

Kunstinstituut Melly

PRESS RELEASE



THE MELLYS: AN AWARDS CELEBRATION HONORING ART'S UNSEEN HEROES

PRESS RELEASE, 22 OCTOBER 2025

Kunstinstituut Melly launches [The MELLYS](#)
the inaugural edition of our **awards celebration** honoring
the often-unseen contributors who make the art ecosystem thrive.

Each award carries a **€25,000 prize** to honor
the often-unseen dedication, skill, and imagination that sustain the cultural sector.

The inaugural edition will take place on **Thursday, 27 November 2025**,
as part of **Melly's 35th anniversary celebrations**.

The evening program consists of a **reception** in **Riet Wijnen's Suitcase Economy**,
a **seated three-course dinner** designed as a shared experience,
performances by **donna Kukama** and **the Unemployed Airhostesses**,
a **DJ set** by **Jollyfish**,
scenography by **Loui Meeuwissen**,
moderated by **Evita de Roode**,
an After Party and more.

THE MELLYS CELEBRATE THREE KEY ROLES IN THE ARTS ECOSYSTEM:

[MAKER BEHIND THE MAKER AWARD](#)

*HONORING THE CRAFTSPEOPLE, FABRICATORS, AND PRODUCERS WHOSE EXPERTISE
BRING ARTISTIC VISIONS TO LIFE.*

[BEHIND THE LENS AWARD](#)

*RECOGNIZING PHOTOGRAPHERS AND DOCUMENTERS WHO CAPTURE AND SHARE THE
CREATIVE PROCESS, PRESERVING ARTISTIC LEGACIES.*

[VISIONARY 010 AWARD](#)

*CELEBRATING ROTTERDAM-BASED CULTURAL LEADERS WHOSE LONG-TERM IMPACT
SHAPES THE CITY'S ARTISTIC LANDSCAPE.*

MAKER BEHIND THE MAKER AWARD

Honoring the craftspeople, fabricators, and producers whose expertise bring artistic visions to life.

JURY

Amira Gad — Curator Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen
Charly van Rest — Winner of the Maker behind the Maker Award 2021,
experimental artist
Ron Bernstein — Artist and Head of Material Matters Lab,
Jan van Eyck Academie

NOMINEES

Egberth Thomas (InnaVisions), Kees Reedijk, Albert Seubring, Ivo van Stiphout, Victoria Zynwala, Van Tetterode Studio, Clim Schots, Oded Rimon, Nell Donkers, Hannah Rose Whittle, Niels de Bakker, Maya Berkhof, Sotiris de Wit

BEHIND THE LENS AWARD

(FORMERLY THE BERRY KOEDAM AWARD)

Recognizing photographers and documenters who capture and share the creative process, preserving artistic legacies.

JURY

Femke Rotteveel — Director, FOTODOK
Marieke Wiegel — Artistic Director, Grote Kerk Breda
Matthew Antezzo — former Art & Culture Manager at Polaroid
Amsterdam, artist and photography specialist

NOMINEES

Maarten Nauw, Jari Nuno, Chris Becher, Naema Khalif, Gigi Kraan

VISIONARY 010 AWARD

Celebrating Rotterdam-based cultural leaders whose long-term impact shapes the city's artistic landscape.

JURY

Saskia van Stein — Artistic & Managing Director, IABR; co-Head MA Critical Inquiry Lab, Design Academy Eindhoven
Aruna Vermeulen — Winner of the Visionary Award 2021,
co-founder and Director, Hiphophuis
Joel Ferdinandus — Program Director, Rotterdam Partners

NOMINEES

Kamiel Verschuren, Virgil Moreno, Jeanne van Heeswijk, Ash Kilmartin, Lukas Simonis, Sharine Rijsenburg, Suze van Bohemen, Chery Salinas, Leana Boven, Samantha Rodrigues, Malique Mohamud & Nacor Martina/ The Niteshop

A VITAL FUNDRAISER FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMING

Beyond celebration, *The MELLYS* serve as a key **fundraiser** for Kunstinstituut Melly. Proceeds from the evening will directly support the institution's 2026 programming, including a major retrospective of *Moshekwa Langa*, ensuring the continuation of bold and socially engaged art projects

ABOUT KUNSTINSTITUUT MELLY

Kunstinstituut Melly is Rotterdam's contemporary art and theory institution. Since its founding in 1990, the institution has been committed to presenting and commissioning thought-provoking exhibitions, public programs, and educational initiatives. With a focus on emerging and underrepresented practices, Kunstinstituut Melly provides a vital platform for dialogue and artistic experimentation, rooted in the cultural and social fabric of Rotterdam and connected to international developments.

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PHOTO CAPTIONS

Awards ceremony 2024, Kunstinstituut Melly, Photographer Liza Wolters

PRESS CONTACTS

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opening hours: Wednesdays – Sundays 11:00 – 18:00 hrs,
Fridays during the Kunstavond until 21:00 hrs.

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