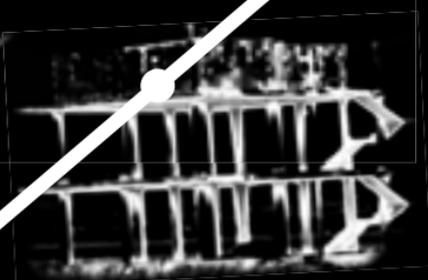


MY PRACTICE, MY POLITICS



Royal
Academy of Art
The Hague



MY PRACTICE POLITICS

17 – 22 April 2018

Ventura Future,
Viale Abruzzi 42, Milano

SALONE DEL MOBILE, MILANO

MY PRACTICE, MY POLITICS

Today's world needs creative thinkers who, through the power of their imagery, contribute towards the development of knowledge and innovation.

Our mission at the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague (KABK) is to educate students to become independent and self-aware artists and designers with investigative mindsets and unique visual and conceptual abilities. Our graduates are able to produce authentic and in-depth creative work that advances their chosen discipline and contributes to the wellbeing of society as a whole.

Founded in 1682, the KABK is the oldest academy in the Netherlands and one of the oldest in Europe. For centuries we have trained individuals who have made a name for themselves in the international art and design world. We embrace this important history while exploring the future of the professional field.

The KABK forms a community where wealth of knowledge is synonymous with passion. It offers a School for Young Talent, preparatory courses, seven bachelor and seven master programmes, a double degree programme and PhD trajectories in collaboration with Leiden University, and a partnership with the Royal Conservatoire.

Through our relationships with seasoned professionals and world-renowned artists and designers, as well as our collaborations with companies and cultural institutions, our students are able to build a solid base of knowledge through enriching, practice-oriented experiences. By participating in various international exhibitions and events, such as the Salone del Mobile Milano, we pride ourselves on highlighting our students' works to give them the best possible start in the professional field. The collaboration with curators Saskia van Stein and Agata Jaworska underlines our high ambition. I would like to thank all students, staff and alumni that have participated in this exhibition. A special thanks goes to the Stichting tot Steun, the Municipality of The Hague and Stroom Den Haag for their generous support.

I hope you will appreciate *My Practice, My Politics* as much as I do!

Marieke Schoenmakers
Director Royal Academy of Art
President University of the Arts The Hague

The personal is political. Whether explicit or implicit, there is an embedded political dimension to everything we do. *My Practice, My Politics* explores how art, too, is inherently political.

The exhibition aims to expand our ideas on political modes of expression. Through a wide array of artistic practices, the presentation conveys

manifestations, interfaces and exchanges between the individual and the societal. *My Practice, My Politics* portrays the way in which artists and designers capture their views on society through the subject matter they explore, the language and tools they employ, the aesthetics they manifest, and the communities they engage."

Saskia van Stein & Agata Jaworska

ONCE UPON OUR TIME

We began this journey acknowledging two parameters of the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague: it being the oldest art academy of the Netherlands; and it being located in the administrative and political capital of the Netherlands, a city that historically has been associated with peace and justice.

We formulated a brief for ourselves—*My Practice, My Politics*—which was to inform our conversations with

chive,” wrote Miguel Peres Dos Santos, one of the participating artists in *My Practice, My Politics*. An important strand that emerged during our search was the interrogation of history. Whether through challenging official accounts, writing their own, or by engaging with others, the artists and designers captured the notion that history, in its attempt to fixate reality, is in many ways a construction of reality. Some of the works in *My Practice, My Politics* demonstrate various ways they participate in the process

students and staff, and our way of looking as we went through the Academy’s archival material dating back to 2011. With it, we wanted to get to know how students and alumni relate to the world through their practice: how do they conceive and manifest the link between their world-views and their artistic work? We wanted to explore the breadth of that question, inquiring how artistic tools such as language, gesture, form, sound, and colour could uphold and convey a personal politics; and different modes of political expression.

“To enable the possibility of reimagining alternative futures, it is essential to adopt subversive strategies towards the ar-

of its de- and reconstruction. They subvert, intervene, and tell the stories as they experience them, capturing the truth that they find in their experience of the world. Part and parcel of this is the migration of stories—from Albania, Egypt, Suriname, former Yugoslavia, and an underground former NATO headquarters in the Netherlands—real stories that don’t always see the light of day, despite the urgency of their message.

In many of the works included in *My Practice, My Politics*, one can sense a sensitivity to power imbalance. Whether dealing with the shortcomings of modernism, the repercussions of climate change, or

the disappointments of a generation that was told it could do whatever it wanted to, the artists and designers respond to questions that they consider to be emblematic of this time.

