

Thesis Prize 2012

General

This year the jury of the thesis prize, comprised out of Jeroen Boomgaard (Lector, Gerrit Rietveld Academie), Saskia van der Kroef (Art Critic, MetropolisM) and Sven Lütticken (Art Critic, Associate Professor of Art history, VU), were very impressed by the devotion and pleasure with which the nominated theses were written. It was interesting to see how students took their own work and ideas as a starting point to arrive at connections with different disciplines and theories. This personal involvement however sometimes caused a lack of distance. That is why the jury would like to encourage and challenge the students to also be critical about their own ideas and assumptions. Nevertheless the students showed courage by completely taking hold of their subject and thinking fundamentally about it. By doing this students run the risk of writing a thesis that gets completely off track on the one hand, but on the other hand it creates the opportunity for new and different ways of thinking.

The jury selected 4 nominees:

Marieke Berghuis

One of the four theses that the jury was most impressed by was of Marieke Berghuis of the department Image and Language. Her thesis researches the boundaries between drawing and writing. She accompanies her research with her personal story of scribbling in a courtroom. This brought on disruption and confusion, because she wasn't making a drawing that resembled anything, but she wasn't writing anything down in shorthand either. Marieke has collected a lot of material for this thesis and she deals with it in a fresh, maybe somewhat naive way. But the montage with her own personal story makes it a very interesting and exciting thesis.

Christopher Holloran

The second thesis the jury selected was of Christopher Holloran from the VAV department. His thesis researches the reality of hyper-reality and illusions of reality. Christopher Holloran is a good writer in that he gives good descriptions and gets to the essence of the subject. He gives plenty of great and fresh examples. The thesis however at times gets too broad and general, and therefore the jury would like to remind Christopher for his future writings that sometimes less is more.

Elisabeth Leersen

Elisabeth Leersen from the Textile Department provided the jury with a beautifully designed thesis that was also content wise very interesting. In her thesis Elisabeth researches how ignorance can be made productive. She takes herself as a starting point and arrives at original and lively references from different disciplines and gives her own creative examples. It is a search that ends up again at Elisabeth Leersen herself. At this point the thesis would require a little more self-reflection and more precise use of language, but the thesis remains one of the best.

Laura Pappa

"The Erratic Life of Text Made Public" by Laura Pappa of the Graphic Design department is an outstanding thesis because it is well written, has a good outline and gives original examples. The thesis describes and researches everything that can

happen with a text, which takes flight from Laura Pappa's own discipline of graphic design. The jury only found one blind spot in the thesis in that it doesn't question what the – sometimes devastating - effect of the graphic designer him/herself can be on the text. Still it is a remarkable thesis in that it is one of the few that really shows an independent manner of thinking and a train of thought that is taken to its utter consequences.

Extra

There were four theses that really stood out to the jury, but they also found the thesis of Nadia Plesner from the Fine Arts Department noteworthy. Her thesis is a thrilling report of the struggle of a young starting artist against the big cooperation Louis Vuitton. The jury questioned whether it could be considered a thesis, because it lacked the critical analysis and reflection of a research. However Nadia Plesner's work was a page-turner and it could easily be imagined that her story would hit the cinemas as a movie. That is why the jury likes to include it in this report.

And the winner of the 2012 Thesis Prize is:

Laura Pappa: "The Erratic Life of Text Made Public"