

TALENT PLATFORM 2023

creative industries fund NL
presents design talent 2023



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FOREWORD

INDIVIDUAL PRACTICES, SHARED DREAMS

Talent should be nurtured. That is why, in the past few years, the Creative Industries Fund NL has developed a programme to support design talent in various phases of their career and to stimulate their artistic and professional development. This programme primarily revolves around the Talent Development Grant Scheme, which this year awarded fifty grants to upcoming designers, makers and architects. The grant gives them the opportunity to build a strong foundation for a distinctive and meaningful practice within the creative industry. It enables them to develop as a maker, to work out a healthy and sustainable business model, and to examine and explore important themes in their work.

Although the grants are awarded to individual practices, it is important during the development year to look beyond the confines of one's own studio and to also invest in a valuable network. As adviser Tim Terpstra says in the introductory interview in this publication, it is precisely by collaborating with others that you can make a difference. The Creative Industries Fund NL primarily encourages such collaboration by organizing events at various points during the development year where the designers, makers and architects can meet each other and share their knowledge and experiences. We also put them in touch with makers who have progressed further along a comparable path. But we also encourage them to build relationships outside their own discipline or the creative industry.

The diversity in the disciplines of the supported designers, makers and architects is matched by the diversity of the collaborations they engage in. For her research into alternative renovation strategies for public housing, architect Sophia Holst works with a journalist, links up with protest organisations, and learns from architecture experts. Tech artist Benjamin Earl joined the

Rotterdam collective Varia that puts technology to poetical use. Colin Wegman learned how to make a tambú in Curaçao, a kind of drum played at traditional celebrations that is also often heard in protest songs. And Hattie Wade works with young diaspora communities to determine what heritage institutions can do to create safe spaces for them to explore heritage.

The stories of all fifty supported designers, makers and architects are compiled in this publication and on our online Platform Talent. As in previous years, the Creative Industries Fund NL will also present this year's group during the *Dutch Design Week*, in the Portiersloge at Strijp-S: a hotbed of talent. We will display short video portraits there and establish surprising connections in the programme, *The Rest is Still Unwritten*.

Enjoy!

Syb Groeneveld
Executive Director
Creative Industries Fund NL

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INTRODUCTION

Every year, nine independent advisers assess the two to three hundred applications to the Creative Industry Fund's talent development grant scheme, with the goal of selecting approximately fifty. The advisers are drawn from various disciplines and expertise areas and are involved in the selection procedure for four years at most. As a result, the Advisory Committee is differently composed each year, offering room to new voices. Programme leader Marieke Ladru talks to three advisers who sat on the committee in recent years: Hellen van Rees, fashion and textile designer; Tim Terpstra, expert in the field of digital culture, audiovisual media and sound; and architect Paulien Bremmer. How do they go about their task of selecting proposals? What trends have they noticed in the past years? And what advice would they like to offer to (future) talents?

HOW DOES THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ASSESS AN APPLICATION?

HR 'I usually panic a bit at first, the number of applications is always overwhelming. But before I read the texts I look at the portfolios. In that way I try to form a picture of the general tendency. After that I start immersing myself in the applications that fall under my own discipline, of which I am the first reader and for which I need to provide more context during our meetings.'

TT 'I fully recognise that. After the initial fright I also look at the types of applications and the disciplines of the applicants. That way I know to what extent I can form an opinion based on my own background, and to what extent I must depend on my fellow advisers.'

PB 'What I also find interesting to see is how various societal themes are addressed by all the disciplines.'

HR 'There's not just a lot of variety in terms of disciplines, but also in terms of the applicants' experience. The grant offers applicants the opportunity to invest in their development for one whole year. So you need to assess the application based on where the applicant stands at the moment, and from what position they are operating.'

PB 'That's right, and the same applies for background and training. Whether someone did or did not train as a designer has an

impact on how they write the application. We are aware of that when assessing the applications. Much has changed in the past years regarding the accessibility of this grant, so that people can now apply from many different backgrounds. It is important for us to hear all these different voices, also from people who developed their voice outside formal art education or whose cultural backgrounds, themes or work methods are unlike what we are accustomed to.'

THE FIRST *SCOUT NIGHTS* WERE HELD IN 2019. THIS HAS BEEN DEVELOPED AND EXPANDED FURTHER IN THE PAST YEARS. WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE TO THAT?

HR 'I think it's great to have these *Scout nights*. It has made the scheme much more accessible for everyone wishing to establish themselves in the field as a professional, including makers and designers with an autonomous or MBO [intermediate vocational] background. It is also very enriching, as it lets you hear other voices and backgrounds. Thanks to the process that these makers and designers complete, with a pitch presentation in the first round, you get to know them differently.'

TT 'It also poses a challenge. How do I assess such a pitch presentation, in relation to a written application? It took some getting used to, but I really like this way of working. People have the opportunity to present themselves in a way that, in some cases, suits them better. I anyhow think that questioning exactly how 'open' the scheme really is and abolishing a number of conditions such as relevant prior education, is one of the most important developments in the Talent Development scheme. The emphasis has increasingly shifted away from only on "talent": how you wish to develop your practice and how you position yourself towards your environment have become as important as the artistic content of your work. This has blurred the hard distinction between what is and is not talent, resulting in a better balance.'

WHAT ARE THE RECURRENT PITFALLS IN APPLICATIONS?

TT 'It's difficult sometimes to make the jump from a story on paper to the actual practice. Certainly when it concerns a work that you need to experience with your senses. This is something that I often try to make clear in conversations with starting makers. Even when you use a lot of theory, you should still try to make it a light and accessible story. After all, not all of your readers will be active in the same discipline, or will have read the same books. The proposal needs to be easy to read.'

HR 'The effort it takes to write a substantive and well-researched proposal can also vary according to the discipline. Some applications are therefore at risk of seeming a bit superficial. That's why, at the committee meetings, I always try to place fashion and textile within the context of the work field. Another pitfall is that you get a kind of "buzzword bingo" with words like "inclusivity" and "feminism". If you need to use words like that, then you must explain why they are applicable and how they are significant for your work or practice. No one expects you to know everything, but if you use words like that, then you should explain how you relate to them.'

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HAVE YOU NOTICED A GENERAL TREND IN THE PAST YEARS AS TO HOW TALENTS WANT TO SET UP THEIR PRACTICE?

PB 'With upcoming makers, we see a lot of initiative in terms of setting up shop in a healthy manner with deliberate attention for fair practices. This is also reflected in the grant applications. We also see that applicants are eager to engage in fair and mutually beneficial collaborative relationships. Many of these collaborations are multidisciplinary, which is also an interesting development. People are reaching out across boundaries.'

HR 'That applies to fashion practices, too, which are increasingly engaging with the digital environment. There was no sign of that in the first year that I sat on the committee. Makers nowadays are seeking cross-overs between physical and digital material. And this is increasingly driving personal and distinctive ways of working and of running one's practice.'

WHAT HAS YOUR ADVISERSHIP TAUGHT YOU?

HR: 'Once upon a time I also submitted an application to the Talent Development scheme. I was very upset to not be selected. But I was able to bring that experience to my role in the committee. I know what this grant means to upcoming makers and how much they wish to see their application accepted. The purpose of this committee is not to reject proposals, but to stimulate makers and to pick out the most promising proposals.'

PB 'The discussions we conduct in the committee are hugely inspiring because of the different backgrounds of the advisers, in terms of both discipline and themes. For example, we had some thorough debates on how to discuss and assess applications with respect to aspects of diversity and inclusiveness. That was very valuable to me, also for my own daily practice.'

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WHAT TIPS WOULD YOU LIKE TO OFFER TALENTED MAKERS?

HR 'That you really don't need to do everything by yourself. I find it a bit concerning to see the number of makers who restrict themselves to a fairly small circle. It's understandable on the one hand, since you do need to get everything off the ground by yourself, during your training or when seeking to develop further as a maker. But a design practice is actually a network in which you must continually choose what to do yourself and what not. And also, in what respects you can enhance your own practice with other perspectives. In my view, it's very important to be part of a larger circle and that you are able to link up with others. This is definitely an attention point, certainly after your development year.'

PB 'I agree entirely. The development year is your opportunity to explore your own interests and to pursue interesting collaborations. You need to go for that.'

TT 'Besides, it can be quite a challenge to develop a practice that's distinctive. Precisely by engaging in collaborations, you can make a difference.'



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AFSANEH GHAFARIAN RABE'I

Afsaneh Ghafarian Rabe'i is an Iranian-Dutch self-taught photographer and visual artist. She creates layered images that translate into stories full of messages, symbols and paradoxes. 'As the daughter of migrant workers who ended up in the Netherlands in the late 1960s, I found out at a young age that the Netherlands is not the centre of the world, but that multiple realities can and do exist side by side.' This layered reality is also reflected in the techniques she employs. In addition to photographs she also makes collages, combining photography with paintings, screen printing and textiles.

For *Parallel*, which is due to be elaborated and released as a self-published art book, Ghafarian Rabe'i examines the parallel experience of second-generation Iranian Dutch nationals. 'It is specifically about the group that was born or grew up in the Dutch system as the result of a choice that their parents made. A world where the outdoors at first glance bears no resemblance at all to their roots. Iranians in diaspora are known for their rapid and successful integration and even assimilation. But the paradox is that many of them, despite not having been born or raised in Iran, maintain strong cultural links with their country of origin and often have a strong sense of homesickness and uprootedness.'

Besides her experimentation with images, this year Ghafarian Rabe'i also worked on her positioning and profile. Her first venture was to design a stamp that bridges her two cultures. 'I find it important to leave a stamp behind, literally from my own point of view.' The prints and merchandise in her online shop fulfil an important role in her communication with her target groups. This year she also exhibited for the first time the photographic series *MHD SKATE 1401 - LIFE GOES ON*, about the skating generation Z in the holy Iranian city of Mashhad. The series was displayed as part of the group exhibition *QOQNOOS - You Can't Burn Woman Made Of Fire*, curated by the Iranian-Dutch artist Tina Farifteh.

It has also been a taxing year. A few weeks after she started the Talent programme, the *Woman, Life, Freedom* revolution broke out in Iran, triggered by the death of the young Kurdish-Iranian woman Jina Mahsa Amini. It turned the world on its head, certainly for Ghafarian Rabe'i as well. A number of her original plans could not be carried out, but other plans soon took their place. As she says: 'It's all part of my practice; you learn to be resilient from a very young age.'

'You learn to be resilient from a very young age'

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'I found out at a young age that the Netherlands is not the centre of the world'



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'My work is concerned with "the noise of materiality".'

ALEX WALKER

Through his publishing project *Mumbling Matter*, graphic designer Alex Walker documents artistic practices that are grounded in resourceful, do-it-yourself and collective production methods. The project was launched in February 2023 with *Growing Blue*, a micro-site which hosts a collection of 102 paper and fabric filters that were used by textile designer Lucila Kenny to extract indigo pigment from the leaves of Dyer's Woad. Each individual filter shows different traces of the pigment, and as such are artefacts that capture a moment in time and an alchemic interaction with the plant.

The second project to be released as part of *Mumbling Matter* is *Best of Days* – a monograph documenting Octave Rimbert-Rivière's ceramic works. This book showcases the ceramist's experimental use of casting, glazing and the ways in which he incorporates digital 3D sculpture into the production process. Photographs of the works are reproduced using fluorescent CMYK, which emphasises the lively character of the objects.

In November 2023, Walker will launch the publication *flower, fruit, leaf, husk and root: experiments in growing colour* – another collaboration with Lucila Kenny and the third project to be released as part of *Mumbling Matter*. This publication documents the friendship and artistic collaboration between Kenny and artist Naan Rijks. Kenny and Rijks have a shared garden adjoining their studio which is part of their project *Painting Plants*. The publication contains conversations and photographs of the work, the studio and the artists' gardening activities. To share their knowledge and offer inspiration, the publication also includes a number of recipes. Each book has a unique silkscreen-printed cover, using homemade inks produced from plants in the artists' garden.

'Materials and production methods reveal traces of people, places and moments in time.'

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'Being a goldsmith is a wonderful artisan practice, but often not so sustainable'

ANNA WONDERS

A strand of seaweed from a black beach on Iceland ends up on the workbench in Anna Wonders's studio in Zwolle. There, the seaweed is pressed into a synthetic rubber mould using a vulcanising press. After pouring wax into the mould, the wax replica of the seaweed is transferred into a cuvette, and plaster is poured in. Once the plaster has hardened, the wax is heated and poured off. The resulting mould can then be used to cast precious metals.

Wonders uses this ingenious and time-tested procedure to transform natural forms into gold and silver jewellery. Her latest collection is based on the curling form of a piece of seaweed. In the past year she was able to spend another month in the Icelandic studio where she performed her graduation internship in 2018, as part of the goldsmith education programme at the Vakschool Schoonhoven. She also invested in new equipment for her studio to enable the in-house production of her jewellery pieces. This marks a renewed start to her own business, with a shift in emphasis from commissioned work to developing her own work. To underline this new start, her own name is now the brand name. 'I think that the core of my discipline is about creating narrative. This is my story, alongside the customer's story.'

At the same time, Wonders is increasingly aware that, as a goldsmith, she is part of a chain. It's not just the relationship to the customer that matters, but she has also started contemplating her relationship to the people who mine the raw material - gold - for her. 'Being a goldsmith is a wonderful artisan practice, but when you really start looking into it, it often turns out to not be very sustainable.' That is why she works with Fairmined Gold: a quality label for gold sourced from responsible and small-scale mining organisations that guarantee that the gold is traceable and mined in a sustainable manner. Wonders also aims to increase this awareness among her customers and colleagues, and to show that you can choose for sustainably sourced gold. 'It's important to me that people choose my jewellery for the design, but also that they are happy with the backstage story. And that they want to join me in spreading this story and in that way to inspire others as well.'

'The core of my discipline is about creating narrative'

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ANNI NÖPS

Sound artist and electronic composer Anni Nöps started her talent development year with a residency in Zurich, at the Institute for Computer Music and Sound Technology. There, she studied how the movement of speakers affects sound. In the conceptual installation *Becoming an ocean*, speakers produce a static hiss – a monotonous sound when they are at rest, but when they move around it creates the impression of waves. That sensory aspect of sound is what fascinates Nöps. 'Part of my research for this development year is "sonic materiality". I want to study sound in the broadest sense, but also from the perspective of how sound can feel physical and tangible in a space.'

She has now studied these qualities of sound in a museum setting for the first time. The sound installation *Borderlands* (a collaboration with sound artist Casimir Geelhoed) will be open to visitors in Stedelijk Museum Schiedam for six months. No fewer than twenty-two speakers have been installed in the museum's attic. As the sound moves between them, the dark room enhances the senses, creating an intimate experience. With regard to the title, Nöps explains: 'In a way, you feel as if the sounds are coming from very far away, so you feel that you are part of the same world as the sounds, as it were, but not always. That creates a space that exists between the real world and the imaginary or virtual world.'

Presenting the installation in a museum allows a much larger and diverse audience to experience her work than at specialised festivals, resulting in different feedback than she is used to. She also intends to invite a choreographer to Stedelijk Museum Schiedam to respond to the sound with dance and motion (whereas usually in choreography, sound follows movement). Nöps is also working towards a music release, since she has also developed further in her compositions. Among other things, she participated in a mentorship programme to explore classical composition.

All in all, Nöps is satisfied with her development year. 'Being able to fully focus on my work has been amazing. It was wonderful to develop myself and be able to investigate things without knowing what the outcome will be.'

