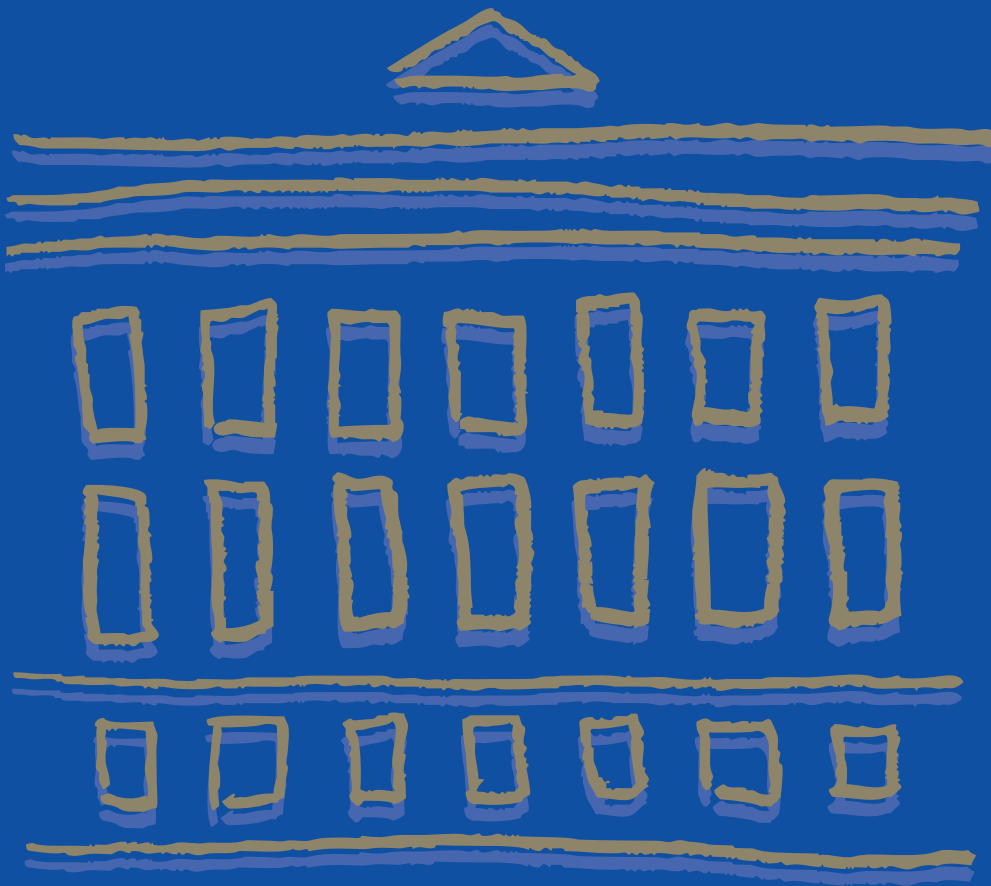




ANNUAL PLAN FOR 2025

THE YOUNG ACADEMY



Amsterdam, November 2024

THE YOUNG ACADEMY IS AN INDEPENDENT DIVISION OF THE
ROYAL NETHERLANDS ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

BACKGROUND

In accordance with the Regulations of The Young Academy as adopted by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (Royal Academy, KNAW), the Board of The Young Academy hereby presents its Annual Plan for 2025. The Annual Plan was discussed and approved by the members of The Young Academy on 4 November 2024 and approved by the Royal Academy's Board on 12 November 2024.

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INTRODUCTION

In this Annual Plan, The Young Academy explains how it intends to continue fulfilling its objectives in 2025. Information about The Young Academy's activities in previous years can be found in its Annual Reports, published at www.dejongeakademie.nl.

The structure of the 2025 Annual Plan is based on The Young Academy's four main themes, which underpin all of its activities. Sections 2 to 5 provide an overview of objectives, topics and intended activities for each theme. Section 6 outlines The Young Academy's communication strategy. The 2025 calendar of events can be found in the appendix to the Annual Plan.

1. AMBITIONS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR 2025

The Young Academy was established in 2005. In the past 20 years, it has evolved into a well-known and respected platform and a serious discussion partner for governance and policy, one that is actively involved in raising society's awareness of science and scholarship and is a frequent guest in the media. The strength of The Young Academy lies in its deeply felt enthusiasm for science and scholarship and its desire to engage with society within that context.

The structure of The Young Academy has contributed significantly to its success: as members join and leave, a steady stream of new plans and ideas is guaranteed. The members are collectively responsible for and closely involved in what The Young Academy is and intends to be. The aim is to continue to encourage and deepen the involvement and active engagement of all members in 2025. Every month, members discuss ongoing projects with one another and have the leeway to examine relevant topics in greater depth or to propose new ideas.

