethics, aesthetics, morality, food, energy, economics, organization, management and the market are turned upside-down, mixed and reformulated in the designs of this town for 200,000 inhabitants. An up-to-date concentration camp, *SlaveCity* benefits from the latest technology, participants work in the *CallCenter* seven hours a day on tele-services such as customer service, ITC, telemarketing and computer programming. After manning the headphones, participants must work in the fields or inside the workshops for seven more hours to maintain the city. The participants' efficiency is closely monitored; appropriate measures are taken if they drop below the optimally set level. *SlaveCity* is the first 'zero energy' town of its size in the world and functions without imported mineral fuels or electricity. The energy needs of the city are covered by using biogas, solar power, wind energy and bio-diesel. Everything is majestically recycled, even the participants themselves, whose vital organs are destined for transplantation instead of decaying into dust. Since no waste products are produced, *SlaveCity* is a green town that does not squander the world's limited resources.

Facts

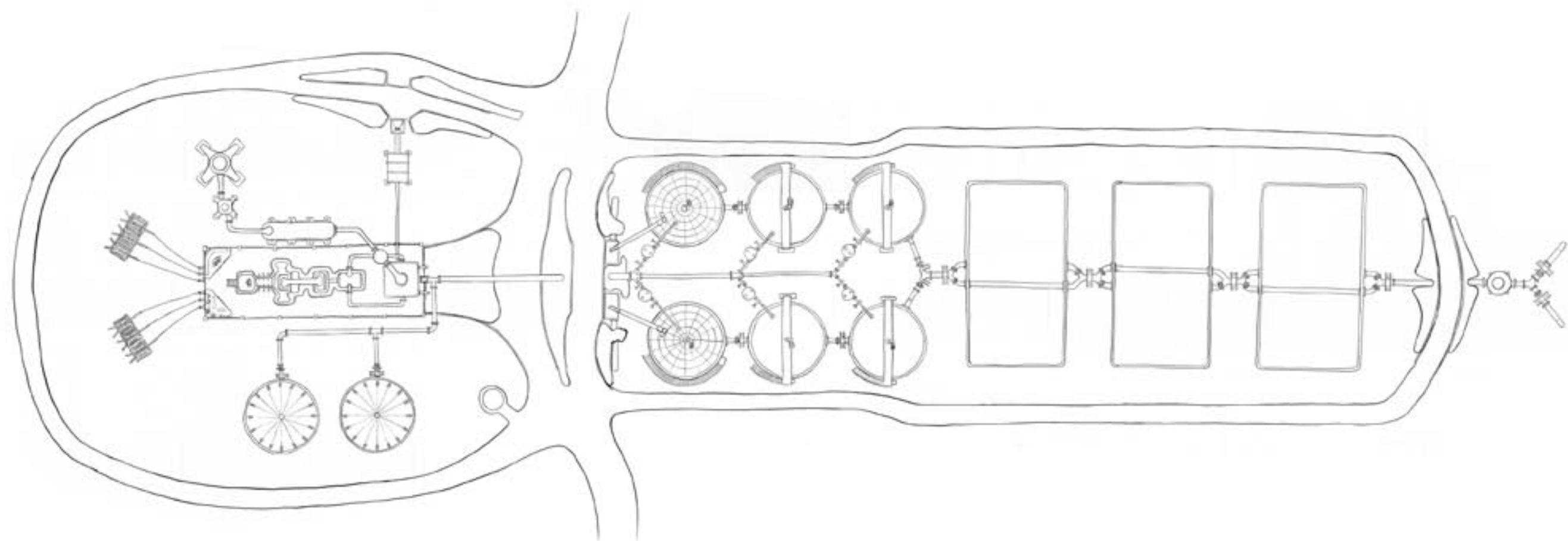
- Built surface**
900,000 m²
- Total surface**
60 km²
- Participants**
200,000
- Employees**
3,500
- Total investment**
1860 million euros
- Annual profit**
7800 million euros
- Arts budget**
78 million euros