'It's wonderful to investigate things without knowing what the outcome will be.'

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'I want to study sound in the broadest sense'



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'Because the computer works on solar energy, I could use it in the park as well'

BENJAMIN EARL

Technology helps us in our daily lives, boosting our productivity and making our lives more efficient. Since completing his master's studies in Non-Linear Narrative at the Royal Academy of Art, tech artist Benjamin Earl sees technology in poetic terms. This year, he wanted to conduct research that would ultimately lead to a 'home-made' computer – a DIY computer that would serve not only as a tool but also as company. 'I came to know computers in a new way this year. Not just as a slick interface, but as something built up out of materials that I can play with.'

In this past year, Earl joined the Varia collective in Rotterdam, which employs technology in poetic ways. In his opinion, the closer you zoom in on technology, the more poetry there is to be found. 'The language used for coding, for example, but also the way we deal with technology as a society. With my work, I want to bring the intangible into the foreground.'

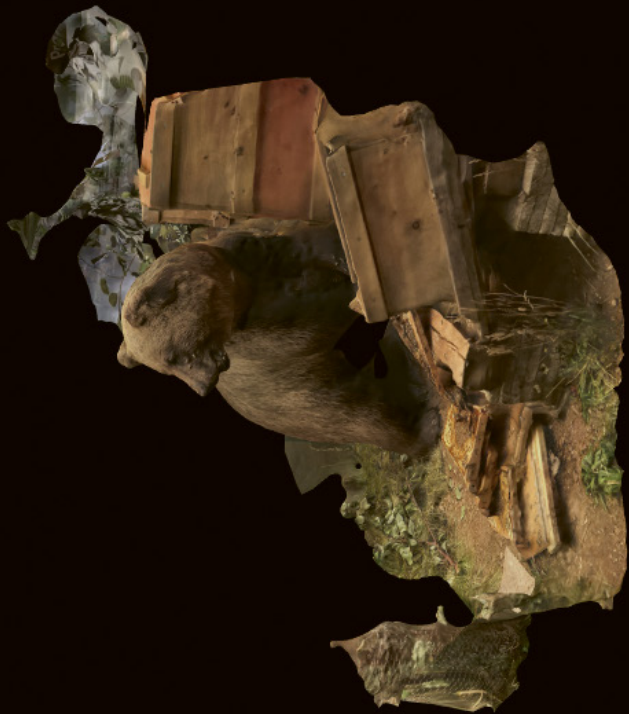
While creating his computer, one aspect that Earl thought about was the power source. He chose solar energy. 'Using technology based on the sun's rotation is interesting. One direct consequence is that the computer does not work at night: like the rest of us, it sleeps.' A computer that 'goes to sleep' and functions in a cyclical manner: it is as poetic as our daily computer usage is prosaic. The fact that the computer does not function at all hours of the day is part of the project. 'You come to realise that there are limits to the way things were made.'

Finding likeminded others was a challenge. 'I found it difficult to break out of my bubble,' Earl says. Fortunately he had the computer by his side, who gradually became a friend of sorts that travelled with him. 'It gained a personality of its own, and because it worked on solar energy, I could use it outside in the park as well.'

The computer will never be completely finished in Earl's mind – an attitude that he also adopts when talking about his project. Always open and inquisitive; not adamant, but possessed of a certain careflessness. This approach was well received at the symposium *Naïve Yearly*. 'I involved the audience in my findings, and that yielded a lot of positive responses and suggestions, which felt very good.' That was the moment when Earl's bubble broke, and he was able to find the kindred spirits he had been looking for. Thus, his DIY computer graduated from good company to matchmaker.

'I came to know computers in a new way this year'

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'I want to stimulate vital discussions about the coexistence of humans and animals'

BERKVELDT

What would the Netherlands look like with big mammals tramping through our carefully manicured landscapes? That's what Noëlle Ingeveldt wonders, co-founder of audiovisual art studio Berkveldt with film maker Juriaan van Berkel. The artist/designer performs scientific research into the possibility of future bear populations in the Netherlands. In her speculative project *Bear Country*, Ingeveldt hopes to stimulate vital discussions about the coexistence of humans and animals and to build support, so that the government can prepare proper measures before bears actually migrate to the Netherlands. It is a real possibility, after all: climate change and deforestation are forcing bears to spread throughout Europe. 'With its many fruit trees, the Netherlands is an attractive feeding ground during the summer,' Ingeveldt suspects.

A graduate of the Gerrit Rietveld Academy and holder of a master's degree in Interior Architecture: Research + Design from the Piet Zwart Institute, Ingeveldt has previous experience with studying artificial nature. She is fascinated by the complex relationship between man, animal and landscaping. 'I want to tell stories about the role of mankind in a natural system from a non-human perspective, to show how people should behave in order to redress the balance.'

In *Bear Country*, the two designers take viewers on a fascinating artistic journey. Their journey in a converted Dacia Loga passes through Romania, Austria, Italy and Switzerland, countries where bears are once again at home. The largest population of bears currently lives in Romania, where they have been a protected species since 2016. Italy, meanwhile, shipped in bears from Slovenia to strengthen its own dwindling population. 'What can we learn from these countries before this predator comes to the Netherlands?'

The objects and 3D scans collected along the way will be combined with insights obtained from interviews with biologists, ecologists, environmental philosophers, bear experts, beekeepers, shepherds and other people to tell a non-linear story. This will take the form of an immersive installation and a documentary. Van Berkel is a skilled coder and Ingeveldt took a course in scriptwriting, 3D animation and design using Blender. Her coach was interaction and media designer Olivier Otten. This project about finding harmony between humankind and the European bear population was launched in TENT Rotterdam and will, if all goes according to plan, be presented at festivals in the future.

'I tell stories about the role of humankind in a natural system from a non-human perspective'

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COLIN WEGMAN

Music producer and sound designer Colin Wegman was born in Curaçao and moved to the Netherlands with his parents at a young age. For many years, he had a wish to do something involving the island where his family came from and still lives. Curaçao is therefore central to the development plan that he submitted to the Fund. Through music, he hopes to become more intimate with the feelings that Curaçao arouses in him.

Wegman travelled to the island for a month. He met and talked with many people, visited museums, and conducted research in music archives. With the traditional music of Curaçao as starting point, he studied the musical instruments that play a role in this musical tradition. That led him to the tambú, a drum that is played during celebrations and has long been used to perform protest songs. 'I visited the workshop of the first and only woman in Curaçao who makes her own instruments, Tatiana. She taught me how to make a tambú. This instrument came to the Caribbean from Africa and has always been used as a political statement. It is also a ritual instrument: the rhythms are played quite fast and create a kind of trance that I recognise from night clubs. Techno music was always associated with resistance, too. I was able to collect all kinds of ingredients, like another instrument, a benta, to take back to the Netherlands and use in my composition. There are a lot of similarities between club music in the Netherlands and the music of Curaçao, that's something I want to work with.'

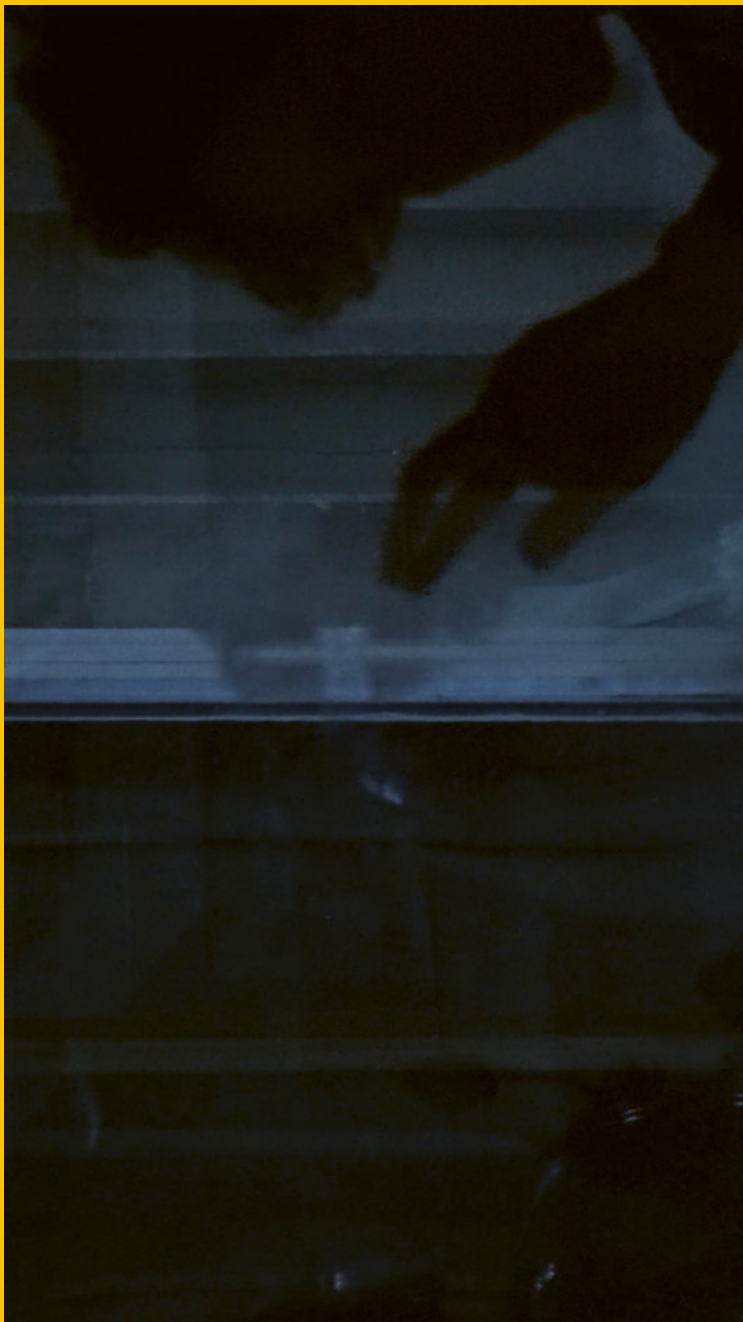
Before his trip, Wegman spent some time working with Cosmic Force (the stage name of Ben Spaander). 'Cosmic Force has been active as a producer of Electro music in the Dutch dance scene for many years. I worked with him in his studio and learned a lot from him. It was a valuable experience that will help grow further.'

Wegman would like to capture the beauty of Curaçao in several tracks. With that in mind, he made a large number of audio recordings during his trip. 'There are some things that everyone experiences in Curaçao – the way the wind blows, for example. Where my family grew up, the wind is always strong. That's very familiar to me. My grandmother's veranda is always lively, with people coming and going. There's always the sound of chatting and cars passing by. And there's always the wind, which carries sounds from far away as well. All that together creates a kind of mystical quality, which you'll definitely be hearing in my music.'

'The wind in Curaçao carries sounds from far away'

'There are a lot of similarities between club music in the Netherlands and the music of Curaçao'

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'I do not see technology as a replacement for human expression, but as a mechanism that can push the boundaries'

CONSTANZA CASTAGNET

Constanza Castagnet's design practice focuses on sound, technology and performance. She is particularly interested in language and voices, which allow us to express ourselves in all manner of ways. 'That fascination has been with me ever since I was a toddler,' she says excitedly. 'I used to mimic all kinds of voices and experiment with high and low tones.'

Talking in more depth about her work, the sound designer explains: 'I use sound, text, performance and video to create experimental environments in which I resist the temptation to use the voice as a shaper of meaning. I create eerie settings in which I use non-verbal and indefinable forms of expression to question our conventional understanding of communication.'

Castagnet came to the Netherlands from Argentina in the fall of 2019 for a two-year master's programme, *Approaching Language*, at the Sandberg Institute. During her studies, she focused her research on singing as a way to dissolve the structures of language. She created compelling installations that encouraged people to reflect on how pre-conceptions about meaning, sense and misunderstandings can be changed.

The currently ongoing discussions about new technologies are a subject of great interest to Castagnet. 'I am intrigued by the ways in which new technologies affect our lives and how we express ourselves, especially the unexpected ways they can be linked to the creation of sound.'

The project is in part an homage to her great-grandfather, who composed tangoes around the year 1930, largely in the capacity of ghost writer for other musicians. 'His own works had been lost, there were no more sound recordings to be found, but during a family visit in Buenos Aires I discovered the existence of a number of original scores. I was seized by the idea that I could revive his music using technology. First, I arranged a quartet performance of his original scores, and recorded that music in order to create an archive of his forgotten works. I also had the ensemble perform my own reinterpretations of his works. Now, I am in the process of creating my own compositions using the collected materials, while for example also using AI and other generative software to transfer the woody tones of, say, a cello to my own voice recordings, endowing my voice with a phonic quality that it does not have by nature. Using all of these materials, I am currently preparing an album, which will be followed by a live presentation. Thanks to sound, I can find some sort of connection with my great-grandfather, even though I never knew him.'

'Using machine learning models, we can revive sounds from the past and give them a new context'

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'By working with musicians, dancers and performers, I am learning to relinquish control'

DEBORAH MORA

Visual artist and designer Deborah Mora has loved nature for as long as she can remember. She grew up near Lago Maggiore in Italy, surrounded by nature and greenery. In her work, too, nature is present everywhere.

In the context of her artistic practice, she is interested in storytelling through combinations of image and sound. Mora studies how these components complement each other, produce stories, convey meaning, have tactile qualities and physical sensations. 'I am curious as to how physical and sensory ways of telling stories can mesh with my image-focused practice, using physical and digital techniques,' the designer says. She creates her audiovisual experiences in collaboration with artists from other disciplines, such as sound designers and musicians. For example, Mora (stage name: Orah) presented an audiovisual performance at *FIBER Festival 2023*, accompanying the premiere of Kenny Kneefel's (Shoal) new album with visuals that immersed the audience in new worlds where reality and illusion merge.

Mora takes another stride forward in her new project, which is to create a live performance in interaction with her audience. Because she misses hiking and cycling through nature, the designer is – during a brief spell back in the area where she grew up in Italy – spending a lot of time outside, zooming in on plants, insects and rocks with her macro lens. The resulting photographs, videos and graphic 3D animations will then be combined with collaborations with musicians, sound designers and dancers. Mora also wants to embrace spontaneity, improvisation and intuition. After all, as a designer she can exercise a great deal of control. 'Visuals can always be corrected, the work is planned and structured,' she says. 'I am learning to relinquish control by working with musicians, dancers and performers whose practices are based more on improvisation. By organising live audiovisual performances, I am learning to accept the unexpected. To experience the physical in person, I took an intensive dance workshop at Amenti in Rotterdam.'

Exactly how she will fuse together music, dance and the interactive live performance remains a bit of a puzzle. Once all the pieces click together, Mora will present the result at arts and culture festivals, such as the next edition of *FIBER Festival* in Amsterdam. Visitors will have the opportunity to form their own interpretations of what they hear and experience, and the nature of the connection they feel with the natural world that Mora has created.

'I am curious how physical and sensory ways of storytelling can mesh with my practice'

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Photo by Jaimy Soares

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'Our intuitive and associative approach lets us deviate from the established way of doing things'

DÉRIVE

Hedwig van der Linden and Kevin Westerveld met at Delft University of Technology, where they were studying for their master's degree in Architecture. After gaining experience in various internships and workplaces, they founded Dérive in 2022. Operating from Brussels and Rotterdam, their research-driven design practice focuses on scenography, public space, landscapes, co-creation and strategy. The socially engaged duo does so in a world full of transition issues, for instance in the areas of climate, biodiversity, food, water and mobility. 'We want to take steps, to bring fresh air to those complex issues, by taking a conceptual and co-creative approach and by being attentive listeners,' says Westerveld.

