

Jury Report Humanities Matter art route

Sitwat Ashar Hashmi – master student Political Science

The third prize concerns a personal theme and is a strong image that raises questions about identity (an important aspect of the humanities). The work takes a political stand and at the same time shows an almost mythological image.

With care and attention, the artist worked on a monumental shape and a unique use of colour, that stimulates curiosity. The substantive contrast that emerges so clearly in the image is supported by a contrast in colour and shape. The artist chose a simple black background and only a very subtle additional visual element. A good balance between the political message and the visual effects results in a mature work.

There is also something dynamic to the image, as if the search for the self and its own meaning is still unfinished. Fundamental thinking about who one is and who one can become is a unique task of the Humanities.

I would like to end with a quote from the person who submitted this work: "The single most important thing that empowered me to speak my truth and have the courage to live it, was my education".

Sitwat Ashar Hashmi, Congratulations!

Pablo Kattenberg & Benjamin Schoonenberg – master students Literature in Society

The second prize goes to a work that the jury unanimously considered to be original and innovative. In an interesting way, the interactive work showcases the connection between art and technology. Assumptions about one of the merits of the humanities - the ability to write well - are put to the test. The work raises questions such as: Are the authors of poetry and literature important? Or are they the geniuses from which the art originated?

This work raises a current and elementary question, the question of whether technology and Artificial Intelligence could take over even that very last piece of the human brain, that what makes the human brain unique: the ability to be creative, to create something that we have come to call 'art'.

The work we are talking about here touches on the fact that imitating a creative act is a piece of cake, but doing, creating, is impossible without input data from existing art. A difficult problem, no idea how it ends, but something that artists have to deal with nowadays. The creator has properly grasped that idea. The form the artists chose highly resembles DADA art: with strange smoking objects, a performance, improvised interaction with the audience and fun banter, but in this case that is allowed.

Pablo Kattenberg and Benjamin Schoonenberg, Congratulations!

First prize – Hester Be – bachelour student Art History and Philosophy

And now... The first prize goes to a work that - according to the jury - represents the clearest link between the humanities and the university. Another personal interpretation of the theme Humanities Matter, with a visible Leiden twist.

This is a work that is cleverly executed in pen and ink. The contour lines of the drawing are sometimes thick and heavy, then fine and delicate, but never without meaning. The lines remain interesting throughout the work, and the perspective effect that this creates is cleverly exploited. The alternation of very "filled in" and very open spaces results in a pleasant composition, which is complex, but still remains easy to understand.

The drawing is filled with biblical symbols, myths and legends and at the same time shows the recognizable everyday in a new setting, in which certain details from everyday practice (Rapenburg, concrete pillars of the UB) suddenly take on a new meaning. This observation of context and meaning is a major Humanities Matter theme.

There is also a lot of relativism in the drawing, you have to look for it, but then you will see many details that will make you smile. The viewer can easily get lost in those. The drawing is very graphic, but never gets out of hand. The drawing is reminiscent of the drawn, but often so light-hearted oeuvre of James Ensor, the Flemish artist from Ostend, at the beginning of the 20th century. As with Ensor: a lot is happening, but through clever composition and the use of open lines, the drawing remains completely accessible.

Hester Be, the jury awards to you the first prize in the Humanities Matter art competition! Congratulations.