They study language, acknowledging it as something that structures reality. They challenge constructs of gender, give space to non-binary ways of thinking, create settings where a queer utopia can unfold, develop tools and methods to challenge current modes of production, collect and reconstruct trash, protest global warming, and otherwise demonstrate ways to regain control over how the world around us is constructed.

The question that this journey now poses is: In what ways has our selection of works informed our understanding of the political, and its intersection with artistic practices? What became evident is a sense of just how committed the artists and designers are to the values entailed in the work that they make, and a sense of how important those values are as a basis for their artistic practice. What was reinforced is that everything we do—in everyday life, and in artistic practice—is political, whether we are conscious of it or not.

What asks for reflection, is what it means to bring an educational institution into what in essence is a commercial context for displaying the latest developments in the design industry. Our exhibition, created together with the Academy’s Interior Architecture and Furniture Design department, responds to this by employing the typology of the white cube. It is a gesture of quietness amongst the hustle and bustle of the furniture fair.

One of our intentions since the start of this project was to bring it back home. We are happy to announce that a second edition of *My Practice, My Politics* will take place at the art center Stroom Den Haag from May 19th until July 15th, 2018.

It has been a great pleasure and joy to get a glimpse into the minds and practices of all the participants, and into the Academy itself. We would like to express our gratitude for that.

Saskia van Stein and
Agata Jaworska



"MY GOAL AS A STORYTELLER IS TO VISUALISE PROCESSES OF POWER, ENABLING THEM TO BE QUESTIONED."

Tracing the invisible infrastructure of capital flows.

By the time you have read this sentence, a trading firm will have made approximately 10,000 trades on the stock market. Welcome to the bizarre world of algorithmic, automated trading known as high-frequency trading. Here, profits are made at speeds the human brain can't comprehend.

Where the money is made aims to bring this obscure economic power to light by tracing lines of algorithmic capital to the places where some of the greatest profits are made today. Guided by the geometric lines-of-sight between microwave transmitters and receivers, the work documents the mundane everyday landscapes of globalised financial infrastructures.



"I AM DRAWN TO THINGS THAT ARE SHROUDED IN MYSTERY. THE BIGGER THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF REACHING THE OBJECT OF INVESTIGATION, THE MORE FACT AND FICTION START TO MERGE."

Embracing the inaccuracies in representing a historic event and place.

For years, it was the best kept secret in the Netherlands: *The Mushroom Club*, a former NATO headquarters inside a mountain on the Dutch-Belgian border that was in use during the Cold War. This underground network of tunnels was stripped in 1992 and officially erased on paper.

All the elements in this installation serve as fictive fragments - building blocks - that allow the viewer to reconstruct a mental image of the headquarters. Questioning the essence of documentation, photographer Lisa van Casand is interested in the subjective act of (re)producing information. She takes enigmatic historical events or scientific ideas as starting points in her interest for "truth finding", property, and human rights.

"LANGUAGE, TECHNOLOGY AND MYTHOLOGY ARE ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL. THEY ARE THE TOOLS OF OUR RATIONALITY, WHICH WE USE TO MAKE MEANING OF OUR WORLD, OUR COSMOS, AND OURSELVES."

The construct of language extrapolated to its extreme.

In *Cosmologicus*, a celestial object has been given the ability to speak. With custom-made software the installation translates radio emissions from Jupiter into poetry. Using a word-number database generated in the work *Lexicon Liber Novus*, the invisible order of electron particles coming from the distant planet is made intelligible through language. Or so it seems.

The resulting semantic stream gives way to an infinite interpretation of the planet's emissions. In attempting to assemble the meaning from the generated poetry, the computer and the spectator become oracles of the mythological Jupiter.



"I FIND IT IMPORTANT TO QUESTION OUR IDEA OF HOME AT A TIME WHERE PROPERTY OWNERSHIP IS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE AND OUR BLIND TRUST IN TECHNOLOGY IS REDEFINING INTIMACY."

The state of unfinishedness turned into a basis for reclaiming the city.

Commodification has turned the house into a speculative asset. This project reimagines the phenomenon of houses left "permanently under construction" in Albania.

Inspired by the tendency of families to construct their own homes, Klodiana Millona aims to unveil the unique qualities that the permanent state of unfinishedness offers. In an effort to twist the shortcomings of modernity into a positive idea of civic empowerment, the work manifests an experimental methodology that questions the concept of the city and who owns it.

The resulting series of speculations pose the disturbing and at the same time exciting question: What if this was great? What if this is the house of the future?

"THROUGH MAPPING I COME TO UNDERSTAND HOW MY CONSCIOUS AND SUBCONSCIOUS REALITIES ARE CONSTRUCTED."