'We do so both upon request and at our own initiative, so that we can put issues on the agenda,' says Van der Linden. 'We are open-minded and embrace an intuitive and associative approach that lets us deviate from the established way of doing things. That deviation – whose meaning is encapsulated in the French word *dérive* – can be difficult because it requires more persuasion. But it also breeds excitement.' A sense of wonder, strolling around and studying environments at eye level are essential elements in Dérive's design practice.

Building on what is already there and operating on a basis of equality and a plurality of perspectives are two further important principles for Dérive. 'We want to involve a diverse group in the development or redevelopment of a given area, and to stimulate a public dialogue,' says Westerveld. Van der Linden elaborates: 'We relate to each other like amphibians, we speak different languages: the tongue of politics as well as of the citizen. All so that we can increase the involvement of the local community.'

The duo's application for the grant centred around a further investigation of the *dérive* method and its potential applications in various areas for their design practice. 'Around the time when we were awarded the grant, we were also selected for the Young Innovators programme and got the opportunity to create an exhibition design in collaboration with AIR and OMI Rotterdam,' Van der Linden explains. 'That gave us the confidence to investigate whether we can make Dérive a full-time practice.' Westerveld adds: 'We are working on various projects, in both fixed and variable collaborations.' Van der Linden: 'With the Dutch Design Week approaching, we are also turning our attention to our visual identity and our website, to share insights with young designers about the *dérive* method and how to run a firm, based on talks with various experts.' 'Transparency is important to us,' Westerveld notes. 'It's going to be a show-room full of stories.'

'We are investigating what applications the *dérive* method could have in our practice'

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ELIF SATANAYA ÖZBAY

Elif Satanaya Özbay's background is in film and video. She obtained her bachelor's degree from Design Academy Eindhoven in 2013, and her master's degree from the Sandberg Institute in 2017. Through her research-based works, the artist – born in the Netherlands and of Turkish Circassian descent – seeks to decode diasporic nostalgia within the horror genre by producing performances, visuals and installations.

With her project *How to Trace a Forgotten Diasporic Identity*, Özbay wishes to further develop both her inner storyteller and her inner researcher, as well as to investigate how she can make materials and information more accessible.

Talking about her background, the artist says: 'My ancestors come from Circassia and Abkhazia, an area in Caucasia, in northern Russia. Ethnic cleansing and genocides forced the Circassian people to flee in the late nineteenth century, creating a diaspora that halted the growth of this demographic group and caused their languages and cultures to slowly be forgotten.' Impassioned, she continues: 'I consider it an honour to create works around this theme. Even with my minimal knowledge, I can help resist this slide into obscurity. I believe that this is important for my community, and I also want to inform others about it. Most people don't know about Circassians, the region of Circassia or the genocide committed against Circassians.'

Özbay describes her project as 'research combined with performance, framed within the horror genre, using linking methods and mind mapping.' She explains further. 'I combine Circassian mythology, folklore and information about historic events with contemporary references, for instance from pop culture. The story's starting point is autobiographic. After that, I play with the idea that myths are born from a place of truth before gradually transforming into fiction. I use structure, but also intentionally create chaos. This way I try to tell my story in a playful and informative way, and to create new stories together with the audience.'

'I can help resist the slide into obscurity'

Following a number of educational studio visits and meetings with researchers and members of the Circassian community, Özbay is now focusing on further elaboration and presentation. The first performance has already been held in Antwerp, while the second version will be presented during the *Dutch Design Week*. The third and final version will be presented in December, again in Antwerp.

'The grant has given me freedom, recognition, time to conduct research, and opportunities to network and establish working relationships,' Özbay concludes.

'I combine Circassian mythology, folklore and information about historic events with contemporary references'

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ELIZAVETA FEDERMESSER

When Elizaveta Federmesser used AI to create new designs based on a database of images of modern jewellery, the software soon came up with the image of a coin. She quickly realised that this is the archetypal form of jewellery in many cultures. For Federmesser, this lucky find opened up the idea that 'instead of creating something new, you can also look at how the new is actually the super old.' It made her wonder whether for every object group there is a source object that we forgot but AI can remember. She applied for the Talent Development Grant with a plan to 3D scan objects from prominent Dutch museum collections and feed them to AI as a dataset to discover the archetypal form of different object groups.

As she carried out the various steps of her plan, contacting museums and starting an acting course to work on her presentation skills, she realised that she needed a venture closer to heart. 'I wanted to expand the project, extend its scope by involving institutions, but instead I expanded into thinking: why do I even care?' She realised that she is not so much interested in the objects as in the stories behind them, the mythology and iconology that gives objects their unique meaning. This realisation marked the start of an investigation into icons, mythology, archetypes, fashion theory and philosophy.

During this research, several pieces of the puzzle fell into place. Her new insights converge with her previous research on 'it' bags and coming-of-age stories, and Federmesser sees many similarities between these theories. 'I adopted the coming-of-age angle to examine these tropes. Many cultural theorists are talking about them, they just have different fields they want to influence. But then I realised I don't need to influence a field; I can just tell a story about interesting icons and tropes through a coming-of-age story to acknowledge what they mean and how they changed throughout time.'

The story will take the form of a self-published magazine, *BagMag*, in which essays and interviews are alternated with AI enhanced images. The first issue will be dedicated to the iconic as an enduring genre in media and everyday life. 'It is a teen magazine for reading adults who are curious about culture, fashion and ideas,' says Federmesser. 'What you might call a mixed bag.'

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'Instead of creating something new, you can also look at how the new is actually the super old'

'It's a mixed bag'



Photo by Studio ACTE (left)
and Stijn Bollaert (right)

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'I believe that we have to build differently in order to create future-proof, resilient and low-impact architecture'

ESTELLE BARRIOL

'I believe that we have to build differently in order to create future-proof, resilient and low-impact architecture,' says Estelle Barriol, founder of Studio ACTE, an architecture firm that specialises in designs based on reused materials. Sourcing those materials and subsequently using them for construction is something Barriol prefers to do personally. There are times when she feels more like a contractor than an architect.

The past year has given her a better grip on her positioning. 'The most interesting thing about applying for grants is that it forces you to think clearly and to figure out how you want to evolve and develop your practice.' One of her insights pertains to the scale of her work: that it needn't be very big. What is more important is that her design method of hands-on building is clear to see. She also realised that her practice, at heart, is shaped by a deep love for artisanal professions and regional or indigenous (vernacular) architecture.

This year gave Barriol the financial room she needed to participate in pitches that pay little or nothing: challenging competitions that do not always lead to a commission but are interesting in terms of substance and offer a good way to expand one's expertise. For example, she was able to elaborate her preparatory process with an additional step, engage in more on-site research into available materials, and create detailed models. She created a database of local materials, found among others at junk dealers and horticulturists, thereby further positioning Studio ACTE as an expert in the field.

Barriol was also able to further professionalise her practice in terms of the recording and documenting of projects and submissions. This is an important factor in acquisitions, especially because the reused materials are often not recognisable as such. This aesthetic aspect is something that Barriol also finds important. 'What kind of language could reuse bring to architecture? And how can we use the urban mine stocks to build in a substantial spatial manner, with design quality?'

Barriol has run her firm for three years, of which the past year was the most exciting: so many things came together. 'Because I could reshape all these thoughts about what reuse means and push it further, that created the chance to get selected and develop more meaningful projects.' The highlight of the year was the studio's selection for the French equivalent of the *Prix de Rome*, for which she is researching the antique recycling technique of *spolia*. Her contribution will be part of a group exhibition in Paris, along with the other selected participants.

'What kind of language could reuse bring to architecture?'

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Photo by Louis Oomes

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FLORIAN REGTIEN

Florian Regtien is straight about it: 'I am addicted to the sewing machine, and I am content with that addiction.' Every piece of clothing he creates is unique and, in that sense, a work of art. Aside from that, he paints and creates mixed media sculptures and collages, often also with the use of his sewing machine. And he is an actor too. Clearly, Regtien has a strong drive to create: 'I just really enjoy making things. It's a kind of meditation, a thought process, something that gives me peace.'

Regtien wanted to use his talent development year to 'taste' a variety of traditional crafts and in doing so develop himself into a true multidisciplinary artist. He apprenticed under a shoemaker, a furniture maker and a goldsmith; he made sneakers, an ottoman, pedestals; he upholstered, learned how to weld, and took a painting course. During a residency in Japan, he dedicated himself fully to denim fabric. 'I was already in love with denim, but now I feel that this love has grown into something eternal.'

Initially Regtien was preoccupied with the techniques, striving to execute them as well as possible. But he gradually let go of that fixation and instead came to focus on the question: what do I want to make, and what do I want to say with my works? Expanding his toolbox of skills has multiplied the creative possibilities in his mind, allowing him to adopt a broader perspective. Now, the challenge is to channel all these ideas. In the past year he was assisted by a creative strategist, who helped him figure out and communicate his broad practice. Regtien will be presenting a selection of his various recent creations in a solo exhibition at Vrij Paleis in Amsterdam.

The many workshops and courses that Regtien took gave him new skills, but even more valuable is a new important insight: 'This year, the main lesson has been that you need to enjoy the process, instead of being obsessed with the end product.' This is symbolised in the artwork that he composed out of the lists he makes every morning, when he writes down everything he wants to get done that day, followed by a daily motto. The most important motto of the year sits at the piece's centre: *Maybe I should seize the day*. 'I really got to know myself better. I have more peace and more love for myself now.'

'You need to enjoy the process, instead of being obsessed with the end product'

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'I am addicted to the sewing machine'



Photo by Eva van Boxtel

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'My work is an unrelenting search for order in the chaos and complexity that surrounds us.'

FLORIAN VAN ZANDWIJK

Florian van Zandwijk obtained his bachelor's degree in Design Art Technology (DAT) at ArtEZ in Arnhem in 2019. He works in the field of digital culture, both as an autonomous maker and on commission. The latter includes assignments as event organizer, curator, designer, producer and educator. Van Zandwijk describes his work as 'an unrelenting search for order in the chaos and complexity that surrounds us and an attempt to make some kind of sense of it.' He explains: 'We humans are constantly taking action to keep the systems, protocols and technologies running that we ourselves created. That incessant need, alongside humanity's inability to truly grasp and control, is central to my work.'

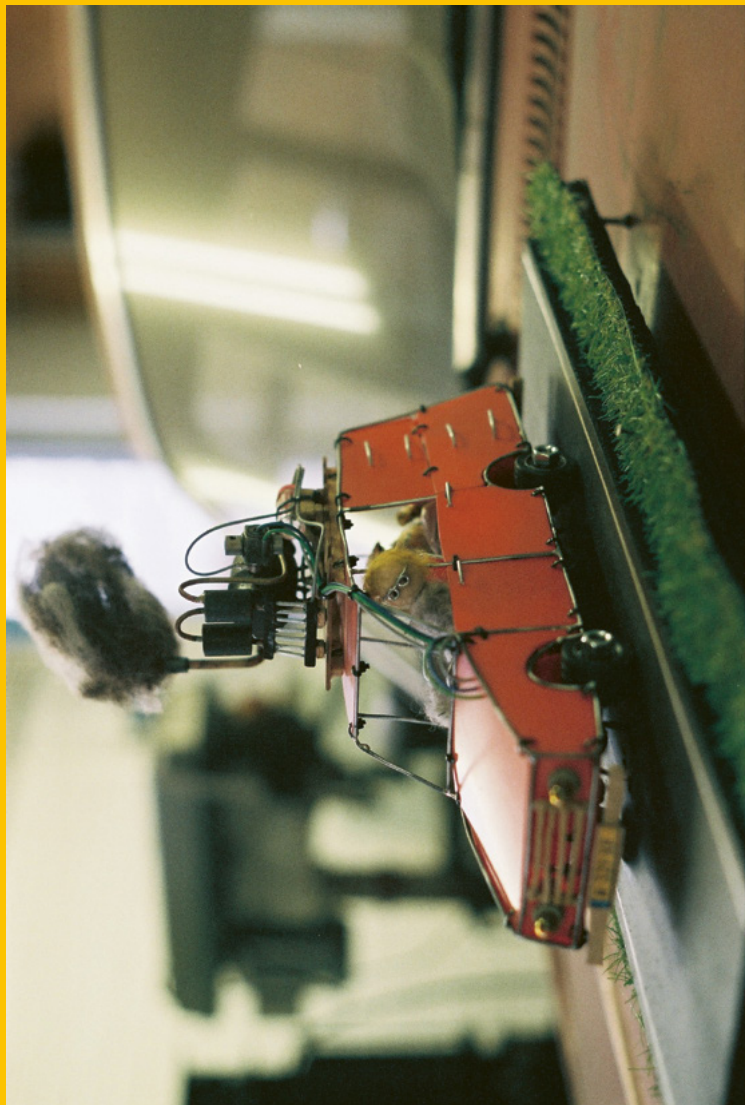
Van Zandwijk's focus is currently on *De Arena*, in which he investigates the football stadium as a metaphor for society. This project is a continuation of his ArtEZ graduation project, *The Ball The Field The Arena*, in which he interviewed workers and journalists from the worlds of data collection, stadium security, technological tools and the recording for TV of football. The book *Homo Ludens* by philosopher Johan Huizinga served as a basis for the project.

De Arena has already resulted in *Spectacle of Sports*, a performative lecture at W139 about the personal, political, cultural, social and technological aspects of the football World Cup. The performance was live-streamed on a large screen. This year also saw the emergence of a new video work, which Van Zandwijk created in the stadium of football club Sparta Rotterdam. It centres around a performative action that relates to technology: 'Before every match in the Eredivisie football league, someone has to bounce a football in the goal on both ends of the pitch to calibrate the television cameras, to ensure that all cameras register the bounce at the exact same moment. This prevents errors during the match itself, for example in the registration of offside. My video work centres on the absurdity of such obligatory protocols.'

Van Zandwijk is currently being mentored by curator Sanneke Huisman. 'My approach has gradually grown more direct. I am trying to develop fewer 'round' concepts and instead respond more to fleeting observations and inspirations, such as an online video or something that I encounter on the street and record. This has grown into a collection of works that I will present both online and in a physical setting in the coming months, for example via open calls and by organising a studio visit.' Concluding: 'Getting out there with my work is good for me. It takes me out of my comfort zone.'

'I am trying to develop fewer "round" concepts and instead respond more to fleeting observations'

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'I am going to build a car that runs on plastic'

GIJS SCHALKX

At his graduation, designer Gijs Schalkx drew attention with his home-built moped, powered by methane gas that he personally 'harvested' from ditches. Why? Because what drives him is a desire to minimise his dependency on the infrastructure that shapes our lives and to demonstrate that we can do more than just consume. 'And because I am very interested in energy, mobility and vehicles, I thought to myself: you know what, I'm going to investigate how much driving a car actually costs.'

'Everything has consequences'

The intention to build a car with his own hands had been with him for a while, but the main question was: what should it be powered by? 'My first thought was electricity, but that would never satisfy my requirements and be low-tech at the same time. I would have had to build enormous batteries, so big that the car would be too heavy to move under its own power.'