The Young Academy will celebrate its twentieth anniversary in 2025, affording it an excellent opportunity to reflect on its achievements, look ahead to the future and reconnect with its external contacts and alumni of the past two decades. The focus will be on topics that have interested The Young Academy since its founding, including the relationship between scholarship and society, the international context of research and the need for a sustainable and futureproof academic system. A special anniversary committee will be developing a detailed programme in the course of 2024 and 2025.

Members of The Young Academy frequently participate in symposia, expert meetings, the Royal Academy's councils and advisory committees, grant selection and review committees, juries for Royal Academy awards and prizes, and its institutes' science committees. In addition to The Young Academy's own activities, members are therefore closely involved in the Royal Academy's role as a forum and advisory body. They also participate in other national councils and committees, for example those established by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science or the Dutch Research Council (NWO). The Young Academy furthermore seeks to involve researchers from other institutions in its activities, including by organising members' days at universities or institutes and through contacts with local young academies. In addition, it joins forces with the Society of Arts (also part of the Royal Academy), for example within the context of the Arts and Science theme, in joint projects or in the form of meetings.

THE YOUNG ACADEMY

As part of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), The Young Academy is an independent forum of 50 young, inspired scientists and scholars with an outstanding reputation in research, teaching, clinical care or knowledge utilisation and valorisation. Its members also have innovative ideas about the academic system. Members must have received their doctorate no more than 10 years prior to their appointment to The Young Academy. They represent a broad spectrum of scientific and scholarly disciplines and carry out their work mainly at research institutions in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. They are appointed for a five-year period. Each year, 10 members are added and 10 depart.

The Young Academy aims to be as diverse as possible, not only in representing a broad spectrum of universities, disciplines and areas of interest (such as research, teaching, valorisation or clinical care) but also in terms of other forms of diversity, such as gender, ethnic, racialised and cultural backgrounds, first-generation researchers and people with work limitations. New members are selected in part on the basis of these criteria. A further consideration in the selection of new members is an adequate passive command of the Dutch language.

The Young Academy develops and implements activities in order to:

- encourage young researchers in their professional development and bring them into contact with disciplines outside their own area of specialisation so as to encourage interdisciplinary research;
- encourage young researchers to make an active contribution to the future of their own and other disciplines by forming their own views on science policy;
- encourage young researchers to convey their fascination with science to the general public and in educational settings;
- encourage young researchers to consider the Dutch academic context within an international framework, to reflect on the position of young researchers from abroad who work in Dutch academia and to collaborate at international level with members of other young academies or similar organisations.

The Young Academy organises a broad range of activities each year, including educational events, research, publications and meetings. It acts boldly to make its own voice heard and has frequently gone public in recent years by entering into debate and raising issues for discussion, such as better support for refugee scholars, a fairer allocation of responsibilities and rewards in supervising PhD candidates ('Everyone Professor!') and ensuring academic freedom and integrity by promoting transparency regarding research funding. The Young Academy intends to continue doing all this in 2025. Going forward, we will be committed to reducing inequality in the academic system with our *A Fair Start* initiative, including scrutiny of our own position as The Young Academy.

Key themes in the academic world:

- Equality in research funding
- Equal opportunities
- Equal pay for equal work
- Making Dutch academia greener and more sustainable
- Mental health of academics

Key themes in the relationship between academia and the world beyond:

- Collective decision-making
- Involving children in research
- Collaboration beyond the walls of the university
- Dialogue with the general public
- By putting *A Fair Start* at the top of our agenda, we can chart a course together, come up with specific initiatives to promote this vital theme and show the rest of the world what our priorities are.

In addition, The Young Academy is continuously engaged in:

- promoting information exchange and cooperation with all departments of the Royal Academy;
- asserting its views in the media and in its communication with university governing bodies, research funding bodies, government and the political world;
- improving the academic system in the Netherlands by advocating for improvements in current science policy;
- keeping track of and monitoring important developments in academia, such as implementation of the Recognition and Rewards programme, Open Science, the situation of refugee academics, internationalisation in higher education and our *Smarter Academic Year* recommendations;
- encouraging discussion of research and the public relevance of science, for example in the media and by means of lectures and symposia;
- conveying enthusiasm for and knowledge of science to children, young people, the general public and hard-to-reach target groups, and experimenting with ways to achieve this;
- continuing to develop and consolidate ideas for interdisciplinary collaboration;
- enhancing the role that science and scholarship play in society and in public debates;
- facilitating internationalisation through exchanges with other young academies, international umbrella- and other organisations and advisory bodies so as to be open to best practices from other countries, and by contributing to science for policy and policy for science at national and European level.

