

## Jury report FORMAT 2020

FORMAT is Z33's coaching programme for the next generation of promising talents in the field of design and architecture. Each year, a selection of designers are given the opportunity to deepen their artistic practice and to share their knowledge and networks. After a year of intensive coaching, all designers unite at a group exhibition. In this learning process, time and space are crucial for exploring boundaries and reaching for unconventional heights. Z33 is a free haven where experimentation, failing and learning come together.

Z33 received a total of 78 proposals in response to the open call for FORMAT. The proposals were assessed by a jury consisting of Véronique Closon (Wallonie Design), Roel De Ridder (Architectuurwijzer), Janneke Janssen (laureate FORMAT 2019), Petrus Kemme (VAi), Bie Luysaert (Flanders DC), Tim Roerig (Z33) and Myriam Vanheusden (MIA-H) and Heleen Van Loon (Z33). Twelve candidates were selected and invited by the jury for a personal interview. During this interview the candidates got the opportunity to explain their vision and ambitions to Tim Roerig and Heleen Van Loon of Z33, who selected eight laureates, including two designer duos. The high quality of the proposals and the complementary backgrounds of the laureates were key factors in the decision-making process choosing the candidates who will collaborate intensively in the run-up to the exhibition FORMAT 2020.

The selected designers and architects are Colette Aliman & Lauriane Heim (Design Academy Eindhoven), Pauline Augustoni & Satomi Minoshima (Design Academy Eindhoven), Rachel Hansoul (PXL-MAD School of Arts), Oksana Savchuk (KU Leuven), Heleen Sintobin (Royal College of Art) and Irene Stracuzzi (Design Academy Eindhoven). The graphic identity of FORMAT 2020 will be developed by Jore Dierckx (LUCA School of Arts) and the exhibition texts will be provided by design critic Josh Plough (Design Academy Eindhoven). The laureates convinced the jury with their original proposals, strong portfolios and clear vision on how their partaking in FORMAT 2020 will contribute to their artistic growth.

Thematically, the laureates all share an interest in social issues. With their proposals, they draw attention to issues like social housing and the organisation of public space, everyday racism and cultural exchange, and sustainable alternatives to the depletion of natural resources. The laureates approach these themes all in very different ways, for example by the use of ancient crafts, modern digital techniques or a combination of both. Their goal is to hold up a mirror to society: asking critical questions is more important than offering concrete solutions. In this respect, the laureates belong to a new generation of designers who are sceptical about the possibility of solving social issues with technical innovations. Instead, they try to bring about social change by involving the public in pressing issues. In this way, they share Z33's aim to serve as a barometer of society to detect social issues and change.

### Four open calls

This year, candidates could respond for the first time to four different open calls. While FORMAT's regular trajectory focuses on the development of individual projects, designers could now also apply for the graphic design and the scenography of the exhibition. Besides

that, there was a call for a design critic who will enter into dialogue with the designers during the course of this program and subsequently write exhibition texts.

It was remarkable that some candidates responded to more than one open calls. This was well received by the jury, provided that the proposals submitted differed in content. In the best cases, the different submitted proposals showed the versatility of the designer; in lesser cases, candidates applied for a second category that did not fit their portfolio. By most jury members, the latter was perceived as a lack of self-knowledge: they were looking for designers with a clear vision of their own work. In the categories graphic design and design criticism, the jury preferred candidates with a distinct personal style and who were open to collaborating with other designers. Instead of a scenographer, the jury chose an additional laureate for FORMAT's regular program. This choice was based on the high quality of the proposals and the jury's confidence that the selected laureates will fit the FORMAT program best.

### **Visionary and dynamic**

The laureates in the categories design and architecture convinced the jury primarily with their original and vital ideas, but also with their portfolios showing that they will be able to execute their ambitious plans. However, this does not mean that the candidates have to have extensive experience or will be discouraged to change direction later on - on the contrary: FORMAT's goal is to promote artistic growth. That is why it was essential to the jury to understand how a next step would relate to the designer's artistic history. Moreover, having a clear vision of one's own development is a sign of the candidate's artistic maturity.

Group dynamics were also taken into account while selecting the laureates. The jury looked for candidates from diverse backgrounds who are interested in sharing their knowledge with other participants and the audience. In this way, the laureates can help each other to take new steps, for example by exchanging techniques or sharing sources of inspiration. Besides that, the participants will be coached by one or more mentors. These can be designers or architects, but also journalists or scientists with in-depth knowledge of the laureates' interests. By stimulating exchange between disciplines, FORMAT 2020 wants to encourage designers to push their boundaries. This is believed to be essential, given that the societal challenges of the future ask for broad collaboration and creative ideas. The jury is confident that the laureates will make an important contribution to raising awareness and exploring solutions for social issues, causes and change.

Tim Roerig, curator Z33