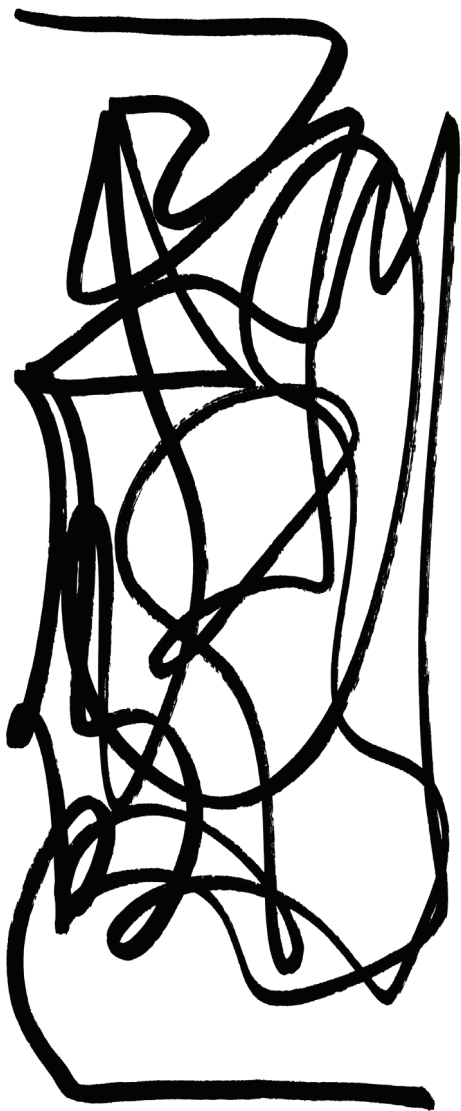


RIETVELD



REVIEW(ED)

Visual Art

Rietveld Review(ed) is a new addition to the Graduation Show's peripheral programming. An independent, external committee was asked to reflect on the Graduation Show as a whole and to signal current tendencies and themes within the exhibition. The committee was also asked to select a number of projects by graduating students that support these observations. The reflections and observations are processed by the Rietveld Academie into this reflection report. This year's visual art committee consisted of Roel Arkesteijn, Théo Demans, Imara Limon, Tirzo Martha and Marina Otero Verzier.

The committee sees that this generation is facing a change of paradigm, coming out of a pandemic and after a year in which crucial socio-political changes, discussions and movements have been taking place. Being in lockdown inevitably results in introspection. At the same time, artists and designers are often expected to respond to all that is happening outside. The question of how to embrace these challenges and intertwine them with one's own artistic language and personal stories is timeless, but even more relevant this year. The committee is aware of the weight that comes with this and appreciates the ways in which the graduates are finding their voices, slowly building up what was broken down, and adding to it as they go. Their works radiate reflection and curiosity, rather than pessimism or panic. It might be a signal of something in becoming: a new ground for new narratives.

A recurrent motif in the exhibition of this year is the domestic domain — intimacy and family play a large role. A lot of works seem to originate from extremely personal stories and perspectives, and have a great impact on an emotional level. While the complete human figure seems almost absent, and is mainly there in dismembered fragments, the emotional, messy and vulnerable aspects of having a human *mind* are present everywhere. The audience is not

bombarded with bold statements: the way the graduates approach the bigger themes of our time is more subtle, personal and intimate. As a viewer, one is smartly being tempted to immerse oneself in the works and in the personal world of the students. It is a world that is directed inwards, one that is enticing and uncomfortable at the same time, a world in which matriarchal relationships take the stage. By looking at the past, many graduates find a way to calmly digest and respond to the current moment.

This looking back and inwards is also visible in the many ways identities are confronted by the reinvention of traditional techniques and materials. Cold hard artificiality is rejected and the committee sees more use of organic and nostalgic elements than before. Categories, assumptions and relations have been dismantled, making place for a certain blurriness and fluidity. This year's graduates seem to have a longing to return to the earth, is how one of the committee members worded it.

