



PRIX DE ROME

Press release  
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Rana Hamadeh receives Prix de Rome 2017 from minister Van Engelshoven.  
Photo: Bas Czerwinski

### **Rana Hamadeh wins 2017 Prix de Rome**

Artist Rana Hamadeh (Beirut/Lebanon, 1983) received the Prix de Rome Visual Arts 2017, the oldest and most generous award in the Netherlands for visual artists under the age of 40, from the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science, Ingrid van Engelshoven. Hamadeh received this award for a new act as part of her opera project *The Ten Murders of Josephine*. The award comes with a 40,000 Euros cash prize and a work period at the American Academy in Rome.

The international jury unanimously selected Rana Hamadeh, an artist who creates her own language and dissects and re-arranges history and gives it a voice. The theme that lies at the basis of this work is urgent: the need to become aware of the missing voice in testimonies and the ways in which the elimination of voices determines the view of our past. In an overwhelming, cacophonous installation she sweeps the audience into a penetrating epic full of intense experiences.

Rana Hamadeh lives and works in Rotterdam, since 2006. She received her MFA from the Dutch Art Institute/ArtEZ in Enschede. Her recent exhibitions include solos at The Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane, The Showroom in London and Western Front in Vancouver. Whereas she previously operated as a scientist, historian or activist who reported on her research in lectures and performances, in her new opera project she adamantly chooses the position of visual artist. And by targeting her audience in this – even poetic – way, she creates a poignant presentation in which the visitor is overwhelmed by sound, technology and text in a theatrical setting that is in keeping with the subjects she addresses. The first part of the opera can be regarded as a living, constantly changing sound play and is on show at Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam, until 31 December 2017. The work she made for the Prix de Rome is an act from the opera, which was performed as a whole on 14 and 15 December at Schouwburg Rotterdam.

The other nominees for this year's Prix de Rome besides Rana Hamadeh were Melanie Bonajo, Saskia Noor van Imhoff and Katarina Zdjelar. The four finalists were judged on the basis of new work realised during a five-month work period. The jury is impressed by what they have achieved during the work period and by the way they have taken their art out of the studio environment and created it in

different work forms and collaborations. They are all greatly ambitious and the quality of the work they made for the Prix de Rome is very high. Together, the finalists open four different doors to four different artistic practices and four different worlds. They all create their own conditions for making their work.

Melanie Bonajo's art stands out because of the catching way it communicates. The jury appreciates the openness of her work and how she shares her perspective of the world and the threats it poses to vulnerable groups.

Saskia Noor van Imhoff's art is layered and the intuitive way in which she presents the objects challenges the audience to think about where they are. Interestingly, Van Imhoff used the Prix de Rome as an opportunity to take a next step in her work and further develop herself. The jury cannot wait to see how she will continue to strike out upon this new path.

Katarina Zdjelar also breaks new ground with the work she made for the Prix de Rome. For the first time she added spatial interventions by applying woodcuts in the floor. The jury appreciates the intimacy and concentration that Zdjelar's film installation evokes, for example by zooming in on the hands of her performers.

### **Jury**

The jury for the 2017 award is chaired by Birgit Donker (Director of the Mondriaan Fund). Its members are Ferran Barenblit (Director MACBA), Mariette Dölle (Director Museum Kranenburgh), Folkert de Jong (visual artist), Petra Noordkamp (visual artist) and Francesco Stocchi (curator Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen).

### **Exhibition**

The final presentations by the recipient of the 2017 Prix de Rome and the other nominees can be viewed until 25 February at Kunsthal, Westzeedijk 341 in Rotterdam.

### **Publication**

The 2017 Prix de Rome is accompanied by a publication that focuses on the nominees' work. This publication includes essays by Maria Barnas, Julia Mullié and Laurens Otto. (nai010 publishers, Dutch/English, design: Lesley Moore, ISBN978-94-6208-401-8)

### **Prix de Rome**

The Prix de Rome dates back to 1808 when Louis Napoleon introduced the Prix de Rome in the Netherlands to promote the arts. Although the award has regularly been renewed, the aim is still to trace talented visual artists and encourage them to develop and increase their visibility. Since 2012, the Mondriaan Fund has been responsible for the award.

For images and a copy of the jury report please visit <http://prixderome.nl/en/press/>