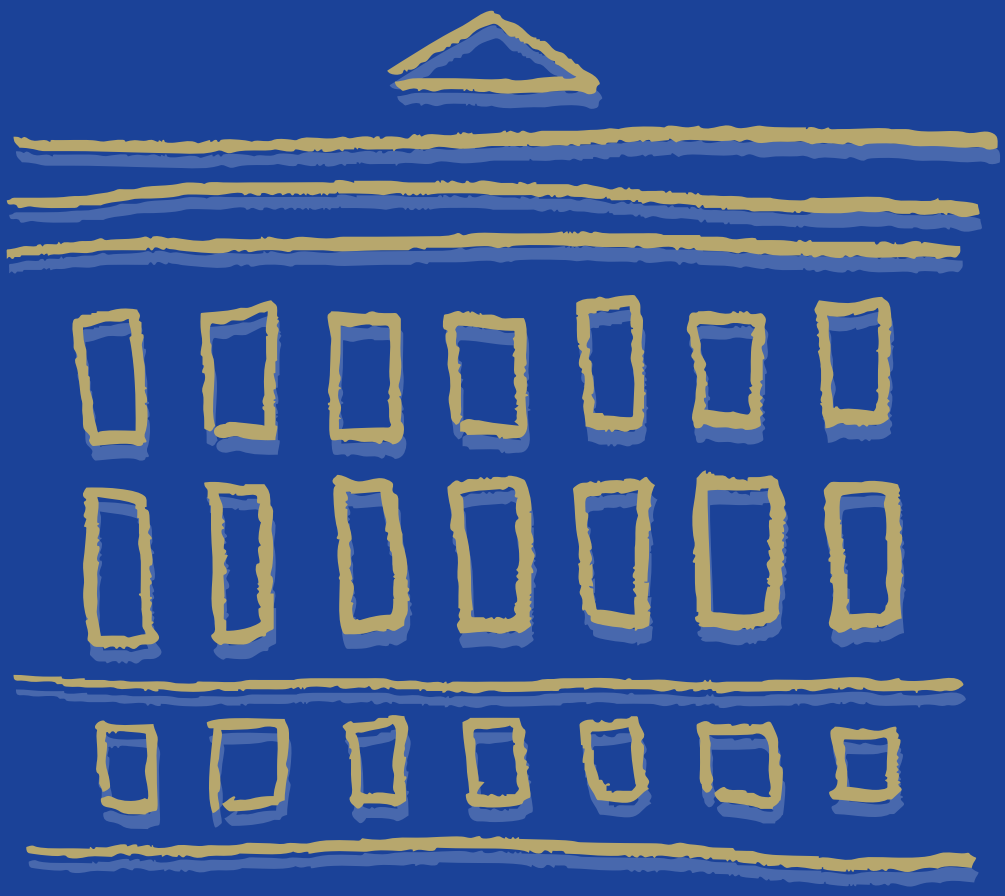
de jonge akademie

THE YOUNG ACADEMY ANNUAL REPORT 2025



THE YOUNG ACADEMY IS AN INDEPENDENT DIVISION OF THE
ROYAL NETHERLANDS ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES (KNAW).

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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 Report for 2025. This Annual Report for 2025 was approved by the members of The Young Academy voting on 27 April 2026.

PREFACE

The Young Academy is committed to securing the future of science and scholarship. It does this by communicating the value of research and by helping to improve the science system. It is a platform of fifty inspired academics who conduct research, advise, share knowledge and bring people together, and who do all this while taking a special interest in young scientists and scholars. Its members are regularly invited to appear in the media and are regarded as serious dialogue partners by national and international authorities and policymakers. Members are also actively involved in raising awareness of science and scholarship at schools and public events. They make a major contribution to Royal Academy councils, committees, assessment committees and juries, and to various events organised by its Learned Society. The strength of The Young Academy is to be found in its deeply felt enthusiasm for science and scholarship and the desire to share that enthusiasm with society.

Unquestionably, the high point of 2025 was The Young Academy's twentieth anniversary. It celebrated this momentous occasion with a two-day event attended by, among others, Willem-Alexander, King of the Netherlands. During the festivities, we not only reflected on the past but above all looked forward to the future, together with our alumni and other special guests. The focus was on topics that have interested The Young Academy since its founding, including the relationship between science/scholarship and society, the international context of research, and the need for a sustainable and futureproof academic system.