2. SCIENCE POLICY THEME

The Young Academy intends to continue leveraging its position so that it can proactively influence policy development and decision-making in and about science and scholarship. Its input is based on the idea that science and scholarship encompass many values, all of which are important - intrinsically, socially, economically and culturally. Its primary aim in participating in this debate is to highlight and promote this wide variety of scientific and scholarly activities.

The Young Academy will address current issues and topics that have so far been ignored on political or administrative agendas. It will also further consolidate its network of partners in the research community, for example its links with university executive boards, deans, the Dutch Research Council (NWO), Universities of the Netherlands (UNL), various departments of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Netherlands Federation of University Medical Centres (NFU), the PhD Network Netherlands (PNN), PostdocNL, the Comenius Network and the Assistant Professors Network (AP-net). The network of local young academies at Dutch universities also facilitates important exchanges and serves as reinforcement. In 2025, members of The Young Academy will continue to participate actively in the Royal Academy's advisory committees, councils and juries, as well as in steering groups or committees outside that organisation, such as the national Recognition and Rewards steering group.

The funding of Dutch research is an issue that will remain on the agenda, with The Young Academy continuing to argue that we must strike the right balance between unfettered, curiosity-driven research and theme-based research. In this context, The Young Academy represents researchers active in all the various disciplines and at all the universities and institutes.

In 2025, the Science Policy theme will focus on the following topics and projects:

The Academy Thermometer

With The Academy Thermometer, The Young Academy intends to 'take the temperature' of the Dutch academic world. How are academics in the Netherlands doing in terms of their mental health? A study based on series of questionnaires distributed among academics in the Netherlands in 2023 and 2024 examined what motivates them in their work. For example, what do they love about their job? In addition to the positive aspects of their work in academia, the questionnaires also delved into psychological complaints (depression, anxiety, stress), perceived work/publication pressure, sleep, motivation, use of health care facilities, perceived social safety and perceived support (at work and at home). These data will provide a better understanding of any complaints that occur among academics, how serious they are and which factors alleviate or aggravate such complaints. More than 2,000 academics in the Netherlands filled in the questionnaire. The results of this study will be analysed in the second half of 2024, and the report will appear in 2025.

Everyone Professor!

The Young Academy declared 2023 to be the 'Everyone Professor!' year. In the same year, it launched a number of initiatives, including a call for academics to engage in discussion of Everyone Professor! at faculty and university level. As 'intellectual ammunition' for such a discussion, The Young Academy published an FAQ on its website with anticipated questions and answers. The Everyone Professor! year concluded in early 2024 with a debate. The Young Academy will continue monitoring the progress of this project at the universities in 2024 and 2025 and publish an overview on its own website. It plans to draw up the overview and update it regularly in cooperation with local young academies.

The Green Young Academy

Universities must set an example in society as drivers of the transition to a green future. While Dutch universities are currently developing various initiatives, these are largely separate and unrelated to one another. Efficiency and a solid basis of support are lost in this way, with universities often – too often – reinventing the wheel, with a level of ambition pitched lower than it could and indeed should be. This fragmented approach may generate only fragile public support, making it difficult to implement changes that are badly needed.

To truly confront the challenges that accompany climate change, an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach is essential. The Green Young Academy is a network of members of The Young Academy and local young academies in the Netherlands who share their knowledge and expertise with one another. By communicating directly with local university administrators, they can heighten the impact of climate-related initiatives. The Green Young Academy will publish its first report in 2025, which will survey the climate targets and plans of all Dutch universities. In the same year, it also plans to publish a strategic vision outlining the guiding principles and targets to which the universities can publicly commit, in the spirit of the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and the Green Deal on Sustainable Healthcare. The strategic vision document will provide guidance on pressing issues such as dealing with research investments, plans for climate-neutral universities and support for this in educational programmes addressing climate change and other subjects.

Big tech in academic education

Big tech firms are playing a growing role in academic institutions, for example in research and teaching. Inherent in decisions to open the door to such technical systems is a fundamental discussion about values. In the view of most universities, however, such decisions are purely technological in nature, comparable to purchasing furnishings or office supplies. The Young Academy intends to launch a broad discussion about the values that underpin the use of big tech systems. It will draw up a manifesto for academic institutions in that regard making recommendations regarding the use of technical solutions offered by big tech firms.

