

## JURY REPORT BEST OF GRADUATES 2018

For the 11th edition of the Best of Graduates exhibition, Radek Vana and the Galerie Ron Mandos team have strived again to scout the most exceptional talent from the Dutch art academies. The exhibition was another opportunity for art professionals and art lovers to explore the most talented artists among the recent graduates.

In the past decade, the triad of the HKU University of the Arts Utrecht, the Gerrit Rietveld Academy Amsterdam and the Royal Academy of the Arts The Hague, seemed infeasible. However, every year some of the academies outside this traditional reach similar heights. Last year, we mentioned the Rotterdam Willem de Kooning Academy, where artists are challenged to confront their own story with that of the outside world. A good and lively atmosphere has continued to prevail over the past few years at the presentation of ArteZ in Arnhem.

This year we should also give mention to the radical presentation of the Fine Arts Department at St. Joost, Breda. However, this year the academy that deserved to accompany the “big 3” is AKI Academy of Art & Design, Enschede. Compared to last year, when the presentation at the academies were slightly safer, we have seen quite a few experimental and large scale installations. The most visible trend was the presence of performances or performative elements in the artworks.

Current societal and global political themes were not as present as expected considering current heated debates. On the one hand, we have seen many works which represent a sincere reflection on identity, individual lives and experiences. On the other hand, pressing issues relating to sexuality, gender and feminism were less apparent instead of increasingly receiving attention.

Before we move on to the announcement of the Ron Mandos Young Blood Award and the Public’s Prize, we would like to bring attention to The Ron Mandos Photo Talent Award. This prize has been created for the express purpose of bringing the winner’s work to the 2019 Unseen Amsterdam fair. In this way the winner is offered a platform to an international audience.

The winner of The Ron Mandos Photo Talent Award 2018 makes carefully prepared shots that confuse us and make our gaze curious at the same time. What seems to be a collage of at least two images is a reversed (or rear) view blending the traditional genre

of landscape photography with current political issues.  
The winner is Marwan Bassiouni!

Each year, the visitors of Best of Graduates receive the opportunity to vote for their favourite artist. In the past 5 weeks, approximately 2.000 people filled out the form at the gallery. It was a close call, but the winner of the Ron Mandos Public's Prize is Mirjam Vreeswijk!

## RON MANDOS YOUNG BLOOD AWARD 2018

We greatly appreciate all the works of the 19 artists on display that we have been able to show in the Best of Graduates. We would like to give special mention to:

- Jacco Jansen who handles carefully the ungraspable elements of light and time in his work. Jansen joyfully mixes different techniques and brings back the experimental spirit of the avant-garde photographers.
- Jonathan Hielkema who reflects on his being as an artist and a graduate in order to question the role and the potential of art in the complex world we live in. He does so using wit and humour as a strategy to deal with existential issues.
- Lena Paßlick who strikes us with her perfect eye for situation and composition. Paßlick has shown to be able to combine these in carefully crafted photographs, which almost invite us to touch them.
- Mirjam Vreeswijk who provides us an unpretentious yet highly controlled manner of painting, creating paper collages which she melts into a colorful flow that generates a sense of surrealism. The sheer joy of painting serves as her focus and means of playing with distorted imagery and composition.
- Quentley Barbara who is a true sculptor with an ability to grasp an expression or a pose in a genuine way. His figures sculpted with inexpensive materials have a strong presence and are touching at the same time. Barbara has proven to be able to combine street art mentality with personal questions and exceptional traditional sculpting skills

The winner of the Ron Mandos Young Blood award 2018 is Quentley Barbara!