After some further research, the designer came up with another answer: oil. Or rather, plastic. 'We all throw away so much of it, and plastic is made from oil. I wondered whether I could reverse the chemical process and convert plastic back into its original form, and then use that oil to power my car. It seemed like a very interesting idea.'

Schalkx found almost everything he needed to build his car at the scrapyards. 'Unfortunately, the car I chose turned out to be the most rotten one of the lot, so I had to cut out the entire floor in order to fix everything underneath it, including the brakes. I ground away all the rust and spent an enormous amount of time welding.'

Right after the official inspection, the engine broke, although I was able to replace it with another second-hand one. Now, the vehicle is road-ready.'

'For the *Dutch Design Week*, I want to have succeeded in getting the car to run on oil. But even that process has consequences that may not be entirely responsible. What I do is boil plastic on the car's roof until it evaporates, and cooling down those vapours gives me oil to fuel the car. One kilo of plastic yields a bit less than a litre of oil. So although my plan to make a car that I can fuel independently was a success, I am not completely self-sufficient as regards energy. I need plastic for each trip, and because of that I may end up having to start consuming more again. So how independent can you really be, nowadays? Everything has consequences.'

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HATTIE WADE

She was always one to ask critical questions, wanting to understand the frameworks that preserve a *status quo* in Europe. Hattie Wade questions what we accept as the truth with respect to our national heritage. Stories about the 'official' heritage can create a sense of national identity based on pride, which can lead to what Wade describes as 'toxic nationalism'. As an example: white nationalists in Great Britain – Wade's place of birth – protected the statues of slave traders during the Black Lives protests. And in the Netherlands, the *Forum voor Democratie* national party proposed a 'Dutch Values Protection Act', in response to the escalating debates about the figure of Black Pete (*Zwarte Piet*). 'This is rarely opposed by "contra-heritage", that is to say, by understanding how the violence inherent to colonialism and imperialism is maintained through the contemporary frameworks of law, education and media,' she says.

Wade is working on three projects to expose this and to offer 'anti-venom', through extensive online, archival and field research. For example, she has interviewed Sadia Habib, a lecturer, researcher and project coordinator of *Our Shared Cultural Heritage* in Manchester Museum. Habib works with young diaspora communities to explore the question how heritage institutions can contribute to creating safe spaces where they can access heritage. Wade also interviews teachers and children in the Netherlands and Great Britain about the way colonial history is presented. She is working with the archaeology department of the municipality of The Hague to understand how historical stories are formed in response to archaeological finds. Her work will result in an experimental documentary. 'Wherever possible, I like to use audiovisual media to let the voices of others be heard.'

'As a designer you can make complex information visible and comprehensible for the general public'

Her two other research projects focus on legislation. Wade is working with ARIJ, which is a network of Arabic research journalists in the Middle East and North Africa. The project concentrates on a colonial law from 1917 in Morocco, which protects forests on the one hand but that stimulates creating wildfires on the other, in order to facilitate the occupation of land. 'As a designer, I am able to represent their research in a spatial, sculptural exhibition, due to go on display in Jordan in December. I enjoy making complex and concealed information tangible, visible and comprehensible for the general public,' Wade says. 'I cannot cause systems to collapse but can make them wobble. And I hope that, a few generations after us, the narrative will have shifted to a more polyphonic, honest historical narrative and fairer laws.'

'I cannot cause systems to collapse, but can make them wobble'

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IGRIEN YIN LIU

Creative director and image creator Igrien Yin Liu had a clear idea in her mind when she formulated her plans for her talent development year. She would explore her own visual and personal identity as a woman of Chinese descent who grew up in the Netherlands. The identity that ended up taking centre stage was very different, however, because during the past year she became a mother. As a result, it has been a wonderful but tumultuous year. 'The pregnancy really changed me, and so has parenthood. As a person, but also as an artist. You start seeing things differently, your perspective changes. It was a real shift.'

In order to capture this reality in images, Liu created *Motherhood*: a visual series about motherhood, parenthood and the fragility of womanhood, as well as the power that comes with being a mother. The foundation of the series is a twelve-chapter poem by her own hand. Each chapter is accompanied by an image, and together they tell a complete story.

This new subject demanded a new visual style, leading Liu to experiment with photography. Where she used to do her shoots in the studio, with copious use of flash and post-processing, she now decided to test out natural light. 'Painting with light' is how she personally describes the technique, a kind of hybrid of photography and painting, softer and with fewer sharp lines. 'I really feel like new version of myself. I think that that's also why I felt the need to invent a new style.'

'Pregnancy has really changed me'

After her parental leave, Liu returned to her work by participating in a Chinese painting course at a Buddhist temple in Amsterdam, as she had intended to do (among other things) at the start of the development year. She is now turning her attention back her original plans to investigate her cultural identity, although the scope of her research has since expanded with new questions: what does her culture mean for her child? And who does she want to be for her daughter? Identity, after all, is always evolving.

'What does my culture mean for my child?'

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IRIS LAM

Interdisciplinary artist Iris Lam had the idea for her first children's book in 2020, as she lay on the couch with a burnout. 'I just couldn't get my body to relax. That's when the image popped into my mind of myself hooked up to a transformer, able to produce electricity. That way, the tension in my body could contribute to the energy transition!' It struck Lam as an amusing story, and the narrative wrote itself. While writing, Lam forgot about the world. The story was just too exciting to stop. 'There's a point when the main character is trapped in an indoor playground. I simply could not go to bed before I had freed her.'

In the past year, Lam learned how to create a book, write a well-rounded story and how to use various writing styles. More importantly, she learned a lot about overcoming one's anxieties, which is the topic of the book. 'I already knew a thing or two about anxieties, since I have enough of my own. I put all of that into my book.' What Lam did not know is that ten per cent of primary school students suffer from recurring anxieties, and that climate anxiety is a growing problem among this group. Despite that, there are very few children's books that deal with these subjects. So Lam had her work cut out for her: 'I like to work with themes that people find difficult to talk about. To me, taboos are frustrating and unnecessary.' And so *De Bond voor Bang-e-riken* (League of Cowards), which Lam both wrote and illustrated, is all about heroic cowards and shivering heroes.

The book helped Lam overcome a few of her own anxieties as well. 'I find self-promotion quite daunting. I was advised to visit children's bookstores to promote my book, so I did that my own way, by going on a cycling trip through the Netherlands. I announced my visits on social media and slept in hostels or stayed with other people along the way.'

It proved to be an educational experience. 'Book-sellers know a very great deal about youth literature, and they gave me useful tips. In a sense, that trip through the country was my own League of Cowards, which made me set aside my social fears.'

Although Lam did not find the answer to the energy transition, she was able to use her energy and creativity to normalise fear among children. And writing one book has left her eager to write the next. The theme? Consent. 'It's going to be a coming-of-age story, a queer story. I've already taken a course about it, in which sex worker Betty Martin explained the wheel of consent. I think it will be a valuable theme for teenagers.'

'I promoted the book my own way, with a cycling tour from bookstore to bookstore'

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'I like to work with themes that people find difficult or do not want to talk about'



Photo by Luuk Roordink

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‘What would a letter sound like if it were a physical object?’

IVO BROUWER

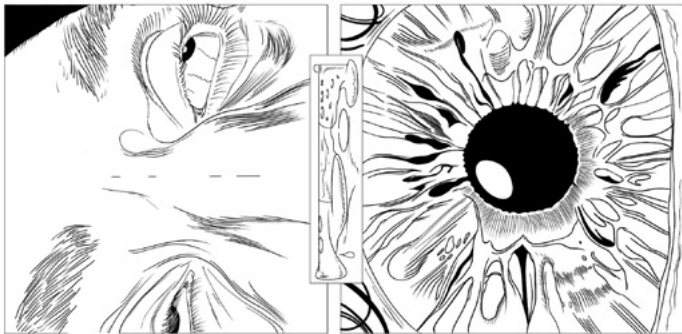
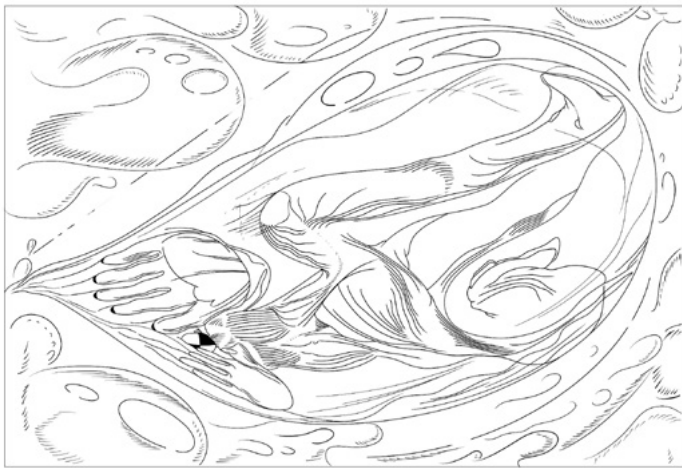
For graphic designer and letter enthusiast Ivo Brouwer, experimenting is the way to new discoveries. His first goal this year was, therefore, to set up a *Type & Technology Laboratory* to welcome in the ‘great unknown’. Brouwer: ‘Collaboration is a good catalyst for that. Over the past year, I worked with various designers and artists, hosted workshops, and took courses to learn new programming languages.’ The end product of all that experimenting is an online archive full of findings. ‘When you’re doing experimental work, it is interesting to share all the steps and invite others to do the same. That’s why I share all aspects of this project on a website, ranging from experiments to videos and articles.’ In Brouwer’s work, the process is also the product. That’s why, in any case, the past year was a successful one.

Letter design is often purely about readability, but Brouwer finds it more interesting to challenge people to decipher the message. He does so by pushing the boundaries of the relationships between the visual and semantics in typography. Brouwer: ‘The letter “A” has a phonetic meaning, but also a semantic one. Shapes can change and still preserve their meaning. The letter “A” can come in many different shapes and sizes, but it always remains the letter “A”. What I find interesting is to push the boundaries of that and to find out what you can do with the shape and behaviour of such a letter. I also always like to add an additional layer of meaning. By playing with that, text is more than just text, becoming a puzzle that lets you decipher multiple messages.’ One word can have two meanings, for example. ‘Not the functional but the poetic aspect of letters is what primarily interests me in this tension between form and meaning.’

How does sound relate to this attribution of meaning? This, and what a letter sounds like as a physical object, is what Brouwer explored in one of his collaborations, with sound artist Stefano Murgia. ‘These kinds of questions are so rich that they give me lots of new ideas.’ The fruitful collaboration spawned new perspectives, studies, and possibly new projects as well. First, however, there is still that online platform that needs to be published, which is Brouwer’s final hurdle to clear. After that he can start exploring the depths. ‘This was an exploratory process. At the next step, I want to completely unravel certain themes.’ In this case, we can actually take ‘unravel’ literally. ‘One concrete project that could grow into something big is *Typographic Tapestry*, where I make carpet patterns using letter shapes. It lends itself very well for a collaboration with the Textile Museum.’

‘The letter “A” can come in a hundred different shapes and sizes, but it always remains the letter “A”.’

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JAVIER RODRIGUEZ

Collaboration is at the heart of Javier Rodriguez's practice. It started back in 2019 when he and his creative partner Lou Buche graduated from the Sandberg Institute's temporary master's programme *Radical Cut-Up*. After their graduation, they continued their collaboration under the alter ego *Robuche*. Rodriguez and Buche describe Robuche as 'a fast thinker that translates ideas into images in unconventional ways (...) exploring the porosity of media, reorganising and distorting the established production flows to develop its own language at the intersection of art and design.'

Rodriguez's application for the talent development grant stemmed from a need to work on a project for a longer period of time. The grant has provided him with an opportunity to explore a new medium and theme. He is currently working on a graphic novel consisting of three stories, each related to the theme of transhumanism on three scales: material, creature, and space. The first story revolves around gamma-butyrolactone, a solvent that is used as a cleaning agent to remove graffiti, for instance, but which also forms one of the ingredients for the synthetic hard drug GHB. In Rodriguez's graphic novel, the everyday banal and the disturbing, uncanny meet. It is a comic book without text; the meaning can be interpreted from the combination of different images. 'Stories need a certain degree of abstraction so that readers can bring in their own perspective and experience.'

Rodriguez's working method is layered and diverse. He creates, combines and transforms both existing and self-created images, using techniques and technologies such as photography and generative AI. 'That's really interesting to me. There are multiple ways to combine all those different inputs into the end result. And so there's many aspects to each part of the story.' He also enlists the help of others to discuss his storyboards, create images and to publish his graphic novel. 'Collaboration is also a way to support your practice. By exchanging and discussing with others, different disciplines come together, breaking down the boundaries and barriers between art and design.'

For the presentation of his graphic novel in early 2024, he is again considering merging different disciplines, such as cinematography, performance and installation, thereby also dissecting the book's creation process. 'I think it's interesting for the audience to see how you can create a story by starting from something that already exists and then you modify and regenerate it into something new.'

'Collaboration is also a way to support your practice'

'Stories need a degree of abstraction so that readers can bring in their own perspective and experience'

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Photo by Mitch van Schijndel

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'The work shows clearly how my background has shaped me as a maker.'

KALKIDAN HOEX

'A third world', is how Kalkidan Hoex describes the jewellery universe she is creating. Another reality within the world we live in, based on the idea of philosopher Michel Foucault. This third world originates in her own identity, which has been shaped by her adoption background. When she was two years old, she came to the Netherlands from Ethiopia. It was a move that led to a lot of 'friction'; developments that were cut off abruptly, only to then continue somehow.

When Lions Learn to Swim is the project she has been working on this year. The lion as the proud symbol of Ethiopia and her ancestors, but also of herself, as a young girl who was taken to swimming and ice skating lessons by her enthusiastic Dutch parents. While it felt very unnatural and not fun at the time, she can now not even imagine not doing those things. 'These two different cultural sides will always cause shifts in how I perceive culture and identity. The work shows clearly how my background has shaped me as a maker. Given that I have to maintain my balance on this middle way, I find that I'm increasingly asking the public what culture is and whether having cultural influences from two cultures is actually a positive or a negative thing.'

The end result is a collection that is not made up of separate pieces of jewellery, but rather an installation where jewellery, both conceptual jewellery and jewellery that can be worn, goes hand in hand with photography, moving images, and illustrated fabrics. The sensory images that Hoex creates make the jewellery break free from the here and now and connect to ancestors and predecessors. The installation will be on display at Bar Bario in Amsterdam, during the *OBSSESSED!* festival organised by the Current Obsession jewellery platform, and during the *New York Jewelry Week*.

Finally, the development year has also changed her as an instructor at the art academy where she works. She has abandoned the idea of what quality is or what it should be. Instead, she now prefers to ask, 'What you are trying to say with this and what are your next steps?' The idea of a canon is also something Hoex finds difficult: 'Sure, you need a basis, but it's far more important that you gather your own examples, especially there where you have your connections.' This is the kind of advice she wishes she had received when she was an art student. 'The realisation that how you do things is your most authentic way, is gold to me.'

'How you do things is your most authentic way'

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LINDSEY VAN DE WETERING

Lindsey van de Wetering completed her master's degree at Amsterdam's Academy of Architecture with the project *Poku Oso*, which sought to bring new life to the dilapidated Cultuurtuin (Culture Garden) in Paramaribo. This park was once used to test exotic plants and trees for use on plantations; today, its very existence is under threat due to neglect and reallocation of the land. *Poku Oso*'s nature-inclusively designed bandstands were inspired by instruments and are intended to bring music to the park – not just as an accommodation for the conservatoire, but also as life-sized sound boxes played by nature itself. The project won an Archiprix award, and she dreamed of realising at least one such bandstand in Paramaribo.