The inner critic

To what extent does an inner critic play a role in the academic world and within The Young Academy? Is it only among a small group of people or in specific disciplines? The purpose of this project is to examine the extent to which the inner critic has

students and researchers in its grasp, clearing scope for discussion. A particular point of interest is the role of the inner critic during meetings and gatherings. To what extent do participants feel free to speak their minds?

After conducting a survey and interviews, The Young Academy will publish an opinion piece on the role of the inner critic in the academic world. This piece will appear on The Young Academy website.

Research Funding Consultation

In its Research Funding Consultation project, The Young Academy experimented in 2022 with a collective consultation method in which respondents grappled with the same dilemmas and constraints that policymakers also face. They were asked to propose solutions within the given parameters. The results of an experiment about research funding using this method appeared in the 2024 report *Informed choices*. The outcomes showed that there is strong support among academics in all disciplines for continuous, non-competitive funding. The funding allocation choices did not differ significantly between academics in the humanities, the social sciences, medicine and the natural sciences. Career stage was identified as an especially important consideration when seeking a balanced representation of researchers to provide input on research funding policies. A large majority of the respondents did not find the review process for competitive grants 'fair', including those who play a significant role in grant review committees and even those with high success rates for their own grant applications.

The Young Academy recommends that public knowledge institutions and research funding bodies should organise collective consultations on a regular basis, ensuring that the views of the collective are taken into account in decisions on important issues (such as research funding). This will improve both the quality and the perceived legitimacy of decision-making. The Young Academy will continue tracking developments around these issues in 2025 and engaging in discussion with policymakers.

Influence of collaboration with the private sector on research in the Netherlands

Recent decades have seen a huge increase in external research funding in the Netherlands, leading to a shift in focus to research with quick results for government and industry. However, science also has the task of generating new questions and anticipating the issues of the future. That task, and with it positive academic freedom – i.e. the freedom of researchers to choose for themselves what research to conduct and to what end – is under pressure.

In 2023, The Young Academy published its report *Space to think. An analysis of structural threats to academic freedom and integrity*, in which it calls for greater transparency through 'intellectual audits' and the establishment of guidelines for responsible research funding. In 2025, The Young Academy will continue monitoring developments around this issue and placing it on the agenda at universities.

Recognition and Rewards

After The Young Academy presented best practices in 2020 in an effort to inspire local Recognition and Rewards committees as they developed their recommendations and policies, it went on in 2022 to produce a series of podcasts featuring interviews with professors. By having top researchers reflect on their own career and the good and not-so-good aspects of the current appraisal system, The Young Academy hopes to gain a better understanding of what is needed for the desired cultural transformation. The podcast series *'TjongeJonge'* (2023) also covered topics relating to Recognition and Rewards. The Young Academy will continue contributing to R&R programme development in various ways, for example by giving workshops and participating in the national steering group.

Lighter workload in a 'smarter' academic year

In 2021, The Young Academy published its report *A smarter academic year*. In the light of the report, the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science invited universities to come up with a 'smarter' design for the academic year. The relevant pilots began in early 2023. Over the course of 4 years, departments at 14 research universities and 1 university of applied sciences will experiment, individually and collectively, with a smarter design for the academic year. The Young Academy will continue to be involved in tracking progress and monitoring the pilots.

National politics

The Young Academy is closely involved in national politics. It seeks direct contact with parliamentarians to facilitate exchanges of information on research and education policy and funding. Alongside UNL, the Royal Academy, the Dutch Research Council, TNO and NFU, The Young Academy will remain committed to the Parliament and Science project in 2025. The main aim is to have evidence-based knowledge play a greater role in parliamentary debate by informing Members of Parliament about recent research findings regarding the topics for which policies are being developed.

3. SCIENCE AND SOCIETY THEME

Science is for everyone and is a collective endeavour. In its Science and Society theme, The Young Academy aims to embed science more firmly in society. It does this by engaging in dialogue with people from all walks of life, by working with partners outside the walls of the university and by encouraging young children to try their hand at real scientific research. Members often contribute to national or local newspapers and magazines and appear on radio and television programmes. They organise ‘citizen science’ projects and participate in public events where they encourage people — from children in disadvantaged neighbourhoods to the elderly in village or community centres — to take active part in ‘doing science’.

The Young Academy also engages in discussion with government, the Dutch Research Council, university governing bodies and the recently established National Centre of Expertise on Science & Society – The Netherlands (NEWS) about such topics as recognition and rewards for science communication, public participation in science and evaluating projects that bridge the gap between science and society. The Young Academy is also committed to ensuring a safe space for academic debate, one in which all participants have adequate freedom to give their thoughts free rein.

