Jury rapport Royal Master Award

08/09/2020 Maaike Roozenburg (chair)

Jury:

Lua Vollaard

Annet Dekker

Lauren Foundland

Peter Bilak

Peter Zuiderwijk

The Royal Master award committee was challenged with the immensely and nearly impossible task to assess the work of 21 nominated master students of seven different departments. A process in which they had to bring together type design and video installation, architecture and photography to a comparable analogy. In their judgement the committee focused on authenticity and independent attitude apparent in the work as well as the urgency of the chosen subject matter. Thorough analysis and deep understanding of the subject matter and critical awareness of applied methods, work process and techniques applied, were core interests of the committee.

In light of these criteria the committee decided to reward ‘Rite of Passage’ of Sébastien Robert the 2020 Royal Master Award. The project, that is part of an ongoing artistic research ‘You are no Bird of Paradise’ is extremely urgent as well as authentic. Dealing with the loss of centuries-old indigenous rituals and advanced knowledge of the natural world caused by global deforestation and climate change. By not only focusing on the disappearance of ecosystems, but on a way of living that is depended on it, it chooses an original viewpoint. Based on thorough on site and ‘participatory’ research and collaboration a sincere and authentic position appears in the work.

The research evolved into an installation of a specific drum, the Kultrun, and how its sound can be ‘archived’ by a crystallization process of Araucaria resin. Tapping into the world of collecting data and connecting analog rituals to technology, the project shows new use of these technologies as part of cultural processes. The work is intriguing as well as communicative, a music instrument as well as an instrument of reflection on climate change and culture. The installation is well executed and refined in its use of technology and materials and in its form refers to the world of geographic measuring tools. The committee is very much interested in how this research will evolve and how this project will tap back into the communities it derived from.