

TALENT

PLATFORM

2024

creative industries fund NL
presents design talent 2024



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FOREWORD

DIVERSITY AND THE POWER OF INNOVATION

Ever since the establishment of the Creative Industries Fund NL, stimulating talent has been an essential policy goal. After all, talent development forms the bedrock of a diverse and innovative cultural and creative sector. Over the past twelve years, our Talent Development programme has supported more than 400 starting designers, makers and architects in their professional development. Each of them has gone on to leave their mark on the creative industry.

Platform Talent is where the Fund celebrates the versatility and innovative energy of this group of makers. Applying their personal approach and unique perspectives, the makers address and explore contemporary societal issues and technological advancements. Their work offers a fresh view of how design can contribute to a more sustainable, just and inclusive future.

The funding provided by the Talent Development Grant Scheme gives makers across the full spectrum of the creative industry the opportunity to fully focus on developing both the artistic and professional aspects of their practice. Addressing themes such as environmental awareness, mental health and self-expression, and by exploring new (design) methods and forms of expression, they not only invest in their own development but also build bridges to other disciplines and sectors. This year again, the importance of collaboration within the creative industry has been plain to see. We saw remarkable instances of cross-pollination emerge between traditional crafts and digital technology, science and art, architecture and theatre, but also between the local and international scenes.

For example, Amos Peled aims to stimulate interaction with medical technology using an ultrasound machine. For his poetical 'ultrasound films' he uses the human body as an abstract medium to tell stories. Katharina

Nejdl is similarly experimenting with new forms of interaction between user and technology, for which she uses creative coding as a design tool. Then there is the 'listening architect' Sjoerd Willem Bosch, researching how everyday life relates to major landscape issues. And see how Laëtitia Delauney and Aurélia Noudelmann, in their project Le Bateau, invite the queer community to participate in building a boat.

We are very eager to see how the makers highlighted in this publication will pursue their careers in the years to come. Let the ideas and works of this new generation inspire you.

Enjoy the read!

Syb Groeneveld
Director
Creative Industries Fund NL

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INTRODUCTION

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The exhibition *Stimuleringsfonds presents talent*, on display at the *Dutch Design Week 2024* in Eindhoven, presents work by promising makers, designers and architects who had the opportunity to devote a full year to their artistic and professional growth, funded by the Talent Development Grant Scheme. Comprising a rich programme of talks, workshops, performances, tours, video portraits and interviews, the exhibition reveals the makers' development over the course of the past year.

The exhibition programme was compiled by Isabel Sheridan, who also compiled the programme of a public talent development event at Nieuwe Instituut earlier this year on behalf of the Creative Industries Fund NL. Sheridan is a programme maker and moderator with a keen interest in and eye for the latest developments in the fields of art, technology and identity. For the Creative Industries Fund NL she identified the three core themes addressed by the various funded practices: *Technology & Internet, Identity & Emancipation, Climate & Nature*.

We talked to Sheridan about the programme, this new cohort of makers, the role of the creative industry in tackling societal challenges, and her vision on the importance of talent development in the sector.

HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE THREE THEMES OF THE EXHIBITION?

'The themes actually emerged quite organically from what I saw in the makers' works,' Sheridan explains. 'Last February, when we were working on the programme for *Stimuleringsfonds presents talent x Nieuwe Instituut*, the practices of the 2023 participants revealed roughly the same three themes as those of this year's participants. These themes are not just contemporary and urgent, which makes them interesting for the general public, but they also mesh well with the themes of this year's Dutch Design Week. They also offer a broad context to which every talent can relate in their own way. As a programme maker, this gives me the freedom to vary endlessly in the range of talks and other programme components.'

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WHAT CHALLENGES WERE YOU FACED WITH IN CURATING SUCH A DIVERSE GROUP OF MAKERS, AND HOW DID YOU TACKLE THEM?

Sheridan laughs: 'It's always a bit of a puzzle to create a programme that works for both the makers and the visitors. You're dealing with a group of highly talented and fascinating people, but not everyone is comfortable presenting themselves publicly. The programme also needs to be strong substantively, but you also need to take into account the limited amount of time and attention visitors have during the Dutch Design Week. You just can't expect people to listen to a panel for hours on end, no matter how interesting the topic is. As a programme maker, you need to balance out all these factors and at the same time try to make sure the essence of everyone's work and vision gets the attention it deserves.'

HOW DOES THE STIMULERINGSFONDS PRESENTS TALENT PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT THE DIVERSITY OF MAKERS AND DISCIPLINES SUPPORTED BY THE GRANT?

'The 2024 cohort of participants is incredibly diverse,' Sheridan says eagerly. 'Whether it's the discipline, their interests, backgrounds or goals: they are all truly unique. Some makers prefer to let their work speak for itself, while others come into their own through a conversation. That's why it's so good to have both an exhibition and an extensive programme. It is challenging but also more fun to create a spot for everyone that they all feel good about, and which makes the audience go "oh wow, I want to see that". As a programme maker and moderator, my job is to give the talents the opportunity to talk about their work and to engage the audience in conversation in a way that suits them.'

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WHAT ROLE WOULD YOU LIKE THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY TO FULFIL IN TODAY'S SOCIETY?

'We need to understand that the creative industry does not operate in a vacuum but is part of a world that is struggling to deal with today's societal issues. We are part of the problem simply by existing on this planet, but we can also be part of the solution. With the statement *TE ZIJN OF NIET TE ZIJN (TO BE OR NOT TO BE)*, dramatist and philosopher Thomas Lamers calls on artists to contribute to making a positive impact on climate change. He stresses that artists are very well positioned to make a difference, since they can exert influence both in front of and behind the scenes, and can function as societal drivers. I strongly believe that as well.'

FINALLY, WHAT DO YOU HOPE THE VISITORS WILL TAKE AWAY AS MAIN INSIGHT REGARDING TALENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY?

'I truly hope that visitors realise how vitally important it is to invest in young, smart, creative thinkers. This is especially important right now, given today's societal challenges and the current political regime,' says Sheridan. 'Such people help society to remain focused, and they often bring a refreshing out-of-the-box approach to issues like climate change, loneliness, population ageing, or inequality. We tend to fully place our trust in technological innovation, but I believe that artists and designers have an equally essential role

to play. With their original vision and unconventional approach, they can force breakthroughs precisely where they are needed most. To stimulate an exchange between these talents and the professional field, we are organising a number of tours this year to visit projects that have also been supported by the Creative Industries Fund NL. This way, starting makers, designers and architects can actively engage with a relevant audience.'

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ALESSANDRA SCALORA

'Did you know that bees buzz on a frequency that has a calming effect on humans? Bees contribute more than honey alone.' Beekeeper, artist, museum guide and mother Alessandra Scalora learns a lot from 'her' bees. As an independent beekeeper, she works weekly on the rooftops of Het Ketelhuis and the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven since 2016. She found a sense of peace and quiet with her bees, which provide a literal counter 'noise' to her thoughts. 'My mind goes quiet whenever I'm with the bees. This was also the inspiration for my *Humbled by bees* project. I wanted to explore making paint pigments from the pollen left behind in the beehive.'

Fast forward to Sicily, where Scalora spent a large part of her youth in her grandparents' lush garden. Highlighting female beekeepers was one aim of her project. She planned to meet local beekeepers and her Italian cousin, a photographer, was going to document it all. However, things turned out differently. Her cousin could not make it and one of the beekeepers had stopped. This was very stressful for Scalora. 'It forced me to make some quick changes but my project ultimately became better because of it. The feminist approach did not appear to be the right one. The story I want to tell is bigger and also concerns my roots in Sicily.' This proved to be her biggest challenge: adapt, refocus, and fight her fear of failure. She decided to start focusing on making natural pigments. 'Besides my own pollen, I also collected local flowers, stones and ashes from the Mount Etna volcano.' In Rome and The Hague, she learned how to make natural paints and ink from these materials.

Scalora intended to create ten works of art, each one framed in wood from her beehive. She now sees the end product differently. 'The actual research, which took more time than expected, is also part of the end result. I would like to record that process in a book.' But first her artworks: Scalora uses her own paints and ink to print the engravings she makes, based on the patterns she finds in the beehives. 'In Italy I explored woodworking, and after this year I'd like to learn wood turning to make my own honey jars.' All the different aspects from her story, about the importance of bees in the broadest sense, come together in this project. After all, Scalora's childhood would have been very different without bees. 'That my grandparents' garden was full of fruit trees is also thanks to the bee.'

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'Bees buzz on a frequency that has a calming effect on humans'

'I make paint and ink pigments from the pollen left behind in the beehive'



Photo by Jordi de Vetten

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ALYSON SILLON

Multidisciplinary designer Alyson Sillon graduated from the Gerrit Rietveld Academie with a bachelor's degree in graphic design in 2022. In her work, she combines her interest in social themes, often related to subcultures and fashion, with graphic design and performance art. She aims to convey values such as empowerment, enlightenment and connection. Sillon: 'With *Before/after* I show how techno parties can be an occasion of transformation or self-discovery. I take the audience with me on a personal journey and share my insights. Personally, I do not use any mind-altering substances at parties. I see the rave as a way to explore the limitations and abilities of my body, comparable with a sports or training session.'

'I take the audience on a personal journey'

Sillon performed extensive research on rave culture and how it has changed. 'Originally, raves were anti-establishment events attended by young people. These raves were illegal, disruptive, hedonistic, dark and transcendental. It was as if people could let their bodies move without any sense of shame. It has now developed into an industry where famous DJ's and light shows have become more significant. I feel that this setting may impact the sense of intimacy, so that the attendees no longer feel they can let themselves go. I wonder how we can bring back this communal need for people to fully express themselves and feel ecstatic in the moment, like how it used to be.'

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The final product of Sillon's project – a journey through the night – is an experiment where she aims to enable the audience to experience deep emotions during an event. 'Before the DJ gets behind the decks, there is a warming-up period with meditation and an inspiring art moment, so that the participants can connect with themselves and others.'

'Raves can be an occasion of transformation or self-discovery'

Recently, Sillon has been working on further research, on stories that provide a theoretical framework for the themes being explored, and on spiritual clock with twelve plexiglass objects to represent the different moments at a rave. 'I want to emphasise the Black and queer roots of techno with this multisensory installation, based on the aesthetics of Afrofuturism and Egyptian symbolism.'

The final project phase consists of developing the choreography and forging collaborations with DJ's and artists. 'I have to get out of my artistic bubble and ask other creatives to share my vision. This is a challenging and exciting phase that requires dedication and faith in the final end result. Hopefully, this experiment will result in a concept I can present at various locations.'



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'I want to enrich healthcare through a mix of multidisciplinary approaches and creative collaborations'

AMOS PELED

More than anything else, Amos Peled is driven by sheer curiosity. 'Just look at the aesthetics of medical equipment alone, such as an ultrasound machine,' he eagerly points out. 'It can provide us with the beautiful experience of being able to look inside the body.' The multidisciplinary artist focuses on experimental music, audiovisual installations and performance art. Peled was born in Israel in 1997 and grew up in a hospital environment, where he, as a patient, became fascinated by the medical systems around him. These early experiences now form the basis of his work. 'I've thought a lot about ways to introduce creativity into the medical world', he explains. 'When I got the opportunity to buy an ultrasound machine for five hundred euros, I decided to explore this piece of equipment from an artistic point of view. I started by using the machine as a camera to film my own body after which I started to involve patients and medical personnel to develop creative processes that would use this technology.'

His approach to this creative use of medical equipment drew the attention of various institutions, including Utrecht University, HKU University of the Arts, WKZ Children's Story Bank, UMC Utrecht, Leiden University Medical Centre and De Nieuwe Utrechtse School who could all see the potential. Peled now shows narrative and poetic 'ultrasound films' at film festivals both in the Netherlands and abroad. For these films he uses the human body as an abstract medium to tell stories, with bodily organs becoming characters and landscapes. He will also take part in *Betweter festival* scheduled for late September 2024 where visitors will be given the opportunity to see inside their own bodies.

During his development year, he also started to collaborate with artist Job Santé with whom he established the Creative Laboratory for the Exploration of Medical Technology (CLEMT). 'The core idea of CLEMT is to create situations where patients can use medical technology creatively on themselves. I want to enrich healthcare through a mix of multidisciplinary approaches and collaborations.' CLEMT also wants to organise a series of workshops in the medical environment to share the creative use of medical technology. By doing so, Peled hopes to deconstruct the hierarchical relationship between doctors, patients, the body, and medical technology. This process is a deliberate attempt to challenge the medically constrained interpretations of the body, injecting subjective biases into frames of supposed objectivity—blending truth with fact, art with science.

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'Just look at the aesthetics of an ultrasound machine'



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ANGE NEVEU

May your eyes never look away, may your genitals always be lubricated (porn, pixels, power and the panda desire economy) is the title of the development plan submitted by Ange Neveu. Although the artistic researcher from Rotterdam, who graduated from the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague, had three different projects in mind, there is only one component this title specifically refers to. Neveu: 'I really wanted to make a documentary based on my earlier research into panda porn. I grew up with the internet and I'm a bit of a hoarder so when I came across a video with panda porn I couldn't resist adding it to my archive. It wasn't long before I started to obsessively archive these videos to try and understand what I was looking at, i.e. how zoos encourage giant pandas in captivity to mate by showing them porn images and exercising their muscles.'

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Neveu's film has become a short, fictitious documentary about the life of the female giant panda Mei Xiang who lives in the National Zoo in Washington D.C. The panda gave birth to a total of seven cubs of which four reached adulthood. Neveu: 'I tell the story from three different angles: the surveillance cameras, the public, and TV journalism. The film looks at the asymmetric relationships between humans and animals, forced procreation and commodification.' Neveu took various courses such as 'scriptwriting' and 'experimental filmmaking' to ensure that the documentary with the working title *Drowned in likeness* can be shown in both art and film spaces. Neveu also wanted to start a research project on invasive plants and queer migrants – 'two groups that are surviving in hostile environments' – and had hoped to forge a new collaboration to analyse the used research methods. All this required a very strict planning and the artist found it impossible to allocate the necessary time to each separate project.

Still, the year has been very fruitful: 'For me, the most rewarding aspect was the collaborations. This is something that I really used to struggle with in the past but I'm really happy to have met the people that I met and what they contributed. I hope I can continue to work with them in the future.'

'I archived panda porn videos to try and understand what I was looking at'

'The collaborations have been very rewarding'



ANNA TORRES

Anna Torres is active in the areas of architecture, research and art. In her design practice, she has recently started to research the role of what she likes to call a 'spatial detective'. Her studio overlooks Warmoesstraat, in Amsterdam's De Wallen red light district. She is fascinated by the area with its myths and symbols, its interesting history, its many different communities and power structures. This area plays an important role in her work which focuses on themes such as spatial justice, feminism, queerness and sexuality in urban spaces. Torres embraces the layers and rawness of these themes. She firmly believes that places, people and concepts should not be made more palatable or acceptable before they can be taken seriously or cared about.