The following activities and projects have been scheduled for 2025:

Not Just Anybody!: first-generation scholars and their experience in academia

Educational inequality is widespread; children whose parents did not attend university have lower grades, are advised to attend a less academically challenging secondary school and are less likely to go to university themselves. And if they do enrol in a university programme, they often feel less at home there. First-generation academics face a unique challenge: how do they find their way in an academic world with unwritten rules and a hidden curriculum, without the aid of an existing social network? What is their experience in Dutch academia? How do they navigate between the two worlds – the one they grew up in and the one in which they now find themselves? What role does their background play in their academic career? And how can Dutch universities and research funding bodies contribute to equal opportunities for first-generation scholars? The aim of ‘Not Just Anybody!’ is to answer these questions in the light of interviews with first-generation scholars. A report will be published in 2025 recounting their experiences and making specific recommendations for more equality of opportunity in Dutch academia.

Collective knowledge development: exploratory research on transdisciplinarity in science

Research funding bodies are increasingly financing transdisciplinary research, i.e. in which civil-society actors and businesses contribute their knowledge and expertise throughout the entire research process. In 2023, The Young Academy, in collaboration with the Dutch Research Council (NWO), conducted qualitative

interviews and organised roundtable discussions aimed at identifying best practices for the design and conduct of transdisciplinary research. The focus was on how to create scientific and societal added value and how to better facilitate and assess transdisciplinary research. A report will be published in 2025 that will address barriers to collaboration between researchers and civil-society partners, as well as success stories and recommendations for universities, research funding bodies and civil-society partners that wish to participate in transdisciplinary research. In addition to making recommendations, the report will also suggest guidelines for researchers, research funding bodies and public knowledge institutions concerning the best way to conduct interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research and how this can be supported within the national Recognition and Rewards programme.

Lil' Scientist

Children are scientists by nature. But many children believe that science is not for them. That is especially true of girls, children with a non-Western migration background and children whose parents did not attend higher education. Lil' Scientist seeks to change this by letting children do real science. This is known as 'citizen science', a method that researchers increasingly use to answer scientific and societal questions. Lil' Scientist is aimed at children between the ages of 10 and 14 who are growing up in environments where they are rarely exposed to science or existing forms of science communication. The project partner is the IMC Weekend School, which has dedicated itself to supporting this group of children for more than 20 years. The project was extended for two years (2022–2024) thanks to a Dutch Research Agenda (NWA) grant, celebrated during the kick-off on 1 July 2023. Since then, members of The Young Academy have given dozens of Lil' Scientist lessons at the Weekend School. Other partners in the collaboration include the NEMO Science Museum and *New Scientist*. A new series of Lil' Scientist lessons have been scheduled for the 2024–2025 school year.

Collaboration with media parties

Members of The Young Academy consistently engage in public activities: they appear on radio and TV programmes, give presentations at public festivals (such as Lowlands Science, where visitors can participate in experiments, and the Noorderzon Festival) and write blogs. The Young Academy proactively seeks opportunities for public engagement and gladly accepts suitable invitations. Its aim in doing so is to make science and scientists more accessible to a wide audience. At the same time, such appearances are an opportunity to provide interested parties with sound information.

4. CONTENT AND INTERDISCIPLINARITY THEME

The Content and Interdisciplinarity theme offers a platform for content exchange and cooperation in both teaching and research. It encourages members and others to look across disciplinary boundaries and shows that doing so can generate value and mutual inspiration. It also deals with overarching scientific and scholarly themes and examines options for and methods of interdisciplinary research and teaching. Collaboration with artists, such as members of the Society of Arts, is another notable focus of attention.

Each year, The Young Academy gives content – i.e. research – a prominent role during its members' days, for example by having members give short lectures about their own research. This encourages an exchange of content and inspiration and serves as an excellent starting point for members to apply for a project grant for interdisciplinary collaboration.

This theme also promotes member-to-member cooperation and includes activities to encourage this, such as a members' day inspired by content and cooperation.

In 2025, the focus of the Content and Interdisciplinarity theme will be on:

InterScience

InterScience is a series of symposia, each one addressing a single topic examined from the perspective of various disciplines. These lectures offer interested parties the opportunity to see cross-connections and contrasts between the different disciplines. Building on the success of jointly organised evenings in previous years, The Young Academy will once again seek to cooperate with the Society of Arts. In 2025, new themes will be on the agenda again, such as 'Debt' and 'Borders'.

The Arts and Science

The Arts and Science theme is part of the Content and Interdisciplinarity theme and is shared between the Society of Arts and The Young Academy, bringing together scientists and artists in art/science projects in which equality between the two domains is crucial. The theme is also intended to encourage artists and scientists to join forces in gathering knowledge and to work together on meeting the challenges facing society.

