

Jury report:

Artist and writer Ada M. Patterson (*1994), was selected for the Profiel Prize 2023 for her poetic and engaged work in which textile plays an important role as a second skin and signifier. Textiles are a recurring element in Patterson's growing multimedia oeuvre. Costumes, masks and kanga feature prominently in her performances and video installations. Patterson plays with the etymological essence of text and textile by interweaving elements, words, threads and actions. A close relationship exists between text and textile objects. Born in Bridgetown, Barbados, Patterson holds a bachelor's degree in fine art from Central Saint Martins in London and lives and works mainly in Rotterdam, while exhibiting internationally. She creates visual stories with great poetic power. Her video installations and performances show characters dressed in costumes and textile objects in poetic explorations. Text, poetry and metaphors are a common thread in her work in which the political is linked to the personal.



Ada M. Patterson, three-channel video installation *A Ship of Fools* 2020, courtesy: the artist & Copperfield, London

Characteristic of this layeredness is her three-part video installation *A Ship of Fools*. In it, Patterson, raised in the Caribbean, reflects on the traces left by global warming. We see images of a boat on a beach, sometimes submerged by waves. In the boat is a figure, covered with burial cloths and masks, and surrounded by flowers. And we hear the sea and songs that carry and interpret the visual story. The songs intertwine personal experiences of climate change of three friends - from different parts of the world. Melancholic memories and critical observations are interspersed with current news stories about storms, floods and forest fires. As viewers and listeners we are drawn into this associative whole, which is simultaneously poetic and confronting.



Ada M. Patterson, From the series *Kanga for the Present (THE FUTURES WE KISSED GOODBYE)* 2020, courtesy: the artist & Copperfield, London

The textiles, covering the figures in the boat, are also autonomous works from the *Kanga for the Present*-series. Patterson learned about the tradition of kangas from her Kenyan-born mother. The printed cloths are widely worn in East Africa, but are also communal gifts during times of joy and sorrow. Kangas' double meaning – as cloths that offer protection as well as signifiers of separation and loss – can also be seen in *A Ship of Fools*. The fabrics printed with watercolour sketches show scenes of people or nature in a state of disarray. A bright yellow fabric with an image of a blazing tree reads: 'The only warmth we'll know'. Meanwhile, the kanga entitled *THE FUTURES WE KISSED GOODBYE* shows the water rising menacingly.

Water is a recurring metaphor in Patterson's work, as a symbol of fluidity and change. But water also represents turbulence and destruction – especially in the Caribbean, which is threatened by the effects of climate change. In her work, Patterson depicts the experience of crisis but also the desire for empathy and connection as a collective force. With her videos and installations, textile objects and costumes, Ada M. Patterson tells stories about how changing bodies make sense of changing worlds.

Congratulations to Ada M. Patterson!