Torres works with sex workers to better understand the complex power structures in the area. 'My goal as an architect is not so much to work for sex workers, but *with* them. Sex workers are professionals in their chosen area and should be treated as such in collaborations. I seek to inventory how this group presents itself in spatial terms, how we can collectively make space for providers of pleasure through scenarios of promising imagination, and how we can communicate these findings in an understandable way. I connect these aspects in various ways, from soft mapping, drawing, painting and collages to participation in political discussions and the organisation of creative communal workshops. For example, during a "world building" session I encouraged sex workers to imagine the workplace of their dreams, which they did while cutting and pasting in a fun and safe environment. It was beautiful!'

Torres wants to create a publication with all input she has collected from research, sessions, projects and reflection, serving as a love letter to the area. She is also working on a videogame about De Wallen. Currently, she is artist in residence for HXSSY, an art and culture collective that wants to strengthen the relationship between sex workers, artists, neighbours and the community in the De Wallen area through art. Torres also recently started her first collaboration project with Studio Ventura, with whom she created an alternative, queer dark room for the *Pornceptual* event. 'I learned how satisfying it is to build something 1:1. I'd love to be more involved with these kinds of practical, fast and tangible projects and to experiment with various collaborations and roles. It helps you to understand your own contribution and to reflect on your practice.'

'The publication will also serve as a love letter to the De Wallen red light district'

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'I don't want to work so much for sex workers but rather to work with them'



Photo by Jacqueline Fuijkschot

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ANNA ZAŃ

Anna Zań (originally from Poland) graduated as an architect in 2021 at the Academy of Architecture Amsterdam, and started teaching at the same academy. She also set up her own design and research practice. 'My message is that we need to find ways to build without depleting the natural resources. Elevate the ordinary, use the raw materials that have been overlooked so far, upgrade these and reuse them. For example by combining minerals and bio-based materials such as straw, wood and cellulose with the "waste soil" excavated in our cities.'

Zań has been researching the latter since 2023 with research partner Elise Laurent. This year she has continued to work on the project, titled *Building cities from waste soil*. Zań: 'Vast amounts of soil are excavated in our cities, for instance to expand metro lines, to build new neighbourhoods, and to densify existing ones. This excavation is necessary to ensure safe foundations. What if this soil were to become the primary resource for new construction?'

Zań examined the soil that is excavated in Dutch cities. Although this preliminary research started with just six cities, she already discovered a wide variety of clay and loam soil types. They range from various marine and river clay types to the dark ochre-coloured loam from the south of the country, each very specific to the city's local landscape. She also worked with Rokus Oskam (Oskam VF) to test the soil's application in the production of raw compressed building bricks. Zań: 'The compression creates solid and sustainable bricks, while the process uses just one per cent of the energy spent on producing traditional bricks.'

In project *Nieuw Oud Oost Leeuwarden*, named after the local district, she worked with M3H Architecten, DS Landschapsarchitecten, Oskam VF, Homes Factory and Strotec to build a prototype for social, affordable, prefabricated and bio-based houses with a healthy indoor climate. 'We developed compressed earth blocks and clay-straw plaster to finish the houses on the inside and outside. To do so we combined bio-based materials such as straw, wood and cellulose with high-quality marine clay, which is excavated on-site to create room for water. These promising results were displayed at the *International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam 2024*.' As Zań sums up: 'Material research, teaching, publishing, exhibitions... What I have learned is that my practice can expand beyond design assignments and include many other activities.'

'Using excavated soil to create sustainable alternatives for bricks'

'We need to find ways to build without depleting the natural resources'

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CHEN-YU WANG

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Through her sheer determination to make it as a designer and artist, Chen-Yu Wang made peace with her past as a factory girl, working very hard every day. She now realises how well these three roles complement one another. The former factory girl from Taiwan developed a sharp eye for conflicting situations and capitalism, as well as for the Eastern and Western perspectives on these matters. Her work addresses all these things. 'I use textiles, sculptures and installations to make Western audiences aware of the working conditions and the human stories behind the products that they use in their day-to-day lives. Following graduation, I realised that I wanted to give other factory girls a voice too. This resulted in *The rest factory*.

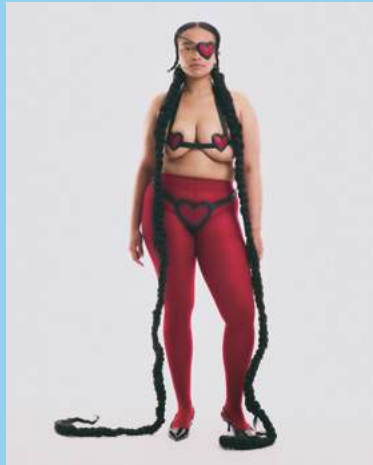
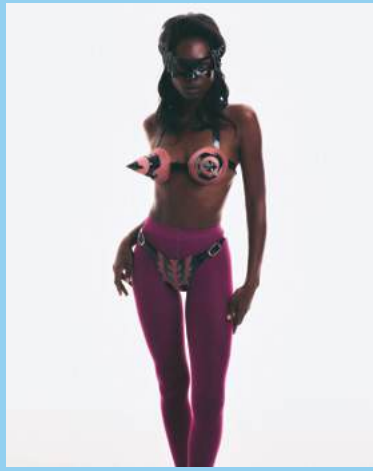
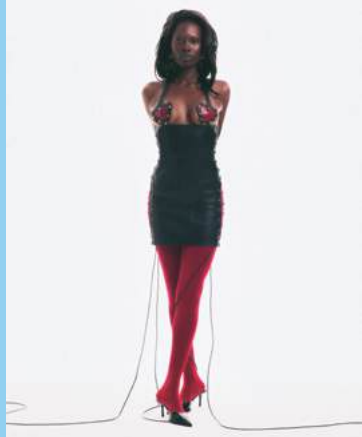
The rest factory is, aside from a solution and ideology, a protest against the capitalist world. It challenges existing business models by introducing 'rest' as a key method and by aiming for a reflective and creative production system. 'I believe that art can make a difference in this world. It is my aim to set up a self-sustaining social collective where factory girls play a full part, with fair wages and dignified work.' Wang's biggest challenge this year was to further flesh out this plan. 'I am continuously redefining, looking for the right forms and collaborations.' Wang took courses in sound therapy, sound art, social enterprise, anthropology, lithography, silk screen printing and weaving this year.

Wang's stay in India yielded interesting new insights. 'In Calicut I met weavers Beena and Ramu, who work with shuttle looms. The meditative weaving sound - *dhat dhat dhat* - inspired me to visualise it. I drew while listening to the sounds of the loom, which I recorded as well, and it felt like a kind of weaving with my pen.' Wang showed her drawing to the weavers and asked them to sign her work. 'I want to tell the story of the workers behind these kinds of artistic processes.' The rhythmic weaving sounds took Wang back to her youth in the factory. 'This is where I was "programmed" to work hard,' she says. 'Hard work is in my DNA. I sometimes wonder if I am even able to rest.' It is just a matter of time before The rest factory allows Wang to create the place she longs for. A place where she can rest her soul.

'I hope that my art makes people see labour differently'

'I tell the story about the workers behind the artistic processes'

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CHENDA FEKKES

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Chenda Fekkes graduated as a 'creative artisan' from the Hout- en Meubileringscollege (a woodworking, furniture and interior design school) three years ago, with a specialisation in shoemaking. In her first job as an orthopaedic shoemaker, she focused mainly on repairs and adjustments. She worked on her own creations in her spare time: leather masks and lingerie as sexually liberating and empowering fashion accessories. She made her designs to order and sold them on Etsy. Even though this wasn't the perfect platform, she never doubted her design ambitions. Before her application to the Creative Industries Fund NL had been approved, she already quit her job. 'I simply couldn't wait,' says Fekkes, 'I just had to find out if I could turn my passion into a profession.'

Fekkes spent the last year focusing on the development and positioning of her brand, which she has given her middle name: Chisenga. She found a workshop behind the Tolhuistuin in Amsterdam-Noord where she started working on more than just her masks and lingerie. At a tannery in Naples, she searched for the perfect leather to expand her collection with leather skirts, tops, briefs and even a leather wedding dress as well as a website with the right look and feel. 'Up to this point, my masks and lingerie were mainly used as styling props for other people's photoshoots,' says Fekkes. 'I started making mood boards together with a creative director and rebranded my products. My visual materials now completely represent my personal style.'

She describes this style as edgy and feminist with a nod to fetish. 'I don't see Chisenga as a fetish label but more as a fashion brand inspired by the fetish "club kids" and punk culture. I have always been fascinated by masks and want to make them more accessible. I have noticed during photoshoots how a model's attitude changes when they wear one of my pieces. It makes them feel strong and attractive. I see their superpowers emerge. It's a wonderful thing to witness.' She hopes to reach a wider public with her new website. 'I like to create sexy designs that undermine the male gaze and conventional beauty standards.' During the run-up to her launch party in August, Fekkes is already working on the next step. She has just finished a course with the world-famous shoemaker René van den Berg: 'René and I are developing a shoe with a heel inspired by a sex toy. The result remains a surprise, but it is nearly finished.'

'I see superpowers emerge in the models.'

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COTECREATE STUDIO



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María José Jara Veragua (Cotecreate Studio) embarked on a global journey eight years ago, leaving her native Chile and eventually settling in the Netherlands in 2019. Within a month after her arrival she began her own business, wishing to contribute actively rather than just learning the language. 'I started my own business in a field I had never worked in before: art. Because I believe art is a universal language that everyone understands. I wanted to connect with the community, and this seemed ideal.'

Having to find her way in a new environment but also learn a new profession and build a network was a steep learning curve. She quickly established a practice as an illustrator and social artist and was appointed as the city artist of Leeuwarden for three years in 2020. At the end of this period, she applied for the talent development grant to further professionalise her practice. During this year she felt it was time for the next step: 'My social nature drives my business, but I was searching for a deeper meaning behind my work.'

During a recent artist residency in Chile, she realised that despite her hard work and the appreciation for her art, she doesn't really have a sense of belonging in the Netherlands. She discovered that her work had always been focused on giving space and a voice to others without acknowledging her own story. 'What I discovered is that the most important thing is not just integration but creating a sense of belonging. The meaning of my work lies with people and their experiences. Art is a means to achieve this, not my goal.'

She started researching the concept of belonging through writing, drawing, and interviewing with people from the Netherlands and Chile. She asks her respondents to fill out surveys or create drawings of what belonging or exclusion means to them. She has collected over a hundred contributions, with which she intends to develop a method to increase our understanding of exclusion in society.

In the next phase, Cote plans to organise an exhibition featuring personal explorations of the theme of belonging through text and images. For *Dutch Design Week* she aims to create an interactive presentation where visitors can contribute their own input. Additionally, she is considering engaging with newcomers in the Netherlands and further developing her method to help them gain a stronger sense of belonging.

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'The meaning of my work lies with the people and their experiences'

'I believe art is a universal language that everyone understands'



DAE UK KIM

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Dae Uk Kim's objects, characterised by skin, hair, and sexually charged shapes, leave little to the imagination but represent much more. His goal for the development year was to enhance storytelling around his work. 'I make physical objects but miss communicating with the audience.' Through interaction, Kim hopes to better convey his story and be better understood. A graduate of the Design Academy Eindhoven, Kim grew up in conservative Korea, where he felt misunderstood in a culture that upheld the motto: 'Don't have any feelings and suppress your desires.' Everything he once had to suppress—his identity, gender expression, and freedom of choice—is now embodied in his mutant 'characters.' It's not surprising that diversity and acceptance are central themes in his work.

Kim's Mutant project depicts his hidden desires. 'As a child, I loved playing with long hair, nail polish, and high heels, but I learned this was considered inappropriate. I felt my family's unease and sensed I was different from other boys at school.' In the Netherlands, he found more freedom but still struggled with self-expression. 'Though my surroundings had changed, I found it hard to adapt. A sense of shame lingered. This is why I created objects as alter egos to express myself.' During his development year, Kim aimed to communicate these deeper layers through mediums like video and performance. 'I sought help from MAISON the FAUX, who merge visual arts, including performance, fashion, and objects, into a strong narrative.'

MAISON the FAUX agreed to mentor Kim, rather than collaborate. Over the past year, they completed two projects and have another big one planned. 'This was a fantastic opportunity. I learned how they create a visual narrative, like in the Timelesstime project, which featured a performance, installations, and video.'

This year, Kim learned to view his approach differently. 'Previously, I focused solely on objects, but now I begin with the concept and visual package, incorporating my objects.' He has learned to embrace his strengths and passions. 'In my plan, I intended to learn filming and editing, but I now understand this isn't necessary for a strong story. I don't need to do everything myself. As the creator and steward of a concept, I seek specialists who can support my message and objects, enabling me to tell a more powerful story.'

'I created objects as an alter ego with skin, hair and high heels to express myself'

'I see myself as the inventor and guardian of a concept and look for specialists who can support my story'

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DENZEL VEERKAMP

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Fashion designer Denzel Veerkamp grew up in Amsterdam, with a Dutch mother and Surinamese father. He often felt he was living between two cultures. 'Because I'd never been to Suriname, I started to have more and more questions and felt the need to explore the history and relationship between the two countries.'

Veerkamp started his trip with an open mind. He met his grandfather and other relatives for the first time, and immersed himself in the culture and the home of his ancestors. As a fashion designer, he subsequently wanted to capture his findings in fashion. 'I noticed how Surinamese women like to show off their traditional clothing on special occasions whereas men don't. This is what started my interest in the self-expression of Afro-Surinamese men and I discovered that there is no *koto* costume for men, for example.'

The story goes that the *koto* costume, an Afro-Surinamese garment that reminds many people of colonial times, was redesigned by the male colonist because women were no longer allowed to work around the house with bare torso. Women communicated non-verbally with one another through the ways they wore the *koto* and *angisa* (traditional headscarf). Veerkamp wanted to explore the significance of expression today. He visited archives, including the National Archive in Paramaribo, and sifted through letters, newspaper articles, magazines, photographs and clothing. With feelings of adoration, astonishment, wonder and pride he translated his findings into new designs. During Ketikoti, a commemoration of the abolition of slavery, he asked the residents of the care home where his grandmother lives to model his clothes, including an *angisa*, for which Veerkamp obtained his official diploma at the end of 2023.

'I now feel more confident in expressing myself when it comes to both my cultural backgrounds.'

However, it is still a challenge to produce the designs. The reuse of existing materials is a key pillar of Veerkamp's work. 'In Suriname, I realised that there are cultural and spiritual customs around the wearing of second-hand clothes. Surinamese people won't wear second-hand clothes unless it belonged to a close family member, because you don't know what the person who wore it before you got up to. In the Surinamese Creole culture people believe in spiritual cleansing through *wassies*, which are perfumed baths that wash away negative energy. I have adopted this custom and now use Florida water to remove any negative energies from the previous wearer.'

'You don't know what some-body may have got up to'

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DRIES VERBEKE

Dries Verbeke's (Driever) art explores the intersection of craftsmanship and innovation. He describes his work as 'applied art' and although this may be an old-fashioned term, his work is far from dated. Verbeke creates objects that are not only useful but offer something extra too, such as a lamp made from items from stores that give away free stuff or an infinity table with lasered patterns, LED strips and (two-way) mirrors. 'I use these objects to show people that everything is changeable, everything is amazing,' he says. His designs clearly reveal his fascination for mechanics. His work is inspired by the inventions of Leonardo da Vinci, Panamarenko's (flying) vehicles and Theo Jansen's moving beach animals.