In collaboration with the Society of Arts, The Young Academy will continue to organise meetings, such as Mingler Live, at which artists and scientists from inside and outside the Royal Academy can meet, art/science projects are presented and collaborative partnerships are encouraged.

Arts x Science x Society

Members of the Society of Arts and The Young Academy meet regularly, and these exchanges have led to a number of projects, including a proposal to set up an arts and sciences fund that was submitted to the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science in 2022. Talks were subsequently held with the Ministry in 2023 and 2024. As a follow-up, the Society of Arts and The Young Academy organised a working conference in 2024 that brought together all the relevant players in the field to explore the parameters for consolidating partnerships between the arts and the sciences. Collaboration between the two domains on socially relevant themes, both fundamental and applied, can offer new perspectives on such issues as climate change, the ecology, economics, digital transitions, loneliness, artificial intelligence, ageing and more.

While such collaboration is already taking place, these efforts are small in scale and fragmented, being dispersed across many different initiatives. As a result, the whole never transcends the sum of its parts.

The Arts x Science x Society initiative is meant to change this. It aims to do so by making such efforts visible, by systematically examining what they signify and by reinforcing the role that they play for society in conjunction with the arts and the sciences.

In 2025, members of The Young Academy and the Society of Arts will build on the foundations laid during the working conference by continuing to engage with relevant parties, including the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, funds, and funding bodies in the arts and sciences.

The Real Homo Economicus

How is it that the various disciplines that all deal with economic activity – financial, behavioural, political, institutional, ecological, feminist economics, economic anthropology – build on divergent images of humanity? The fact that different disciplines have such divergent images as their starting point perhaps also explains why there is hardly any interdisciplinary exchanges between anthropologists and behavioural economists, for example, or between mainstream and heterodox economists. To be able to talk to one another, there must be a common language, and no such language exists if those involved cannot even agree on the exact object of study. Moreover, disciplines often adhere implicitly to certain philosophical assumptions about humanity. Within the discipline, the image of humanity is rarely a matter of debate; between disciplines, dialogue is extremely rare. Over the course of an interdisciplinary workshop (held in 2023), an English-language podcast series and a number of group interviews, The Young Academy and those participating in these events have explored how being confronted with other disciplines has influenced their assumptions, opened their eyes and raised new questions. The results of these explorations also serve as input for reflection for the Content and Interdisciplinarity theme. The podcast series is expected to air in 2025.

The Memory of Scent 2.0

This is a follow-up to the earlier project of the same name, which recreated a seventeenth-century perfume and examined the meaning of sensory experiences from the perspective of various different disciplines. The project also established

a link to the past by asking questions about the meaning of sensory experiences in both the past and the present through collaboration between different disciplines. In producing new historical reconstructions of perfume recipes, this project explores interdisciplinary collaboration in depth. A perfumes cabinet (simplicia cabinet) will be installed at the Huygens Museum as a permanent display. The cabinet, which will resemble one that Huygens himself must have had, will offer museum visitors a glimpse of how knowledge was gathered and ordered in the seventeenth century, in a manner that combined the humanities and natural sciences. A neuroscientific smell experiment involving 30 healthy subjects will investigate whether our experience of scent changes over the course of time.

Cantata for Invertebrates/All the Sea You Cannot See

The vast majority of the two to three million species of fauna that have been described are invertebrates, i.e. animals without bones: insects, snails, jellyfish, crabs and sponges, to name but a few groups. As vertebrates, however, humans have an unconscious preference for other vertebrates. Animals without a backbone are ignored or loathed, despite these 'un-charismatic' species being crucial to the functioning of our ecosystems. Without invertebrates, we cannot survive. In this project, a scientist and an artist will unite in an art-science partnership, culminating in an interdisciplinary musical theatre performance that celebrates and expresses the splendid diversity of life forms and raises awareness of their importance. The performance will be a contemplation on the climate crisis, more specifically the position of invertebrates in Earth's largest ecosystem, the sea. *Cantata for Invertebrates* will be performed in 2028 by the Netherlands Bach Society.

Room for Wonder

What do we wish to pass on to future generations? And why? In 2025, The Young Academy will collaborate with the Society of Arts on a time capsule project meant to ensure that objects emblematic of the arts and sciences will be preserved for several generations. The impulse to preserve is a human one that can be traced back to the earliest civilisations. By assembling objects for a time capsule, the Room for Wonder project questions our assumptions about what we wish to pass on and how we do so. The capsule will be filled with objects created by members of The Young Academy and the Society of Arts.