The grant afforded her the opportunity to explore that dream. Travelling to Suriname, she encountered the Green Growth Suriname foundation, who asked her not only for input on the preservation of the Culture Garden, but also to help reflect on the importance of nature-inclusive building in a city plagued by the rising sea level. 'In addition to upscaling one of the models, I have made contact with the people of Paramaribo in all kinds of ways, in order to identify their needs and build the future together,' says Van de Wetering.

Something that stood out in that process was how hesitant many people in Suriname are to dream about the future: 'People are more focused on surviving here and now.' A workshop session at the Kinderuniversiteit (Children's University) opened the way for a visual research approach: making collages using photos and drawings makes it easier to dream. Van de Wetering wrote an essay on the subject, titled *Dromen over Suriname 2043*, in which she not only explains, but also demonstrates the importance of imagination. 'By visualising thoughts, we can create a vision of the future, and such visions are necessary to be able to realise a transition. As far as that is concerned, there is a great need for design capacity in Suriname.'

Van de Wetering became an ambassador for the ecological organisation Forest93, gave lectures and workshops, and encouraged urban residents to create collages of the city of the future. Based on those sessions, she started making collages of her own as well, two of which will soon be on display at Podium in Amsterdam West. 'This grant has also given me more room to rediscover art. I was always torn between choosing art school or architecture, but now I can bring the two together. I would like to continue telling stories using art, photography and film.'

'There is a great need for design capacity in Suriname'

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'I want to help people dream again'



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LINE ARNGAARD

Line Arngaard studied Graphic Design at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie from 2016 to 2018. Following graduation, she turned her focus to the research and development of projects at the intersection of graphic design and fashion. 'I am fascinated by the idea of fashion as a social virus that spreads a variety of aesthetic and cultural codes, which expresses itself in the way we look at things, how we dress and how we move. My aim is to make projects that through a conceptual approach to graphic design reflect deeply on fashion as an experiential, and not merely a representational, medium. Studying fashion and textile is something I take very seriously. For example, I find it interesting to examine the way in which times of crisis effect the way we dress. In this context one thing we always see is the return of patchwork, a technique that relates to female ingenuity, resilience, and thriftiness.'

Talking about her own development, Arngaard says: 'By studying patchwork and quilting techniques, I started to see them less as a purely fabric-oriented practice and more as a metaphor for work, a conceptual framework to create new images and tell stories. My main project, *Piecing Pages*, involves creating patchworks, but not in the traditional sense: it is more a way of thinking about how I can create randomly recycled images in textile, on paper or in other ways. These visual experiments will end up as part of a publication, along with texts that investigate how patchwork serves as a means of expression for women in different times.'

In her second project, Arngaard and her mentor, author Hanka van der Voet, research the *Nationale Feestrok*: a unifying campaign that provided thousands of Dutch women with clear instructions on how to create their own patchwork skirts in the years following World War II. Her third project is a workshop that centres around the creation of improvisational images in the medium of fabric, using classic patchwork techniques. 'Once the grant period has passed, there will undoubtedly be incomplete "patches" and new collaborations to pick up,' says Arngaard.

Concluding, she notes: 'This past year, I haven't just made things using the computer. I rediscovered that "thinking with your hands" really works. I want to hold on to that practice, because I've found that it has tremendous added value for my work.'

'I find it interesting to examine the way in which times of crisis effect the way we dress'

'I see patchwork as a conceptual framework to create new images and tell stories'

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MAARTEN BRIJKER

Maarten Brijker obtained his master's degree from the ArtScience Interfaculty, a joint programme offered by the Royal Academy of Art and the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague, in 2018. Brijker enjoys combining creative disciplines, and is therefore active in various capacities: as a music artist, as a composer and as a sound designer in the fields of dance and performance art, video and film. He also creates installations as a sound artist, which are displayed in museums. Brijker is hugely fascinated by the intimacy and power of sound. 'Music is something very physical to me,' he says. 'Some textures of sound, tonalities, are almost tangible. Certain frequencies literally touch your skin and can bring about physical effects. And by playing certain harmonies, you can convey emotions. In films, music is often a subtle yet powerful tool to evoke certain feelings in the audience.'

'I want to make my music tool available to as many people as possible'

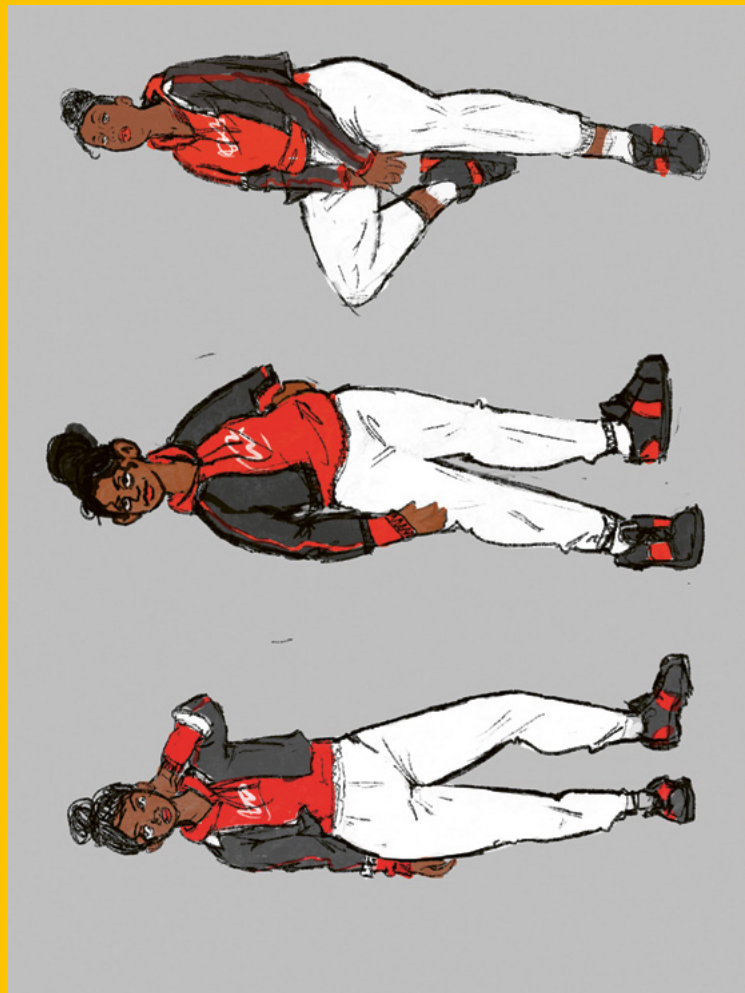
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After graduating, Brijker began to collaborate extensively with other artists from a variety of disciplines. 'I experimented a lot to find my own voice and discover my qualities as an artist. Now, I feel that my practice has acquired a clear form and that I have a good understanding of who I am as a maker.'

The grant that Brijker received in the context of the Talent Platform has offered him the space and freedom to formulate a long-term study into the sensuality and tangibility of sound. He is also working to develop a VST audio plugin, combining his skills and knowledge in the area of music with programming. 'It is good to be able to take a year to focus my attention on this project. Learning how to use the programming language MaxMSP and developing the plugin is taking quite a bit of time – more than I initially expected.'

Brijker is working on a Max4Live plugin compatible with Ableton, a digital audio workstation used by many producers and musicians. 'I want to make my music tool available to as many people as possible. And to join people from the music community in the studio to see how they use my plugin. During this process, I want to publish a mini album of experimental club music under my stage name, Yon Eta. Probably electronic, something in the direction of soundscapes. The music release will probably be ready in 2024.'

'Certain frequencies literally touch your skin and can bring about physical effects'



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MALIK SAÏB-MEZGHICHE

Safi is aboard a jam-packed bus with a friend – the bus is so crowded that she was unable to check in when she got on. When a ticket inspection is carried out, things get out of hand: the inspectors force her to pay a hefty fine on the spot, and when she objects, they become aggressive. This two-minute animation is a small but deeply recognisable example for many people of the daily abuse of power by police and enforcement officers in the French banlieues, says Malik Saïb-Mezghiche. He personally grew up in a suburb of Lyon, where violent riots broke out this summer after the police shot and killed a seventeen-year-old boy in a Parisian suburb during a traffic check.

Saïb-Mezghiche wishes to use his animations to reach young people in similar situations. Having been exposed to it himself, he knows what racial violence can do to people mentally. The series he wants to create around this subject is partly aimed at creating a sense of recognition. The first step is therefore to portray these injustices and the frustration people feel about them. 'But I also want to bring about a shift in the way people think. It helps to know that you're not alone in this. Why do we all still accept it? What can we do to bring about a change?'

In *La Porte du Dragon*, Saïb-Mezghiche adds a dash of magic to reality. 'It's going to be a coming-of-age story in a fantasy world in which the sad stories of reality are given better endings.' This first clip is a proof of concept; in the coming weeks and months, he will seek investors for the series as a whole. Though originally trained as a graphic designer and art director, more recently Saïb-Mezghiche has invested heavily in his animation skills. At Project City he learned how to write scripts, create storyboards and develop characters. 'As a creator of images, writing dialogues doesn't come naturally to me. I don't want to resort to caricatures and clichés, so I am working with experienced actors – not just for motion, but also for the texts.'

Making and selling animations is a time-consuming process. 'Those initial two minutes represent no less than three months of work. And now I have to generate my own publicity to get other people interested enough to invest time and money in my project.' He has a plan for that, too: starting from September, he intends to kickstart the project by posting a one-minute animation every two weeks.

'To convince investors,
you need an audience'

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'Young people in the
banlieues need to know
that they are not alone'



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'We should say that we do not know or understand something more often: it creates room to learn'

MANAL AZIZ

Manal Aziz has a background as a psychologist, writer and interviewer. The works of this audiovisual maker centre around identity issues, the telling and sharing of stories in an inclusive way, and the impact of work at the social level and in the area of the environment. Manal focuses on sound and image, both still (photography) and moving. 'I also write,' says Aziz. 'My works are an audiovisual translation of the questions I ask of the world around me. I hope that encountering my work helps people feel that they too have room to question their own position in the world and society. In my opinion, there is nothing wrong with saying that we don't know or understand something: it creates room to learn, and we should do so much more often.'

Aziz was selected during the *Scout nights*. 'There were so many talented makers, my expectations were low. In all honesty, it took months for the realisation that I had been chosen to really settle in. As I am self-taught, being recognised in this way is very rewarding. The grant opened many doors for me, especially in how I view myself and my position as a maker. Receiving it was a wonderful thing, of course, but I have to say that it also put a certain pressure on me: a feeling of "it's now or never". To some extent, that pressure is still with me now.'

As a person, Aziz is always moving between worlds. 'As a maker, too, I move back and forth between disciplines as part of my process. It's something that I want to investigate further this year, in material and process. That gave me the idea for a multimedia zine, combining digital elements with the physical form of a magazine. Content-wise, it might include wordcraft, photography and audio elements in the form of QR codes that grant access to a digital platform.'

The project sees Aziz joining forces with organisations and communities in the Netherlands and Morocco. During a residency in Marrakech, Aziz will dedicate his full efforts to material research for the zine. 'Good friends of mine have founded a platform in Marrakech that focuses on sustainability and experimentation, *Khial Nkhel*. They previously organised paper-making and printing workshops in their atelier. I am going to experiment with a variety of things, including natural, DIY techniques for photo printing using direct sunlight. I am a fairly analytically-minded person, so I'm looking forward to spending a month working primarily with my hands!'

'I want to make a multimedia zine, combining digital elements with the physical form of a magazine'

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'I really believe in the effectiveness of performance as a production method'

MAREN BANG

For Maren Bang, the year following her graduation with a master's degree from Design Academy Eindhoven felt empty and lonely. 'Finding work was a struggle. I didn't want to start working for just any company, or something like that.' What Bang wanted to do more than anything else was to follow her artistic calling without compromise. But how? With help from environmental psychologist and coach Adeola Enigbokan, she took a deep-dive into herself. 'It was Adeola who encouraged me to do something with my theatre background.' Little by little, she came up with a method to boost her own practice. Bang developed traditional skills – woodcutting, working with ceramics, weaving, and 3D design/printing – not just for the sake of it, but to incorporate them into the concept of a 'fake open call'. It saw her do all the characters herself, ranging from woodcutter Ole Riemann, ceramicist Marion Nelé, 3D designer Nolan Meier, and weaver Norma Illene to curator Elma Norine and assistant curator Elenor Monira. All these names are anagrams of her own, Maren Oline Bang. The jury consisted of Bang's mentors Amanda Pinatih, Lucas Maassen, Oli Stratford and Alexandre Humbert.

This was how Bang combined various of her ambitions and was able to lose herself in the fun of making it. 'I find it hard to choose one direction. Organising and running an exhibition is something I find interesting, but I also want to be an artist. The fake open call brings it all together.' And it gave her full control, something that, like insecurity, is a prominent theme in her work. 'While my work is not functional like that of product designers, I still hesitate to call myself an 'artist'. By shaping my own ecosystem, I create the freedom to experiment and to seek myself as a maker, without fearing criticism or rejection.' This is what allowed the autonomous artist in

Bang to come out over the past year. Laughingly: 'Whenever I made a mistake in the woodcutting, I'd just blame Ole. I developed his character during a residency at the Hjerleid crafts centre in Dovre in Norway. We have his character to thank for my dramatic woodcutting style.' Bang's theatre background came in very handy when it came to working out the characters. 'I believe in the effectiveness of performance as a production method. It allowed me to discover various facets of myself, for example.'

Bang came up with an institute that she worked out based on research and information from Amanda Pinatih (design curator at Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum). 'Setting up a fictitious museum was such fun. The structures behind it fascinate me enormously.' Not just the characters, but also the institute itself got its own unique personality and costume. 'This lets me move my institute around by myself.' It doesn't get more autonomous than that!

'Whenever I made a mistake in the woodcutting, I could always just blame Ole Riemann'

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MARGHERITA SOLDATI

Exhaustion, rehabilitation, transformation, repair: these are some of the terms Margherita Soldati kept hearing during her recovery process following a burnout several years ago. And they are terms that she was all too familiar with, given her work in the reprocessing of textile waste. She found the similarity fascinating. 'I thought: if I spend all my time working on projects that tackle sustainability in textiles, why can't I do the same for the sustainability of my own brain?'

A worn-out favourite sweater formed the starting point of the project *Alchemy of Resilience*. She unravelled the body of the sweater but left the edges intact. Using a contrasting thread made of textile waste, she loosely reknitted the remaining parts together, so that the garment transformed into something new, and at the same time became a self-portrait. Soldati stresses that it is better to speak in terms of transformation than of reparation. 'When you ask someone to repair you and to be returned to the condition that you used to be in, you are asking something that is completely impossible, with adverse consequences.'

For this project she wanted to learn how to knit, both by hand and by machine. Partly during a residency at Lottozero in Prato, the famous Italian textile city and a pioneer in the field of textile recycling. She also started talking to the people working there in the industry, and the theme of burnout proved to be an effective conversation starter. During the year she organised several events to let people try their hand at knitting, and at the same time to talk to them. In the library of Tilburg's TextielMuseum, she explored the history of knitting as an artisan practice that brings people together, and thus helps to create and reinforce communities. Soldati is eager to develop this social aspect in her practice.