Other key themes in 2025 included first-generation academics, digital autonomy and environmental sustainability in higher education and research. April saw publication of the report *First but not least*, based on interviews with first-generation academics about their experience within Dutch academia. This was followed in June by *In Control: A Manifesto for a Responsible Digital Future in Higher Education*. The Young Academy is using this manifesto to launch a broad discussion about the values that underpin the use of big tech systems at higher education institutions. In November, the Green Young Academy published a report subjecting the climate plans of all Dutch universities to a critical review. The report reveals considerable room for improvement when it comes to coordination between the universities and their ambitions. The manifesto *Think green, act green,* published at the same time, calls on all Dutch public knowledge institutions to develop ambitious sustainability plans and to work together to accelerate the climate transition.

Politics and geopolitics remained sources of concern in 2025, including cuts to research funding in the Netherlands, the precarious situations faced by researchers abroad, and faculty reorganisations in the Netherlands. Prior to the country's general election, The Young Academy called on political parties to keep the Netherlands healthy and resilient by investing in science. It published a dashboard based on an analysis of the various party platforms, giving voters a better understanding of their plans for research and education. The Young Academy also published a critical review of the new Tulip Fund in which it called on nominating organisations to focus on protecting scientists and scholars who are unable to carry out their work in safety.

Eddie Brummelman
Chair, April 2024 – April 2026

CONTENTS

BACKGROUND 3
PREFACE 4

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW 7
   1.1 The Young Academy's objectives 7
   1.2 Core activities 7
   1.3 Governance and organisation 8
   1.4 Members' days 9
   1.5 Themes 10

2. SCIENCE POLICY THEME 11
   Highlights in 2025 11

3. SCIENCE AND SOCIETY THEME 14
   Highlights in 2025 14

4. CONTENT AND INTERDISCIPLINARITY THEME 16
   Highlights in 2025 16

5. INTERNATIONALISATION THEME 18
   Highlights in 2025 that align with the first objective 19
   Highlights in 2025 that align with the second objective 19

6. THE ARTS AND SCIENCE THEME 21
   Arts x Science x Society 21
   Room for Wonder 21

7. UNIVERSITY TEACHING THEME 23
   'Bij de les' 23
   Negative Impact of Student Evaluations 23

8. YOUNG ACADEMY COMMITTEES 24

APPENDICES 26
   1. Members as of April 2025 26
   2. New members in 2025 28
   3. Project grants in 2025 29
   4. Participation by Young Academy members in Royal Academy councils, advisory committees, selection committees, assessment committees and juries and in the science committees of Royal Academy institutes 30

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

1.1 The Young Academy's objectives

The Young Academy was established by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) in 2005. It is a society of young researchers who received their PhD no more than ten years before being invited to join. Its main objectives are:

1. to actively bring promising young researchers into contact with disciplines outside their own area of specialisation and with opportunities for undertaking interdisciplinary research;
2. to encourage young researchers to develop and communicate views on the future of their own discipline, on collaboration with other disciplines, and on science policy;
3. to encourage young researchers to communicate their scientific/scholarly insights to the general public;
4. to support young researchers in their progress as scientists and scholars;
5. to encourage young researchers to consider the Dutch academic context within an international framework and to urge them to reflect on the position of young researchers from abroad who work in Dutch academia.

1.2 Core activities

With a view to achieving its main objectives, The Young Academy engages in the following activities:

- It actively brings early-career researchers into contact with disciplines outside their own area of specialisation and in doing so encourages interdisciplinary research and education.
- It asks members to make an active contribution to the future of their own and ancillary disciplines and/or to interdisciplinary research, and to formulate their views on science policy.
- It consults with science organisations and policymakers and advises them on science policy.
- It conveys its fascination with scientific insights and the conduct of research to school pupils and students and to the public, and considers the matter of valorisation in the broadest sense of the word.
- It has a grants programme to provide financial support for members if a study or project is in line with its objectives.
- It makes an active contribution to internationalisation, for example through exchange programmes with other young academies (both national and international) and international organisations.