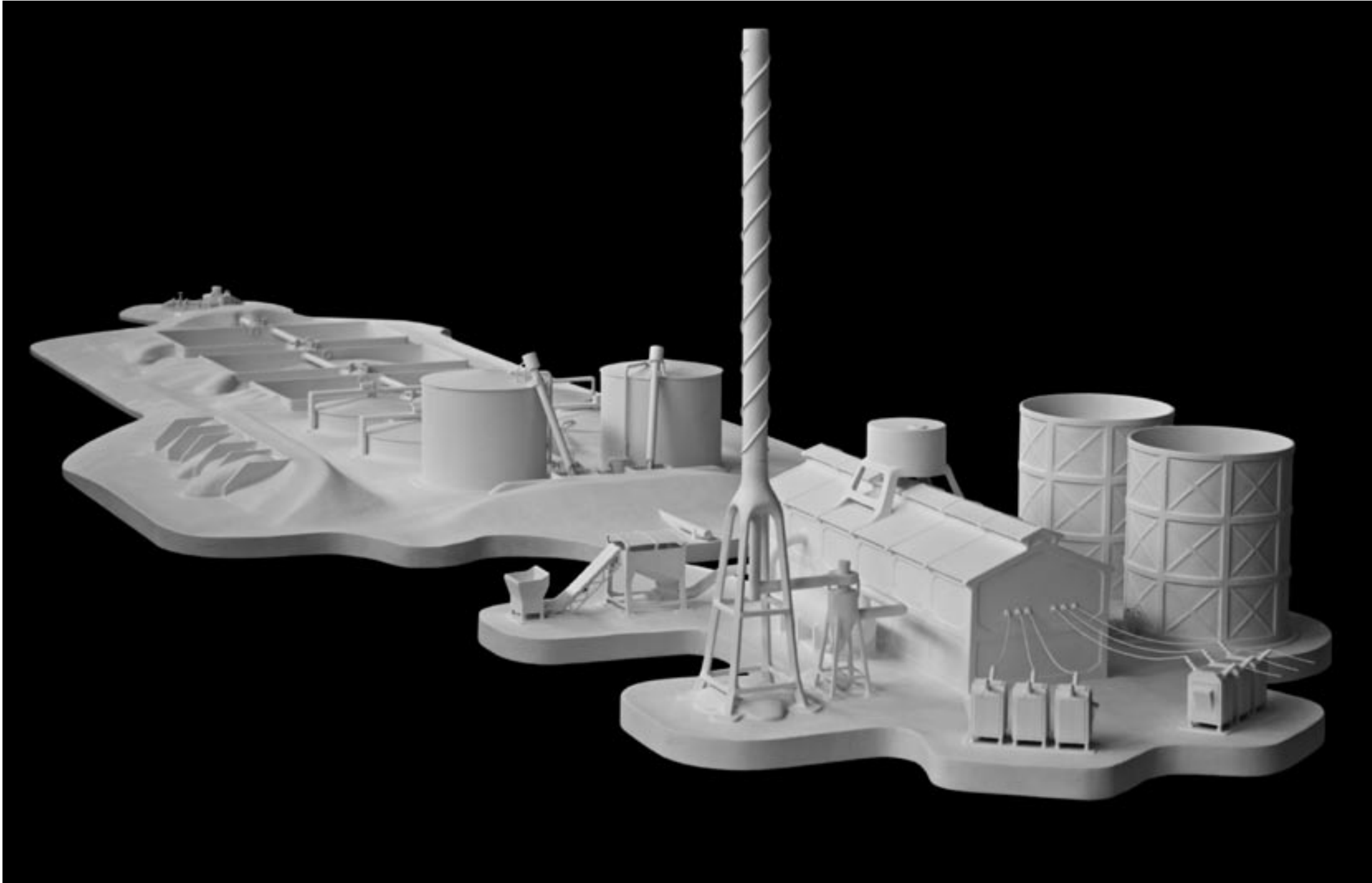










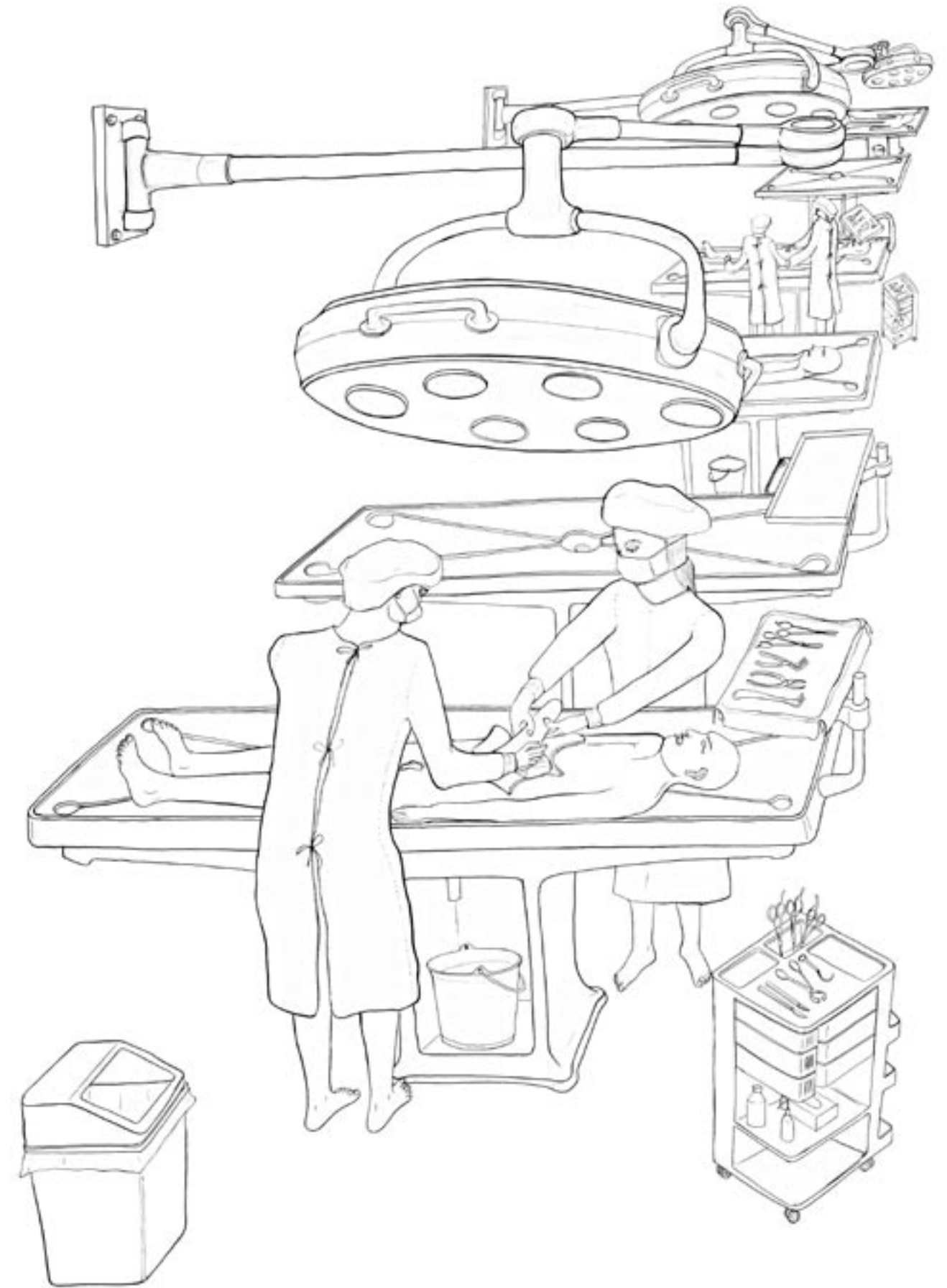