In the coming period, she will be showing the outcomes of her project in various places and different ways; for instance in the display window of EM Studio/Gallery and in an exhibition in W139, both in Amsterdam and in collaboration with artist Hanna Steenbergen-Cockerton. During the exhibition in W139, there will be a workplace where people can knit and of course talk together. Soldati finds it important to make the theme of burnout visible, also within the cultural sector where it happens frequently. The financial security provided this year was a relief: 'It gave me enough time to work in the right way.'

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'If I spend all my time working on projects that tackle sustainability in textiles, why can't I do the same for the sustainability of my own brain?'

'It gave me enough time to work in the right way.'



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MARIO GONSALVES

'I want to make Disney for our people.' This is the goal Mario Gonsalves had in mind when he submitted his application for a talent development grant. In 2019, he graduated from HKU University of the Arts in Utrecht with a bachelor's degree in Audiovisual Media. His graduation project was a film called *Patroon*, which tells the coming-of-age story of a young man called Malik who moved with his mother from the Caribbean Island of Curaçao to Amsterdam's Bijlmer district. The story is told from the perspective of three types of relationships, i.e. with his mother, with his friends, and his first love. The film shows how the path towards adulthood is full of obstacles for young people with a migration background.

Where *Patroon* is based on his personal memories of setbacks and pain, in his next projects Gonsalves wants to focus on creating stories, characters, and designs that will enable people from the Caribbean to also dream and shape their own environment. To accomplish his goal, he explored new fields and learned new skills. He learned to use Rhino, a 3D drawing program for parametric designing, through a three-week course at AA School for Architecture in London, and he attended an 'active wood bending' workshop.

He started by exploring gentrification and architecture on the Caribbean islands. Tourism is an important source of income here, resulting in waterfronts lined with unattractive colossal hotels that are often box-shaped for economic reasons. Aside from those hotels, there are resorts that cater to more affluent tourists, for which nature conservation areas have had to make way in some cases. According to Gonsalves, Caribbean authorities' short-sighted approach to tourism is harmful for the region and its population. In his photographic work, he uses a fish as a symbol of something that has a holy status on the islands on the one hand, but is also killed for survival on the other. The same paradox also exists in how nature is damaged for the benefit of economic development, including tourism.

His study will be presented as a manual for designers who work in the Caribbean. 'Many designers are stuck in the reality and frameworks within which they are used to doing their work. With my proposal, I want to put people and culture first again in the design mindset.' His manual is an invitation to other designers: 'Build on it.'

'I want to make Disney for our people'

'With my proposal, I want to put people and culture first again in the design mindset'

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Photo by Roy Manuhutu

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MARTIJN HOLTSLAG

Painstakingly cutting loose one troll to glue it onto another. A medieval city of varied houses and roofs, every stone cut out by hand. Even when miniature construction was still just a hobby for Martijn Holtslag, he already strayed off the beaten path of tabletop wargames: while these centre on dice and rule-based play, Holtslag was more interested in creating his own worlds. That hobby has grown somewhat out of hand since then: his collection of hand-painted figurines and miniature landscapes is enough to fill an exhibition gallery.

Experimentation and unconventional connections are central elements in Holtslag's works. His practice is diverse, comprising not just miniatures but also music and film. He used part of the development year to define his practice: 'In my head, it was always boundless. Now, it is increasingly: *this* is what I do, *this* is what it can do, and *that* is what I can achieve with it.'

This can lead to interesting crossovers between disciplines, media and elements. Presently, Holtslag is collaborating with a programmer to build an interactive model of a waterfall. Behind the waterfall is a cave with a water surface in the form of an LED screen. By constantly placing different elements on the screen and then projecting images onto them produces scenes in and around the water.

Holtslag is fascinated by landscape elements such as caves, islands and waterfalls, and likes to share that fascination with nature lovers and game designers. Why do elements such as these appeal so strongly to our imagination? What makes a landscape beautiful? What does Paradise look like? What kind of stories can a landscape tell? Questions such as these are what Holtslag's works explore.

Holtslag also used the past year to develop the thematic aspects of his works. In the world of miniatures, landscapes are often connected with a greater narrative – a story from history, the fantasy world or science fiction. History, too, is an inexhaustible source of inspiration for Holtslag. 'But those stories are often so much bigger than a single landscape can capture. A landscape is more suited to capturing a moment.' Thematic research led to new questions. 'Because of my background in fantasy landscapes, I wanted to investigate whether I could really make this into an art. The more time you spend creating, the more you start asking yourself: what is it really all about?'

'The more time you spend creating, the more you start asking yourself: what is it really all about?'

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MATILDE PATUELLI

Matilde Patuelli is a social designer who examines social constructions, human interaction and how we experience reality. In her current design practice, she is researching to what extent she can incorporate Live Action Role-Playing into her work as a narrative and experience-focused tool.

'During my studies, I began sketching out the "Methodology of Ambiguity", which investigates ways to express feelings we cannot put into words through visualisation, materialisation and embodiment. My goal was to study LARP as a co-creative tool for interaction, narration and exchange. The idea of LARPing is for players to enter the "magical circle" of the game and agree to reside in a different reality, giving them an alibi that allows them to behave in ways that would otherwise hit too close to home, or instead feel too foreign. This ambiguous space for transformation and safe exploration is what fascinated me and inspired me to incorporate gamification into my practice.'

What Patuelli finds so interesting about LARPing is that the players continuously manipulate and shift the narrative, as a result of which the outcome is different every time the game is played. 'I also integrated that aspect into the workshops and activities that I have developed.'

'I started this research year by joining the Transformative Play Initiative. These lessons gave me theoretical knowledge and a basis that I could use to start experimenting for myself. Throughout the year I took part in valuable learning opportunities that crossed my path, such as *Als ik in jouw schoenen stond* ('If I Were in Your Shoes'), in Slovenia, where I practiced using the theatre techniques of the Theatre of the Oppressed. At the LARP conference *Knutepunkt23* in Denmark, I had the honour of presenting the workshop *Visualising, Manifesting, Embodying your Queer Resistance* in collaboration with anthropologist Cosmo Esposito. And at a summer camp in Greece about urban game design, *Trust in Play*, and the College of Extraordinary Experiences in Poland, I had the opportunity to explore non-verbal LARPing.'

'My focus this year was on learning, research and application by means of experimental workshops and collaborations. In the coming months, I want to continue feeding the playful networks into which I was welcomed and to transform the theory into a physical result.'

'I study how we experience reality'

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'This ambiguous space for transformation and safe exploration fascinated me'



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MORENO SCHWEIKLE

The three goals that designer Moreno Schweikle set himself this year all come together in the immersive exhibition he opened in Cologne in August. 'I wanted to broaden my material and technical knowledge, expand my network, and develop myself in a new area. I make autonomous objects at the intersection of sculpture, furniture and installation, and I wanted to take this year to explore whether I could apply my work to spaces and places.' Much to his delight, it worked out very well. 'The relationship between spaces and objects interests me. I think it's great that this can also be part of my work.'

While exploring this new avenue, Schweikle found three interesting books on different types of sculptures, how they work and what they mean. He discovered that his work ties in with the assemblies and readymades we know from pop art and Dada. He also learned more about that through his contacts with art historian Wladyslaw Barion. 'I met artists, journalists, designers, and gallery owners this year with whom I could discuss my work. This gave me a lot of confidence.' Although he was initially not thrilled with the pop art comparison, he does acknowledge that there is an overlap. Just like pop art, he uses existing and banal products, albeit without wanting to elevate them to icons. Schweikle: 'I was always curious about mass-produced objects and I reflect on their function by modifying them.'

Along the way, Schweikle also stumbled on a new material: clay. 'It was like a revelation. Normally, the results of my digital designs and 3D models are somewhat artificial and "cold", but it's not like that with clay.' Schweikle likes to work with the contrasts between the industrial and the organic, making his work a bridge between these two realms. 'Clay is ideal for that, as an "intermediate material" made of water and stone.' In his exhibition he applied elements from contemporary culture to the space. He used industrial materials to make a vertical 'river' on the window. 'I initially thought of it as a wave, but as I was creating it the wave became a river. It benefited the installation, but it is always a challenge for me to deviate from my initial design and to slacken the reins during the process.' During a small, spontaneous group exhibition this year, he did not have any time to make digital designs, so Schweikle had no choice but to go by his intuition alone. 'As a result, the work became much more the outcome of a process than the execution of an idea.'

'I've always been curious about mass-produced objects.'

'Working with clay for the first time was like a revelation.'

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Photo by Mateusz Janas

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'A performance stays with people, and encourages taking action'

MYRTHE KREPEL

Performative designer Myrthe Krepel creates interventions using language, the body and theatre, often in non-artistic contexts. In her new project, *Het kamertje*, the focus is on a societal theme: the imbalance of power between the government and the people.

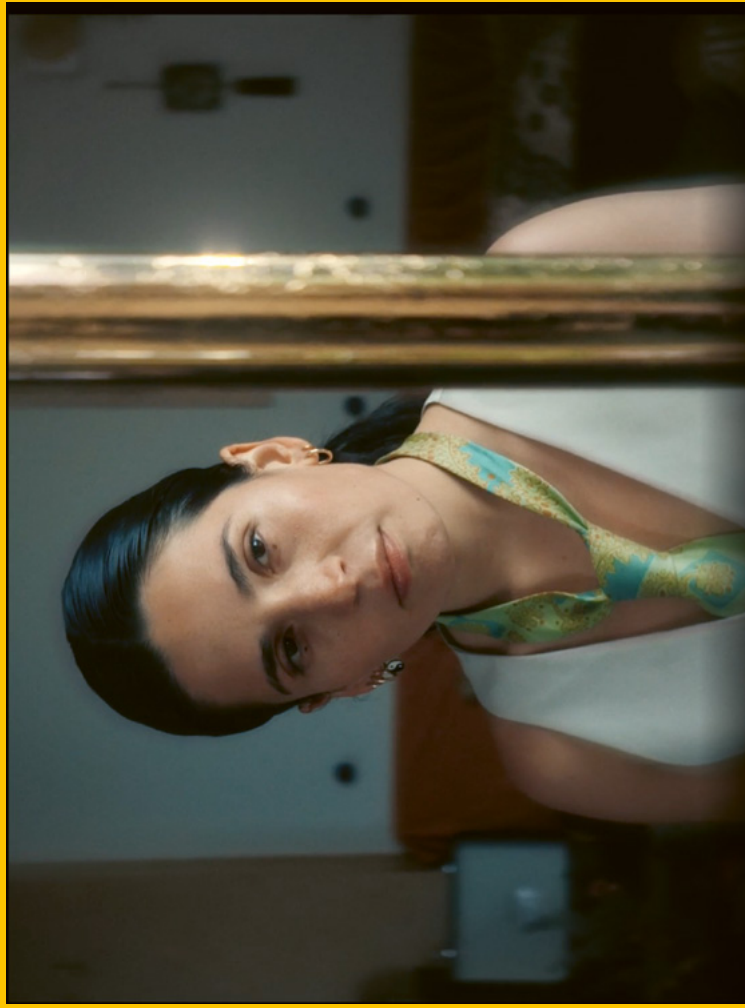
The project began with reading a substantial number of books on the subjects of power and discipline. Since Krepel's own education is scientific and linguistic in nature, having obtained a master's degree in Design for Interaction at Delft University of Technology in 2018, she wanted to do something that involved her body as well: power, after all, is something that can also be felt. To that end, she took dance and performance workshops at Amenti in Rotterdam.

'When people want to change something in an organisation in a creative way, they often end up choosing a workshop format. That makes the participants feel inspired, but afterwards they simply return to the daily grind. A performance, however, can truly form an intervention. It stays with people, it encourages taking action, and it enables you to play with social structures – how you move, what you say,' Krepel states. She applied this with the government in the 'Dialogue and ethics' programme, set up following the childcare benefits scandal. 'The official language that policymakers use creates distance, and often acts as a substitute for action,' says Krepel. She had policymakers choose a word that is important in their work, such as integrity or comradeship, and translate it into an instruction for a performance. It proved to be a confrontational exercise, revealing how utterly their language has become divorced from action, and how words are being used without any knowledge or sense of what they mean.

Finally: *Het kamertje* is a title that intentionally evokes associations with office of the prime minister of the Netherlands. This interactive performance, of which a try-out has already been held as part of the *Co-Co* festival at Sectie-C, deals with complex social structures – although a bit tongue-in-cheek, with light-hearted and theatrical aspects. A version worked out in more detail will be presented during the *Dutch Design Week*, in a performance wherein the post-new normal is sustained by people who have comparable jobs in daily life. The concept includes a booklet, *Regels Vormgeven*, containing ten rules to change the tone of our coexistence. The mildly absurd performance focuses on the status quo that we all maintain together, and which structures and rules we really want to keep.

'I present complex social themes with a light-hearted touch and theatrical aspects'

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Film still from *Emotional Girl*, actress Sinem Kavus

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'I want to use my films and characters to create room and break open suffocating pigeonholes'

NOHAILA GAMAH

Director and scriptwriter Nohaila Gamah studied Film & Sociology at Amsterdam University College. She lives and breathes storytelling. A descendant of the Amazigh ('free people'), one of the oldest nomadic people in Morocco, she explains with audible passion that 'entertainment is in my family's blood. Whenever something funny or unusual had happened, my aunts would tell the story while putting on different voices, imitating the gestures and movements of whoever they were talking about and making use of scarves and other props.'

Gamah's films are characterised by gut-felt social commentary. 'I consider it important to shine a light on certain normative structures, structures that we invented ourselves or that were imposed on us by others. About what we should be like and how we should live as women, men, people in this world. I want to use my films to create room and break open those suffocating pigeonholes that we never really fit into anyway. So that we start asking ourselves why we do what we do.'

In the style and storylines of her films, Gamah uses impulse, intuition and genre-crossing. 'I am always looking for something innovative and different, something that the viewer does not necessarily expect, but which does appeal to our emotions. And I also like to mix genres, such as drama, horror, comedy and fantasy.'

For her current film project, Gamah among other researched the topic of Female Gaze in Horror. 'The horror genre is interesting in that it has created room for female characters to be more than just an object of lust or a wife whose purpose is contingent on a male character. This genre allows me to investigate the deeper, darker layers of the female psyche.'

Gamah finds it fascinating to use her films to study the deeper layers of the mind and the monstrous aspects of humanity through different characters and from different perspectives. 'Because it shows the feelings that we have inside us but cannot always share or understand where they come from.'

'I will never stop developing as a director,' Gamah concludes. 'Recently, I have been focusing not just on *Afro-Surrealism*, *Female Gaze in Horror*, and *Intergenerational Trauma*, but also on writing and rewriting. I have dived in very deep, to feel it, to understand the characters. That takes a lot of energy, but it is also an interesting process. I want to understand what truly lies at the core. That's how the characters come to life, on their own. And that is what you ultimately want as a director.'

'I find it interesting to study the deeper layers of the human psyche in my films'

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NÓRA BÉKÉS

Library of Narrative Types is a design research project into cultural-historical narratives in typography and letter designs. Nóra Békés started her project with a study of the Roman script, also referred to as *capitalis monumentalis* since it only consists of capital letters, used for example to carve inscriptions in stone. Our modern capital letters are derived from this script.

