

2021 Drepelprijs (Threshold Award) for Autonomous Practices

Jury

Simone da Silva: director of gallery and centre for culture heritage DIG IT UP, and an expert in the field of film and journalism

Alireza Abbasy: curator, writer; co-founder and editor of Sarmad Platform

Angelica Falkeling: visual artist, seamstress, costume designer; runs Emotional Channel webshop, and is a co-founder of the queer art and community space Tender Center Rotterdam

Skye Maule-O'Brien: Practices Leader, Interdisciplinary Pedagogy & Didactics. Internal WDKA non-voting secretary, responsible for the jury report

Nominated projects

This year's accomplished and engaged jury members discussed and assessed thirteen nominated graduating or recently graduated students aligned with the Autonomous Practices. This year's nominees exhibited a diverse range of research, creation, exploration, experimentation, and innovation through their individual art and design practices.

The selected projects displayed a rich array of media, methods, and issues covered in Critical Studies, Hacking, Digital Craft, and Public & Private courses within the Autonomous Practices curriculum. And the students showed the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary potential available to them in their use of film, illustration, printing and publication, performance, painting, installation, product design, virtual reality, coding, fashion design, community education initiatives, graphic design, and sound. The jury was impressed at the rigorous research and the level of engagement with difficult subjects the students traversed in shaping their projects. This included issues of family and belonging, ecofeminism, dialogues between art and science, hate speech and propaganda, mental health and social media use, embodied ways of learning and knowing, storytelling and how narratives of migration are remembered or forgotten, collaborative making, and collective uses of public spaces.

The complete list of nominees are as follows:

Advertising & Beyond: Lode Dijkers

Animation: Jacob Eriksson en Lina Maldeikytė (duo)

Fashion Design: Welmoed Bosch

Fashion Design: Maja Simišić

Fine Art: Adara Godschalk (Honours Programme)

Fine Art & Design Teacher Training: Anke Diederer

Graphic Design: Gabija Bubnytė (Honours Programme)

Illustration: Katta Rasche (Honours Programme)

Transformation Design: Minsun Kim

Photography: Milah van Zuilen (Honours Programme)

Photography: Julia Gat (Honours Programme)

Product Design: Joni Veizaj
Spatial Design: Lieke van der Meer

Each of the artists met with the jury members to present their work and answer questions. Afterward the jury embarked on the difficult task of shortlisting the candidates and choosing a winner of the Dremelprijs within the set out criteria. The abundant variation, and the outstanding quality and aesthetics of the works nominated made this task extremely challenging. The jury thanks each of the nominees for sharing their research and practices with them in this vulnerable process. They are inspired by the talent and dedication each emerging artist has showed and looks forward to seeing their practices develop as they complete their program at WdKA.

Criteria

Besides the given criteria that were used in the process of selecting the nominated projects (quality level, theoretical context, innovation, problem statement, connection to the WdKA's goals, career and development opportunities), the jury also focused on the process of translation from concept, to problem statement, to research and then creation. Other areas of concentration were on ethical considerations, collective impact, and what was communicated aesthetically in the presentation of the works

Shortlist

The jury's in-depth engagement with the works and following generous and critical conversation on the criteria and output resulted in a short list of five student artists. From those five the jury then narrowed the selection further to three contenders for the award. The jury wants to make an honourable mention to the two students who were removed to form the final shortlist.

Welmoed Bosch (Fashion Design)

Dressing the Body

Bosch's project worked at changing the perception of functionality of clothes on the body. The artist showed a strong understanding of tailoring and history, with a clear problem statement that captured the attention of the jury. The jury was struck by the paradoxical problem discussed by the project that challenged traditional ways of pattern making that erase the body beneath the fabric. However they also read the new form of pattern making to offer new challenges of time, intimacy, touch, and vulnerability that could be difficult to navigate.

Lieke van der Meer (Spatial Design)

Zebra Machine

Two members of the jury were strongly moved by van der Meer's research and action of reclaiming urban and public space through this innovative, impactful, well executed project. The sensitivity towards the needs assessment of the community brought attention to a citizen issue and of the use of the street was particularly impressive. The jury is hopeful that the hacking potential and meaningful intervention can be taken further and used in changing how streets are used by pedestrians and cyclists.

The winner of the Dremelprijs was decided between the following 3 students and their outstanding projects!

Minsun Kim (Transformation Design):

The Faraway Nearby

Kim welcomed the jury with an incredibly moving, strong theoretical grounding and well researched video essay that explores issue of family, movement, restraint, belonging and connection across time and space. Beginning from a deeply personal moment Kim shows plainly how private moments and issues are always imbedded within the public and socio-political realm. The multigenerational narratives that link Kim to her Korean heritage were centred in the questioning of belonging and the conditions of life in a western context. This and the push and pull between notions of hope and optimism captured the attention and imagination of the jury through relatable and personal reflection. The jury felt that the presentation of the work could be explored in ways that better represent the layered and complex theory and research Kim is confronting.

Joni Veizaj (Product Design):

Dat Kan Mijn Kleine Nichtje Ook (My Little Niece Can Do That Too)

The jury was engaged and quickly invested in the presentation Veizaj's beautifully executed project. The playful nature and visibility of the process of tinkering as a method of research and creation captured the jury's attention. Veizaj begins from the concept of the child as creator and appropriates a demeaning statement meant to devalue creative processes as a way to challenge notions of production and ideas circulating high art while offering a playful critique. The jury appreciated the aesthetic qualities, exploration of materials. and the ways mistakes and creative troubleshooting are made visible in the prototypes. The furniture displays a growth and maturity of a strong design and product. The jury was won over by joyful themes of drawing, tinkering, and hacking and the aesthetic qualities and potential of the artist's future. However, the link between the product and the Autonomous Practices' commitment to the individual artist's impact within the collective and self-organizing beyond the institution was less apparent in the presentation.

Winner

Gabija Bubnyte (Graphic Design & Honours Programme)

Conversations about Counter Narratives

The jury has chosen Bubnyte's experimental, inspiring, and beautifully presented project as the winner of the Drempelprijs. The layered project combines robust research, exploratory methods, risk taking, engagement with public demonstrations and discourses, the development of educational programming, collective community planning, implementation through workshops, as well as public documentation through an online database to aid in further dissemination of the project. Scoring high in all categories of the criteria, the offered teaching kit is well presented and organized making it welcoming to engage with. The project begins from a clear issue and the innovation lies in the practicality of the work to bring forward counter-narrative to combat homophobic speech and discourse.

As a powerful and timely critical pedagogical tool, Bubnyte explores experimental methodologies to develop different forms of thinking of and through homophobic speech. She proposes to go back to the drawing board of what methodologies to use when encountering homophobia and presents a pedagogical tools to address the ways hate speech and homophobia circulate and are used in societies.

Conclusively the project critically engages with the notion of propaganda as its central thematic. The artist shows a deep engagement with political and social sciences, merging her Autonomous Practice commitments as a graphic design student in the dual degree programme of International Relations and Politics, minor RASL: reimagining tomorrow through arts & sciences. The presented project shows the potential of a transdisciplinary autonomous practice of interdisciplinary research and creation.

While the project begins from a Lithuanian context, it is designed in such a careful manner that it can be picked up and used in various spaces. The fact that it offers a tool kit for others interested in sparking similar conversations, allowed the jury to envision the possibilities of such workshops being hosted in multiple contexts and moments. Bubnyte's winning project shows strength in rigorous research and its potential to continue the counter-narratives of challenging homophobic speech, reclaim language and action in the everyday, as well as outside of institutions and inside community led locations.