The Young Academy also wishes:

- to express its opinions and recommendations in the clearest possible terms to government and the political world as well as in the media;
- to promote exchanges and cooperation with all parts of the Royal Academy, including the Society of Arts;
- to critically monitor important developments, such as new investment in research and implementation of plans concerning recognition and rewards for researchers;
- to continue to encourage discussion of research and the public relevance of science, for example by means of lectures and symposia;
- to experiment with methods for encouraging children, adolescents, and the general public to take an interest in and learn about science;
- to continue developing ideas and recommendations for interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary cooperation.

1.3 Governance and organisation

Although facilitated by the Royal Academy, The Young Academy operates independently within the former's framework.

Until 1 April 2025, The Young Academy's Board members were:

- Eddie Brummelman (chair, Science & Society portfolio)
- Léonie de Jonge (vice-chair, chair of the project grants committee until 1 January 2025)
- Noel de Miranda (member, Internationalisation portfolio)
- Sanli Faez (member, Science & Society and Science Policy portfolios)
- Else Starkenburg (member, Content & Interdisciplinarity and The Arts & Science portfolios).

Since 1 April 2025, the members of the Board have been:

- Eddie Brummelman (chair, technical chair of selection committee, coordination and general matters)
- Daphina Misiedjan (vice-chair, chair of the project grants committee)
- Else Starkenburg (member, Content & Interdisciplinarity and The Arts & Science portfolios).
- Sanli Faez (member, Science & Society and Science Policy portfolios)
- Jim Portegies (member, Science Policy portfolio).

The Young Academy's Board is accountable to the general meeting of members of The Young Academy and to the Board of the Royal Academy. The Young Academy's Board is a facilitatory body, concerning itself primarily with guiding and coordinating ideas and the activities initiated by the members. It is also the first point of contact for external parties and for the Royal Academy.

The Board of The Young Academy meets every two weeks. In April of each year, The Young Academy renders its account to the Board of the Royal Academy based on its Annual Report, and in the autumn it submits an Annual Plan and multi-year budget for approval. The Young Academy is supported by staff from the Forum, Advice & Research Department, the Communication Department, and other supporting departments of the Royal Academy (Legal Affairs, Board of Management, Facility Services, Information Policy and ICT Services).

1.4 Members' days

All members of The Young Academy meet five times a year for a members' meeting and a themed programme. Besides the standard members' day components – such as feedback on projects and presentations by members – the following activities took place at the 2025 members' days:

- 30 January. The first members' day of the year featured a session devoted to the follow-up to the 'Everyone Professor!' campaign. Members shared what they had experienced and what they thought about the changes currently taking place at universities in the Netherlands. During the general meeting, members discussed establishing a new theme, University Teaching, with a view to emphasising the importance of teaching in academia. Members also considered how best to deal with strikes. The mood during members' meetings had revealed a strong willingness to strike, and the issue of industrial action remains very relevant. Should this happen, what would The Young Academy do? Would our members go on strike in a personal capacity? And what do we mean by 'going on strike'?

- 27 March. This early spring members' day was devoted to the topic of 'A smarter academic year'. Representatives from the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) explained the current situation and offered a preview of the interim evaluation. Members talked about the present state of affairs and also looked ahead. They discussed the relationship between academia and defence and The Young Academy's role in this area. The backdrop to this discussion was the broader public and political debate about the need to strengthen defence capabilities in these geopolitically uncertain times. The evening event featured a celebratory ceremony to welcome our new members and say farewell to the ten members who were inaugurated in 2020.

- 16 and 17 May. The annual members' weekend saw participants attending a training session on negotiation in academia. Members of the Society of Arts were invited to dinner to encourage interaction between the two organisations. The Saturday began with a slow science hike. This series of hikes was initiated by Pieter Coppens to encourage a creative 'slow science' lab, a place to incubate ideas for interdisciplinary collaborations and allow academics some breathing space to reflect on their work,

sparking creativity and innovation. The final event was a panel discussion with Jeroen de Ridder and Liesbeth Bik about public and political resistance to science, scholarship and the arts. Members debated the current social climate and the resistance that some academics and artists have encountered from politicians and society.