Békés combines an interest in letter designs with visual storytelling and design history. She is converting her interpretation of the Roman script into a contemporary font. The theoretical questions that emerge over the course of the process will be captured in fictitious stories – which is highly unusual in the world of typography. 'Letters communicate. There are so many stories contained in them, they are the carriers of messages,' she says. 'As a designer, I immediately notice the feeling within a letter. I am aware of what the letters represent. There are stories hidden inside; for instance, inside this Roman script are the stories of the enslaved people who had to labour in the stone quarries and often died because it was so hard.' As the designer personally experienced as part of her research: 'Carving letters in stone is also hard work, but at the same time a fascinating discipline that requires a lot of knowledge and focus.'

As she originally hails from Hungary, Békés performed much of her research into the Roman script there. Once upon a time, when this area was part of the Roman Empire, the script was also used here, and carved stones continue to be found today. She discovered that the Roman script encompasses various styles. 'I was pleasantly surprised to discover the diversity of letter shapes. Letters were often cruder or more peculiar in the periphery than the familiar letters seen in inscriptions in Rome, for instance on Trajan's Column. It's also interesting to see how the letters change throughout time, resulting in a wide variety.'

The study of Roman letters is the first chapter in the *Library of Narrative Types* and establishes Békés's method of investigate and narrative design. After this she will continue by designing a monospace font. All her findings, texts and designs are presented on a steadily growing platform.

'I was surprised to find that letters of the Roman script could be cruder or more peculiar'

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'Letters communicate; there are stories and messages hidden inside'



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PAUL COENEN

Creating designs for his own show in Paris, professionalizing and engaging in more commercial collaborations: just a few targets that designer Paul Coenen had set for himself this year. Reshaping turned out to be the theme of the year. 'A major goal of mine was to learn hydroforming, which is a specialized industrial technique to reshape steel tubes by pumping high-pressure water through them.' Coenen is particularly fascinated by the interaction between man and machine, which also characterises his own work. 'Parts of my works are laser-cut and machine-folded, but I put everything together by hand.'

Coenen makes smaller products as well as grand furniture for high-end galleries. The seemingly simple shapes and steel plate that he uses reveal his interest in materialization and modern production techniques. 'This year, I wanted to take my limited editions for galleries to a higher level. The result was a grand show in Paris, with five new works. The high steel prices meant that the required investment was significant, but it was worth it. I had been working towards it since my graduation.'

In recent years, Coenen has worked on improved versions of his graduation piece at Design Academy Eindhoven. 'The underlying vision hasn't changed, but certain complex technical details have been better thought out. My understanding of the material is getting better and better, and I was able to perfect my designs. That is the most enjoyable part, it's like scoring victory after victory against yourself.'

The show in Paris boosted Coenen's confidence and his business. 'I wanted to design for other brands, and that's something I have managed to do this year as well, with two new collaborations.' Meanwhile, Coenen also worked with four other designers and an investor to establish an American furniture brand. It has become a major project with a lot of potential. 'With our local production site in North Carolina and a material-minded vision, we can make a difference in the American market.'

Though somewhat sceptically at first, Coenen also hired a coach this past year, and the decision paid off with valuable insights. 'It helped to take a good look at my finances, but also to make smarter choices in what to say yes and no to. For the first time I can dedicate myself to my own practice full-time, without having all kinds of jobs on the side. Thanks to that, it feels like everything came together this year.'

'For the first time, I was able to dedicate myself to my own practice full-time'

'A show in a gallery, that's something I had been working towards since my graduation'

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Photo by Bianca Paul Photography

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'Drag is part of the cultural scene and deserves a platform'

PAUL KUIJPERS

For trend watcher and designer Paul Kuijpers, also known as drag queen Cindy van der Loan since 2018, drag is a multi-disciplinary expression that blends design, performance and fashion into a single narrative. His inspiration comes from the sugar-coated glamour of Hollywood: he loves the shine and sparkle.

That love comes to expression in various forms, such as the theatre show for the opening of *Let's talk about Sex* month at Parktheater Eindhoven, in which Kuijpers was asked to participate. In collaboration with director Lenneke Maas and DayDayGay, an Eindhoven-based organization for queer culture in which Kuijpers has been involved since its foundation in 2017, he developed the show *Come (as Sensitive) as You Are*, an exploration of sensitivity in an individualized society. It was a golden opportunity for Kuijpers to develop his artistic leadership qualities in the world of theatre.

Kuijpers is now putting those experiences and his expertise as a trend watcher to use in his own project during a residency at Eindhoven's international platform New Order of Fashion. 'I am researching how drag can be made more sustainable. Designer Valentine Tinchant is helping me learn sewing techniques and design methods that focus on upcycling.' Using these skills, he wishes to use his large collection of clothing to put together a new capsule collection that better suits his professional development. Kuijpers is also developing his skills in the area of performance, taking voguing and waacking lessons from professional dancer and choreographer Shahin Damka.

Kuijpers grew up in a small village, where the concepts of queerness and drag simply had no place. As far back as the second year of primary school, he liked to dress up in a wedding gown. But it was not until age nineteen that he discovered the existence of drag and how it could be a real part of his life. 'I have had an obsession with long hair ever since I was a child. Working with hair is one of the most inspiring things in the world,' says the designer, who – with the same focus on sustainability – also wants to learn how to make his own wigs.

These days, Kuijpers regularly performs as Cindy van der Loan. 'I find it important to show that drag is part of the cultural scene and deserves a platform. In Eindhoven, the nightlife is mostly aimed at a mainstream audience. It could do with a bit of diversity.'

'I want to make my practice more sustainable'

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'When people see the true problem behind open source medical solutions, it will become clear that there is still a lot of work to do'

PERNILLA MANJULA PHILIP

Pernilla Manjula Philip's roots lie in South Africa and Sweden. She studied at the Sandberg Institute, obtaining her master's degree in Design in 2021. As a social designer, her focus lies on investigating the accessibility of medical treatment, searching for new forms of collective care and questioning the concept of health within society. Her project, which continues on from earlier work, centres around hacking and medical management. She is especially interested in communities of people who are investigating how they can manage their own medical treatments through forms of hacking and tinkering. This raises other issues as well, for example: what is safety? Whose safety is being prioritised? 'When people see the true problem behind open source medical solutions, it will become clear that there is still a lot of work to do,' says Manjula Philip.

The story told is based on Manjula Philip's own experiences with using open source code to reprogram her insulin pump. 'In my work, I experiment with different approaches to share my experiences.' Her current project, *Post Purpose Pump* station, is an installation in which she invites visitors to reconsider their own stories about unconventional and unofficial treatments. 'Self-diagnosis, tinkering and hacking medical technology is an active practice for many among us who are dependent on the biomedical industrial system.'

In her project, Manjula Philip also challenges data ownership. 'Who possesses my data, who can use it, and what is it used for?' In that context, she recently visited the Wellcome Collection in London, and participated in a try-out workshop and a mentorship session with artist Jesse Darling and writer, media analyst and culture critic Flavia Dzodan. The talent development grant has enabled Manjula Philip to further develop her ideas and develop new forms of experimentation, as well as afforded her the unique opportunity to push her practice in a direction that is meaningful for her at this time.

'Who possesses my data, who can use it, and what is it used for?'

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'A deep dive into the complexity of the ocean'

PIM BOREEL

'A deep dive into the complexity of the ocean,' is how audio artist Pim Boreel describes last year's research project, under the title: *Aquapocalyps*. Boreel studied the extremity and fragility of the system, with special attention for deep sea mining. It is a topical issue, given how the world is on the verge of permitting this type of mining on a commercial scale, as part of the green energy transition. 'Or will we learn from our previous mistakes in time, which have led to the exhaustion of land and people?'

In his research, Boreel relies on his intuition, on 'algorithmic crossovers', and his interest in 'ecological holism'. He maps out the diversity and mutual interdependency of underwater life: the different zones and communities, the food chain, and so on. He also looked for signs of human impact on underwater life, such as pollution, the constant bombardment of sound waves, and the stifling sediment plumes as a result of mining raw materials from the ocean floor. He brought together all the found materials in his own 'oceanic database' – ranging from scientific articles to (pop) songs inspired by the ocean, underwater footage, videos and spectrograms. This interdisciplinarity is what Boreel describes as 'algorithmic crossovers': a network of theoretical, material and artistic information about the deep sea.

Boreel also produced a 'mix tape': a sketch for a musical composition consisting of music samples and sounds collected, recorded and composed in the past period. The musical piece draws the listener increasingly further underwater, towards the ocean floor. Along the way we are accompanied by singing whales, but also by the peeps of human underwater communication and the ominous droning of machines. By creating this world, Boreel hopes to stimulate empathy and the imagination regarding the ocean, and hence to link together science, emotions, and the necessary behavioural change among people.

Another important focus point this year was to position his wide-ranging practice. Besides 'deep research', his practice spans art, media and music, each with its own audience and community. He formulated the steps that he could take in the coming years to arrive at 'the intersecting points' between his various practices. By contemplating what direction to take, he realised that he wants to have more time and opportunity to delve deeper still. That is why he has enrolled for the two-year master programme *Artificial Times* at the Sandberg Instituut; yet another leap into the deep.

The mix tape stimulates empathy and the imagination regarding the ocean

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Photo by Rogier Boogaard

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'Give me any kind of material and I'll work with it'

SIDDHARTH PATHAK

'I'm a practical artist: give me any kind of material and I'll work with it.' During the Covid pandemic, Siddharth Pathak only had a keyboard and a laptop at his disposal, so sound became his means of expression. Last year, he expanded his 'sonic universe.' He focused on five themes around sound art to further shape his autodidactic practices and his role as a performer.

The first thing Pathak did was strike up a collaboration with glassblower Selma Hamstra. Together they made ten glass objects that should function as resonance chambers, or sound objects. He is now considering two ways to make this happen. It can be done electronically by equipping the objects with light-sensitive sensors that activate a sound database when light is shone onto them by a light-emitting device that he can hold in his hands. This would make the glass a performing, motion-directed instrument that he does not even have to touch to play it. The second option is mechanical: the objects would then be balanced between two parallel rods with wheels, driven by a motor. By filling the glass shapes with different materials or substances (sand, water), different sounds will be heard when the objects rotate. This rotating motion is also a great reference to the constant turning that is so typical of the glassblowing process.

Pathak has organised his year around different mentors. Besides the glassblowing, he worked with instrument inventor Rafele Andrade and artist Ronald van der Meijs, who makes analogue sound installations. With media artist Heidi Hörsturz, Pathak roamed the streets of Rotterdam to record different sounds, from the tunnel under the river Meuse to the city's Museumpark. These sounds will form the basis for new compositions. 'I'm a sound seeker and I love nothing more than sounds,' he says. 'The most beautiful sound in the world is the sound of birds singing, equalled only by the sound of streaming water.'

All these learning experiences now have to blend together into a performance featuring glass objects where he – again with the help of a mentor – explores the aspect of duration, the final focus point in his research into sound art. 'It's only because of the Fund that I even got a chance to develop this idea and to challenge myself. Without any expectations as to what will happen, but just to see how it unfolds and what my learning journey turns out to be.'

'I'm a sound seeker and I love nothing more than sounds'

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'During Covid times, I took a more critical look at my environment than before'

SOPHIA HOLST

During Covid times, architect Sophia Holst lived in Brussels and became more critical of her environment than before. An unoccupied building caught her eye. She looked into it and found out that it had been listed for renovation for some time. After finding the renovation plans, she took a closer interest in the housing situation in the city. She later did the same in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. 'What stood out to me in particular were the renovation projects for social housing. Why do renovations always lead to a reduction in the number of public housing units? What happens to the residents? And how do they experience being forced out of their familiar living environment?'

These questions were the starting point for the plan that Holst submitted to the Creative Industries Fund. With *Housing Pain, Healing Strategies*, she proposes alternative renovation strategies based on her own research. These strategies do not see people removed from their local communities, and they respect the existing social and architectural context.

For her project, she teamed up with a journalist, various members of protest organisations, building renovation experts, and residents. Holst: 'I wanted to give a voice to the people who have had to move and were unable to return or people who may potentially find themselves in this kind of situation. In the Nieuw-West district of Amsterdam, residents have united in the *Nieuw West in Verzet* group. They are rising up against housing corporations that are going against the best interest of many of their own tenants by gearing their renovations towards future wealthy residents that will yield more profits. Thanks to the perseverance of this residents' committee and their protests, they managed to strike a deal with their housing association. Tenants are at loggerheads with housing associations and landlords in many more places. And for young people and future generations, it is becoming virtually impossible to find an affordable home in the neighbourhoods they grew up in. The fact that especially people with a migration background are moved to the outer periphery of the city or are completely unable to find housing in the city reminds me of how we treated guest workers back in the 1970s. Besides this renovation case study in Amsterdam Nieuw-West, I do archival research to put together an historic framework of possible discrimination in intra-urban migration as a result of urban renewal and housing policy.'

'Why do renovations always lead to a reduction in the number of public housing units?'

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Photo by Ivy Mullekom

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STEEF OFFERHAUS

An ode to rave culture, the night owls and all the other people in the entertainment scene who fall outside of the generally accepted norm. That is the core of the project of illustrator and autonomous designer Steef Offerhaus. Raves have negative associations: they are illegal parties where people use drugs. At least, Offerhaus notes, that is how the dominant view would have it – a view that he refutes based on his own experiences. 'The atmosphere at such parties is very accessible, and the people are caring. These parties emerge as a countermovement to the above-ground entertainment scene, which offers little room for certain genres and lacks the freedom to go as crazy as you want to. That's why people look for illegal alternatives.'

Offerhaus studied illustration at HKU University of the Arts in Utrecht for two years, after which he designed album covers, clothing, posters and clips for hip hop artists. His ambitions, however, were to do less commercial work and make more creative and autonomous works for himself. He developed the concept *From the Cradle to the Rave*, including a personally designed clothing collection and zine. And of course, such a project would not be complete without a rave that brings everything together. 'A rave in the Maassilo in Rotterdam, with a few thousand partygoers, awesome DJs, strobes, models on stage wearing my clothing collection, and my own visuals, followed by an exhibition in Amsterdam with photos and films,' is the ideal that he has in mind.

Offerhaus has since completed his preliminary investigation into rave culture. What is this culture, when you get down to it? Ravers and skaters do not form a clearly demarcated group with a single overarching mentality; one might describe them as defiant, uncompromising free spirits. Offerhaus interviewed people whose choices in life were influenced by the rave scene, or who have done theoretical research. He also listened to podcasts, viewed films and documentaries and read news articles.

Gabbers with shaved heads wearing tracksuits and Nikes were a familiar feature in Offerhaus's own youth, which is why his collection consists of these particular clothing articles, with prints that reference classical art. 'I am selecting expressionist masterpieces that were controversial in their time and, like the rave scene, had a one-dimensional stigma forced upon them. I will then use my own handwriting to turn these into colourful graphics worn by models and captured by photographer Lois Cohen.'

'Raves are refuges for the development and expression of a unique culture'

'My clothing collection references expressionist masterpieces by artists who were controversial during their time'

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STEPHANIE IDONGESIT ETE

Architect and design researcher Stephanie Idongesit Ete graduated from Amsterdam's Academy of Architecture in 2021. The goal of her work, which consists in researching designs aimed at the built environment in the Sub-Saharan African context, is storytelling – stories told through the language of architecture and experienced by reading the architectural context. Idongesit Ete explains: 'There is so much to learn and experience about any place from its built environment, by learning to understand how the society, culture and complex history is reflected in the built environment. I want my work to emphasise this in the African context, to make this easier to read for other architects, students and designers.'