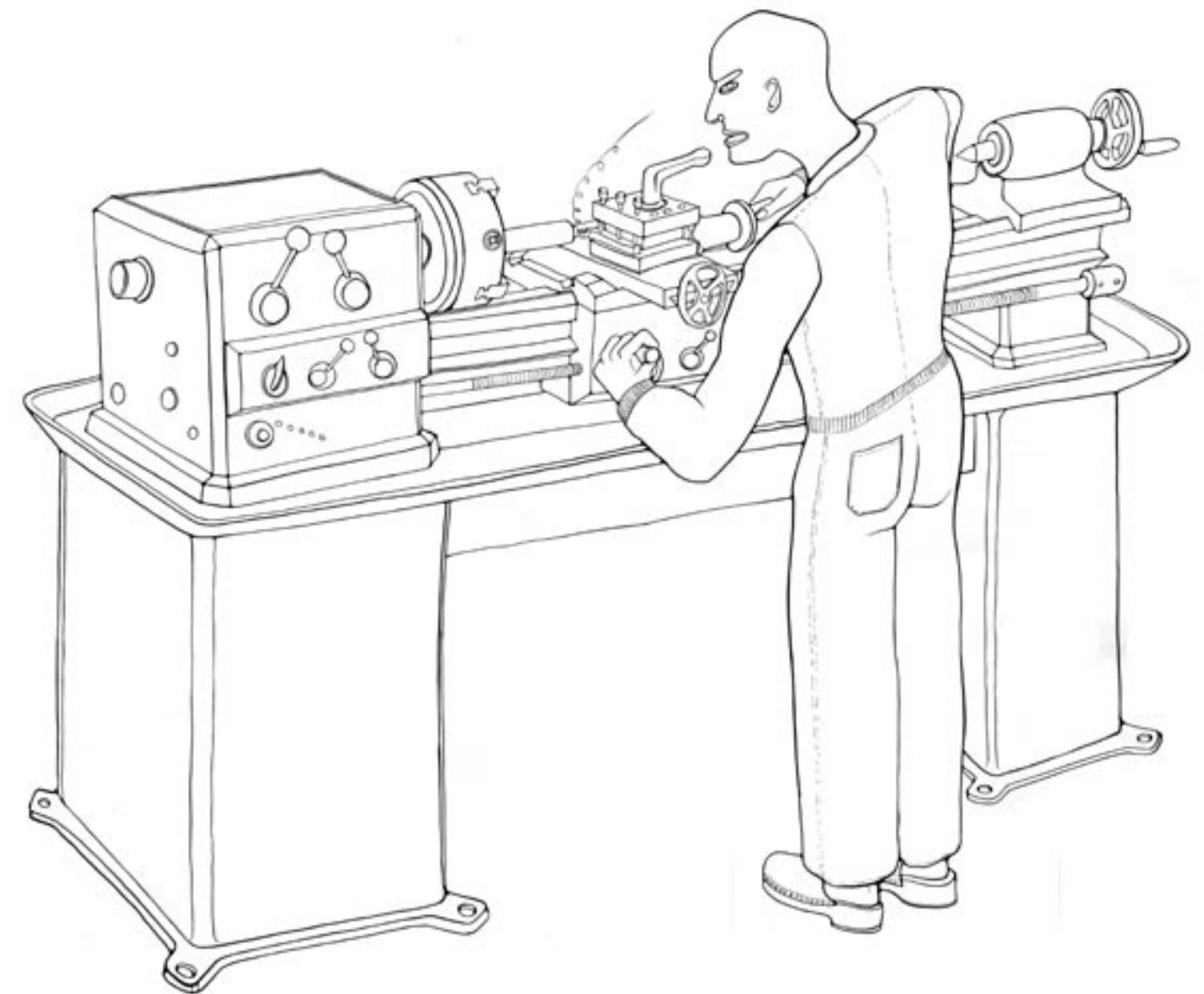
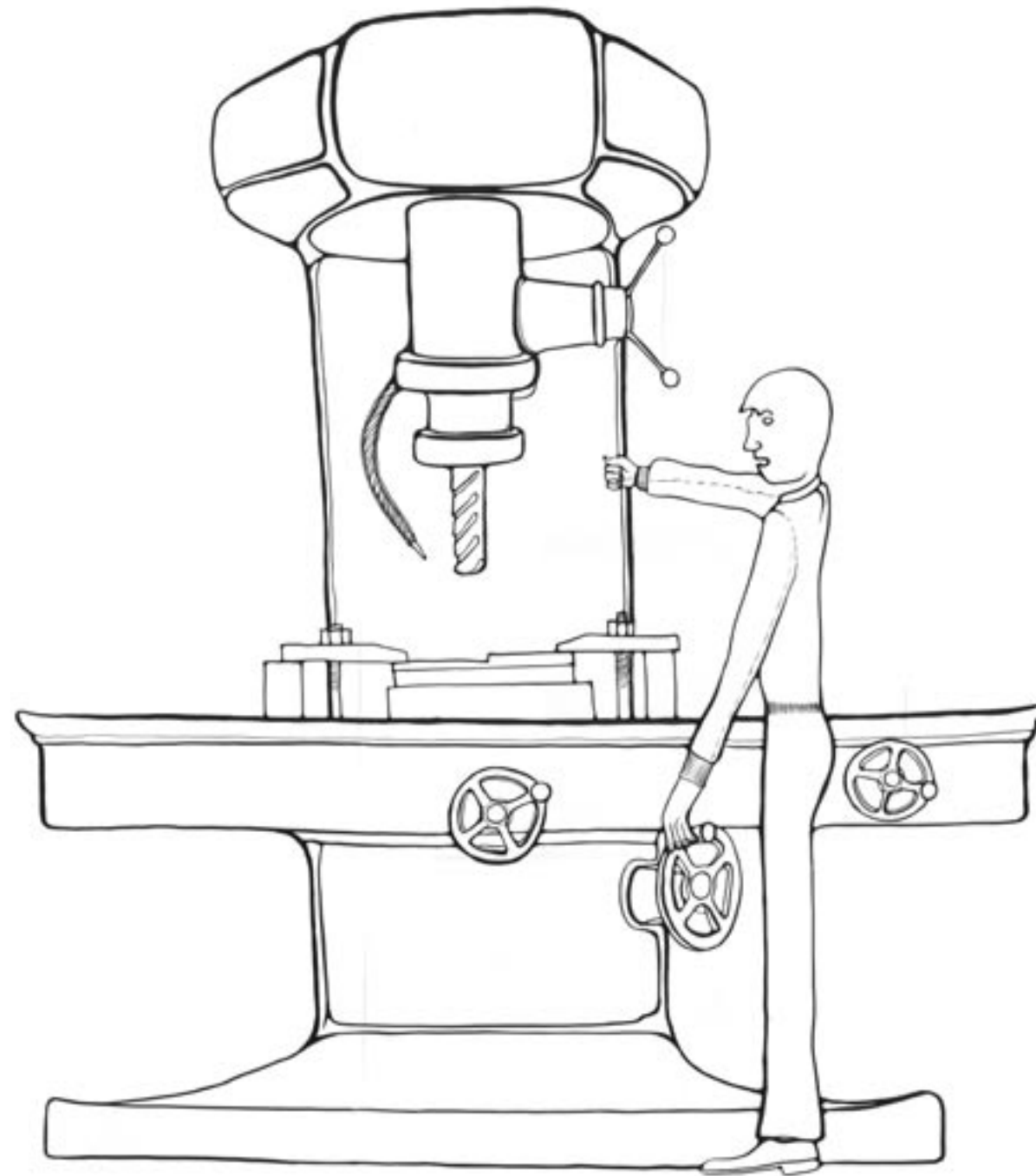
ENERGY PRODUCTION