'I want to make things that survive us.'

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Although Verbeke, originally trained as a graphic designer, he has since developed further into a versatile artist and craftsman. He taught himself woodworking, metal working, welding and laser cutting; skills he needed to bring his creative ideas to life. Thanks to his experience with graphic programmes such as *Illustrator*, he found it relatively easy to switch to 3D drawing programmes. His projects expanded in line with his skills, not just in terms of size but even more so in terms of complexity and layers.

Supported by the talent development grant, Verbeke aims to make his work more interactive this year by integrating technology such as electronics, sensors and Python programming. 'The idea is to let humans literally influence the work, whereby their presence causes the work to respond through sensors,' he explains. This adds a new dimension to his work, with a focus on the interaction between art and the observer. Recent fatherhood has not reduced his ambitions. Although his plan to follow courses in Python and robotics have been put on the back burner since the birth of his son, he continues to develop himself using online tools such as *ChatGPT* and hands-on projects, such as the restoration of an old electric cargo bike, to increase his knowledge of electronics.

Verbeke has also discovered a new passion in education. He found it very inspiring to share his knowledge in a series of workshops for children of various ages. He hopes to develop this educational practice further in the next few years, in addition to his creative projects. 'I want to make things that survive us. Things that don't only still work hundreds of years from now, but then still have meaning as well.'

'Everything is changeable, everything is amazing'



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DUNYA ZITA

Personal experiences and thoughts are often Dunya Zita's starting point. She then uses her practice as an instrument to truly explore and philosophise about the topics she is interested in.

Zita left for Morocco, her father's country of birth, in early 2024 and stayed for two months. 'He moved to the Netherlands in the early nineties and I've always wanted to know what it would be like to live there. I also wanted to spend time with my family who, except for my father, all stayed in Morocco.' In her project *Mejmou3en* (together) she weaves together stories and feelings around the themes of spirituality, connection, family, language, the connection between mind and body, and religion.

In contrast with the rest of her family in Morocco, Zita did not have a Muslim upbringing. 'When I saw how important religion is in their day-to-day lives, I started to explore my own spiritual beliefs, experiences and thoughts and looked at the similarities and differences between my family and myself. The language barrier proved to be one of the biggest challenges during this project. Although the power of connection transcends spoken and written language, the lack of shared language made it more challenging to develop closer relationships.'

Zita successfully used her instruments to put unconditional love, the Moroccan culture, (second generation) migration, community and the language barrier in the spotlight. In her practice she combines photography, film, audio and poetry. 'I use my writing to explore my subconscious and to uncover the depth of my thoughts, feelings and issues. I also like to look at ways of communicating that can establish a connection on another level. A level that transcends language, such as someone's energy.'

Her research into the connection between mind and body and the idea that the body can store emotions and experiences was also a key component of her work this year. 'Here, I find the physical aspect really interesting, partially because of my own experiences and also because I think that people in the West tend to focus more on the mind and less on the body.'

The connection between rational thought and emotions is a common thread in Zita's life and work. 'Rational thinking can get you a long way but emotions are more instinctive and, often unconsciously, changeable. It is about the interaction between experiences, emotions and physical responses.'

'The lack of a common language with my family proved to be a challenge'

'Rational thinking can get you a long way but emotions are instinctive'

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EMMIE MASSIAS

Massias's plan was to perform research in Vietnam, into the links between the Dutch Imperial Oyster, Vietnamese mother-of-pearl inlays, and the French exploitation thereof. Designer and researcher Emmie Massias, who grew up in France and Vietnam, is interested in this age-old Vietnamese craft as well as in cultural influences, neo-imperialism and the colonial origins of the European perspective. 'I want to explore and renew this craft by taking leave of the exoticism and traditional decorative and labour-intensive techniques.' But her development year took a very different turn when she was given the opportunity to work with wild clay and volcanic rock.

Massias had wanted to work with wild clay for some time when the perfect opportunity announced itself. 'I was working as a workshop coordinator for the French artistic organisation Domaine de Boisbuchet, where I met Mexican artists. A friendship developed that led me to being invited for a ceramic residency at Casa Ceniza in Guadalajara. I worked there for four months under the supervision of Maxine Álvarez, known for her research into wild clay and natural ash glazes.' Massias learnt to identify, 'harvest' and process wild clay. She created her own materials, putting together a library of glazes from finely ground volcanic rock, ash and charcoal. 'This way of working required an enormous adjustment after working with industrial ready-made materials.'

Using the wild clay, Massias worked on a series exploring the blurred lines between preservation and conservation which resulted in her first solo exhibition in Guadalajara. She gave something back to the community through a series of workshops about pouring wild clay with modular moulds. This experience taught Massias an important lesson: the impact of a community on a successful collaboration. 'I felt supported in Mexico. Local artists showed an interest and wanted to help and collaborate. I had never experienced that in quite the same way in the Netherlands. It taught me to open up and not wait so long before making connections with others.' Massias put what she learnt into practice: together with designer Marine Col, she established Studio Amalgame. During her time in Mexico, she participated in a workshop organised by marble factory Mármoles Covarrubias, where she worked with volcanic rock. This led to a fruitful collaboration with the manufacturer as well as an exhibition at the first *Collectible Fair* in New York in September. Another collaboration project saw Massias searching for wild clay and volcanic material during an excursion to Sicily with colleague ceramicist Elena Genesis. This way, Massias passes on the lessons learnt in Mexico.

'In Mexico I discovered the benefits of collaboration and I learnt to open up more.'

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'Working with wild clay required an enormous adjustment'

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Photo by Sankr.it KuImanochowong

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'I explore how digital fashion can be turned into something physical again'

ENZO AÏT KACI

Enzo Aït Kaci has a background in graphic design and fashion. They are becoming less interested in creating something wearable. Their current research focuses on the visual and communicative aspects of clothes, both online and offline. How do major brands use visual materials? How do images move across the internet and what is the impact in the material world? 'I am interested in physical things that can be digitised and look at how this digital fashion can be turned into something physical again. My aim is to explore how physical and online things can be brought together in a new production system.' They also want to explore how images can regain their value in the endless stream of images that consumers see online.

One of Aït Kaci's experiments consists of downscaling as an approach to sustainability. They made miniature clothing during a residency in Lottozero, a textile lab in Prato, the heart of the Italian fashion industry. It should, in theory, be possible to make these small prototypes at their true size upon ordering, though their tiny scale is hard to capture in a photograph. Aït Kaci also worked with a web designer to explore how websites can be designed to minimize their environmental footprint. After all, the digital presentation of fashion consumes energy as well.

For Aït Kaci, textile and pixels are inextricably linked. They clearly see a parallel between the internet and the fashion industry. We see the internet as something that is intangible, whilst it is quite a physical thing with cables, servers, electricity and so on. Fashion is another field where the production process largely remains unseen by the consumer. And where people used to visit physical stores to touch and try on clothes, modern consumers often don't see the product until it arrives in the post. This type of consuming also affects the way clothing is visually presented and even the way it is designed. 'When you wear the product, you actually also wear the image that lies concealed within the clothes.'

All their research into issues like this will be brought together in a book that will also cover media and fashion history. 'I wondered how I could write without making any images. How can I translate my interest in visual culture into a critical perspective? One of the key things that Aït Kaci has learnt this year is that they are starting to feel more like a visual critic, rather than just a designer.'

'The digital presentation of fashion consumes energy as well'

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FATIMA OULAD THAMI

Fatima Oulad Thami works as a *neqacha* or henna artist under the name Hand of Fatima. Initially working on commission at weddings and workshops, her work grew more expressive. 'I realised I had more stories to tell and that my work had a social relevance.' While professionalising and working on her own project, *Restore the narrative (through hennafication)*, Oulad Thami developed and strengthened a distinct personal signature. With her work, she questions the prevailing Western image of North African women using oriental photographs of 'the Arab world' from the first half of the previous century.

Oulad Thami started as a henna designer and entrepreneur to financially support herself and her son. But her artistic ambitions soon overshadowed her practical intentions. 'The decorative side is just one side of henna. The symbolic and storytelling side is much bigger than that.' Henna was originally used to protect brides from the evil eye, with fertility symbols playing a key role, explains Fatima. 'I now translate fertility into growth, with natural symbols. The palm tree gives us sweet fruit in dry conditions, isn't that wonderful?' Oulad Thami's themes became more narrative, technically challenging and expressive. Though starting later than planned, she achieved her ambition of a home studio. 'Following the *Procreate* course, I now also produce digital designs. I started working with a coach and professionalised my online presence by emphasising the 'arty side' of my work. I learned to talk differently about my work and acquired a new perspective on my processes. I transformed as a maker and I am really grateful for that.'

Oulad Thami got inspired at the *Groeten uit de Oriënt* (Greetings from the Orient) exhibition at the Huis van het Boek museum. Here, Oulad Thami came across old oriental photographs of undressed women, presented as sex symbols. 'I found this manipulated image of the North-African and Arab world rather disturbing. Particularly, since there is so much negativity nowadays towards veiled women: so whatever you do, it's wrong. While it should be up to us if we want to be naked or covered up.' Oulad Thami covers the nakedness of these women with henna. She 'restores' the images using symbols that represent femininity and strength. 'The next step is to place a photograph on a *bndir*, a hand-held drum, over which I then apply the henna. The *bndir* is predominantly played by women as they sing. The instrument symbolises their voice. This is the statement I want to make as I take my first steps into the art world.'

'I translate fertility into growth, with symbols from the natural environment'

'The symbolic side of henna is so much more important than the decorative side'



Photo by Akadre

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IKE MELCHIZEDEK

Ike Melchizedek is a multidisciplinary designer. Often mixing stories containing cultural ethical elements and fashion, he describes his work as refreshing and contrasting. 'Some parts of the story can be dark, I like to explain the darker side of things, but the message I want to convey is essentially a positive one, as shown by the design. I don't create from a place of pain but from a place of joy. The clothing has a good fit, appealing colours and a feel-good style. I love that kind of twist. My designs are not just shown by the models but also worn by me. I like to express myself in that way, I am not shy.'

The name of the project, collective and brand, The Gang is Beautiful, is also positive with a twist. Melchizedek: 'It refers to getting together with others, to a good vibe. You may associate the word "gang" with criminality but it is also used to describe for example sports team. We have created a nice contrast by pairing this word up with the more elegant word "beautiful".'

Melchizedek tells us a bit more about the origin and success of The Gang is Beautiful. 'A couple of years ago, two friends and myself created an Instagram and organised dinners, live music, workshops, games etc. These were events where could people meet. We have grown considerably since then. Our community, predominantly in Amsterdam and Berlin, but also in other cities and countries feel connected to our brand's identity.'

The enthusiasm of the self-taught Melchizedek shines through in his talent development and openness to meeting others. 'With the talents of this year, we set up a group app. We got to know each other better by travelling to the Creative Industries Fund NL meetings together. I have visited some of them at their workshops and this is how I discovered that there are so many more disciplines out there that I would like to learn more about. Take the basic skills for shoe making for example.'

He concludes: 'I have learnt so much this last year at courses offered by professionals. But I am always looking for the next challenge. I'd like to investigate what sort of things would help expand my skills set and my vision as founder, designer and creative director of The Gang is Beautiful. I am proud and happy to have been awarded a talent development grant and it motivates me to work even harder.'

'I like to create fresh works with a twist'

'The grant motivates me to work even harder'

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Photo by Jessica Manuhutu

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'By learning more about the craft and symbolism, I feel more connected to my ancestors'

JAMES NOYA

James Noya (Hatutamelen) is a self-taught craftsman who learned the skill of wood engraving by making *tifa*'s or Moluccan drums. Since he set up the Awareness Moluccan Identity collective with a group of like-minded people in 2018, he has started to further explore Moluccan symbolism and craftsmanship. His talent development application consisted of three parts: revitalising the craft, the reintroduction and reinterpretation of Moluccan symbolism, and discovering the best way to present his work.

His work *Salawaku, active protection through compassion* was bought by Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam in 2023. With his interpretation of the *salawaku*, a Moluccan shield that offers physical and spiritual protection, Noya highlights the hidden power and meaning of this object. The symbolism of the wood engraving, inside the shield, is hidden from outsiders and known only to its bearer. As an heir to the Moluccan culture and craft tradition, Noya sees his practice as a continuation of his ancestors' culture. This year he went through old anthropological publications and digitally accessible museum collections to study the symbols and patterns on Moluccan objects. With his work, he wants to bridge the past and present, as well as different cultures and communities. 'By learning about the craft and symbolism, I feel more connected to my ancestors. I can give these objects my own meaning by acquiring a better understanding of the symbolism.'

He attended an intensive woodworking workshop last year where he acquired technical skills and gained a new perspective on his working methods. By approaching the work as a whole and working the wood layer by layer, the material gains an active role in creating the final result. 'The wood tells me what it wants to be, it's a collaboration.' Noya enters into a dialogue with the materials, with the Moluccan community, and with a wider audience. He is currently collaborating with a videographer on a short documentary to highlight the importance of knowing your own culture and its craft tradition. In today's world, people are becoming increasingly estranged from their (material) culture as everything continues to speed up, including the production of things. Noya thinks it is inherent to human nature to want to create things and to give their objects meaning. This is why he wants to show the value of culture, symbolism and craft in this documentary. 'The symbols that I create, the story behind it, it's actually a very universal story that applies wherever you go.'

'The wood tells me what it wants to be, it's a collaboration'

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Photo by Olivia Tudor

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JAZMON VOSS

'A total of fifteen looks can represent my complete vision and deserve the investment for a great presentation,' says designer Jazmon Voss. Reining in his ambitions was his greatest challenge this year. 'I had originally planned to create and present six collection pieces. At the moment I've got five, but in my head I have finished no fewer than fifteen. I find it hard to let go of that.' Originally trained as a ballet dancer, Voss is inspired by dance, music, movement, and his Afro-native background. He aims to present his work in a performance-style show rather than a traditional catwalk. Voss has already showcased three pieces from his collection at the Fashion for Good Museum in Amsterdam. 'It was a valuable run-up to my final show, that again confirmed the power of performance for me.'

This year, Voss learned that creating a great collection and presentation requires more than being a skilled designer or performer. 'Everything needs to come together - the right designs, materials and collaborations - to create coherence.' Voss created a lot by hand. 'But the materials and shapes I use can be challenging. For some pieces, such as corsets, it is better to outsource them to specialists.' He loves working with leather and recycled materials. 'I created two looks where I only used existing materials: beads, string, leather, and other residues.' His use of raw materials reflects his Afro-American background and indigenous cultures. To achieve the right mix, Voss conducted research, which fuels his vision. 'I am currently looking at a way to translate my vision into a form that is accessible to a wider audience. I would like to present a collection as an artwork and simultaneously make affordable pieces for a larger audience.'

Voss's vision extends beyond the clothes he makes, to the way he presents them. 'I make fashion but I think and work as an artist and performer. My dance background sets me apart from other designers, and I want to tell my story through a captivating performance.' The show will have a mysterious atmosphere, he reveals. The audience will feel they have arrived in another world. 'It will have some ritual components and my models are from all over the world. I make use of a range of influences, without translating these literally. I enjoy playing with elements of surprise and confusion, such as a Congolese woman in a Japanese kimono.' It is new and quite grand, says Voss. 'Imagine me being able to present fifteen different looks. It's going to be epic!'