- 25 September. As is customary, the September members' day was held at one of the organisations with which members are affiliated, in this case at the International Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, part of Erasmus University Rotterdam. Daphina Misiedjan introduced members to the institute, the work that it undertakes, and her own position at Erasmus University. The main focus was on the city of The Hague as a centre for justice and peace. Members paid a working visit to the Netherlands' Council of State, where State Councillor and Young Academy alumnus Janneke Gerards explained the Council's work and her role on the Council. This was followed by a tour of post-colonial monuments in city centre.
-
- 27 November. The final members' day of the year followed up on the earlier debate concerning the relationship between academia and defence. Members participated in a deep democracy exercise that captured their diverse perspectives. This type of exercise organically reveals differences of opinion based on the positions taken by the participants. The session highlighted the need for appropriate framing when discussing academia and defence, including such topics as war, historical interdependence, values, and the various roles that academics can play.

1.5 Themes

The Young Academy focuses on six themes:

1. Science Policy
2. Science and Society
3. Content and Interdisciplinarity
4. Internationalisation
5. The Arts and Science
6. University Teaching

Each Young Academy member devotes themselves to at least one theme. Members may also organise and carry out activities in smaller project groups and working groups, for example by making use of the project grants available to Young Academy members. There are strategic vision documents for each theme; these are updated regularly with new annual plans and reviews of the priorities set for that theme.

2. SCIENCE POLICY THEME

The Young Academy wishes to influence discussion of national science policy by being critical and constructive. While it is never a policy author or co-author itself, it advises policymakers on science policy and continues to monitor policy critically as a representative of researchers active in various disciplines and at various universities or institutes.

Current topics of interest or topics that are not on the agenda, or not prioritised there, are discussed in administrative consultations with such parties as the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), the Dutch Research Council (NWO), Universities of the Netherlands (UNL), during annual meetings with university governing bodies (in 2025, that of Erasmus University Rotterdam), during debates, in statements, and in other administrative discussions.

In 2025 too, The Young Academy was regularly invited to act as a formal or informal partner in discussions of policy intentions or preparation of policy assessments. For example, there have been periodic consultations with the Ministry's Research & Science Policy directorate on such matters as structural investment in science, diversity and inclusion, the position of early-career researchers, and how to reduce systemic pressure. The Board of The Young Academy also holds annual talks with the Executive Board of the Dutch Research Council. The Young Academy is furthermore involved in the Parliament & Science partnership; twice a year, the Speaker of the Dutch House of Representatives welcomes the chairs of the science organisations behind Parliament & Science to discuss the status of the partnership.

Highlights in 2025

Big tech in academic education

Big tech firms are playing a growing role in academic institutions, for example in research and education. Inherent in decisions to open the door to such technical systems is a fundamental discussion about values. In the view of most universities, however, decisions concerning whether to use technical systems and which ones are purely administrative 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. In June, it consequently published *In Control*. A Manifesto for a Responsible Digital Future in Higher Education.

The Green Young Academy

In 2024, members of The Young Academy set up the Green Young Academy, a national alliance for climate action and initiatives within Dutch academia involving members of local young academies in the Netherlands. In 2025, it published *Thirteen shades of green*, in which it compared and analysed the climate plans of the Dutch universities. It also released its *Think green, act green* manifesto calling on public knowledge institutions to commit to specific action to promote sustainability in education, research, operations and governance.

Cuts in research funding and the general election

In terms of science policy, the year 2025 was (once again) largely dominated by the proposed cuts in research funding and attitudes towards the internationalisation of academia in the Netherlands. The Young Academy voiced its opinions in various ways. For example, in the run-up to the general election, it called on Dutch political parties to keep the Netherlands healthy and resilient by 1) investing in research and development, 2) investing in education, and 3) protecting and investing in international talent. In October 2025, it released an election dashboard analysing the election platforms of the various parties against the foregoing three points. The dashboard, which was the outcome of this analysis, showed how the choices the parties had made affected the future of academia and young researchers.

Profkip

Unequal opportunities in academia is a recurring topic of debate in The Young Academy. Both the outcome and the catalyst of inequality are academics who supervise so many PhD candidates that their supervision suffers. They are known as *profkippen*, a portmanteau of the Dutch word *plofkip* – a popular name for a broiler chicken – and 'professor'. The Young Academy is keen to start a conversation about the profkip, the quality of PhD supervision, and the number of PhD candidates assigned to any one supervisor. The project will continue in 2026.

The AI challenge

The aim of this project is to raise awareness within the academic community of the negative environmental impacts of AI, with a view to promoting its responsible use. The project was launched in 2025. The project group aims to survey the environmental impact of AI use by reviewing the literature, consulting experts, and collecting quantitative data from university IT departments. The data it collects will be used as input to promote the responsible use of AI in academia among students and staff.

