

**FINISSAGE SPEECH SUZANNE SWARTS
BEST OF GRADUATES 2019**

Before I announce the winning artist, I'd like to share two things with you. Don't worry, I won't keep you in suspense for long!

I would like to thank Ron Mandos and the Ron Mandos Young Blood Foundation for seeing the potential in having a good partnership with us, we have agreed to take the winning work as a gift into our collection. With great pleasure we accept this gift and will take good care of it. We will give it a platform whenever possible, in our museum and outside of it.

The second point I would like to make is that in the last few weeks I have tremendously enjoyed all the graduation shows that I have seen, and this year appeared to be even livelier and more vibrant than previous years. The artistic level is remarkably high, in terms of craft, workmanship and presentation there seems to be a strong development in professionalization among the artists. For a museum director, this development creates interesting opportunities to spot young talent and rather tempting to acquire some works and to include new persons in our programme. This is a perfect environment in which all parties: from artists and collectors to gallery owners and museums can benefit. This climate also ensured that it was quite a challenge to make a short list. I know the process of "Kill your darlings" all too well when making exhibitions, this was (unfortunately) a perfect example.

My compliments must go to Radek who created a beautiful, balanced exhibition from a very diverse range of works, and has done his utmost to try to make each work come into its own. Every one of you looks wonderful, and should feel as 'chosen', yet there can only be one winner! And that is someone whose work excels in all imaginable dimensions, she shows excellent quality in visualising a narrative, she has mastered the art of camerawork, scenography, montage and sound. She manages to keep the viewer's attention from start to finish, and to consequently affect the viewer, entering under one's skin. The video can be considered not only a masterpiece of production, but a genuine artistic masterpiece

The Young Blood Award goes to Stephanie!