

# Jury report ABN AMRO Art Award, 2005

*Birds*, the installation which closed Eylem Aladogan's training at the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam in 1999 which was later exhibited at the Fons Welters gallery in Amsterdam, was engraved on the minds of the five jury members of the ABN AMRO Art Prize 2005. In 2000, *Birds* was included in the Exorcism, Aesthetic Terrorism exhibition at the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam, along with works by international celebrities such as Bruce Nauman and Louise Bourgeois. Her *Pharmagenic Decline* exhibit at Het Domeim Museum in Sittard (2002) received rave reviews from the press and many regarded her Army of Me exhibit at the Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam in 2004 as one of the strongest solo presentations of the year.

Eylem Aladogan was a strong candidate: the five jury members unanimously declared her the winner of the ABN AMRO Art Prize 2005, from a group of 16 selected candidates. Because this prize has the character of an incentive candidates with longer careers do not qualify. The rules also explicitly state that the Art Prize cannot be awarded on the basis of form a broader picture of the artistic development of the candidate. The ABN AMRO Art Prize is designed to stimulate international exchanges in the visual arts between artist with different cultural backgrounds. Aladogan was born in Tiel of Turkish parents and holds dual Dutch and Turkish nationality.

In many senses, *Birds*, was a visual statement on the fascinations of artistic content that still form the guiding theme in Aladogan's work. The work consisted of a large table holding a number of clay birds sculpted to resemble the dead birds that are often found washed up on a beach. Above the table, a sprinkler unit kept the clay moist, as if the birds

could still be saved. Although we are all too familiar with ecological disaster scenes in today's world, the way in which Aladogan's work combined the sterile environment of a dissection table with the hopeful moist shine on the clay feathered birds was a uniquely evocative reinterpretation, with aesthetics and substantive associations that were not only complex, but as striking as a thunderbolt.

Aladogan's arresting installations and drawings reflect her fascination with the relationship between technology and culture, death, genetic manipulation and space travel. In addition to praising its intrinsic content, the jury also felt that Aladogan's work demonstrated a singular level of professionalism and perfectionism. The jury was also full of praise for the monumental oeuvre that Aladogan has already built up at a young age. In her futuristic environments, Aladogan masters the constraints of space and convincingly presents her own highly personal world of imagery, a world which mixes and combines an unemotional palette of sterile forms and objects with primal instincts and deeper meanings.

#### Members of the jury for the second ABN AMRO Art Award:

Leo Delfgaauw, curator of the De Pont, Museum of

Contemporary art, Tilburg

Jan Roeland, visual artist

Wilma Suto, art critic and curator

Tom de Swaan, member of the ABN AMRO Managing Board, chairman of the ABN AMRO Art Foundation and chairman of the jury

Pietje Tegenbosch, advisor to the ABN AMRO Art Foundation

On behalf of the jury,

Pietje Tegenbosch