

Jury report: Threshold Award (Drempelprijs) for Commercial Practices

On Thursday, July 11, 2019, during the opening day of the Willem de Kooning Academy's annual graduation show, the jury had the privilege of experiencing up close the eleven outstanding projects nominated this year for Commercial Practices. This new generation of designers guided us through their recent projects and plans, which clearly has been realised with a great deal of passion as well as pleasure. The jury listened, looked, read, felt, experienced, questioned, discussed, and eventually arrived at a decision.

The jury carefully considered all projects in terms of their innovativeness as well as their value in representing the profile of Commercial Practices at the Willem de Kooning Academy. The jury also discussed all projects with regard to their potential and future perspectives, concrete steps taken in this direction, and future professional ambitions. Naturally, the jury also took into account the quality and coherence of the research, the quality of implementation, and the visual design.

The jury was also pleasantly surprised by the high quality level, which showed an upward trend compared to last year. The profiling of Commercial Practices has thus continued to improve. The jury was impressed by the realistic expectations of students with regard to their professional identity, what they stand for, and where they want to go next. However, the jury would have liked to see a wider variety of innovative business models. We also noted the absence this year of any truly innovative perspectives, unexpected outcomes or radical shifts in outlook. The positioning of one of the projects within Commercial Practices also seemed questionable.

The jury noted a high number of well-crafted plans and professionally realised publicity campaigns. First, in alphabetical order:

Andri Bastiaanse's appealing perspective on further applications of animal intelligence was consistently linked to his own immediate plans for developing practical knowledge relevant to his design.

Esmee van Beekhuizen is concerned about people's sense of safety in the streets. Further building upon her own extensive research, she designed a series of new police surveillance cabins, which convincingly demonstrated her ability to come up with solutions within complex regulatory specifications and limitations.

Maureen van der Lugt admirably aspires to make opera accessible to broader audiences, particularly young people. The jury was impressed by the distinctive character of the illustrations she made for her Instagram project.

Julia Luteijn's project *Kilo-Girls* identifies an acutely relevant problem, and the jury applauds her ambition to address this issue within its relevant context, the world of ICT.

The jury was impressed by **Rosalie van Pinxteren's** approach to fashion. Her project *Adobe Fashion*, which experimentally investigates the influence of the internet on the world of fashion, is impressively contemporary, and she is able to discuss it from a variety of relevant perspectives.

Maxime van Strijland developed a project to help her kick her own smartphone addiction, a recognisable and urgent topic. Her visually striking approach to colour and graphic composition seductively invite the user to follow her example.

Ricardo Dutkoviak is concerned about loneliness among elderly people. In his project *#dederdehelftmetopa* ('the third half with Grandpa') he demonstrates an ability to benevolently confront viewers with a real and urgent problem. It's a powerful concept, well-filmed and with a strong voice

casting, and also a fine example of the possibilities of combining a fine-art oriented major in photography with a graduation profile of Commercial Practices.

Mandy Liebrechts developed a number of products including a fragrance clock for people with dementia. She conducted a meticulous in-depth research and developed a credible and feasible plan. The jury believes she is now ready to find a co-financier for developing the next phase.

The jury deliberated at length in compiling the shortlist. All three designers convincingly demonstrated their use of craft within the context of Commercial Practices, each from a different perspective. The jury wishes to emphasise this variety of perspectives – ranging from the pure joy of making, to the circular economy, to the intensely personal sphere – as an important defining characteristic of Commercial Practices.

Hannah Gilhooley's work *The Great Eventually* addresses the age-old theme of motherhood. Hannah explicitly chose to explore this theme, not from the (usually male) perspective of art history, but rather based on her own questions and doubts, as well as on contemporary literature by women, visual art, and visual language. Through a deliberate application of relevant sources, Hannah manages to increase awareness of a seemingly familiar topic. The jury was impressed by her open and vulnerable approach to portraying her chosen topic. Her work generated a lively discussion among jury members, which is something we deeply appreciate within the context of the academy. Her work has a real emotional impact upon viewers.

Fleur Peters combines a fascination for glass and colour with a concern for the uncertain future of the craft of glassmaking, leading to a series of experiments for new glassmaking techniques. These beautiful experiments in turn led her to making a design for a public space. Fleur managed to infect the jury with her enthusiasm, her pleasure in making, and the undeniable aesthetic appeal of her work. She was able to convincingly link her major to the Commercial Practices profile by establishing professional connections with relevant experts in the field of education, in municipal government, and among suppliers of materials, all in the service of achieving her stated goals.

In the fashion industry, where the circular economy is still a relatively unfamiliar concept, **Chloe Severien** managed to quite naturally follow her own vision, which led her to develop a technique for knitting with threads made from recycled plastic bottles. She designed a colourful fashion collection with a contemporary visual identity, while intelligently addressing the technical issues and requirements of a circular design. Each garment can be fully recycled, since the threads are strong enough to be unravelled and reused multiple times. Her carefully designed presentation showcased a fully-fledged project. She involved a number of relevant parties in her project; carefully designed a number of garments; worked out the relevant financial projections; researched the necessary technical aspects; and clearly described her next concrete steps. The jury was convinced of Chloe's ability to further develop this project.

After carefully considering all of these exceptional and important projects, and deliberating intensively, the jury unanimously decided that the project that was the most fully developed, and that best addressed all formulated criteria, should be the winner of the 2019 Threshold Award for Commercial Practices. **Chloe Severien** shows an admirable ambition that truly deserves to be further developed, as well as a clear and concrete vision for the near future, and is thus fully deserving of the Threshold Award for Commercial Practices. **Chloe**, congratulations!

Finally, we would like to congratulate once more all nominees, and to wish them the very best with their further projects.

On behalf of the jury:

- Marina Toeters (Fashion Innovation expert at By-wire.net)
- Janjoost Jullens (founder at Wolfpack)
- Rachid Naas (Creative and Executive Director at RCHD)
- Karin Hillen (WdKA, nonvoting secretary)

Rotterdam, July 11, 2019