Other time capsule projects often focus on futuristic target groups. The concept of 'legacy' is often associated with the distant future, but the future in fact begins with our own children. This time capsule project will therefore focus on children as a target group. Will we be able to pass on the science and art of today to the next generation?

The Room for Wonder project will match each participating scientist to an artist so that they can develop an object together. The objects will be placed in the time capsule, which can then be sent to schools. The aim is for children to feel a sense of wonder about science and the arts, but even more so about the combination of the two.

Slow Science Hikes

In partnership with local young academies, The Young Academy plans to organise a series of walks in nature during the 2024–2025 and 2025–2026 academic years. Every two months, academics will get together in the vicinity of a university city and go on a nature hike. The idea is to create a relaxed and interdisciplinary setting in which academics can meet and put the concept of ‘slow science’ into practice. The Young Academy hopes these hikes will make academics more broadly aware that aspects of this ‘slow’ approach are already feasible within the existing university structure and will signal to policymakers that allowing their academic staff to ‘slow down’ during working hours can improve the quality of their research.

Walking together invites more open communication than meeting in a conference room; silences are not experienced as uncomfortable, and deep listening comes naturally while walking. There is also an element of serendipity; participants never know in advance who will turn up, who they might find themselves walking alongside and what topics might come up in conversation. The hope is that these hikes will become a creative laboratory for slow science, in which ideas slowly percolate for interdisciplinary partnerships.

5. INTERNATIONALISATION THEME

The Internationalisation theme aims to reinforce the merits, quality and impact of science and scholarship internationally, with activities being organised around two core objectives. The first is to strengthen the position of young scientists and scholars worldwide and improve the diversity and sustainability of science and scholarship in general by aligning with European and global initiatives. Examples include: supporting the representation of young scientists and scholars in science advisory bodies; addressing global challenges, such as carbon emissions in academia, scientists and scholars in high-risk situations, the Sustainability Development Goals and sharing best practices; and partnering with young academies in other countries and meeting their members.

The second objective is to make Dutch academia more inclusive and attractive for international scientists and scholars so that they come to the Netherlands or remain here. Related activities include: publishing virtually all Young Academy communications and documents in two languages; updating *A Beginner's Guide to Dutch Academia*; taking stock of any forms of exclusion or unfairness at universities; and strengthening the ties with the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The Young Academy collaborates with young academies in other countries and international scientific and scholarly organisations, including the Global Young Academy (GYA), the Young Academy of Europe (YAE), the European National Young Academies (ENYA), Neth-ER, the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP), the European Commission and other European organisations.

Networking with other international young academies is important for setting up activities in an international context, including in the area of science policy, but also the Sustainable Development Goals formulated by the United Nations, addressing problems facing society that are meant to be solved before 2030.

The Young Academy also wants the voice of young researchers to be heard in connection with European science policy. It participates in various European stakeholder platforms and working groups and in 2024–2025 has a seat on the board of the European Young Academies Scientific Advice Structure (YASAS), which participates as an equal partner in SAPEA, part of the European Science Advice Mechanism.

In 2025, the following activities will take place under this theme:

A Beginner's Guide to Dutch Academia 2.0

In 2022, The Young Academy published a new online version of *A Beginner's Guide to Dutch Academia*, a handbook comprising mainly factual information about the academic system in the Netherlands. The Young Academy's aim with this publication is to assist researchers who are new to the Netherlands in getting started within the Dutch system and its work culture. The guide will be updated each year.

Safeguarding the international component of Dutch academia

The international component of Dutch academia is currently under threat, with questions being raised by politicians and in public debate regarding the value of its international researchers, lecturers and students. This issue came to the fore owing to the 'Internationalisation in Balance' bill (*Wetsvoorstel internationalisering in balans*), introduced in parliament in response to concerns about a preponderance of international students at many Dutch universities and to promote the use of Dutch as the language of instruction in higher education. The Young Academy has consistently stressed the importance of internationalisation and the risks that these measures may pose to the quality of teaching and research. We will continue joining forces with institutional partners and universities in particular in championing internationalisation as a cornerstone of Dutch academia.

Refugee scientists/scholars

In 2016, The Young Academy launched the Science Buddies project to match refugee scientists and scholars with their peers in the Netherlands. In close cooperation with The Young Academy and the Foundation for Refugee Students (UAF), the Dutch Research Council (NWO) then developed 'Hestia – Impulse for Refugees in Science', a programme meant to better help refugee academics find paid work in Dutch academia. The Young Academy is helping to evaluate the programme and is committed to working with the other parties involved, such as the UAF, to support refugee academics in the Netherlands in various ways.