This year, Idongesit Ete will undertake a research expedition to Lagos, Accra, Dakar and Abidjan, where she wishes to more closely observe and record the local material culture. She eagerly explains why she chose these West-African coastal settlements specifically: 'I am fascinated by the expansion of urban life along the coast and the agglomeration of multiple West African cities, and curious about the spatial similarities and differences between these concentrated coastal urban areas. Dakar struck me as the most logical choice among this expanse, and Abidjan seemed like a good choice due to its cultural similarities with Accra and geomorphological similarities with Lagos. I am also curious about the differences and similarities between Francophone and Anglophone West Africa and how this might influence the architecture of these cities.'

Idongesit Ete has already completed her visits to Dakar and Abidjan, where she spent seventeen and twelve days, respectively. 'In Dakar, I visited a brick factory and a tapestry factory to see their influence on the built environment. I explored many different parts of the city and met a wide range of makers, designers and architects, which gave me a good understanding of the local professional practice and to expand my network. The same happened in Abidjan, although on a smaller scale: I met a number of architects and visited projects in various stages of construction.'

Further new impressions and encounters await in Accra and Lagos. Idongesit Ete's schedule in these cities includes workshops and curated events. All of Idongesit Ete's findings in West Africa will come together in a production entitled *Anthology of Collages*, a compilation of artistically interpreted observations – made with the help of artist Aàdesokan – that could serve as a basis for future research or construction projects in the cities Idongesit Ete has visited. 'After the research phase, the next step is to generate publicity and present the results,' says Idongesit Ete. 'To figure out how I can present the results in a way that is meaningful for others.'

'I am fascinated by the urban expansion of West African coastal cities'

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'The object of my work is storytelling'



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'The migration of birds in an installation makes the connection between people and nature visible'

SUNJOO LEE

Sunjoo Lee designs tools, sensory robots and video art installations in which technology and ecology meet. 'I create a hybrid world in which advanced technology forms a vital mediator between humans and nature.' Lee is currently working on two research projects out in nature. For *Terra Invasion* she observes coastal birds in the Netherlands' northern Wadden Sea and in the Yellow Sea between China and South Korea. She also compares ecological systems. Lee gains advice from artists Mark IJzerman and Sema Bekirovic.

Lee performed a residency on South Korean mud flats. This enormous tidal region has a natural value comparable to that of the Dutch Wadden Sea. She observes the tide and various sorts of crabs. In the Wadden Sea she works with ecologist Allert Bijleveld and his team to observe migrating birds. Why birds? 'In the city, people and birds share the same habitat. They are not pets, but I can observe them. I'm fascinated by the long distances that birds travel twice a year to spend winter elsewhere. Like the cuckoos, which fly ten thousands of kilometres from South Korea to East Africa.'

For her Wadden Sea project, Lee found inspiration in a nighttime boat trip to the Griend bird reserve, where birds are ringed so that their movements can be monitored. She drew on the experience of being in the pitch dark with a flock of birds, the waves and the wind, the saline smell of the sea and bioluminescent algae, to create a multi-sensory art work with image and sound and the migration data collected by scientists, for which she also developed an algorithm. 'The connection and overlap between people and nature is made visible. We observe the birds who fly over our cities and villages, but you can also look at it the other way round: they observe us from high above!'

Lee developed *Tree-001* with designers Timm Donke and Seokyoung Kim. This project observes an oak tree in a forest throughout the course of its life, using a livestream. Here again, Lee brings together two worlds. While the livestream consumes lots of data at a high speed, the tree grows very slowly and can live for a thousand years. To use the technology in a responsible manner, Lee is investigating how to make the livestream eco-friendlier and less costly. She obtains license-free radio frequencies through open source technology. She is also developing methods to generate electricity from soil, where microbes break down organic material and thereby produce free electrons, which can be used to power a camera. The experiment with 'harvested energy', stored in a battery, will be presented at the 2023 Dutch Design Week.

'Technology is an essential mediator between humans and nature'

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TAYA RESHETNIK

'The stories that semi-public places have to tell intrigue me. The urban environment continually influences us, even if it often does so in subconscious ways,' says multidisciplinary designer Taya Reshetnik. Her interests lie in the visualisation of those stories, which she does to show how the design, use and perception of public space is always changing. To that end, she does not use static images or documentaries, but video collages that employ cleverly interwoven fragments to tell fictional stories based on historical fact.

Reshetnik is fascinated by places where people are passing through, such as airports and train stations, particularly the area between the points of arrival and departure. 'It's a kind of limbo that nevertheless has a strong impact on our identities and our quality of life.' During her studies, she encountered a story about a person who spent no less than 87 days at Schiphol airport during the 1960s. This was not something that you were supposed to do, but, as this traveller proved, that did not mean that it was not possible. Last year, Reshetnik went back to this story. 'In what ways can such an event change our perceptions about an airport?'

She began gathering information about the incident and the environment in which it occurred. The person in question was Yvonne Paul, a Dutch citizen whose lack of a residency permit had seen her deported to the Netherlands from the USA. Upon her arrival at Schiphol, she decided not to leave the airport. Reshetnik searched for witnesses, dug through archives, combed the internet and made contact with architectural historian Isabel van Lent, co-author of a book about the design of Schiphol in those days. 'I interviewed her about that for my video project, to get a better idea of the environment during those long days at the airport.' At present, Reshetnik is conducting anthropological research into rites of passage, in which she sees parallels with transit areas.

Using archive footage, her own filmed material and photos, newspaper articles and home-made 3D visuals, Reshetnik is now puzzling out the narrative, experimenting along the way with various new technologies and plugins that enable the projection of 2D photos onto 3D digital landscapes, to give one example. After the summer, she will sit down with a sound designer to work out the soundscape. 'Right now, I am still very much in the middle of editing, it's really a work in progress. The publication of the result is scheduled for October.'

'Urban environments determine our identities'

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'Public space is not an immutable phenomenon'



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THE NIGHTMARE DISORDER

They sat across from the 'mother of fantasy costumes', Jany Temime, who designed the costumes for six *Harry Potter* films and *House of the Dragon*. 'I don't really understand why you're here,' she said, referring to the previous successes of designer duo The Nightmare Disorder. Beni Nijenhuis and Nemo Cheminée's costume for the performance of The Countess in the series *Drag Race Holland* caused a furore in the drag queen community. 'That was awesome,' says Nijenhuis, 'because with drag queens, it's all about character building. We much prefer to create complete characters than fill stores with fashion.' He recounts how the duo found each other early on, bonding over their passion for fictional dream worlds during their studies at ArtEZ. They are fascinated by the subconscious, and they would love to bring it to life for a bigger audience: in short, the world of fantasy films beckons.

In order to woo that branch of the film industry, they are now working on a portfolio collection. This began with months of research and practice. They visited London, where they not only bombarded Jany Temime with questions, but also explored the costume collections of various museums, such as the Victoria and Albert Museum, drawing inspiration from the royal costumes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Back in the Netherlands, they learned how to create historic costumes from Angela Mombers of *Walking through History*, who taught them traditional techniques, materials and patterns. Under her tutelage, the duo created a number of centuries-old clothing articles: plunderhose trousers, doublets, rebato collars.

Everything the duo did this past year is reflected in one way or another in the collection they are currently creating. 'We investigated what tools we will need to conquer the fantasy film world,' says Cheminée. 'The world we want to portray with them is the product of our own fascination.' For their debut collection, that fascination is life after death, and their present efforts are fully dedicated to developing characters for *The After Life of the Nightmare Disorder*. This fictional world is rife with digital archetypes that speak to the imagination: ghosts, trolls, haters, influencers and followers. It's going to be disconcerting and uncanny, the duo says, but also regal and extravagant: 'It won't necessarily be a question of heaven or hell, but a place where you can be who you want to be.'

'We share a love for character building'

'We use fantasy costumes to create freedom for ourselves'

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'Worldbuilding means immersing people in a new place or a different kind of story'

TIM VAN HOOFT

While studying at Willem de Kooning Academy, digital artist Tim van Hooft (Timaëus) developed into a maker of video installations, digital worlds and games. His work occupies a niche between graphic design and autonomous visual art: using game engine software, he creates digital, speculative works. 'Worldbuilding means immersing people in a new place or a different kind of story. I do that using digital means.' Van Hooft analyses images of objects, such as a tree trunk. This allows him to bring pieces of reality into his new worlds.

Van Hooft considers himself a digital storyteller, so crossing over to the world of film was not surprising. This past year he worked on a short film. Close your eyes and visualize the following: layer upon layer of lichens, accompanied by tranquil music and a poem. Van Hooft's short draws viewers into a story in which natural elements are ceremonially awarded the title of martyr. The idea came to him during a visit to a church in Austria. 'That was the first time I saw martyrs, decked out in jewellery, precious stones and opulent clothing.'

His interest triggered, he decided to apply the same narrative to nature: it is his way of calling attention to the grim climate situation. 'Martyrdom has historically been reserved for people, but I wanted to confer that title onto nature and thus question our anthropocentric outlook. Not to force something on people, but to reach them and hopefully activate them. That's my way of dealing with difficult issues.'

Making the film took much longer than he had initially expected. 'Fortunately I had enough time available, but I had never made a linear film before, so it was a question of trial and error.' Collaborations helped smooth the way. 'That was one of the biggest revelations of this past year. There were so many ways to approach the subject that it was difficult to choose. Another 3D designer, Famke Immelman, helped me work through the options, and that allowed me to start taking concrete steps.' After that, the challenge was to squeeze the film into an 8.5-minute timeframe. 'I'm used to making nonlinear installations, but now I had to think in terms of beginning, middle and end. That was the steepest learning curve, along with how to capture the story in visual form.'

This particular story has a happy end, because the film is finished and is currently being distributed and promoted. Meanwhile, Van Hooft is already taking his first steps towards another world. 'I went on a guided journey to one of Europe's last primeval forests in Poland, where I collected material for what will hopefully become another project.'

'Martyrdom has historically been reserved for people, but I wanted to confer that title onto nature'

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TIMOTHY SCHOLTE

Fashion designer Timothy Scholte's past year revolved around a career switch. For many years he worked as a nurse, also during his bachelor studies in Textile and Fashion Design. 'I wanted to go back to doing what I learned at the Royal Academy of Art, but I found it difficult to pick up the thread again.' And it required a strong thread to make the eight leather outfits and four wearable sculptures in his new collection, in which Scholte plays with bodily shapes. His metal and leather sculptures, for example, make the silhouette larger and broader. 'I am fascinated by the human body, and how the way we perceive it shapes our body and identity.'

Scholte takes inspiration from a wide variety of sources, ranging from video games to the fetish festival Folsom, but takes a very intuitive approach to his work. He personally 'translates' his collages into three-dimensional products through a process of fitting and welding. 'Draping in metal,' he calls it. 'I attach leather to those metal frames the way others drape fabric over a mannequin.' Scholte also wanted to work with silicones and a 3D printer this year, but that proved a bit too ambitious. 'A single year just flies by. I had to choose my focus, and what I chose was leatherwork. I am especially fascinated by motorcycle gear. It's made for protection, with all that padding, but it also makes you look more muscular. That paradox between protection and sexualisation, between the masculine and the queer, is exciting.'

Scholte took courses in leatherworking, made bags, dismantled second-hand biker clothing and used the components to make new pieces. 'I used part of the subsidy to buy new machines that allow me to sew leather. That has allowed me to create better-finished pieces, which I find hopeful. I may be a designer, but craftsmanship is equally important to me.' But his desire to work with silicones and a 3D printer has not waned: 'I would like to create prosthetic pieces that combine silicone with leather.'

Starting again was Scholte's biggest challenge. 'My perfectionism gets in my way, so I took my own advice: like I tell the children I teach in the Schilderswijk quarter of The Hague, I started by making a collage without any intended final product. All I really need to do is start, and before I know it I've created a new collection.' That collection will be presented during the *Dutch Design Week* and in the form of a performance in Rotterdam. 'I'm working with ballroom dancers to investigate how they can wear my wearable sculptures and, despite the constriction, still move freely.'

'What I find exciting about motorcycle gear is the paradox between protection and sexualisation'

'I want to investigate with ballroom dancers how they can wear my wearable sculptures and still move freely'

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TYMON HOGENELST

Tymon Hogenelst has been a visitor to the Italian region of Liguria for fifteen years now. The seasons dictate his activities: harvesting olives, pruning trees, and so on. Last year he conducted a study into the archetypical 'fence' in the region. It is a personal project that ties into his usual daily practice: the architectural office Studio Wild, which he runs with Jesse van der Ploeg. They are mainly interested in site-specific, narrative projects. In order to build something that truly belongs to that location, it is important to spend some time there. 'That's one of the things that the talent development grant has offered me: when you work for a client, there usually isn't much opportunity for such immersion, for a more investigative attitude that doesn't necessarily lead to a solid and specific end result right away.'

His starting point was a photographic series that Hogenelst had previously made in a valley in north-west Italy of all the fences that surround gardens, vegetable patches and orchards. They are constructed using local material remnants such as bed springs and reinforcement mesh. The results are provisional but also pragmatic. 'Some people might find it trashy or even ugly. But as I see it, they have a particular architectonic quality that I also recognise in traditional forms of construction. There's an inventiveness in reusing or reinterpreting the materials found in the direct surroundings. I would describe it as the contemporary material culture of the Ligurian countryside.'

Besides actually building a fence, Hogenelst is also writing an essay about the narrative side to his research and the role of 'tacit knowledge': the bits of wisdom, customs and tricks naturally passed on from generation to generation, and which are often very specific to the location. How do you build a dry stacked wall? What rocks do you use for that, at what angle are the rocks stacked on top of each other, and according to what system?

In this region, the need for fences emerged from an interplay of nature and culture. Around 1800, people started colonising the mountainsides by building terraces and walls, enabling agriculture. At the same time, wild boar disappeared from the region as a result of hunting. As rural communities dwindled over the course of the twentieth century, this four-legged 'bulldozer' returned, making it necessary to protect the crops. Hogenelst places his design research in the context of these developments. 'You could say that my research responds to and tries to be relevant for a social and ecological trend occurring here.'

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Iris Stam
 Maaïke Staffhorst
 Priscilla de Putter
 Roosmarijn Hompe
 Victoria Anastasyadis
 Viveka van de Vliet
 Willemijn de Jonge

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Creative Industries Fund NL is the Dutch cultural fund for design, architecture and digital culture, as well as every imaginable crossover. The Fund strives to make a substantial contribution to the quality of professional design practice within and especially between the disciplines of design, architecture and digital culture. Part of this endeavour is the interdisciplinary interplay between the cultural, social and economic domains. The Fund supports exceptional and innovative projects and activities of designers, makers and cultural institutions in the creative industries.

Creative Industries Fund NL
 Groothandelsgebouw (Entrance C, 5th floor, space C5.069)
 Weena 723
 3013 AM Rotterdam
 +31 (0)10 4361600
 info@stimuleringsfonds.nl
 www.stimuleringsfonds.nl

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What does it mean to be given the space to focus on artistic and professional growth for an entire year? Creative Industries Fund NL offers talented up-and-coming designers that very opportunity every year with the Talent Development Grant Programme.

With the Talent Platform, the Fund aims to give these design talents an extra boost in visibility. Get to know the 2023 recipients in this publication, and get an overview of all those supported in the past at talent.stimuleringsfonds.nl/en.

For more information about the Talent Development Grant Programme, visit stimuleringsfonds.nl.