'I make fashion but I think and work as an artist and performer'

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'The audience will feel they have arrived in another world'



JENNY KONRAD

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Jenny Konrad, like much of society, suffers from sensory overload due to excessive information. Yet bodily we are often understimulated. This realisation followed a severe burnout. Their own neurodivergence has become a driving force in their multisensory practice. 'I now understand how I had become alienated from my body and needs, and I know many people face similar struggles.' Konrad believes that society could greatly benefit from more sensory design.

Rather than adjusting to societal norms, Jenny chose to gently challenge them through their work. 'I discovered who I am partly due to my burnout and diagnosis (autism and ADHD), which now forms the foundation for my artwork.' This led to a shift toward more physical and spatial work. 'Physical work significantly helps in regulating my feelings of sensory overload.' After completing a master's programme in Non-Linear Narrative at The Hague's Royal Academy of Art, Konrad received a grant for their project *Sensory potentials within alternative ways of storytelling*. 'Sensory perception is crucial in my work. I investigate sensory experiences of people with limitations.' Konrad views limitations as social constructs relative to the norm. 'If you don't meet the standard, your way of being can be deemed disruptive and unsupported. I want to show these societal failures and use a multisensory approach to make information more accessible.' This includes conducting research for a daycare centre for autistic individuals with intellectual impairments. Konrad wants to both shake up society and create practical work. 'I want neurodivergent people to feel heard and seen: nothing about us without us.'

'I want neurodivergent people to feel heard and seen: nothing about us without us.'

Konrad encourages learning from each other's experiences. 'I'm currently quilting weighted blankets to give non-autistic people an "autistic experience" from a sensory perspective.' Earlier, Konrad created a 'light sensitivity installation' where latex hats represent their own episodes of light sensitivity. Spectators experience Konrad's personal stories through flashing lights, allowing them to understand light sensitivity. The next step is producing multisensory designs on commission. 'This year, I presented at cultural organisations like Mediamatic, Corpo, and Instrument Inventors, and lectured architecture students on sensory design for exhibition venue Beautiful Distress.' Konrad aims to use their experiences and knowledge to contribute to discussions about physical and sensory experiences, ultimately striving to change design norms.

'I investigate the sensory experiences of people with a limitation'

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JEROEN ALEXANDER MEIJER

According to Jeroen Alexander Meijer, attention is a kind of superpower; an essential resource that we use for all we do in life. But in the current era, with so many media channels and stimuli, the interdisciplinary mindscape artist wonders how we can preserve our attention, what to focus it on, and how long we can sustain that.

'My graduation work at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague consisted of installations that combine light and sound, aimed at researching how stimuli affect our attention. I also wanted to find out how light and sound, when synchronised, can be perceived as a single experience, and then what happens when you pull them apart. It turns out that everyone responds differently to these stimuli, and that our attention is strongly influenced by our environment and personal sensibilities.'

Meijer also discovered his own sensibilities. 'For me, it was often about the importance of establishing contact with your own body. How do you do that? Your body often emits signals that we ignore, particularly in a world where we are constantly surrounded by digital media that mainly appeal to our eyes and ears. This is how I came to the idea of researching which media can help us reconnect with our body.'

Consequently, he developed an art installation that uses a parabolic mirror and an infrared lamp to create the sensation of warmth. 'I wanted to make this an interactive installation, enabling you to steer the sun with your body, as it were.' Meijer sees this project as a way to stimulate people's connection with their body.

Personally, Meijer has learnt that it improves his sense of balance to focus attention on what his body and emotions are telling him. 'This has meant so much for my creativity, my well-being and for how I feel, especially in my relations with other people. People tend to be trapped inside their heads, which can cause tensions in relationships and in society at large. With my work I hope to help others reconnect with their body and to focus their attention on what really matters in their life.'

'People tend to be trapped inside their heads'

'For how long can we maintain our attention?'

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JESSE VAN DEN BERG



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‘What does my ideal world look like?’ Jesse van den Berg used this question as a starting point to explore utopian environments for their new project: places that make you feel so good that you want to stay forever. Van den Berg focuses on photography, audio, installations, and the representation of queer people. ‘In my creation process, I want to give love and vulnerability a prominent role. My work is about intimacy and feeling at home in each other’s company,’ they explain. ‘I prefer to stay away from the hard and raw images that I often encountered in articles and documentaries about queer people when I was discovering my own queerness. In recent years, I spent a lot of time working in my studio to explore this.’

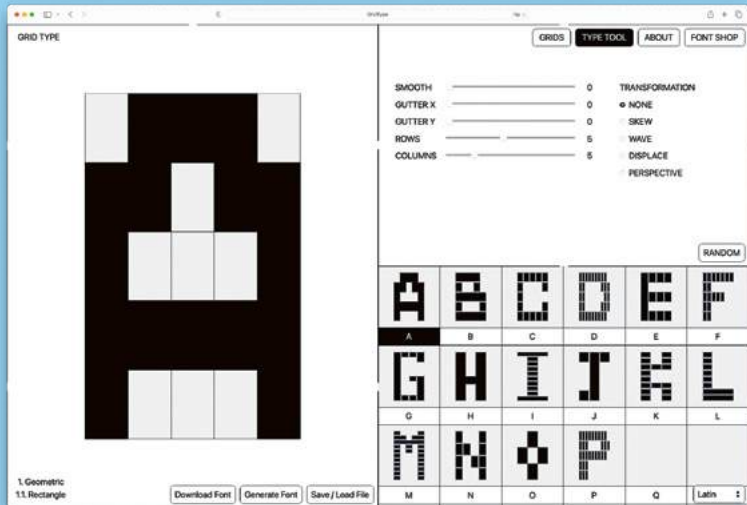
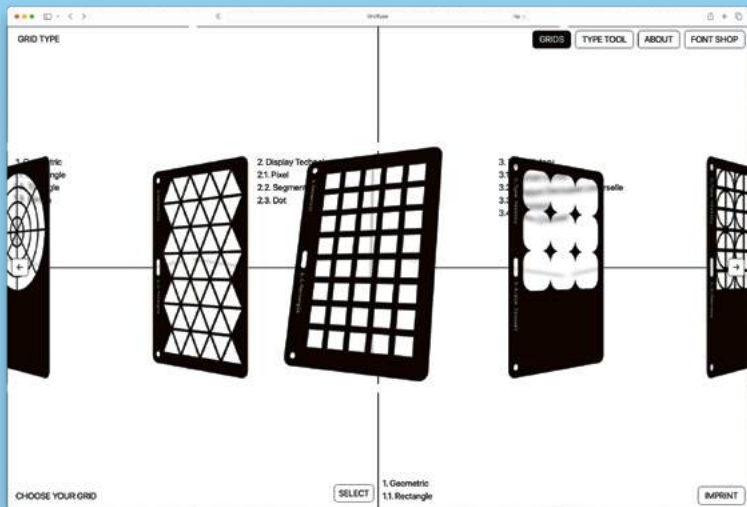
Van den Berg graduated in Fine Arts & Design (MA) from the St. Joost School of Art & Design with their ongoing project *Reconstructing queer intimacy*. This development year allowed Van den Berg to take a major new step: ‘Since working in a photography studio has limitations, I wanted to go outside and search for utopian places. My partner is a forest ranger and feels safest and most at home in nature. He also worked as a location scout, which is how we ended up in the Spanish Extremadura region, an area he sees as a truly utopian environment. For me, it also proved to be the perfect landscape for a new photography series.’

The two worked in the region for a week. The place took the photographer back to their childhood: ‘This is when I used my parents’ camera to start experimenting with photography. Back then, I mostly took pictures of flowers, which I continued to do as a secondary school student. Again in Spain, it was mainly the flower fields that drew my attention. Taking pictures outside has the added advantage of capturing moments of luck that prove to be a real gift to a photographer, such as the play of light and shadows or plant structures that can resemble the human body. It adds more playfulness to my work. I also made a soundscape to accompany the series, using sounds we recorded in Spain to add more context. The series will be shown for the first time at the Pennings Foundation in Eindhoven in the summer of 2024.’

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‘My work is about feeling at home in each other’s company’

‘What does my ideal world look like?’



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KATHARINA NEJDL

Have you ever designed something by shaking your head from left to right or making arm gestures in front of your computer screen? Katharina NejdI writes innovative programs to make things like this possible. She uses creative coding as a design tool, researching its potential and its impact on the design field. She also experiments with new forms of interaction between users and technology. After obtaining a bachelor's degree at the Universität der Künste in Berlin, Katharina studied for a master's degree at the Sandberg Institute where she graduated in 2022 with the *together-online.net* project: an interactive online platform where you can co-create a design with others.

'I hope to circumvent the limitations of commercial software by developing my own design tools,' says NejdI. 'A self-built system with an x number of variables can generate endless surprising results that you couldn't have possibly come up with yourself. Coding allows you to do so much more, both in terms of the output and the role of the designer.' Besides her work as web designer and developer, the grant provided by the Creative Industries Fund NL allowed Katharina to spend more time on research: how can you integrate coding in the design process and how do you design a usable tool?

She started by buying a stack of books. One of these books contained a reference to Joseph A. David's *Plaque Découpée Universelle* from 1876, a stencil capable of generating every letter of the alphabet. This antique template inspired her to make a digital reinterpretation: *GridType*.

The program allows you to create custom fonts that defy conventions, offering endless grids and letter combinations. NejdI: 'This is because of all the different variables you can use, which is what makes it so interesting. And any glitches you may encounter make it even more fascinating. What happens if you start feeding those bugs instead of fixing them?'

The project is still in development, but GridType will eventually become a web-based tool for designers to create and export their own fonts. In the meantime, NejdI has not lost sight of the connection with the historic Plaque. In the Tetem FabLab in Enschede, she has converted a number of her grids into analogue form using a laser cutter. You can use these plastic templates to work the old-fashioned way with pens or pencils. It emphasises once again that tools, whether they are tangible or not, are also product designs.

'It allows me to spend more time on research'

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'I hope to circumvent the limitations of commercial software by developing my own design tools.'



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LAMIAE EL HAJJAJI

As a child, Lamiae El Hajjaji would spend every day drawing or doing some form of artwork. When she was older, she initially chose a secure career by studying to become a teaching assistant. Three years later, El Hajjaji decided to return to the creative field. 'I started studying communication and multimedia design at the University of Applied Sciences in Utrecht, expanded my network, visited exhibitions and became a freelancer. I joined the LFMC art collective in Amsterdam where I completed my graduation project.'

As a visual artist, El Hajjaji currently translates concepts and stories into visual works. She offers services in the areas of animation and branding as well as graphic design and illustration. El Hajjaji has established a name for herself through her commissioned work, but her busy freelance schedule meant less time to spend on creating autonomous works. 'The talent development grant allows me to find out what area I would like to consistently focus on; what is my own story?'

El Hajjaji describes her personal work as nostalgic, multilayered and positive. 'I find it important to highlight stories rather than emphasise the struggle. The usual questions such as "How hard is it to be a person of colour?" or "How difficult is it to be visibly Muslim?" simply label people. Instead, I want to show how much fun it is to just be who you are.'

This development year, El Hajjaji will work on a deconstructed cartoon and a number of objects, including ceramics and a screen printed and embroidered headscarf. Her multidisciplinary project revolves around the young lady *Hia*, which is the Arabic word for she/her. *Hia* wears a hijab, is Moroccan, with roots in the Amazigh, a nomadic tribe in Morocco. 'You follow her story in which she rediscovers herself and learns to connect with all the different aspects of her life.' El Hajjaji was inspired by the concept of *ubuntu*. According to this African philosophy, people do not exist as isolated individuals but come to be themselves through a network of human relationships. Hajjaji: '*Ubuntu* is very close to my Islamic way of life. The Muslim community is as one, we feel each other's pain and are happy when everyone else is happy.' Lamiae concludes: 'So it is all about "I am because we are". I hope my work alludes to the importance of community instead of individuals. Because you can draw strength from other people. Their stories shape you.'

'Highlight stories rather than emphasise the struggle'

'Other people's stories shape you'

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Photo by Winny Sandvliet

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'I sweep along both myself and others in a brighter world'

In their artistic practice, Lashaaawn combines the creation of epic fantasy worlds with online and offline drag performance art. 'I write stories about supernatural places and the people who live there. In my "world building" process, I present a vision of a more evolved society that prioritises wellbeing and peace. As a drag performance artist, I bodily express the aesthetics of those worlds, whereby I become a character from one of my stories as it were. It allows me to claim space as a member of the vulnerable minority, to sweep along myself and others in a brighter world, and to show what is possible in our wildest fantasies.'

During the talent development year, Lashaaawn will focus on the production of the digital variety show *Ehmeneehm with Lashaaawn*. In addition to drag performance art and epic fantasy aesthetics, the show will feature comedy sketches and a talk show with well-known personalities from the Dutch creative and social design field. Lashaaawn: '*Ehmeneehm* is colloquial language. In Surinamese culture it is like an extension of the interjection or filler word "umm". It is a comical reference to a conversation and it sets the tone for the talk show where I blend Dutch-Surinamese culture with parody and in-depth interviews.' It is a place of organised chaos where the charismatic, yet razor sharp Lashaaawn has candid discussions with guests about both casual topics and, more often, about serious personal, political and spiritual matters. 'The title is also a subtle recognition of the fact that Surinamese and other cultures from former or current colonies enrich Dutch culture.'

'This year gives me the space to continue working on both the short and long-term vision of this project without having to worry too much. I also have an overarching vision where I see my practice grow into a digital powerhouse. The multidisciplinary approach provides a unique framework that we don't often see, particularly not in the Netherlands.' They add enthusiastically: 'I want to inspire both myself and others. I also speak up for marginalised groups that I don't belong to directly, and choose to steadfastly avoid any elements of violence in my work. Afrofuturism is a key pillar since it is an intentionally inclusive way of creating. In my practice, I do my utmost to help build the necessary digital infrastructure to promote and strengthen this valuable artistic-cultural and diverse sound.'

LASHAAAWN

'As a drag performance artist, I bodily express the aesthetics'

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Photo by Peter Lange

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'In our participative workshops we like to learn and share knowledge with people'

LE BATEAU

A boat has been built at Amsterdam's Sloterpas Lake that defies all unwritten nautical laws. Laëtitia Delauney and Aurélia Noudelmann want to make the traditionally male dominated ship building sector accessible to a much more diverse group of people. Last year, they invited everyone – women and members of the queer community in particular – to join them at workshop Noorderhof to collaborate on *De walvis* (the whale). Prior experience was not required, this was all about learning by doing. Through monthly workshops offered by a variety of artists, the participants worked on the boat furnishing and equipment: from the richly painted sail to the mosaic-covered ship's table.

De walvis is the second boat built by Delauney and Noudelmann. They built their first one while studying at the Rietveld Academy. They already noticed then how their instructor doubted their technical skills in this area. 'With this project we hope to challenge these kinds of preconceived notions', says Delauney. Delauney and Noudelmann established Le Bateau after graduation and decided to start a larger scale project with an even bigger boat, a more comprehensive side programme, and more participation from local residents and friends. 'This project is not just about building boats but also about building more inclusive communities where we invite people from outside our own bubble,' says Noudelmann. 'In our participative workshops we like to learn and share knowledge with people who wouldn't usually be involved with such projects.'