That is clear to see in the work of
EVA VAN DER ZAND —
THE LARGE GLASS.

Eva made a presentation that stands out because of its extensive research, extending her roots in many directions: science, gender, the language of botany, all beautifully interwoven with her personal story. She is owning her topic, and her obsession with it is enchanting.

NOVI ERYTRYASILANI —
DOGTIME —
EXPANDED PAINTING —

excited the committee with her series of large charcoal drawings, depicting childlike dream figures. They seemed to show traces of an earlier self, of something that has been and that has passed, something painful. In all its simplicity, a strong urgency was felt by the committee, who found the work deeply moving.

ANNA PLOWDEN
— FINE ARTS —

has a unique, very personal language which comes to full force in her video work. It seems to deal with uncomfortable domestic situations, repressed sexuality and the art of storytelling itself. Or does it? The committee was delightedly confused by the absurd acting and warped dialogue. It doesn't matter at which point you enter her inflatable space — you get hooked anyway. It made the committee very curious to see what Anna will do in the future.

The committee was captivated by
the hair-raising performance of
MICA PAN —
FINE ARTS.

With impressively simple gestures, she makes a space her own and creates a suggestive and exciting setting for her intimate, concentrated performance. It is clear Mica is fully able to grab the attention of her audience, and it made the committee crave for more.

One of the few presentations in this year's show in which the human figure as a whole is very much present and celebrated is the work of
ROXANE MBANGA —
FASHION.

The committee was fascinated by her exploration of being comfortable in relation to the public space. This is an outspoken, straightforward statement indeed, and a very powerful one. The committee furthermore compliments Roxane on the use of the pavilion, which was very well thought out and seemed to mirror the multi-layered quality of her design.

The committee was struck by the amount of care in this year's Graduation Show, especially in the presentation of the Fine Arts department, with a very well-balanced exhibition throughout the whole floor, and the coherent and generous presentation of TXT. This is not true only in terms of the concept and execution of the

individual works, but also on a curatorial level. The students seem very aware of the relationship between their own work and its surroundings. It is clear to see that students understand each other's work, appreciate it and make use of ways to amplify each other. The committee finds the departments that give space to the collaborative have the strongest presentations. The togetherness and fellowship between the graduates is tangible in the exhibition as a whole, something that is greatly appreciated.

A work that stood out for the committee in the overall very well-curated exhibition of VAV – Moving Image was that of
SHIFRA OSORIO WHEWELL
— VAV – MOVING IMAGE.

Her remarkable video collage is raw and in your face, and certainly won't look like anything you've ever seen before. The committee immediately fell for its weirdness and Shifra's smart critique of her daily surroundings. It inspired the committee to go outside and look at a distorted world through Shifra's very humorous lens.

Overall, the committee was highly impressed by the quality and the amount of care the students have put into the conception of their theses. It was clear that a lot of energy was invested in research, but the richness and depth in which this resulted was not always directly visible in the presentations, as not all works spoke that clearly for themselves. By viewing the theses, things often fell into place with regard to the visual work: it came to life with more information.

In this regard, the committee would like to compliment TXT. The committee was blown away by their coherent presentation, which offered a lot of context and was powerful in its simplicity. The works emitted a vibrant, sensitive energy and poetical elegance, all while being very on point and unpretentious.

MATHILD CLERC –
VERHOEVEN
— TXT —

intelligent exploration of the art of pickpocketing, for example, made a great impression on the committee with its simplicity and humour. Her questioning of a certain morality is captivating, her talent for storytelling is evident, and the committee looks forward to seeing what she will do next.

Thesis

This year's thesis committee members are Katja Mater and Sarah van Binsbergen. The committee is led by Jeroen Boomgaard.

