



PRIX DE ROME

Press release

Amsterdam, 30 November 2021

## Alexis Blake wins Prix de Rome Visual Arts 2021

**Artist Alexis Blake received the Prix de Rome Visual Arts 2021 from the Dutch outgoing Minister of Education, Culture and Science, Ingrid van Engelshoven. Blake received this award for her new performance *Rock to jolt [ ] stagger to ash*. The award comes with a 40,000 Euros cash prize and the possibility to participate in a residency programme. The Prix de Rome is awarded once every two years to a talented visual artist in the Netherlands. Due to the corona measures in force, the program was adjusted during the award ceremony.**

“For the Prix de Rome, Blake immersed herself in lamentation as an expression of mourning, a topical subject, for the pandemic has caused people to suffer great losses. The artist studied the lament from a feminist perspective as a means of protest. This took her all the way back to antiquity, when the lament was forbidden as a form of art. Silencing is a form of repression – of the voice, but also of the emotions. Blake studied various periods in history, for forms and customs leading to physical expression – because that is what a lament does; it brings out, without censorship, what is inside. How people do this is determined by gender, race, socio-economic situation, sexuality and other influences Blake is able to harmoniously bring together in classic dramaturgy, exceptionally staged”, according to the jury.

In addition to the performance, Blake also organised an exhibition room with the smell of decay. In this empty space, meant to invoke reflection, visitors can pick up a tabloid with background information. The jury, however, prefers the overwhelming emotional power of the performance. It is crucial that Blake’s performance can be physically felt as well as intellectually understood. The performance shows how effectively Blake commands the principles of conveying of emotion. Moreover, she is able to fully exploit the resonant space of the staircase, and thus takes her place in a tradition of artists who have made this monumental staircase their own. The jury was impressed by the performance, worked out to the smallest detail, moving and memorable. Therefore, the jury has decided to award the Prix de Rome 2021 to Alexis Blake. Moreover, the jury wants to put in a plea for the wider distribution and recording of the performance, so it can penetrate other spaces and minds.

Alexis Blake (1981, Pittsburgh, US) lives and works in Amsterdam. In 2007, she received a master’s degree in Fine Arts from Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam. Blake was an artist in residence at the Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht (2014-’15), Delfina Foundations, London (2016), and at Wiels – Centre for Contemporary Art, Brussels (2020/2021).

The other nominees for this year’s Prix de Rome were Mercedes Azpilicueta, Silvia Martes en Coralie Vogelaar. The members of the jury greatly appreciate all of the presentations. The pandemic, diversity, feminism, the future, technology. The four nominees reflect upon the present time. The jury appreciates the finalists’ empathy in this regard; a sensitivity to the social, political and technological matters at stake. Moreover, the finalists convincingly demonstrate the power of cooperative networks. These artists work in a multidisciplinary way and know how to surround themselves with the right experts and people to create meaningful works of art.

All finalists were judged on the basis of new work realised during a five-month work period. The exhibition with the work of the nominated artists will be on show at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam until 20 March 2022. Find the full jury report on all nominees and the press images [here](#).



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### **Prix de Rome**

The Prix de Rome is the oldest Dutch award for visual artists below the age of 40. The purpose of the award is to identify talented visual artists and to encourage them to develop and increase their visibility. The Mondriaan Fund is responsible for the award from 2012 on. For Prix de Rome 2021 the Mondriaan Fund collaborates with Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (exhibition), Jap Sam Books (publication) and Mals Media (introductory films).

### **Jury**

The jury Prix de Rome 2021 consists of Ann Demeester (director, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem; extraordinary Professor Art and Culture at Radboud University, Nijmegen), Amira Gad (head of programs, LAS Light Art Space, Berlin), Antonio Jose Guzman (visual artist, researcher, lecturer), Samuel Leuenberger (director, SALTS, Basel) and Viviane Sassen (photographer, winner of the 2007 Prix de Rome in Visual Arts). Chair with no vote is Eelco van der Lingen (director of the Mondriaan Fund)

### **Exhibition**

The final presentations Mercedes Azpilicueta, Alexis Blake Silvia Martes and Coralie Vogelaar can be viewed until 20 March 2022 at Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

### **Publication**

The 2021 Prix de Rome is accompanied by a publication, published by Jap Sam, in cooperation with Mondriaan Fund. The artists are introduced by the authors Dagmar Dirkx and Esmee Postma. An introductory essay is written by Rein Wolfs (director Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam) (NL/Eng, ISBN 978-94-92852-45-8, 144 pages, €15,00)

[www.prixderome.nl/en/](http://www.prixderome.nl/en/)

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### **For further information and images:**

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