They see the workshop as a kind of artistic research platform where they can learn in practice how best to deal with sexism and exclusion. This is why they found it so important that the workshops, meetings and building sessions could be offered free of charge. Working with so many amateurs, they managed to build a very special vessel whereby they not only reframed the typical profile of a ship builder, but also the design itself. *De walvis* is modelled on a whale's skeleton, and is supported by empty beer barrels. The participants played with ideas of form and counter form to make optimal use of materials. The table is made from discarded tiles and old crockery and the sail has been painted with locally picked raspberries that were left over following an on-site brunch.

This year, *De walvis* can be booked for events that chime with the goals of Le Bateau. Next year, Delauney and Noudelmann will sail the boat from Amsterdam to the Canal du Midi in Southern France, making stops along the way to show their boat and spread their message.

'The workshop is our artistic research platform'

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LENA WINTERINK

Five years ago, Lena Winterink graduated cum laude from the Design Academy Eindhoven with two projects that personalise the fabrics that we wear. At their request, she turned people's souvenirs into personal patterns that can be worn close to the skin. She also integrated copper into cotton garments which, depending on use, results in a unique oxidation pattern.

These patterns continue to be an important feature of her work. Winterink translates social patterns into textile designs and also carries out research for various clients, looking at the lifecycle of textiles, from their origin to the production and use. During her development year, she further explored the manufacturing side. She joined a textile network, made new contacts in the industry and, with the support of two experienced weavers, started to experiment on her own loom. These efforts resulted in a new sample archive with innovative weaves for future projects.

The talent development grant also gave her the necessary space to reflect on her position as a designer. Developing a new website fitted in nicely with this. She is currently looking at the possibility of a follow-up to the project *Made in*: a cloak she designed for the Amsterdam Tropenmuseum (now: Wereldmuseum) consisting of 1300 labels cut from discarded garments. 'These labels are waste products of a waste product, which need to be removed for recycling,' says Winterink. 'In this way, a piece of textile loses part of its history.' *Made in* makes a statement about the global origin of the clothing we wear and revalues the local context. Winterink: 'I think it's fascinating how people assign such very different values to textiles. In one place textiles are discarded, whereas somewhere else the same textiles might be put in a museum.'

In the meantime, Winterink's networking and positioning efforts have also started to pay off. Winterink has been selected for two new projects in Rotterdam. She will analyse the work processes of textile sorting company Opnieuw Goed for the Versatile Academy: how can she, as a designer, contribute to the sourcing, sorting and reusing of second-hand textiles? She will also be researching the traditional Afro-Surinamese headscarf for Tailors and Wearers, the so-called *angisa*. How can we preserve and at the same time make these special cultural items more accessible for others? 'These questions tie in very well with the kind of design practice I'd like to have.'

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'I think it's fascinating how people assign such very different values to textiles'

'Patterns are an important feature of my work'



Photo by Katarina Juričić

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LUKAS ENGELHARDT

Graphic designer Lukas Engelhardt is interested in autonomous infrastructures of both digital and non-digital nature. It could be a computer that hosts his work files or the studio that provides the conditions to develop his practice. Engelhardt seeks to understand and manipulate these mechanisms. 'It can be very powerful to understand how these things work and to be able to do it yourself.' Accordingly, he builds servers, uses an open source alternative to Dropbox, and self-hosts his new website. He is also eager to enable collectivism and activism by creating places that facilitate collaboration and friendships. 'Collaboration is really the key thing for me.'

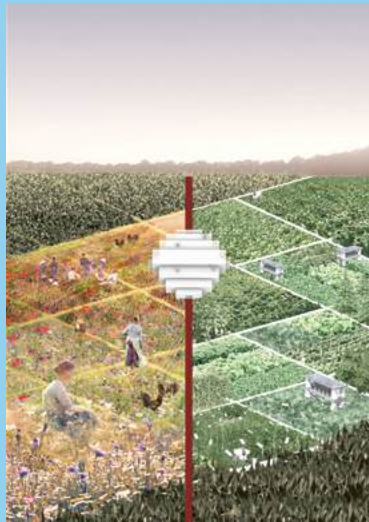
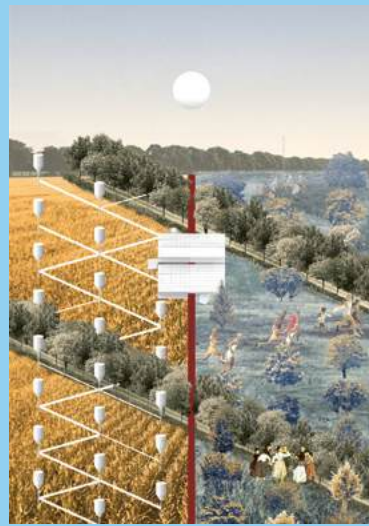
Engelhardt can't help but wonder: why does a server look the way it does? It doesn't need to be that way. The way it works, how it feels, but also the way we talk about it. These are all choices. Engelhardt wants to reveal that random aspect by approaching the object as a sculpture, for instance by painting it or by exhibiting it in a gallery. As a result, the public starts to relate to it differently. 'As a designer I have always been interested in how you can communicate things.' Another fascinating phenomenon: desktop backgrounds, showing wonderful natural scenes. On the one hand there's the metaphor of it being your desktop, while on the other hand it's an inaccessible kind of space. It is also quite striking how many words we use from the analogue world to refer to things in digital space, such as files, folders, save, icon, window... These shifting meanings also fascinate Engelhardt. 'It's many different things, but there is a common theme. It's all about the aesthetics of autonomy.'

'Collaboration is really the key thing for me.'

Engelhardt cherishes the autonomy provided to him to arrange this year however he wishes. He will concentrate on practical matters to support the development of his practice, such as a course in miniature painting, travelling to visit collectives, having conversations with inspiring example figures in his discipline, and arranging business coaching for him and his studio partner. His feeling is that everything is now materialising in his practice. 'It gives me lots of energy and lots of other things besides. It's nice to receive public feedback once in a while, to see that people seem happy with the things I'm involved with.'

'It's all about the aesthetics of autonomy.'

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MACIEJ WIECZORKOWSKI

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Technological developments have made our lives a lot more comfortable in the past few decades. Running water and mechanical ventilation, once upon a time only available to those wealthy enough to afford it, are now standard in any average home. The downside is that we experience fewer shared moments nowadays. And what about sustainability?

Architect Maciej Wieczorkowski decided to explore these issues further. 'A fireplace used to be the focal point of the home and formed the backbone of family life. The fireplace is where people came together for warmth, cooking food, drying clothes and sleeping and as such it established a kind of hierarchy in the home. On an urban scale, wells and granaries served as meeting places and a central point for the community. For many cultures, these infrastructural objects were important enough to become a place of religious worship. But such resources no longer have a collective meaning in our modern culture. This shift not only affects society, but also has an impact on architectonic design. Where we used to have beautifully designed objects that were used daily and were created through collaboration between architects and craftsmen, we now have items that are produced on an industrial scale with the involvement of anonymous engineers and climate advisers. These technical installations subsequently require intensive maintenance and frequent replacement and this is expensive and not really sustainable. At the same time, these installations contribute nothing to the aesthetic, architectonic or cultural dimension of the building. Wieczorkowski finds this concerning. 'Should we reconsider our collective relationship with resources?', he wonders.

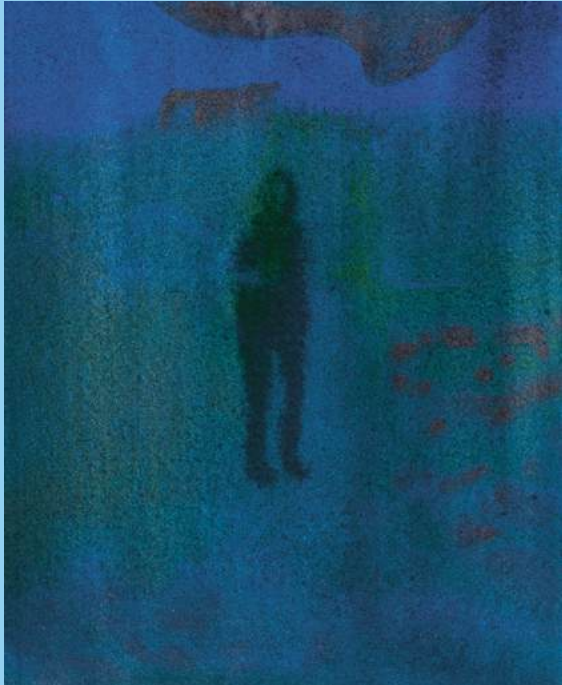
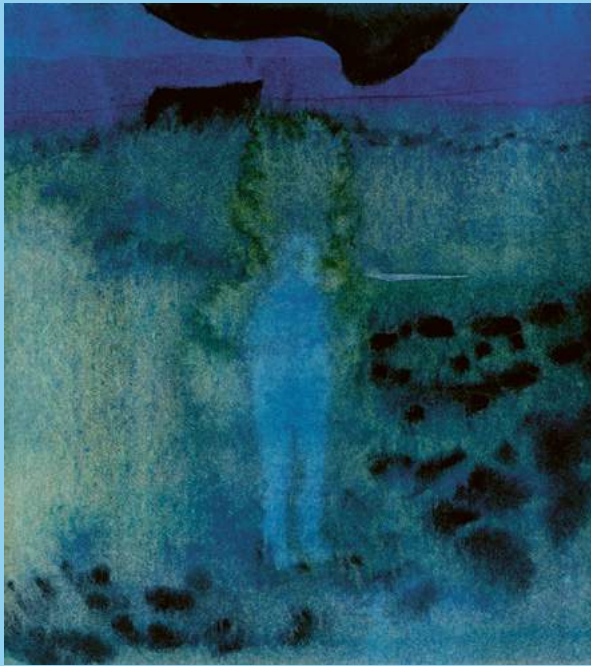
Wieczorkowski visited communities in Barcelona and Berlin that are still organised around the sharing of resources. He also researched various types of objects that are related to collective resources in the past. 'Currently, I am looking at ways to translate this formal research into a design language. But I also see the entire project as a theoretical, practical and personal knowledge base for my practice. I am convinced that these experiences will be valuable for various ongoing projects, such as the *Gemene grond* project that I am collaborating on with the municipality of Roermond. They also serve as an inspiration for teaching in a design studio at the Rotterdam Academy of Architecture and various future projects.'

'Some resources no longer have a collective meaning'

'New technology is expensive and not always sustainable'

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MARIA FRAAIJE



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This year, Maria Fraaije learned how to 'crawl out of her head'. 'Now I draw worlds to get lost in, rather than worlds with which to confront others.' Previously, the illustrator created projects of a social nature. For DRIFT (Dutch Research Institute for Transitions) she researched societal themes, and initially wanted to weave together the worlds of illustration and research. But that ambition changed over the course of the year. 'I discovered that this wasn't really what I was looking for. Much of my original plan went out the window.'

Fraaije no longer feels the need to stimulate reflection, debate or change through her drawings. Most of all, she wants the viewer of her work to feel touched. 'My drawings are still about themes that mean a lot to me, but in a more gentle manner and with more room for nuance. It's an approach that suits me better. I feel less compelled to explain things.' It changed her process and has made her drawings more poetical. 'I always associated research with rationality. With thinking and understanding. Thanks to this year, I know that I prefer to do artistic research, which can be irrational and explorative. I always felt that I needed to be assertive, activist and socially engaged in my illustrations, but through the development of my practice I realised that I like to create softer images, through a simple and open research process.' To illustrate: she used to draw mostly indoors, but now she likes to take a stool and sketchbook out into the world to draw what she sees there. 'Later, in the studio, I create illustrations of a spot based on memory. Through this approach, I not only record the facts but also my own truth. The world that emerges in that way is usually more gentle and elusive. I think I also started working more with watercolour and charcoal for that reason, they are more imprecise and harder to pin down.'

Fraaije did a residency in Scotland, where she discovered the kind of work that emerges when she spends all day long drawing outside, in nature. The course she followed at the Royal Drawing School also helped. 'How the instructors and artists talked about their work – explorative, open and curious – was inspiring.' Just like her drawings, Fraaije's own view of her work became softer. 'I discovered this year that one drawing can feel more sincere than another. And that ugly drawings don't really exist.'

'Artistic research can be irrational and explorative'

'I always felt that I needed to be assertive, activist and socially engaged'

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Photo by PoLagraph

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MD-2 ARCHITECTS

As architects based in Rotterdam, Michał Długajczyk and Mahaut Dael of md-2 architects concentrate daily on renovation and transformation projects. 'We study the stories, history and identity of the city, which are aspects often ignored in architecture. And we ask critical questions about the continual demolition and disappearance of valuable parts of the city.'

Inspired by surrealism, the pair apply their *Description by Design* methodology to examine themes such as identity, sustainability and flexibility. 'In this development year we are combining research, practice and communication. One goal was to translate our study of surrealistic methods and specifically of the work by the Czech artist Jiří Kolář into techniques for the reuse of scrap materials. We find Jiří Kolář's work inspiring as it offers us creative solutions for contemporary challenges in architecture and renovation. This year we travelled to Prague to examine his work from up close. This yielded lots of new knowledge, insights and contacts, including with institutions that offer the opportunity to exhibit our work abroad. We experimented with surrealist collage techniques for architectonic designs at the Rotterdam Academy of Architecture and Urban Design. We applied these techniques to the Citroen auction hall, a building in Rotterdam. We also visited Rotterdam's ECNI cement factory to learn more about material properties and recycling processes.'

They accumulated even more knowledge by following a course in exhibition design, and they presented their research into surrealistic collage techniques and their experiments with scrap materials sourced from transformation projects in Rotterdam's Oude Noorden district. They also tested disassembly, recombination and consolidation techniques, and translated their research into mock-ups. They are furthermore renovating a house in Italy, applying new techniques to reuse old roof tiles.

'By acquiring knowledge about materials and construction techniques, we are better able to connect with more advanced project phases and to play a bigger role at the construction site. This development year allows us to further explore our work and to learn how to present our work. This way we can position our work in the field more effectively, make it relevant for contemporary issues, and grow our network. We intend to produce another series of mock-ups and to apply these at actual construction sites. We will also further test surrealistic techniques and specify how these can be translated to contemporary architecture.'

'The identity of a city is often ignored in architecture'

'Our trip yielded new knowledge, insights and contacts'

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MICHELANGELO WINKLAAR

The exhibition *Kijken met je handen* (looking with your hands), held at Escher in the Palace Museum in The Hague in autumn 2021, introduced a groundbreaking approach to museum fashion exhibitions. Inspired by his visually impaired mother, Michelangelo Winklaar developed an haute couture collection that visitors are allowed to touch. With the target group of blind and visually impaired visitors as starting point, this exhibition appealed to a much more diverse audience. After all, who does have the temptation to touch those special silhouettes, textures and fabrics? Through his inclusive approach to fashion exhibitions, Winklaar resolutely breaks with the usual 'do not touch' instructions. Here, touching is permitted, which is an enriching experience for many.