Everyone Professor!

In March of 2023, The Young Academy declared that year to be 'Everyone Professor Year'. The idea was to build an academic climate in which academics would be judged on their values and competences instead of their academic title.

In 2024, a survey was conducted among local young academies to clarify what changes universities had implemented since the launch of the 'Everyone Professor!' campaign. The Young Academy published an evaluation and recommendations on its website in 2025.

The Academy Thermometer

The *Academy Thermometer* survey was conducted in December 2023 examining the mental well-being of academics. The Young Academy hopes that the survey will deliver valuable insights into aspects of working in academia that have a positive or negative impact on mental health. The results of the survey were analysed in 2024 and 2025 and the report will appear in 2026.

A Smarter Academic Year

The Young Academy's efforts in the project 'A Smarter Academic Year' have borne fruit in the past few years. Former Education minister Robbert Dijkgraaf invited universities to work on designing a 'smarter' academic year and to undertake pilot projects exploring how to do this. The Young Academy is actively involved in monitoring the pilot projects, which will run until mid-2027. An interim evaluation was published in 2025 describing the first findings and deliverables. The interim evaluation shared these findings based on three 'levers' for designing a smarter academic year. The Young Academy has published a response.

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 a path for discussion. A particular point of interest is the role of the inner critic during meetings and other gatherings. To what extent do participants feel free to speak their mind? This project got off to a start in 2024 with interactive sessions during Young Academy members' days. 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 will appear on The Young Academy website.

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. We do this, for example, by familiarising children with scientific research and by collaborating with partners outside academia. Members also contribute regularly to national or local newspapers and magazines and appear on radio and television programmes.

The Young Academy also engages in discussion with government, the Dutch Research Council, university governing bodies and the National Centre of Expertise on Science & Society-The Netherlands (NEWS) about such topics as recognition and rewards for science communication and science participation 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 can give free rein to their thoughts.

Highlights in 2025

First but not least: Experiences of first-generation academics in the Netherlands

Educational inequality is widespread; children without university-educated parents receive lower marks, are advised to attend less academically challenging secondary schools, and are less likely to attend university themselves. And if they do go to university, they often feel less at home there. The aim of the First but not least project was to interview first-generation academics about their experiences in academia in the Netherlands. A report was published in April recounting their experiences and making recommendations for attaining greater equality of opportunity within Dutch academia.

Lil' Scientist

One objective of The Young Academy is to convey enthusiasm for and knowledge of science to children, young people and the general public, and to experiment with ways to achieve this. That is also the purpose of the Lil' Scientist project, which received an award from the Dutch National Research Agenda in 2022. The Young Academy and the IMC Weekend School developed instructive and challenging citizen science experiments for children who are otherwise less likely to come across science. They are collaborating in this project with the Citizen Science Lab Leiden, the NEMO Science Museum, and New Scientist magazine. This year, the project team gave twenty lessons at the Weekend School, divided over ten different classes. In other words, the team worked closely with 200 to 300 children. The Lil' Scientist lesson materials in fact reached even more children because

they were used in mainstream Weekend School and primary school classrooms. All of the materials are now publicly available and can therefore be embedded in mainstream education.

Collective Knowledge Development

Transdisciplinary research incorporates the knowledge and expertise of civil-society stakeholders and businesses throughout the entire research process. Research funding bodies are increasingly funding transdisciplinary research, but setting up such research and carrying it out is complicated. In its project Collective Knowledge Development, The Young Academy is bringing together the views of researchers, civil-society partners and staff of the Dutch Research Council to identify the obstacles involved. Part of the project is being carried out in collaboration with the Dutch Research Council's Knowledge Platform for Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research. An initial analysis was produced in 2024 and 2025 based on questionnaire responses, interviews and round-table discussions. In 2026, The Young Academy will publish its recommendations, with clear guidelines for researchers, the Dutch Research Council and public knowledge institutions on best practices for carrying out and supporting interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research.

