

draft Edo

MAMA and AVL during Documenta 15

The project that MAMA and Atelier Van Lieshout present during Documenta 15 can be regarded as reverse colonization of the soft kind. The party from the 'global south' has the initiative and indicates the direction. The western partner takes a subservient attitude.

This division of roles is a continuation of the collaboration that MAMA and AVL first entered into in 2011. MAMA had just been created to think about a contemporary version of the ideal world in view of the upcoming 500th anniversary of Thomas More's Utopia. A group of activists and artists came together to revive the ideas of the English humanist. The location chosen was the ocean coast of the department of Chocó in Western Colombia. With a wealth of natural resources, great biodiversity and varied landscape, the area has the potential to develop into a new Utopia. But it is also one of the poorest regions in South America, with high infant mortality, widespread malnutrition and violence by paramilitary groups.

The name of the founded group speaks volumes: Más Arte Más Acción (more art, more action). But to bring art and action together, a physical place was needed to invite artists from home and abroad. A meeting place where knowledge can be exchanged with the local population. A platform for community. And that's where AVL came into the picture.

Joep van Lieshout initially thought to place a white cube in the middle of the Amazon forest, but when he traveled to Chocó and immersed himself in local life, he decided against it. Instead of a western Fremdkörper, he designed a pavilion that adapts to the environment and refers to the customs and formal language of Chocó. With a huge stump as a base, he constructed a boat-like, slightly undulating structure. Some of it contains spaces for the MAMA organization, but most of it is open and inviting: a Colombian interpretation of the Indonesian lumbung that is central to Documenta 15.

When MAMA was invited to Documenta 15, the idea arose to transport the structure to Kassel and sell it in order to finance the activities of the organization with the proceeds. For practical reasons, this was abandoned and an alternative was devised. MAMA now wants to build temporary pavilions in the parks of Kassel to organize workshops, lectures and discussions, perform rituals, and spread knowledge about life in the Colombian rainforest. Wood is used for this, which has been attacked by the bark beetle, an insect that has become a veritable pest due to climate change and monoculture. The deadwood is a western translation of the ecological problems that are felt in Colombia on a much larger scale and with more urgency.

AVL provides the Werner mobile cinema to connect the various locations. Like the base in Chocó, the vehicle functions as a platform for encounters and a pedestal for the story of the artists and activists from Colombia.

The AVL creation has the appearance of an armored vehicle but the intentions of a dove of peace. It is named after Werner Herzog, pioneer of the New German Cinema, which, despite many setbacks, keeps going. He couldn't even stop filming *Fitzcarraldo*, in which a western rubber baron has a steamboat pulled over a South American ridge to open up a new production area – the height of imperialistic pride and destructiveness. In Kassel, AVL's Werner shows how much damage the behavior of the *Fitzcarraldo*-like people has done over the centuries, which effects continue to this day and which solutions can be developed with respect for local knowledge and needs.