At the exhibition, visitors could experience the sensation of a heavy, rough sequin fabric that feels like scaly skin, as well as the lightness of layers of tulle, fine flowery embroideries or the angular shoulder pads of an 80s blazer. Winklaar designed a series of special display cases inspired by incubators, with holes to put your hands through. This sparked his interest, leading him to apply for a grant from the Creative Industries Fund NL to explore the durability and design of tactile textiles. How can fabric withstand constant touch without wearing out, getting dirty, or fading? And how can the experience be made even more engaging for a diverse audience?

Winklaar aims to revive haute couture by using this new, inclusive approach. This year, he is focusing on professionalizing his practice, culminating in the second exhibition: *Kijken met je handen 2.0*.

In The Hague, he dived into the Kunstmuseum's fashion archives to discover which textile techniques endure best over time. In France, he refined his embroidery skills to produce less fragile embroideries. And he searched for special audio clips at the Netherlands Institute for Sound & Vision to further enhance the sensory stimulation.

He also talked to curators and designers about the exhibition design. 'There is so much to think about when organising an exhibition. I am trying to learn as much as I can about all the various aspects. Additionally, I like to reflect on my way of working. When you're creative, your mind is constantly active. I learnt that it is important to switch off now and again.' He can't afford to switch off for too long though: the pre-launch of the first pieces is scheduled in early October at the Lange Voorhout in The Hague.

'I learnt that it is important to switch off now and again'

'I want to revive the traditional craftsmanship of haute couture'

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MICHÈLE BOULOGNE

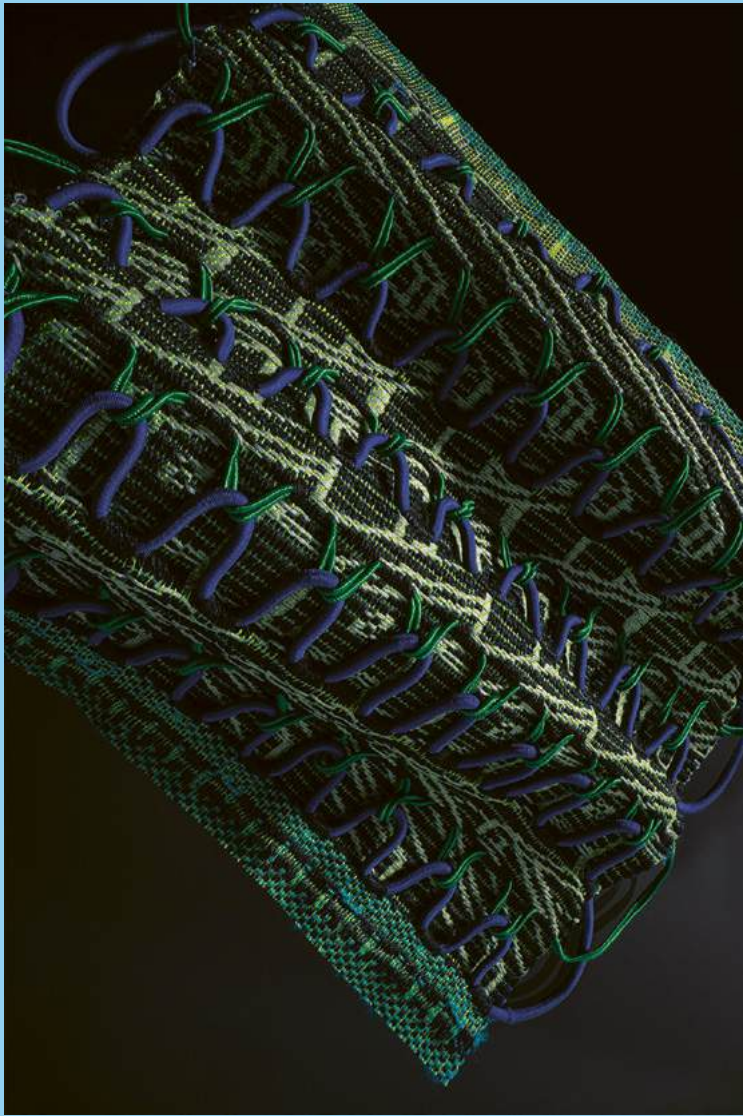


Photo by Marjon Trap

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What do artisanal textiles, space, and colonial issues have in common? These seemingly different themes converge in the projects of textile designer and visual artist Michèle Boulogne. This year, she aims to clarify the connections between her projects. 'I want to get a grip on who I'd like to be in this world and for my community. To this end, I combine my tools, textiles, and my subject, space.' Her fascination began in her youth in Martinique. 'As long as people exist, there will be textiles. The same applies to cosmology. They are both deep-rooted human preoccupations. In the US, I studied textiles within a universal context and learned about the connection between textiles, cartography, and the representation of the sky.'

'This is too big an issue to ignore'

Growing up on the island with its French colonial history, Boulogne loved nature and the night sky. 'But there was another side to life on the island: of tension and deep-rooted problems related to the colonial history.' Boulogne sees similar contrasts in space. 'It is the ultimate place for wonder as well as for geopolitical issues.' Here, her knowledge and art intersect. 'I feel that I have something to contribute to the debate about voyages of discovery, particularly given today's talk about colonising space. I find that notion and the rhetoric around it very shocking. Given recent focus on colonization's negative impacts, I don't understand why we're discussing this in the same terms.'

Boulogne will conclude her development year with a research project on Caribbean basket weaving techniques, collaborating with anthropologists. 'I want to learn everything about the basics of this skill, using only fibres and your hands.' Simultaneously, she will study satellite images of the island to understand how its resources have been used. This is how Boulogne intertwines her subjects. Acceptance and finding the right balance have been her biggest challenges. 'I am constantly switching between research, working with textiles, and collaborating with others. It can be difficult to achieve the right balance.'

In October, Boulogne will present a series of graphic prints about the human relationship with extraterrestrial resources and a publication on traditional Caribbean basket weaving concerning territorial awareness. She is also preparing a paper for Milan: *Caribbean arc and outer space, an academic and visual reflection on exploration*. 'For the first time, there will be a colonial panel,' says Boulogne. 'Things are happening with regard to this topic, people from the community want to come together. I have been able to focus on that this year. This is too big an issue to ignore.'

'I have something to contribute to the debate about voyages of discovery'

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Photo by Nicolai Schmelling, scan by Jizz Taco

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'My practice questions and explores the politicisation of queer people'

MICHIEL TERPELLE

Finding communities was one of the key aims for graphic designer Michiel Terpelle (he/they) this year. Particularly queer communities: places where he feels at home and can collaborate without compromise. 'The basic premise of my practice is that queerness is not so much a way of doing or a kind of layer over the design practice as a neutral entity, but more a way of being that questions and explores the politicisation of queer people in relation to heteronormativity and compulsory heterosexuality.' Terpelle approached various people and initiatives for mentorship, including the Belgian collective Bebe Books. First invited as a resident, he is now a member of the group.

Covid hit shortly after Terpelle graduated from the ArtEZ University of the Arts with a master's degree in typography in 2020. Structures were lacking, collaboration was difficult and there were no facilities available. It feels for him as if his practice is starting to take off only now. One of the projects he has worked on recently has been the development of his drag character Jizz Taco. 'I am active in the drag scene and you can see elements of this culture in my design practice. Elements such as performance and identity but also the platforms provided by clubs, streets and galleries, where I question and explore themes such as gender, sexuality and class.'

Terpelle increasingly aims for a more independent relationship between client and designer. In this hierarchical structure, marginalised people are often expected to adjust to interests that do not serve them. That is why he is increasingly rebelling against heteronormative design practices. 'I don't want to explain queerness "on condition that..." – for instance on condition that heterosexuals can understand it in their language or within their own frame of reference, or on condition that it doesn't offend them or create feelings of guilt, or on condition that it won't cost them anything.'

All the experiences of the past year will be archived. Besides a digital archive, the archive itself will also be an event. A performance, almost like a kind of liturgy, to celebrate collaborations and results. Incidentally, Terpelle also discovered a community at the Creative Industries Fund NL: 'I think talent development is a great way to support people and give them a push in the right direction. You not only receive financial support, but you also get a large group of people who are all at the start of their careers.'

'I don't want to explain queerness "on condition that" ...'

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MILENCO DOL



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A series of black-and-white photographs show a portrait of a young man, with each photo becoming progressively darker. On the last photo the subject is barely distinguishable from his surroundings. With this four-piece series of self-portraits, Minco visualises a personal experience. 'This project emerged from a longing to disappear, to dissolve into silence.' The gradual disappearance of the portrayed subject is achieved by gradually shortening the shutter speed on an analogue camera.

Dol wanted to devote this year to making a series of portraits of people just starting out on the job market, and to learning how to work with an analogue camera. From the period following his own graduation, he remembers the sense of having no direction once the structure imposed by the study fell away. 'The feeling I got was: if I don't do anything, then nothing will happen anymore.' However, while working on his project he realised that the portraits were not telling the story he had envisioned. Working with a medium-format analogue camera also required a different approach. 'You can't shoot a thousand pictures and then select a couple later. The picture I take just has to be right.' He decided to stop working according to a predetermined concept and to simply start taking photographs instead. 'It's nice to have the room to just experiment. With an analogue camera, you do look through the viewer but what you're looking at is just a mirror reflecting what you see in front of you. A beautiful image is what is already beautiful when you simply look at it with your own eyes.'

'It's nice to have the room to just experiment'

This resulted in an approach where Dol separates the process of making photographs from the editing of a series. He has also learned to develop film and to make analogue prints. Thanks to these experiences and his conversations with various mentors, he has gained a broader perspective on photography. 'When I make a series, it's not just about what I want to say, but also about what another person can see in it.' For Dol, photography is a means to make things visible, but also a way for him to disappear (behind the lens). He tries to capture this ambiguity by letting images tell a story together. The time-consuming and artisan process of analogue photography means a lot to him. 'The time you invest in creating a single image increases its value. You start with nothing and it can become much more. As soon as you pick up an analogue camera, you're engaging with the world itself.'

'As soon as you pick up an analogue camera, you're engaging with the world itself'

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NIELS DE BAKKER

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'Somewhere between building the electronics and writing the compositions, the final work appears.'

From Sonology at the Conservatoire to a master's degree in Art Science and a Tech Fellowship at the Royal Academy of Visual Arts: artist Niels de Bakker blends his knowledge in installations that he plays like instruments. This is his way of getting a grip on materials and processes. The tools that he needs are so specific that he makes them himself. 'I have to keep learning so that my work can evolve.' Visiting lectures, he often seeks advice from experts in electronics and mechanics. His efforts are paying off with increasingly improved experiments and faster results, just as he aimed for this year. 'I want to professionalise my practice by expanding my technical skills. For my installation machines, I continue to build further on my existing knowledge.' Because with new knowledge, come new questions.

When De Bakker was completing his application, he thought he would like to do something with optics, lenses and light. However, his plans gradually started to change. 'I built an ecosystem of small computers and electronics that enables me to build new and improved installations more quickly.' Those installations are the result of a deep dive into his personal fascination and of thorough, complex and experimental research. 'For my latest installation I dissolve pigment in a special silicone oil. The colour of the pigments changes as a result of their temperature. De Bakker shows how this process works using an LED screen for which he makes images based on the heat of the pigments: the image continuously changes because of cooling and heating. Complicated? Yes indeed. He also didn't understand it at first, but then that's his biggest drive. 'Something fascinates me precisely because I don't understand how it works. The technical journey I must undertake to gain a better understanding is what I find interesting.'

Understanding and controlling seemingly magical yet natural phenomena is his goal. 'As an inventor, I make my own equipment so that I can control it. I now do the same with magnetic pigments whereby a magnetic field causes colours to change.' By understanding how something works, De Bakker learns how to control and model results. He does so based on compositions. 'Somewhere between building the electronics and writing the compositions, the final work appears.' Everything has been carefully thought out. Still, most discoveries happen by chance. 'I look for coincidences, to be honest. Unexpected results are always the best ones.'

'Something fascinates me precisely because I don't understand how it works.'

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Photo by Lici Feng

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QUIANA CRONIE

Quiana Cronie was born in Curaçao and grew up in Aruba. When she was nineteen, she moved to the Netherlands for her studies at the Design Academy in Eindhoven. Today, Cronie has returned to the island where she grew up. As an Aruban designer, she aims to preserve the island's culture for future generations, through creating sustainable fashion and by visual storytelling. She also researches Aruban traditional dress, which has been influenced by various cultures as a result of colonisation and trade. She enthusiastically explains: 'Aruba has a rich oral tradition and limited written sources. I want to reveal, share and highlight our stories, such as the origin of the Aruban saying *come harinja, bisti bari*, which means "eat the flour and wear the bag". It refers to the straight cut work shirts that the hard working women, farmers and fishermen used to make around the year 1800 from empty flour bags, which were strong and breathable. The reuse of this strong material turned the *cashaca* into a sustainable garment. I hope to revive this innovative tradition with my current project *Cashaca*. Inspired by the working methods of the past, I produce an upcycled version, made from cotton tablecloths sourced from the local hotel industry. This also refers to present-day Aruba which isn't very sustainable yet, and where the main income source is tourism. Both souvenirs and fashion are mostly mass-produced outside of Aruba. By reviving the *cashaca*, I want to focus on the islanders' heritage, identity and sense of community. At the same time, the *cashaca* is a way to tell the untold stories from Aruba via sustainable clothing, meant for everyone. *Carrying the culture of Aruba*, that is what you do when you wear this shirt.'

'Wearing the *cashaca* is carrying the culture of Aruba'

Cronie is currently focusing on further improving her sewing skills and visual aesthetics using new media such as 3D fashion and Cinema4D. 'I hope to also appeal to a younger target group by injecting a sense of freshness and innovation into this project.' She also aims to organise a series of popup exhibitions in collaboration with shops in both Aruba and Europe to show her developing work and to get feedback from the community. 'This is an exciting and significant phase. I can fully devote myself to my passion, focus on experimentation, reflection and growth, and start building the foundation for my practice as an independent designer. I am very grateful for that!'

'This sustainable garment tells the story of innovative islanders'

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'I tell stories that otherwise remain invisible in our society'

RO BUUR

Ro Buur is a graduate of the HKU University of the Arts in Utrecht and the Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam, and active in the areas of film, photography, sculpture (ceramics), illustration and typography. Their work is inspired by a strong need to explore and reflect on certain themes within their day-to-day life. 'My projects tell stories that otherwise remain invisible in our society. I draw a lot of inspiration from the queer community where people encourage me to grow and stay true to myself. My ideas also come from nature, the Dutch landscape and the water that flows through it. The diversity of nature reassures me. There are plants and animals that have both male and female characteristics, non-binary animal species, and some animals engage in homosexual behaviour. This shows that it is natural to be who I am.'

Buur talks about their current multimedia project (working title: *Queerdo's*), which will culminate in a film upon completion of the talent development year. 'The main character is Birdie, a queer and trans person who suffers from a negative self-image and sees themselves as a monster. Four (imaginary) friends spend some time in nature with Birdie for a ritual that ensures that Birdie can let go of their anxieties and negative thoughts. I based Birdie on a water monster from a scary Dutch folk story that is intended to make sure that children stay away from water. In this project I draw a parallel with how a part of society, that is increasingly adopting normative and binary views, sees queers and trans people.'