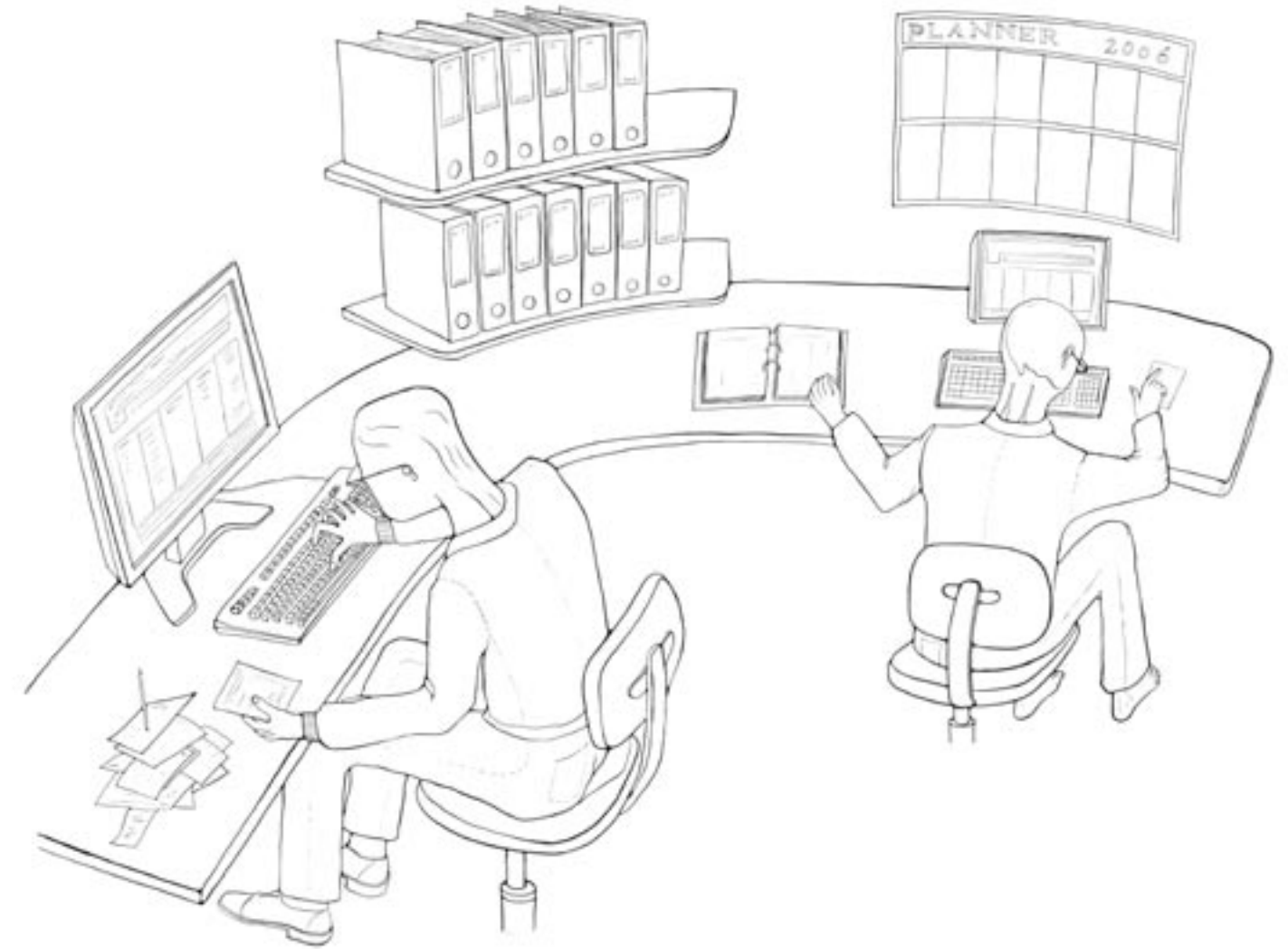
TOTAL ENERGY USAGE PER YEAR		88.013.630	kWh/a
Electricity		66.774.256	kWh/a
Thermal energy		21.236.374	kWh/a
BIOGAS			
Excrements			
Excrements Fresh Substance per person and day	0,40	kg	
FS per year	29.000	ton	
Dry Substance (FS)	23	%	
Organic Substance (DS)	85	%	
Gas/kg (08)	520	l	
Gas production per year	2.968.472	m³	
AGRICULTURAL WASTE			
agricultural waste Fresh Substance	11.440	ton	
Dry Substance (FS)	48	%	
Organic Substance (DS)	83	%	
Gas/kg (OS)	520	l	
Gas production per year	2.382.613	m³	
WIND ENERGY			
Wind turbines	2.750	kW	
Energy output per annum	5,29	GWh/a	
Wind turbines	10	pieces	
Electrical energy	53.787.732	kWh/a	
SOLAR ENERGY			
Thermo photovoltaic device	350	kWh/a	
Needed M2	23.214	m²	
BIO DIESEL			
Rape seed	4,11	t/ha	
Percentage diesel	38	%	
Percentage rape pie	60	%	
Bio diesel	1,58	t/ha	
Rape pie	2,50	t/ha	
Planned rape seed	22	ha	
Total production bio diesel	34.310	l	