In 2023, The Young Academy published *Support for Refugee Scholars in the Netherlands*, an advisory report in which it explained the problems public knowledge institutions face in this regard and recommended ways to structurally improve the situation for all refugee academics in the Netherlands. Recommendations include developing a permanent, non-competitive structure for supporting refugee academics in an acute crisis and in the medium term.

These activities will continue in 2025, with all parties involved considering how best to help them. In addition, members of The Young Academy are working to support colleagues in countries where academic freedom is under threat, for example by ensuring that temporary and flexible bursary programmes are available for refugee academics in both the acute and medium term.

Caribbean part of the Netherlands

The Young Academy is committed to making the Dutch academic landscape more accessible to people from the Caribbean part of the Netherlands. It consistently draws attention to this topic in its discussions with university governing bodies.

The Young Academy is a member of the liaison group for setting up a research network organisation, the Dutch Caribbean Research Platform (DUCARP). In 2024, The Young Academy joined the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science's knowledge mission to Aruba and Curaçao. At the Ministry's invitation, it cooperated with the Dutch Research Council and the Royal Academy in organising a sub-session on research and innovation in the Caribbean part of the Netherlands. The sub-session focused mainly on addressing the barriers that Master's students, PhD candidates and postdocs encounter when seeking access to funding, and more generally on how to improve research ecosystems. Drawing on the insights gained during this sub-session and elsewhere, The Young Academy intends to continue exploring opportunities to support young researchers in the Caribbean part of the Netherlands as effectively as possible.

In 2025, The Young Academy will continue its efforts to improve the ties between science and scholarship in the Caribbean and European parts of the Kingdom. It will also consider how best to identify the needs and requirements of young researchers on the islands, for example by setting up a society for researchers there, or by contributing to a Graduate School in order to facilitate progress in PhD programmes. Another facet being explored is how to involve researchers from the Caribbean part of the Kingdom more closely in Faces of Science and other Young Academy initiatives. Scientists and scholars from the Caribbean part of the Kingdom have been able to join The Young Academy since 2022.

6. COMMUNICATION

The Young Academy intends to continue pursuing a number of communication goals. Work began on a new website in 2024, which should come online in 2025. The website is a key tool in The Young Academy's external communication strategy. In addition, we plan to streamline internal communication by working with Microsoft Teams starting in autumn 2024. The Teams environment will ultimately replace the online 'members section'. Finally, The Young Academy will not be reticent about communicating its views in the media and to the national government and the political world.

Important target groups for The Young Academy are:

- policymakers and organisations in science and scholarship, i.e. the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Universities of the Netherlands (UNL), the Netherlands Federation of University Medical Centres (NFU), the Dutch Research Council (NWO), the Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMW) and university executive boards;
- young and older scientists and scholars in the Kingdom of the Netherlands (and abroad, for certain projects);
- fellow organisations in the Netherlands and abroad, such as national and local young academies;
- individuals with an interest in science or scholarship and groups in society who are less likely to be exposed to science and scholarship;
- members and alumni of The Young Academy, the Royal Academy's Learned Society and the Society of Arts;
- members of the Dutch House of Representatives holding the science portfolio;
- media, journalists, opinion leaders, individuals with an interest in science or scholarship and higher education.

There may also be other target groups for specific objectives and projects.

The Young Academy promotes itself and its projects with the support of the Communication & Information Department of the Royal Academy's Bureau. It seeks advice about communication at an early stage of project development so that the project can be launched as effectively as possible. Where necessary, a communication plan is drawn up for each project or activity, with a strategy for dealing with target groups, the message and communication tools.

APPENDIX: TIMELINE IN 2025

Calendar of recurring activities for The Young Academy

Month	Meetings of members	New members and selection committee	Annual documents cycle	Young Academy Grants Committee
January	30/1 at the Trippenhuis	The Board welcomes new members, with photos and preparations for the installation gathering		
February				First round deadline: 15/2
March	27/3 at the Trippenhuis	27/3: installation of new members and change of Board	Approval of draft Annual Report at members' meeting	Allocation of grants
April	01/4: change of Board	01/4: start of membership of The Young Academy; start of submission of recommendations for membership of The Young Academy	Final version of Annual Report	
May	16-17/5: members' weekend at Ernst Sillem Hoeve in Den Dolder			
June		Mid-June: deadline for submission of recommendations for membership of The Young Academy		
July	Twentieth anniversary of the founding of The Young Academy			
August				
September	25/9 away day	Selection of new members and call for new Board members	Approval of draft Annual Plan and draft budget at members' meeting	
October			Final version of Annual Plan and budget	Second round deadline: 15/10
November	27/11 at the Trippenhuis			Allocation of grants
December				