Buur used the grant for research, writing and developing the script, whereby they combined research with magical thinking. 'I experimented with various media to tell a narrative, and developed a real passion for clay. It unleashed my imagination, with the characters coming to life while modelling the clay, which I then converted into illustrations and text. I am about to start using the ceramic sculptures as the basis for moulds to make rubber masks, to be worn by the characters in the film. The sculptures will also become part of an installation that I will show at the end of this development year.'

'The film characters came to life while modelling the clay'

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'With my projects I aim to make energy consumption tangible and visible'

ROSALIE APITULEY

Rosalie Apituley is a graduate of ArtEZ University for the Arts in Arnhem (2022), and in her artistic design practice she focuses on product design, critical design, social design and interaction design. She first explored the theme of energy consumption in her *Uit de meterkast* project. Apituley: 'My work is socially critical and carefully thought through, but the playfulness and humour makes it accessible to a wider audience. With this project, I wanted to redesign the daily interactions with energy to emphasise that energy isn't something that just comes out of the wall.' Her interest in the theme was sparked by a memory from her childhood. 'Whenever I left a light on, I was told: "Think of the polar bears". As a novice designer, I started to wonder: why don't I understand how energy works when I am so dependent on it? I wanted to find out what the relationship was between those small acts performed around the house, such as the switching on and off of light switches, and the larger scenario of climate change. How do you, as an individual, have an impact on this?'

Meanwhile, Apituley is increasingly starting to position herself as a designer who focuses on energy awareness. 'I am inspired by questions such as: what motivates people? We can have a real impact on climate change through our actions. The way we design our technology and infrastructure has an influence on our relationship with nature. With my projects I aim to make energy consumption tangible and visible, because it is by understanding something through physical experience that one is motivated to act.'

This year, Apituley will continue to work on her project named *It giet oan* (meaning it's going to happen in Frisian) which asks if it is possible to adapt our culture to solar and wind energy, with its inherent dynamic rhythms. During *Dutch Design Week 2023* she built a so-called *koek-en-zopie* stall (refreshments associated with ice skating) together with network operator Alliander, where five solar panels supplied power for an ice cream machine. Apituley handed out ice creams whenever the sun was shining but when it was cloudy the machine would stop working. 'I am currently looking at the possibility of running an ice rink in summer that will be powered by solar energy. With this project, I explore how we can adapt our culture and economy to the seasons, with seasonal energy. I am also working on a festival that will be held on the ice rink grounds, with lectures, workshops, a small art exhibition and games around the theme of energy consumption. Together with the audience, I want to find out if we can have collective celebrations when there is an abundance of power, such as when the sun is shining in summer.'

'Have collective celebrations when there is an abundance of solar power'

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SAMUEL RYNEARSON



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Samuel Ryneerson likes objects whose purpose may not be immediately obvious. Examples are fountains, teapots and bird houses in all sorts of shapes and sizes that are not immediately recognisable as such due to their special design. The designer is particularly interested in how these objects influence our habitat and vice versa. Although he mainly works with digital media, his fascination for physical objects has grown over the years. What is more: 'Even though I can still be amazed by digital objects, I am particularly fascinated by the feel, the tangibility and the unsettling aspect of physical objects. I am increasingly aware that it's important for my mental health and quality of life that I start to move away from making digital art only. This is why I'm looking for a new approach where I can combine digital and physical objects' He likes to emphasise the strange or disconcerting aspects of an object. 'This makes you feel that you can't stop looking and this is something I like to encourage. I'd also like the viewer to wonder why it looks that way as well as how it is made.'

During his development year, Ryneerson focused on the design and production of bird houses that can now be seen in gardens throughout The Hague. He wanted to create a certain tension between the houses and their surroundings. To achieve this, he collaborated with the designer Jonathan Looman and others. 'After various consultations, we designed objects and explored how to make bird houses that are suitable for their environment and the living creatures that live there.'

The designs, which are far from traditional and have some futuristic elements, as well as the choice of materials and the production process were all part of his research. It is no big deal to print a digital design in plastic but what about ceramic or metal? The designer responded to this challenge with lots of research, experimentation and creating an archive for material use and production processes. This gave him a taste for more: 'I hope to evolve into a designer who does not just create digital art but can also insert and link the digital with the physical (and vice versa) to suggest new connections with our surroundings.'

'I want to make new connections with our surroundings'

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'I like to emphasise the weird and wonderful'



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SANDIPAN NATH

Sandipan Nath is interested in the rapidly growing world of artificial intelligence and machine learning, and how the digital world is increasingly coming under the influence of these technologies. Five years ago he started creating art works that use machine learning and deep learning, and algorithms have since become an important part of his work. 'These technologies influence my creativity, as do government interests and commercial interests. I am worried about the consequences of this computational condition for the physical world.'

In the post-internet era, digital imagery became so abundant that networks and platforms were flooded by media content. In the current post-algorithm era, algorithms play an essential role in interpreting and understanding these images. Image recognition has evolved from the simple identification of lines and edges to recognising complex patterns and even predicting future images. The focus has shifted from user-made content to machine-generated content, which is being produced faster than ever before. 'I am fascinated by these machine-readable media that record the interactions between algorithmic systems and the natural world.'

'In the past year I have accumulated a collection of images, videos and gestural data which are used to train a UR3 robotic arm to perform complex tasks, such as picking up apples. This machine-generated content has strong aesthetical qualities, which form the basis of my creative work in which I aim to create poetic compositions using algorithmic processes.'

Nath has furthermore developed as a composer with a focus on new music that develops organically. 'I approach sound design from an algorithmic perspective and have learnt much about the unpredictable nature of both classic and quantum algorithms. This has added depth to my research into uncertainty and probability, which are central themes in both classical and quantum systems.'

In his current work, Nath is investigating the aesthetical conditions for a post-algorithmic era and how this will influence culture. 'I am working with researchers, artists and academics to understand how modern algorithms influence our social interaction, ecological goals and knowledge production. Although my research is of a theoretical nature, my approach is experimental and intuitive. My goal is to connect artistic with scientific knowledge and to create results that are not bound to any particular place or time. It will be something that evolves over the course of time, or can exist in multiple forms at the same time.'

'I am worried about the consequences of this computational condition for the physical world'

'I approach sound design from an algorithmic perspective'

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SÉBASTIEN ROBERT

After projects in Cambodia, Chile and Norway where he researched disappearing indigenous music, cultures and cosmologies, this time Sébastien Robert engaged with a project closer to home. His interest in the bagpipes originated in his youth in Brittany, and the low sonorous sound of the instrument continues to evoke feelings and memories. His interest grew when he discovered that the instrument originated in the Middle East and was then spread across Europe by the Romans. With variations found in France, Italy, Greece, Ukraine and Great Britain, according to Robert it can be viewed as the most European instrument, connecting cultures, generations and social classes. 'People tend to see traditions and cultures as national and static entities, which don't change much. But my approach in this project is transnational, trans-European, even trans-Mediterranean.'

'In a certain sense I am helping the tradition forward with the use of technology'

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Whereas in previous projects he performed field research to investigate and record disappearing music, this time he started with an archive, specifically the collection owned by Marseille's Museum of the Civilisations of Europe and the Mediterranean. 'It feels odd to me that these instruments are there, sleeping in their cases. It's nice to archive things, but it can also be the death of an instrument.' During a residency in Marseille, he had exchanges with art historians, organologists, traditional and contemporary instrument builders, and musicians. Using a 3D scanner owned by the Paris Philharmonic Hall, he scanned five bagpipes from the collection, specifically focussing on the bourdons that produce a constant tone. Back in the Netherlands he worked with Luuk Meints (for 3D modelling and printing), instrument builder Léo Maurel and multimedia artist Benjamin Maus to construct an audio installation using three of the 3D printed copies, which brings together the various European bagpipes. Robert was also assisted by Marie-Barbara Le Gonidec, an ethno-musicologist who helped him to combine his artistic vision with a scientific approach.

'It feels odd to me that these instruments are there, sleeping in their cases'

Last year's developments culminated this summer in a presentation in The Hague's Grey Space in the Middle, where he can explore the possibilities of his installation. 'This year was all about testing and exploring the idea. I expect that this will give me a fairly clear picture of what I want to do exactly.' Looking ahead, Robert hopes to take his work back to the regions where the instruments originally came from, and to the people who make these instruments. 'In a certain sense I am helping the tradition forward with the use of technology.'

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Photo by Daimy Halfhide

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SHANELLA BLEECKE

Shanella Bleecke graduated in 2021 as an audiovisual specialist from the Amsterdam Media College. She has worked in the cultural sector as a programmer, curator, host and film maker and has also been active in journalism and politics. Bleecke provides a platform for previously unheard stories. As a multidisciplinary talent, she acts as an observer and voice for a young generation that is fighting for a more fair, equitable and inclusive world. 'My storytelling is based on telling present-day stories using the knowledge and events from the past. I explore the parallels, continuities and changes in social, political and cultural aspects. In my audiovisual work I can literally and metaphorically splice together the past and the present, enabling me to reflect upon the modern-day context and to substantiate my perspective.'

The production of the documentary *Rutu* is Bleecke's top priority this year. '*Rutu* is the Surinamese word for roots. My grandmother never told me much about her life in Suriname. When she came to the Netherlands, she spent all her energy on raising her children and building a new life. But as the years went by, I noticed how the concept of identity started to become more important to me and this is what prompted me to travel to Suriname in 2023. Family as well as my grandmother's

friends from the past told me how my grandmother had always been both a caring and very confident woman. The realisation that I share the strength of these Surinamese women really touched me and is what inspired me to make this documentary. During my next visit, further research revealed that the very foundation of Suriname is built upon the strength of exceptionally strong women. *Rutu* starts with one of these historically important women, named Maria Vlier. She was born as an enslaved person, but grew up to write the first history textbook about her country from a Surinamese perspective. Learning about Maria felt so magical!

Concept development, research, interviews with camera, the production of a documentary: for Bleecke, the project and the process are a way to further develop as a multidisciplinary maker. 'I think the strength lies in remaining curious and to want to be able and willing to do everything. I am currently working on the further development of my documentary plan. Once I have finished, I want to present the plan in the form of an exhibition. It's great that I now have the freedom to focus on all these different aspects.'

'The foundation of Suriname is built upon the strength of strong women'

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'I noticed how the concept of identity became more important to me'



Photo by Jesse Verdoes

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SJOERD WILLEM BOSCH

In the past year, Sjoerd Willem Bosch has explored the Groningen and Terschelling landscape as a 'listening architect'. During his walks, he listens to the landscape and its inhabitants by drawing and talking to people and learns about the relationship between day-to-day life and major rural issues. This year, Bosch hopes to develop the research aspects of his practice during the 'professional experience period' which is mandatory for architects. Following his bachelor and master in architecture at the Delft University of Technology, he wanted to learn non-typical design skills such as interviewing, writing, photography and making maps. In 2022, he developed his graduation project *Hedendaags Ommelanderhuis*; a political centre for the rural region around Groningen where he was born. He explored how architecture can facilitate a dialogue about the landscape through walks and conversations.

He continued this way of working, which involves recording experiences and observations in drawings, stories and photographs, this year in Groningen. For his research, he chose a family story about the 'black path' of his great grandmother who lived on a farm in Ellerhuizen more than a century ago. This was actually a church path that went straight across the fields to the nearby village of Bedum but has disappeared since then due to reparcelling. During his walks, Bosch sees how these and other changes occur in the landscape. Housing, infrastructure, utilities as well as earthquakes, subsidence and salination all leave their mark. 'A personal exploration can address general rural issues. I see this as an alternative way for a designer to approach a landscape.'

'A personal exploration can address general rural issues'

Bosch involves others such as theatre producer Sijas de Groot, photographer Rubén Dario Kleimeer and architect Rien Korteknie to broaden his perspective even more. He also collaborates with archeologists and students from the University of Amsterdam on an inventory of drowned villages and vanished buildings on Terschelling. Together with archeologist Heleen van Londen, he is organising an exhibition for the *Oerol festival* where visitors can learn more about the stories extracted from the soil. The *Doorgronding* installation links the small scale archeological finds to the landscape and the bigger picture of the Wadden Region.

These experiences have broadened his perspective: 'Now I think more freely about who I can be as an architect and how I can use this to address major issues such as sustainability, inequality or how people interact with places.'

'The area where the answer is not obvious, is the most interesting one'

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STUDIO-METHOD

How can we change our relationship with materials? That's what Pedro Daniel Pantaleone and Riel Bessai explore in their design practice Studio-Method. They aim to tackle scarcity by focusing on sustainable innovation and reusing materials. The result consists of architectural interventions, spatial installations and theoretical explorations. Studio-Method focuses not only on buildings but also on their added value for people, says Pantaleone. 'We want to understand how to improve the reuse of materials, by approaching it as a cultural rather than a technical issue.'

Studio-Method responds to human needs. This makes the projects more complex but also more fun, according to Pantaleone. 'We can now build from scratch, with our own studio and client, and we also need to handle planning, permissions, and regulations.' Studio-Method was commissioned to build a pavilion from residual materials in Drenthe. This project provided an opportunity for Pantaleone to put the practical skills he learnt this year into practice. 'It had been my particular aim to improve my manual skills.' He attended a course in welding, an important skill for working with residual materials. The ability to join metals together gives us many new options.'

The highlight of their year is taking place in October 2024 in Fredriksoord, Drenthe. This is where Studio-Method built a pavilion with a reading room, in the middle of the woods, as part of the heritage restoration project *De proef*. The location and the building are part of the 19th century Koloniën van Weldadigheid or Colonies of Charity (UNESCO World Heritage Site) and Museum De Proefkolonie. The building has a direct connection to the estate, as all materials, including wool from on-site sheep, are sourced from the site itself. 'The pavilion functions as an interspace between the existing building and the garden where you can experience an introspective moment in nature.' The flexible construction, using prefabricated drywall which is easy to disassemble and reuse, may remain on site for five to ten years.

The development year exceeded all expectations, says Pantaleone. They not only improved their practical skills but also gained a better understanding of professional practice, including license applications and artistic experiments. 'It is not just about design, vision and implementation but also about networking, support and financial resources. Art and architecture are strongly associated with social and political issues. I now know how important it is to link projects to the city, from a social point of view but also with respect to laws and regulations. I learnt things I would never have picked up from a book.'

'We do this by treating the reuse of materials as a cultural rather than a technical issue'



Photo by Sang Hyun Lee

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SUN LEE

As a Korean designer working in the Netherlands, Sun Lee always feels halfway between preserving her identity and adapting to a new environment. 'This is why I deeply connect with the philosophy embodied in craft history. I see it as a collection of cultures that has been accumulated in specific regions and times.' For her, crafts are a living heritage; not the remains from times gone by but dynamic practices that can evolve and adapt.