Maps convey the reality of their maker.

In 2014, while studying at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague, Fahmy Shahin received a letter from IND, the Dutch immigration and naturalisation office, in which he was asked to prove his being and whereabouts.



This started his quest to understand his reality and his identity. By drawing his own maps, Shahin works through complex notions of identity, migration and place, in order to construct an idea of the world that reflects his own experience. Mapping has become his means to reconcile the actual with the fictional, distance with proximity, and the present with the past.

"TO ENABLE THE POSSIBILITY OF REIMAGINING ALTERNATIVE FUTURES, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO ADOPT SUBVERSIVE STRATEGIES TOWARDS THE ARCHIVE."

Public archives attest to our shifting collective consciousness, revealing bias towards historical events.

That one is able to speak does not mean that one has a voice. In *Voices*, Miguel Peres dos Santos constructs a comparison between a censored archive and our collective consciousness. Just as we suppress that which we do not want to remember in our lives, public archives similarly reflect the selectivity of our collective memory.

While researching the archive of the Netherlands Institute of Sound and Vision, Peres dos Santos and Sharely Emanuelson found a significant amount of television footage related to the migration of people from the former Dutch colony, Suriname. Within this



footage, the essence of the Dutch relation to the alleged "other" can be discerned. Peres dos Santos seeks to find out if the perceived voiceless people really were silent, and if those who do not have a voice today are only mute to the ones who refuse to listen.

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"I AIM TO EXPOSE THE MECHANICS OF PERCEPTION AND TO CONSTRUCT EXPERIENCES THAT COMBINE THE REAL AND THE UNREAL."

A hyper-real landscape constructed through post-production techniques.

This continuous environment is composed of 3D scanned geological formations downloaded from a 3D model bank. The model bank has an excessive amount of rock formations uploaded by its members, which informed Jean-Baptiste Castel's choice to construct this landscape.



"CAPITAL ABSORBS ALL OF THE WORKER'S TIME, AS WELL HIS OR HER CREATIVE DESIRES AND EXISTENCE."

Post-production renders the assemblage of rocks - from different locations and different time periods - as a non-linear panorama of a non-existing place and time. The resulting image is fluent and hyper-realistic, exposing its technique through moments of imperfection.

Questioning the instrumentalisation of play as a form of production.

Work and leisure have become unified in one never-ending shift. In our online networked presence, every hour of play, every minute of entertainment, and every megabyte of shared data generates profit for social media platforms such as Facebook, Tumblr and Instagram.

Graphic designer Tereza Rullerova has termed the confounding of labour and play as playbour. Playbour is an activity of work that feels like play and leisure - attractive and pleasurable production. All of us have become players in this game, but who is the real winner?



"IT IS MY HOPE THAT MY INSTALLATIONS INSPIRE VISITORS TO COMBINE THE KNOWN AND THE UNKNOWN IN NEW WAYS—WHETHER THAT'S MATERIALS AND OBJECTS, OR KNOWLEDGE ITSELF."

Visceral installations constructed with found "waste" material.

Visual artist Gitte Svendsen creates abstract installations inspired by the colours of the city. Neon lights, billboards and shiny cars, plastic containers and building materials, are some of the "waste" materials that Svendsen collects, reconstructs and builds upon. Inviting the viewer to step into a three-dimensional painting, her aim is to create a sensory experience that overwhelms and inspires.



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"THROUGH MY WORK I AIM TO EXEMPLIFY THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCEPTING SOCIAL DIVERSITY, ENGAGING WITH INDIVIDUALS ON A PERSONAL LEVEL IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES."

A tactile gesture that connects and enables conversation about gender identity.



Diversity is a project questioning how we relate to other human beings in terms of gender identity. Using an unfired porcelain object, Zsofia Kollar engages individuals in a conversation, asking them to imprint the object as they answer questions on the topic of gender and sexuality.

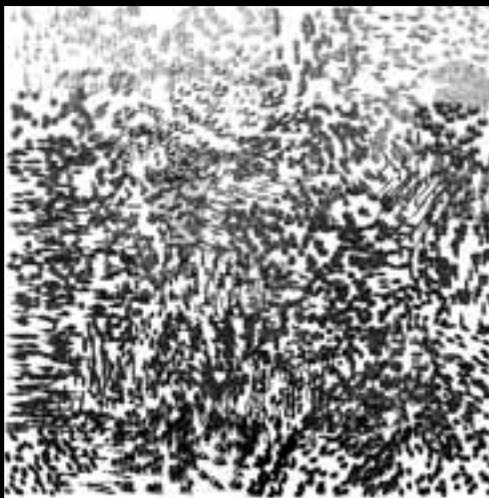
Last year Kollar's design proposal was selected as The Jos Brink Prize, which every year is awarded to an individual who has contributed to the acceptance of LGBTQ communities. For the first edition she has mapped over one hundred different coordinates in the Netherlands where she asked over one hundred people to treat a soft porcelain object as they would be another human being. During the Salone del Mobile, she will be working on a new series by engaging visitors to the exhibition.