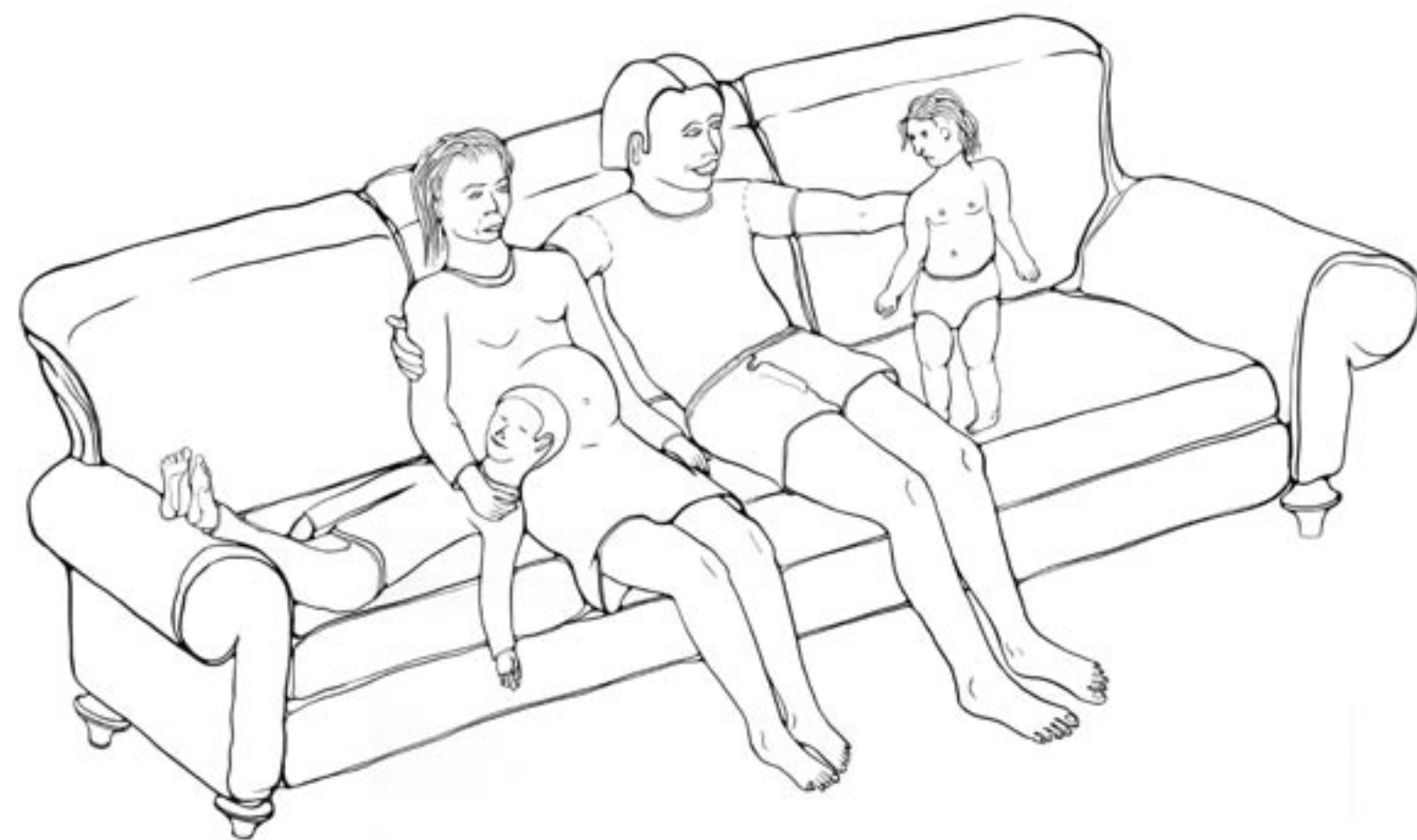
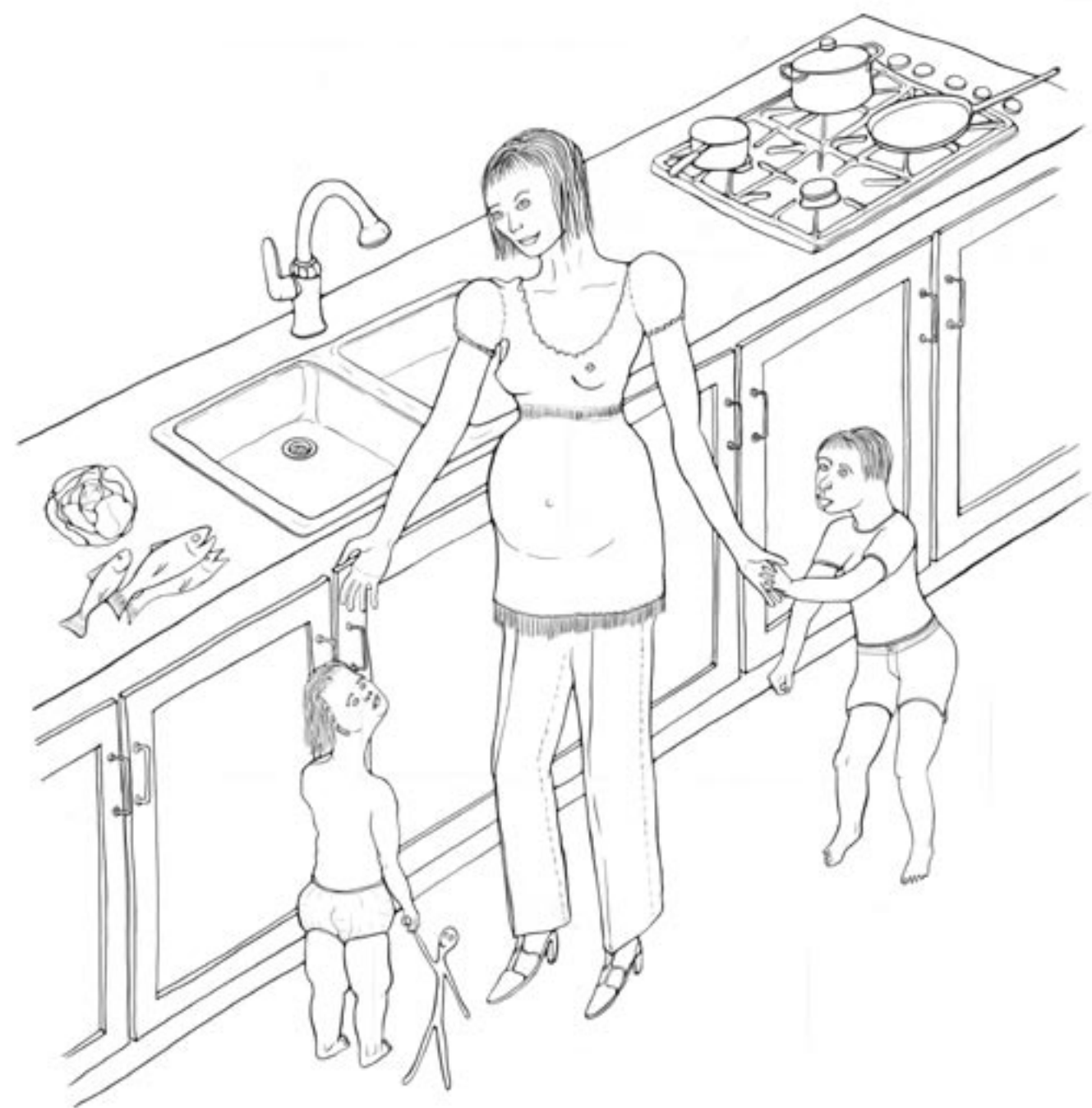