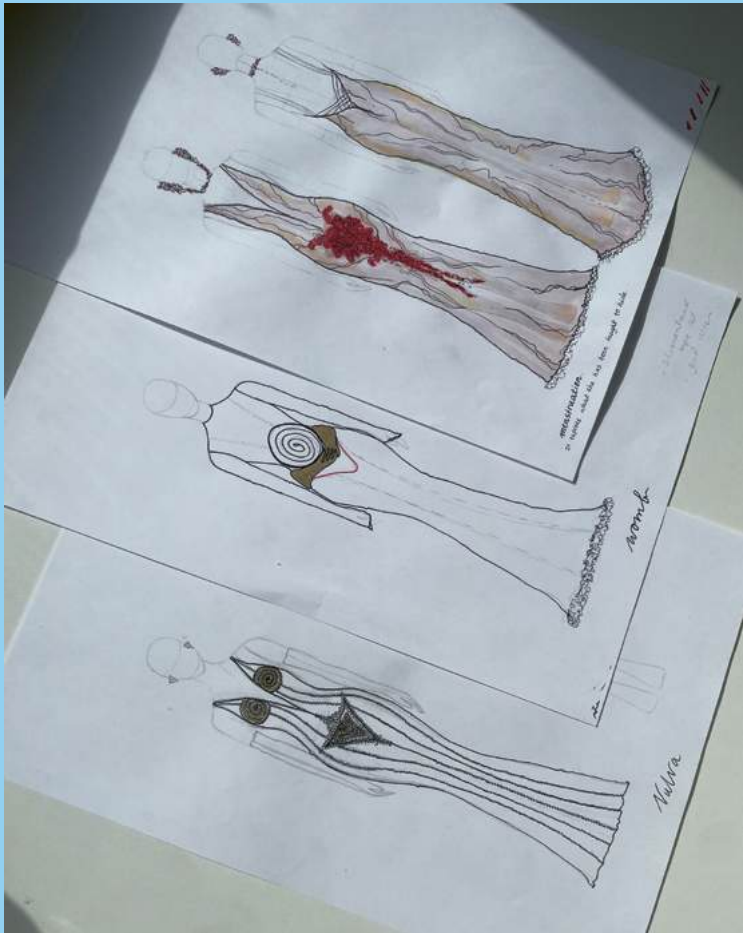
To further explore the deep-rooted interaction between tradition and modernity, Lee focuses on both Korean and Dutch papercutting for her *Cut-out* legacy project. During the research stage, she carried out a literature study, experimented with materials and interviewed experts. She also explored the intersecting field of paper cuttings and shamanism in collaboration with the Korean shaman Hong-ki Kim and Shim Ha-Yong, head of the Korean Folk Art Museum. Following three different experiments, she managed to blend Korean and Dutch papercutting techniques into a new cultural language. In the first experiment, she compares the work of Mennonite preacher Jan de Bleyker with the work of Hong-ki Kim. For the second experiment, she collaborated with Hong-ki Kim and mime artist Yu Jin Gyu, with whom she explores how best to depict *Seolwi* (Korean papercutting) in intangible ways. Finally, she interviewed members of the Dutch Association for Papercutting, which resulted in a reciprocal knowledge exchange and the conclusion that the preservation of this art cannot be the sole responsibility of individuals alone. 'Cutting craft should be approached not only as a beautiful traditional craft but also as an intangible cultural heritage that is alive and evolving through time. I believe it can provide valuable insights into the role of crafts in shaping cultural identity and community.'

'Cutting craft should be approached as an intangible cultural heritage that is evolving through time.'

This year has been transformative for Lee. 'It has deepened my understanding of the socio-cultural and historical layers of traditional crafts, allowing me to better appreciate their profound influence on contemporary design.' The opportunity to collaborate with experts and organisations has expanded her creative network and enriched her artistic vocabulary. 'On a personal level, this year confirmed my belief in the interconnectedness of art, craft and society. It reminded me that the beauty of craft lies not only in the final form but also in the process, labour and stories woven into each piece.'

'This year confirmed my belief in the interconnectedness of art, craft and society.'

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TESSA VAN DEN EEDEN

Self-taught fashion designer Tessa van den Eeden began her journey with her mother's sewing machine and will-power, and has now built a business. She developed her own voice, with work that shows what's happening on the inside. She stood out and was selected during the Scout Nights. 'I was overjoyed, but had pushed the bar high with my proposal.' Her proposal builds further on her multi-media project COCAINE. 'This project was based on the urge to escape through drugs, alcohol, addiction to work or standards of excellence.' This year, Van den Eeden wants to address other topics in a similar manner. 'I want to break down taboos and get people thinking.' She wants to visualise people's struggles, but was struggling as a maker. 'This year turned into a voyage of discovery into who I am as a maker. What is my voice? What space can I claim for myself?' She wanted to use the input of others for a new collection, but it did not get off the ground. 'It's not the obstacles experienced by others, but what I personally see and feel that drives my desire and ability to design.'

Now, Van den Eeden puts her autonomy squarely in the middle. She observes sensitivities in society and processes these in her designs. Often, these are themes that affect her personally as well, such as femininity. 'I see many people in my client circle: models, brides-to-be, mothers, performers and drag queens. They all have a different perspective on femininity. Some view it as a role to fully embrace, while others seek to balance revealing and concealing. They want to cover up what they don't like about their body. For many women, a fitting session can be quite confronting. You can see how they feel about themselves and their body, which is interesting. They hope that different clothing can dispel their discontent.' But the last thing Van den Eeden wants to do is to conceal femininity. 'I like to focus on the small details of the female body, that's why I took a course in lingerie this year.'

For Van den Eeden, femininity is something to literally highlight in the foreground. Drawings of the 'menstruation dress', 'vulva dress' and 'womb dress' each show dresses that are feminine in terms of form as well as applications. How someone views the dresses depends on their reference framework. 'It is feminine, it stands out, it's in your face. I want to confront people with their discomfort.'

'I want to confront people with their discomfort'

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'I like to focus on the small details of the female body'



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'To what extent can we use today's technology to reconstruct memories?'

'To what extent can we use today's technology to reconstruct someone's memories?' wonders graphic designer Tofe Al-Obaidi. Memories are a central part of his work. He was fourteen years old when he had to leave his homeland of Iraq, and he has been living in the Netherlands for as many years now. In his graduation project *Removing dust covers* he explored how he could return to the place of his youth. The 'dust covers' refer to the custom to cover furniture with sheets when you leave your home for an extended period of time. The Al-Obaidi family did this before fleeing Iraq in the hope that they would return.

He reconstructed their home and the interior digitally in 3D, based on the very few photographs that he still has from his childhood home, his personal memories and information from sources such as Google Maps. In due course, he transformed that digital world into a physical one by recreating his former bedroom and projecting images onto the furniture. A narrator takes you back to the traumatic moment when Al-Obaidi had to tell his mother about the tragic fate of his brother.

Although the realisation of this project was extremely confrontational for Al-Obaidi, it also helped him to process his experiences. To expand his project further, he will portray somebody else's memories for the first time: a co-student from the academy who is also unable to return to his childhood home for personal reasons. Ultimately, Al-Obaidi hopes to develop a method and system that will allow others to give shape to their personal memories. 'I have noticed that it is much easier to do this for other people, because you don't have the same close emotional attachment.'

This year, Al-Obaidi worked on technical improvements to make the 3D textures and experience even more realistic. He also explored ways to add more sensory perceptions such as smell to make the memories more tangible. He has also developed a keen interest in new types of archiving, such as the 3D scanning of objects, and he wants to replace the mdf-furniture in the installation with a more sustainable modular system. The talent development grant allows him to experiment with materials in this way and provides the stability to try out new things. Another unexpected advantage has been the collaboration with other programme participants: 'It makes it easier to connect with others.'

'I can now connect with other people'

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TYCHO



Photo by Lin Woldendorp

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Actually, Tycho did not want to have anything to do with art. With a father who was a visual artist and a mother who was an actress, as a child he developed an aversion against traditional art forms. But when he was thirteen, he developed an interest in graffiti and was especially drawn to the anonymity and excitement it offered. Some ten years later, and after completing his graphic design course, he started making critical murals about urban change on buildings ready for demolition and putting alternative traffic signs on building sites. The Amsterdam resident started to turn these kinds of interventions in public areas into his work, addressing serious issues such as the housing shortage and gentrification. And so he became a kind of artist after all.

With his social critique and typical Amsterdam sense of humour, he exposes the inequalities in the city. His criticism arises mainly from the love he feels for his place of birth. 'The housing shortage does not apply to every demographic. Anyone with enough money can buy a house but people on lower incomes cannot. This is what I want to convey, and public space is the best place to do this.' During the development year, Tycho explored new techniques and materials and started collaborations with various artists from a variety of disciplines, including photographers, tattoo artists and ceramists. 'We all live in the same city and are part of the community. We can see how Amsterdam is changing, positively as well as negatively.'

In the Vrij Paleis art centre, he organised the flash exhibition *Kontempererrie kunst* using his own installations and the installations of others that highlight important urban themes. 'I was interested in finding out if I could capture the same sense of rebellion while displaying the work in an indoor setting. It certainly left me eager for more. By experimenting in this way - which you can only do if you have the necessary financial resources - I also discovered what I cannot do.'

He made a series about anonymous identity with photographer Lin Woldendorp. 'We live in a very visible world. It has become increasingly difficult to remain anonymous these days. And what does privacy still mean in this day and age? Woldendorp photographed a group of men with the same haircut. I am one of these men. We are shown in different poses and positions but you can only see the back of our heads. The interesting thing is: this is how we become anonymous again.'

'What does privacy still mean in this day and age?'

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'Stillness, what does that actually mean?'

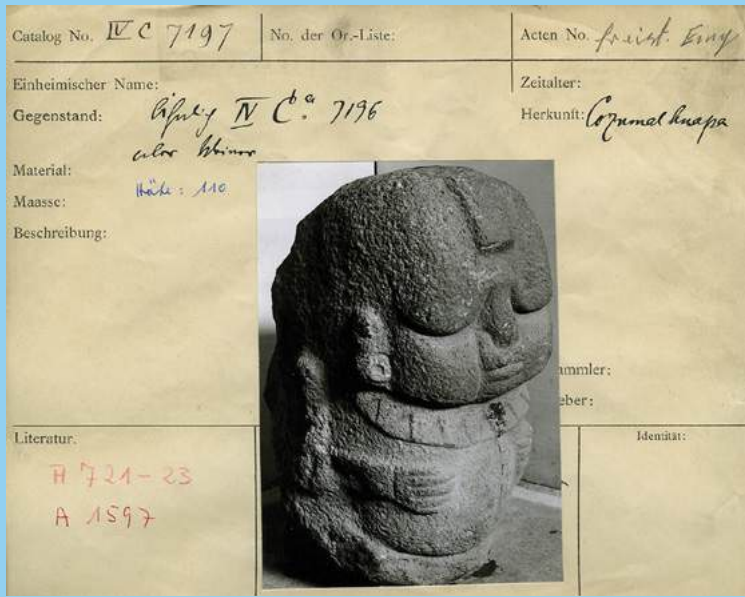
The central theme for Zobayda was stillness. 'What does it actually mean? How do I see and experience it in my own life, and what does it mean to others? There are so many forms of stillness, and this is what I wanted to focus on. I felt inspired by writers, artists, thinkers and friends who all grapple with stillness in their own way. The big question is: how can we all find stillness, given the pace at which today's world is charging ahead? I wanted to share my vision and that of others by means of research, interviews and visual arts. Many of the outcomes and results are long-term projects that haven't yet been shared or displayed in public. At the same time, I worked on various projects in the past year using photography and film. In the coming period I wish to work with sound, and to take a more introspective look at my practice, and to build up my archive and website.'

The entire process has been of inestimable value for the audio-visual maker. 'I have learned which working method suits me best. For example, I know now how liberating it is to be fully autonomous with regard to my hours, my interests, the formats and collaborations. Besides learning about my own practice, I have also been able to further explore my network and my own role therein. The role I want to fulfil as storyteller and visual artist, and how I can be there for people through my art. I have collaborated with all sorts of makers: writers, researchers, photographers, videographers, poets and more. I was able to put myself in the position of a student and in that way to learn as much as possible from the people I admire. This way, the grant has enabled me to learn, to grow, to create and to collaborate in ways that I used to dream of. My next step is to develop a documentary, which I started on earlier this year.'

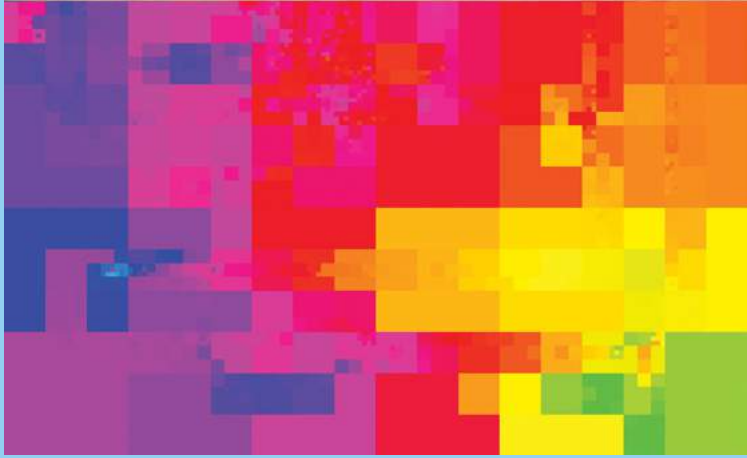
ZOBAYDA

'I was able to grow and collaborate in ways that I used to dream of'

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A spectrogram generated by a custom-made magnetometer, Zuzanna Zgierska



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Barrigón, Late Preclassic Maya, 500 BCE – 300 BCE. Berlin State Museums, The Ethnological Museum of Berlin / Ines Seibt CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

ZUZANNA ZGIERSKA

As an artistic researcher and documentary filmmaker working with technology, Zuzanna Zgierska challenges the Western ocular-centric knowledge paradigm that ranks vision over other senses. She hacks scientific tools and embeds them in her camera rig as prosthetic extensions. These pieces of technology sense information archived in the landscape that is invisible to the human eye. By doing so, she critiques the visual tools of colonists and settlers who charted terrains with texts and images, while acknowledging the wisdom of vanquished cultures that often gain fascinating insights beyond the directly perceivable. 'By changing how we register the world, we can shift power structures and thus social reality,' says Zgierska. 'I am looking for a way to connect different forms of knowledge and to make them accessible.'

Since 2020, she has collaborated with nomadic communities in Inughuit Nunaat (Northern Greenland) and with paleomagnetic physicists in Europe on a series Out of focus (co-directed by Louis Braddock Clarke). In this work, remagnetising iron meteorites (the (hard drives from space) became a strategy to recover geological trophies and decolonise landscape discourses.

Her current project draws on the 2019 scientific discovery that Barrigones, sculptures from the ancient Monte Alto culture in present-day Guatemala, show magnetic anomalies around the belly-button area. These stone giants were deliberately formed around a magnetic field, suggesting that the Mesoamerican sculptors knew about magnetism long before the Greeks described it in the eighth century BCE. The discovery changes our view of the Western world as being historically more advanced. Zgierska repeats the scientists' measurements in Guatemala with a self-developed magnetometer. She is mapping anomalies in real-time to share and celebrate this knowledge – which would otherwise remain hidden behind a scientific journal's pay-wall – with the local community. 'There is so much we can learn from non-Western cultures, and by calibrating registration tools, I can tap into different ways of understanding and in that way facilitate knowledge exchange.' Her work pays tribute to the knowledge of the ancient Monte Alto people while speculating on magnetism as a way of storing information.

'By changing how we register the world, we can change power structures'

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COLOPHON

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TEXT

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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 2024 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.