This year the selected theses demonstrate a broad variety of ways to intertwine theory, writing and artistic practice. The 21 recommended theses by all departments show great skill in interlinking theory with each student's personal context and practice. While some theses investigate and develop a narrative through classical, essayistic writing, others appear to counter this style — and translate their research into poetry or a more fictional form. The committee is impressed with the fact that all the theses were able to relate personal research to current issues and matters of concern. Topics such as multiple and virtual realities, identities, fantasies and desires are explored while the writing remains inseparable from the student's own experience. For instance,

JUN ORTEGA'S
— FINE ARTS —

thesis *The Glistening Abyss* interweaves matters of gender politics, transness and transitioning, carefully examining its kinship with artificial intelligence. Their thesis' blend of fictive elements with a strong personal narrative reveals a powerful connection with their artistic practice.

As the theses range from dense to light, the committee is pleased about how each thesis provides enough *space* for the reader to dive into the minds and worlds of each student. A thesis where this is accomplished in a remarkably clever and witty manner is *French Shopping* by

MATHILD CLERC –
VERHOEVEN
— TXT.

Her way with words seduces you from the very first line, making you an accomplice in the act of shoplifting. Shoplifting is examined by Mathild not only as an action to protest against capitalism, but also as a response to textures, which can prove so alluring that we're simply not able to resist temptation. In its subversiveness, the research sheds light on our present-day issue with (social) moral dilemmas.

The committee also notes that this year, some of the theses tend to lean towards a more academic style. By closely monitoring and guarding the research question(s) during the process of collecting information, this style can be balanced and in turn, rewarding. An example of a thesis that demonstrates this in a sophisticated manner, is *Spin the Wheel, Seal Your Fate* by

KARLY GERHARTS
— FASHION.

In this research, existing feminist theories are considered and dissected carefully. Theories concerning witchcraft, sagas, and fairy tales are subsequently reconstructed in a new, personal narrative, bringing a compelling research to fruition. Karly manages to weave all the topics together through associations that emerge from inconspicuous and unexpected areas.

Lastly, the committee wants to acknowledge the amount of care and consideration that went into the design of each publication. It was clear that the thesis is not solely viewed as an exercise in writing, but also from the perspective of how tactile and visual elements can enhance a reading experience.

Times are blurry, but the committees feel times are changing — the start of new things emerging is visible and tangible in this year's show, and the committees have confidence in the future of this generation.

Luuk Heezen and Rik Lauwen will create video portraits of all selected projects. The selected visual art projects also get the opportunity to develop either a RietveldTV episode (aired on AT5) or an exhibition at Eight Cubic Meters, the academy's public gallery in the city centre of Amsterdam, and present their work to a new audience in a new context.

Biographies of the Committee Members

Committee visual art

ROEL ARKESTELJN is a writer and curator active for museums in The Netherlands and France. He is also teaching at the academy of Antwerp and the HISK in Gent.

THÉO DEMANS is a scenographer, designer and sculptor currently based in Brussels.

IMARA LIMON is a curator of modern and contemporary art at the Amsterdam Museum.

TIRZO MARTHA is a sculptor, performance artist and co-founder and director of Instituto Buena Bista, the center for contemporary art in Curaçao.

MARINA OTERO VERZIER is an architect, director of Research at Het Nieuwe Instituut and head of the Social Design MA at Design Academy Eindhoven.

Committee thesis

SARAH VAN BINSBERGEN is an art journalist and writer based in Amsterdam. She is a critic at newspaper De Volkskrant and has written for platforms such as Metropolis M, Boekman Cahier and Kunsten '92.

JEROEN BOOMGAARD is Professor at the Lectorate Art & Public Space (LAPS) at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie. With an expertise in art in public space, he is also a member of various committees, such as the Stadscuratorium Amsterdam and Stadscuratorium of Leiden (Lucas van Leydenfonds).

KATJA MATER is a visual artist and filmmaker. Alongside her artistic practice, she is an editor for Girls Like Us Magazine; an independent magazine turning the spotlight on an international expanding community of lesbians and queers within arts, culture and activism.

Colophon

Text visual art by Sarah Arnolds

Text thesis by Christie Bakker

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