An all-female part of *SlaveCity*, the university is a training centre where the 100,000 female slaves can learn technical, business and communication skills. Equipped with several lecture halls, the university can be reached via earth ramps around the building. There are a total of 1,027 study places; these are used 24 hours a day by the female slaves. While one group is learning, another group sleeps, and yet another works on the land, in the fields or in workshops. The upper level holds a space for the teachers.

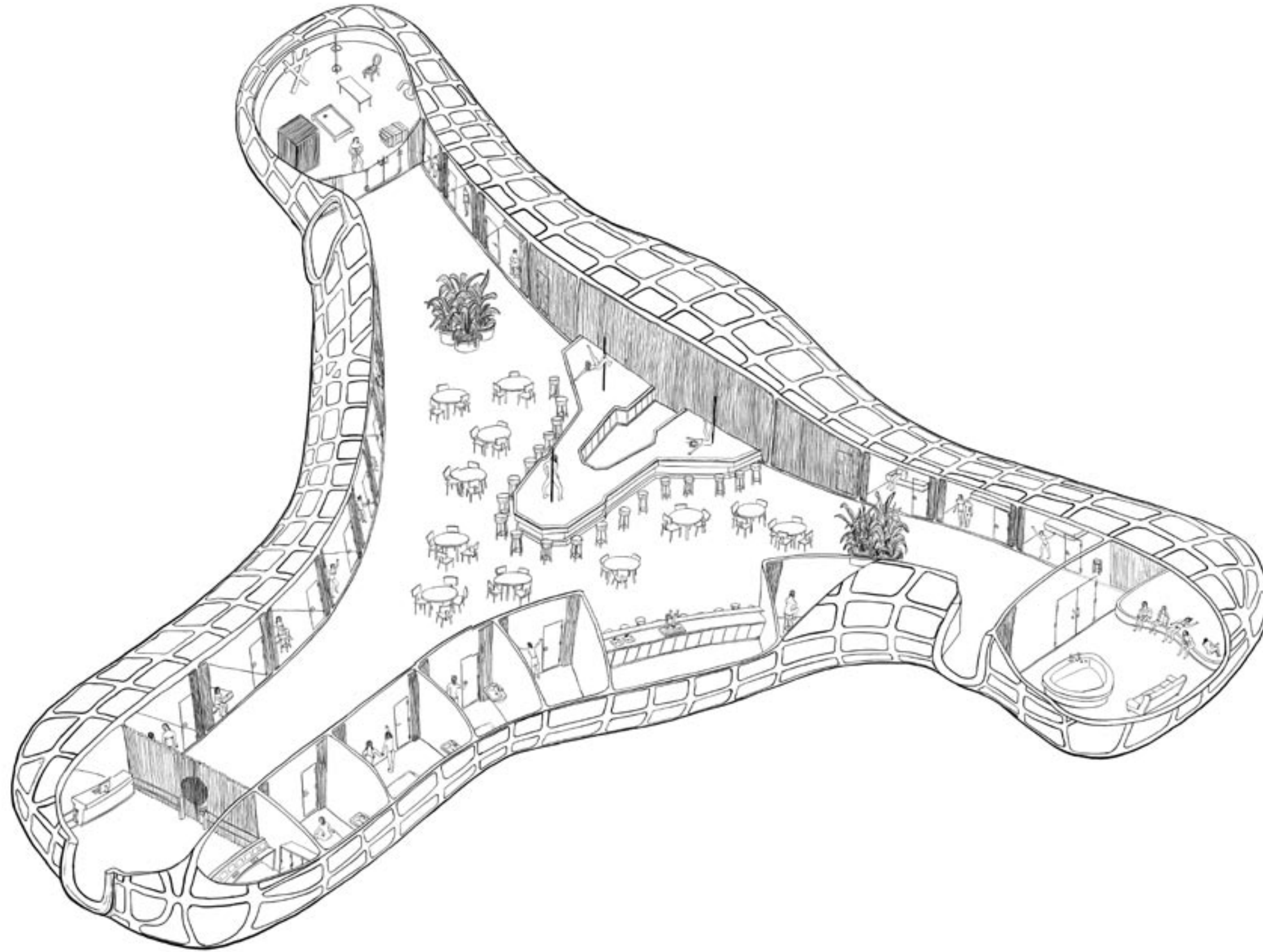




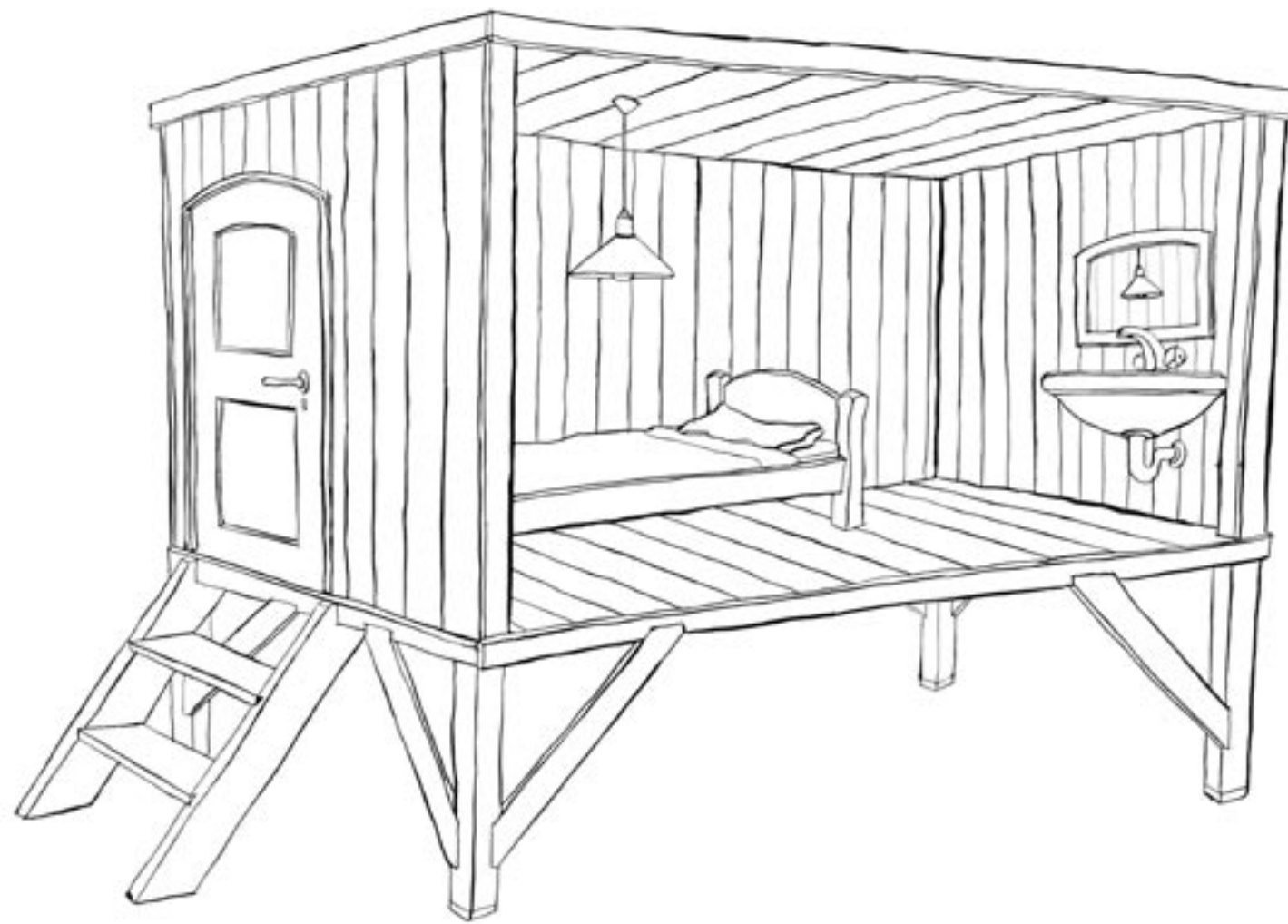








The *Brothels* are a popular attraction in *SlaveCity*. Designed for the lower-class slaves, the modular brothel mixes the styles of Bauhaus, a Socialist *Plattenbau* and a ramshackle wood construction.

