



**Koninklijke
Academie van
Beeldende
Kunsten**

**Royal
Academy of Art**

**Hogeschool der Kunsten
Den Haag
University of the Arts
The Hague**

Jury report Royal Master Award 2021

Jury:

Elisa Medde
Anke Bangma
Annet Dekker
Erno Langenberg
Jarl Schulp
Jan Heijnen
Yassine Salihine

The MA prize for the best final presentation of practice goes to a digital video artwork that immerses the viewer in an online multi-player war game. This single channel video work shows the artist in a virtual gaming environment, looking for, and finding, the brother he has been separated from by 10 years of actual war in Syria. This virtual space is the only possible space for them to meet, and they steal moments of brotherly intimacy within avatars that cannot fully look each other in the eye. They fight off other players to be allowed these moments of virtual embrace, the only embrace that is possible.

The jury found this work to be an intense and deeply moving experience. The artist becomes an online ghost in order to bring forth the ghosts that war creates, and sets this within the existential awfulness of war as an entertainment form.

The jury were unanimous in their decision to award the MA 2021 Prize to Ghiath Taha Mardini.