"I HOPE THIS PROJECT PUTS SOCIETY'S CRAVE FOR TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT IN PERSPECTIVE, REMINDING US THAT INNOVATION DOESN'T EQUAL PROGRESS."

A catalogue of the internet of things questioning if the promise of connectivity supersedes functionality.

Choose anything: your fridge, your bed, your egg tray, your toilet seat. By 2018, versions of all these products have been connected to the internet.

Connected Ad Absurdum consists of an inventory of current technologies for the Internet of Things, along with a speculative catalogue of fictional computing devices. By bringing the speculative next to the actual, it becomes apparent that absurd quality of the speculative is not far off from what already exists. When does the addition of connectivity render an object useless instead of more useful?



"THIS PROJECT IS A VISUAL EXPLORATION OF THE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE SELF."

Visualising gender fluidity in material form.

Although the body is a point of departure for all of us, our perception of the body is shaped by our mind. Our perception of the body is in fact fluid; it changes over time with our changing perception of ourselves. In this work, designer Lieke Vernooij captures the notion of gender fluidity by melting wax and foam.



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"MY UTOPIAN WISH IS THAT WE COULD DEAL WITH EACH OTHER FREE FROM THE EXPECTATIONS WE HAVE CONSTRUCTED."

Envisioning a world where all sexual behaviour is possible.

While human ideas on gender and sexuality are fixated through labelling and categorisation, the animal kingdom shows another possibility. Animals seem not to construct norms and standards about how one is supposed to behave.

Nienke Sikkema was inspired by sea creatures as they have developed the most free and extravagant ways to live together and procreate. She takes this as a starting point for developing glass forms that represent to her a freedom of thought and being.



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"COEXISTENCE, COLLABORATION, COMPASSION AND COLOUR ARE CENTRAL VALUES IN MY PRACTICE."

Creating a scene in which queer utopias can unfold.

The world is a heteronormative place. With hand tufted carpets, large knitted fabrics, banners, and metal scaffolding, Yamuna Forzani constructs scenes in which queer utopias can unfold.

Her aim is to create a safe space where people can be their authentic self, no matter their gender, race, or background. As a queer woman Forzani is an active member of the LGBTQ+ community, where the power of coexistence, collaboration, compassion, and colour are central values.



YAMUNA FORZANI
Textile and Fashion, 2016

"AS A FASHION DESIGNER, I WANT TO HELP HUMANITY PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE AND THE CONDITIONS THAT GLOBAL WARMING WILL BRING. IT IS INEVITABLE."

Protective garments made to protest a dystopian future.

These garments are designed to protect our bodies and minds from environmental catastrophes and the loss of the North Pole. Protective materials and activist slogans convey the message Sarah Lauwaert wants to share.

The aim of this project is to use fashion design as a political tool. Lauwaert visualises scenarios in which we are prepared for any catastrophe caused by global warming. By creating an image of a dystopian future, she hopes to inspire a positive change.



"THE APPEAL TO LOCAL MANUFACTURING IS MEANINGLESS WITHOUT NEW ALTERNATIVES TO THE PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES THAT HAVE BEEN MOVED ABROAD."



Digital manufacturing and circular design enable local production.

Industrial designer Bas Froon combines traditional manufacturing processes with technological innovations. He aims to make local production of labour-intensive 'soft' products possible again.

Froon's micromoulding machine can alter the property of biocomposite materials from soft to hard. It can make various components - such as buckles and joints - out of one material, which eliminates labour-intensive assembly work. As a consequence, products are made from a single material, which facilitates material reuse at the end of its life cycle.

BAS FROON
Industrial Design, 2017

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Press & PR

Maria Dzodan

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A second edition of *My Practice
My Politics* will take place at
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stroom.nl

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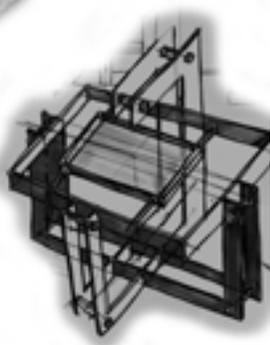




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אנחנו מודים
לכל מי שנתרם ל"מבצע המעורבות"



**Since 1682, the city of
The Hague and the
Royal Academy of Art
have hosted many
artists and designers.
Creative professionals:
you are more than
welcome in The Hague!**