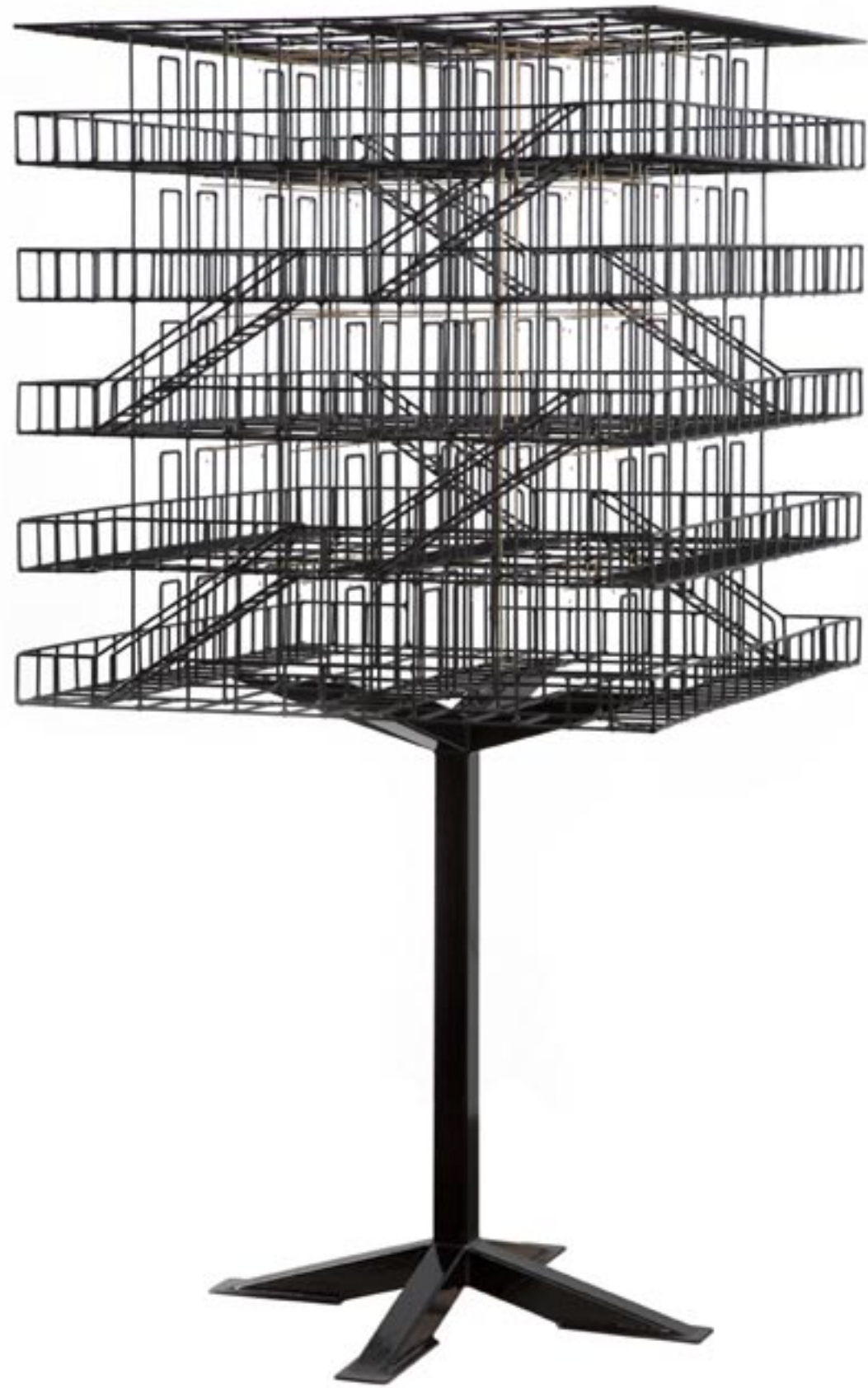


Mini Modular Brothel 2 x 1 x 1, 2005



Mini Modular Brothel 2 x 2 x 5, 2006





AVL's work gets more minimal
everyday.

Everyone has a coward inside.



Biography

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Fax +31-10-2440972
info@ateliervanlieshout.com
www.ateliervanlieshout.com

Atelier Van Lieshout was established in 1995 by Joep van Lieshout (born 1963, Ravenstein. Lives and works in Rotterdam since 1987).

Awards

- 1991
Charlotte Köhler Award
- 1992
Prix de Rome Award
- 1995
Bolidt Floor Concepts 1995,
1st prize
- 1996
87.Katalogförderpreis 1996,
Alfried Krupp von Bohlen
und Halbach Stiftung
- 1997
Anjerfonds – Chabot 1997 Award
- 1998
Mart Stam 1998 Award
- 2000
Wilhelmina-ring, Sculpture Award
- 2002
Stankowski Award
- 2004
Kurt Schwitters Award

Recent Solo Exhibitions (selection)

- 2001
PS1, New York
Jack Tilton Gallery, New York
Gallery Gio Marconi, Milan
‘AVL-Ville’, Rotterdam
- 2002
Camden Arts Centre, London
‘AVL Franchise’, Middelheim Museum,
Antwerp
‘SM’, Gallery Fons Welters,
Amsterdam
- 2003
Le Rectangle, Lyon
Centre d’Art Contemporain,
Brétigny-sûr-Orge
- 2004
Gio Marconi Gallery, Milan
Gallery Tanya Bonakdar, New York
‘Teutopia’, City of Munich
‘Der Technokrat’, Sprengel Museum,
Hannover
Tim van Laere Gallery, Antwerp
- 2005
‘Der Disciplinator’, Museum für
Angewandte Kunst, Vienna
‘Happy Forest’ Kröller-Müller Museum,
Otterlo
‘Triumph’ Boijmans Van Beuningen
museum, Rotterdam
- 2006
‘SlaveCity’, Oficina Para Proyectos de
Arte/Central del Arte, Guadajajara
‘SlaveCity’, Tim van Laere Gallery,
Antwerp
‘SlaveCity’, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery,
New York

Work of Atelier Van Lieshout /
Joep van Lieshout has been acquired by:

- Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht
Caldic Collection, Rotterdam
CAST, Tilburg
Centraal Museum, Utrecht
Centre d’Arts Plastiques, Rotterdam
Centre of Contemporary Art,
Castello di Rivara, Turin
Daros Collection, Zurich
Falckenberg collection, Hamburg
FNAC, Paris
FRAC des Pays de la Loire
FRAC Languedoc-Roussillon,
Montpellier
FRAC Rhône-Alpes, Lyon
Hall Collection, Connecticut
Interpolis, Tilburg
Les Abattoirs, Toulouse
M.A.C., Marseille
Martha Herford Museum, Herford
Middelheim Museum, Antwerp
MOMA, New York
