



PRIX DE ROME

Press release
Amsterdam, 18 October 2018



Alessandra Covini wins Prix de Rome Architecture 2018

Architect Alessandra Covini (1988, Milan) received the Prix de Rome Architecture 2018 from the Dutch minister of Education, Culture and Science, Ingrid van Engelshoven. Covini is awarded for *Amsterdam Allegories*, her proposal for the Sixhaven area in the North of Amsterdam. The award comes with a 40,000 Euros cash prize and a work period at the American Academy in Rome. The Prix de Rome Architecture is awarded once every four years to talented young architects, urban designers or landscape architects.

With her proposal *Amsterdam Allegories*, Alessandra Covini responded to the fictional assignment, formulated by the jury, to come up with a meaningful and non-consumptive programme for the Sixhaven area that could be significant for the city and would be cherished by many. Covini's plan is a proposal that turns Sixhaven into a walled harbour in which twenty-one islands provide space for passing visitors. In addition, Covini sketches scenarios in which the islands drift around the city. Each island refers to specific characteristics and typologies of the city and harbour of Amsterdam. By enclosing the islands, Covini adds a new typology. The result is a refreshing plan that proposes new forms of public space that sparkle with pleasure, positive energy and humour.

Covini has a captivating way of depicting what the end result will look like, whereby the models play a key role. The jury thinks that the islands are liable to prove so attractive that the question is whether they can provide enough space to accommodate that success. Covini can be forgiven for the rather too literal ideas behind some of the islands because they nonetheless suit the atmosphere and identity of Amsterdam. The jury is also very impressed by the way Covini works directly in the third dimension and manages to transform materiality into architecture. Moreover, this proposal, in which she

transposes her ideas into a larger scale, represents an interesting step in her development. It is this development, in combination with the refreshing energy of her proposal, that led the jury to unanimously declare Alessandra Covini the winner of the Prix de Rome Architecture 2018.

Covini graduated from TU Delft in 2014 and set about establishing a private practice, which led to the founding of Studio Ossidiana in 2015. Covini focuses on the material qualities of objects, spaces and buildings. She is an architect who also works in the field of visual art and design.

The other nominees for this year's Prix de Rome besides Alessandra Covini were Bram van Kaathoven, Katarzyna Nowak and the duo Rademacher de Vries. All candidates have seized the opportunity to experiment and to think outside the box. That independent spirit, which is wholly in the tradition of the Prix de Rome, is warmly welcomed by the jury. Moreover, they all succeeded in underpinning their design with a strong narrative.

Bram van Kaathoven (1991, Lieshout) receives a honorable mention for *New Atlantis*, a proposal which concentrates Sixhaven's emptiness by constructing a perimeter building around it, preserving and monumentalizing a vacant core. The jury is impressed by his intelligent analyses and the highly consistent way in which he develops his plan and succeeds in raising it to a high level. Bram van Kaathoven works at Bauhütte / TU Eindhoven.

Katarzyna Nowak (1985, Czestichowa/ Poland) introduces a new position on the public realm. *Vrijhaven* inverts the way we think about the public domain by developing meaningful public space as a new precondition for a healthy, growing city. In her proposal the development of public space takes precedence over the urban development of the area. The jury is charmed by Nowak's intuitive and experimental approach praises her ability to create strong, three-dimensional spaces based on models. Nowak works at MVRDV and won the Archiprix in 2016.

Rademacher de Vries is the collaboration between David Rademacher (1984, Maastricht) and Christopher de Vries (1985, Maastricht). They took a hypothetical future as the starting point for their project, *Foundations*. The bare foundations of an imagined Sixtower are leased to a wide range of groups all of whom lay claim to their own space, observed by outsiders who watch them from above. The jury regards it as an interesting thought experiment to develop a plan based on a dystopian vision of the future and in so doing to ponder the question of what kind of future actually awaits the city of Amsterdam.

[\(Click here for the jury report.\)](#)

Prix de Rome

The Prix de Rome is the oldest and most prestigious award in the Netherlands for architects under the age of 35 and visual artists under the age of 40. The aim is to trace talented architects and artists and promote their further development and visibility. Since 2012 the organisation and funding of the award is handled by the Mondriaan Fund.

This edition of the Prix de Rome focuses on two extremes in architecture: urban design and landscape design. These extremes were covered in two consecutive rounds with fictive assignments. The first round, Low Pressure, was an open competition that addressed a specific rural area in the province of Groningen. From a list of 66 submissions an international jury selected four candidates for the shortlist. They concentrated on High Pressure, an assignment in a popular urban area, the Sixhaven area in Amsterdam North.

Jury

The jury of the Prix de Rome 2018 consists of Mels Crouwel (architect/founding partner Benthem Crouwel Architects), Frank Havermans (founder/artist/designer Studio Frank Havermans), Afaina de Jong (architect/founder AFARAI), Oana Rades (owner/architect Shift architecture urbanism), Ronald Rietveld (architect/founder RAAAF/ winner Prix de Rome 2006), Peter Cachola Schmal (director Deutsches Architekturmuseum). Chair of the first round was Birgit Donker (director Mondriaan Fund), chair of the second round was Mels Crouwel.

Exhibition

Until March 10th 2019 Het Nieuwe Instituut presents an exhibition with the proposals of the four nominees and an introduction to the Sixhaven area. In addition, Het Nieuwe Instituut and Mondriaan

Fund organize a temporary pop-up presentation, until December 9th, containing the plans for Oost-Groningen that were submitted in reaction to the open call

Publication

The 2018 Prix de Rome is accompanied by a publication that focuses on the nominees' work. Except the jury report and documentation about the four proposals, the publication contains a.o. an essay written by Louise O. Fresco, interviews by Sander Heijne and photos by Sem Langendijk. The publication is published by nai010 in cooperation with the Mondriaan Fund. (nai010 publishers), NL/ENG, design Lesley Moore, ISBN 978-94-6208-457-5.

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