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen,
Rotterdam
Museum De Paviljoens, Almere
Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich
Museum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo
Museum of Contemporary Art,
Benevento
Noord-Brabants Museum,
’s-Hertogenbosch
Prada Foundation, Milan
Rabobank Netherlands, Eindhoven
Sammlung Essl, Klosterneuburg
Sprengel Museum, Hannover
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
Stedelijk Museum, Schiedam
The Dutch State, The Hague
The Henry Moore Institute, Leeds
TPG/KPN, The Hague
Van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis

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Rotterdam: Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 1990.

Collection 1991.
Rotterdam: Atelier Van Lieshout, 1991.

3000 Prefabricated Sanitary units for Application in Mobile-Homes.
Rotterdam: Atelier Van Lieshout, 1992.

1993–1995.
Rotterdam: Atelier Van Lieshout, 1995.

Atelier van Lieshout – A Manual.
Texts by Piet de Jonge, Joep van Lieshout, Bart Lootsma, Arno van Roosmalen, et al.
Rotterdam: Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen/NAi Publishers, 1997.

Atelier van Lieshout – The Good, The Bad & The Ugly.
Texts by Menno Noordervliet, Peter Hoefnagels, BelBin Associates, Bart Lootsma.
Rotterdam: Atelier van Lieshout/NAi Publishers, 1998. (also published as *Le Bon, La Brute & Le Truand* (French edition)/*The Good, The Bad & The Ugly* (German edition))

Atelier van Lieshout: schwarzes und graues Wasser.
Texts by Rudi Fuchs, Jennifer Allen.
Vienna: Bawag Foundation, 2001.

Atelier Van Lieshout. De Zakenmannen.
Rotterdam: Kamer van Koophandel, 2002.

Atelier Van Lieshout. XXV Bienal de Sao Paulo 2002. Representation for the Netherlands.
Text by Jennifer Allen.
Amsterdam: Mondriaan Foundation, 2002.

Atelier Van Lieshout.
Text by Jennifer Allen.
London: Camden Arts Centre, 2002.

Franchise.
Text by Jennifer Allen.
Antwerp: Openluchtmuseum Middelheim, 2002.

Sportopia.
Text by Jennifer Allen.
Lyon: Le Rectangle, 2003.

Atelier Van Lieshout.
Text by Alexandra Midal, Paul Rauchs.
Beaumontpublic Luxembourg, 2005.

ATELIER VAN LIESHOUT, Der Disziplinator.
Texts by Peter Noever, Elisabeth Schweeger, Bettina Busse.
Vienna: MAK, 2005.

Atelier Van Lieshout

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