The PhD Programme of the Future

A significant proportion (40%) of university academic work is carried out by PhD candidates, many of them young people on a temporary appointment of three to five years. The PhD Programme of the Future project aims to help PhD candidates and their supervisors establish more successful ties with society as they conduct their research. A guidebook with inspiring examples and specific recommendations will appear in 2026. This project also identified how much scope there currently is for 'doing things differently' at Dutch universities, so that issues can be addressed in conversation with the universities and their graduate schools. The ultimate aim of the project is not only to make PhD programmes more transparent and to spark dialogue with relevant sectors; it is also to encourage researchers at all levels of academia to embed their work more broadly within wider society. A podcast about the PhD Programme of the Future was recorded during the anniversary celebrations and was released in late 2025.

In the media

Members of The Young Academy appear regularly in the media to talk about their research or their Young Academy activities. For example, our chair appeared on NPO Radio 1 to talk about the situation of researchers in the United States and about first-generation academics. Members were also interviewed by Dutch newspapers *Trouw* and *Financieele Dagblad* about The Young Academy's stated views on specific topics, including the impact of budget cuts and big tech in higher education. In addition, news about The Young Academy is almost always covered in the various university news publications.

4. CONTENT AND INTERDISCIPLINARITY THEME

The Content and Interdisciplinarity theme provides a platform for content exchange and cooperation. Members interested in this theme consider topics of scientific and scholarly reflection and public issues that require interdisciplinary input.

In 2025, The Young Academy once more gave content – i.e. research (by members) – a prominent role at members' meetings by scheduling short lectures. This approach encourages an exchange of content and inspiration, and provides a starting point for interdisciplinary collaboration.

Young Academy members and alumni make their subject expertise available by sitting on various Royal Academy and Society of Arts committees and juries (see Appendix 4 for a detailed list). Members also gave lectures during the Royal Academy members' days.

Highlights in 2025

Slow Science Hikes

Slow Science Hikes is a Young Academy hiking group offering academic staff an opportunity to meet and chat in a relaxed, interdisciplinary setting. In partnership with local young academies, The Young Academy organised a series of walks in the countryside during the 2024-2025 academic year. They took place every two months in the vicinity of a university city. The Young Academy hopes these hikes will make academics more 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.

Reading group 'Academics in the Public Sphere'

The reading group organises a bi-monthly interdisciplinary 'conceptual laboratory' involving collective reflection on the concept of the 'public sphere', public deliberation and the role of academia/academics within it. How do academics relate to the public sphere? Are they equal participants there alongside other members of the public, do they have a separate position with different responsibilities, or should they in fact remain entirely outside it, or even be shielded from it?

The reading club's objectives are:

- Intellectual leadership: become more astute thinkers and discussion partners regarding the relationship between academia and the public sphere;
- Common ground: create a common language and conceptual toolbox for collaborative thinking;
- Slow science: create a venue where we can discuss and reflect on problems (for example 'academia versus the public sphere') in a collaborative and interdisciplinary manner, without any predetermined expectations regarding output.

The Real Homo Economicus

'The Real Homo Economicus' project started in 2023 with group interviews and an interdisciplinary workshop in which The Young Academy and participants considered how exploring other disciplines influences their assumptions, opens their eyes, and raises new questions. The main question examined was: how is it that all the various disciplines that study economic activity – behavioural, financial, political, institutional, ecological and feminist economics and economic anthropology – are based on divergent images of humanity? The fact that different disciplines have such divergent images as their starting point perhaps also explains why there are hardly any interdisciplinary exchanges between anthropologists and behavioural economists, for example, or between mainstream and heterodox economists. In addition to providing input for an English-language podcast that was released in 2025, the project results also serve as a topic for reflection within the Content and Interdisciplinarity theme.

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, even though the 'uncharismatic' invertebrates are crucial for the workings of our ecosystems. In this project, collaboration between a scientist and an artist will culminate in an interdisciplinary musical theatre performance that contemplates 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.

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.

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; helping to address global challenges such as the Sustainability Development Goals, carbon emissions in academia or scientists and scholars in high-risk situations; and sharing best practices and partnering with young academies in other countries and meeting their members.

The second objective is to work towards an academic community in the Netherlands that is more inclusive and attractive for international scientists and scholars. Related activities include: publishing virtually all Young Academy communications and documents in two languages; updating *A Beginner's Guide to Dutch Academia*; surveying inclusion and fairness at universities; and strengthening the ties with the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The Young Academy also wants the voice of young researchers to be heard in connection with European science policy. The Young Academy is a member of the board of the Young Academies Scientific Advice Structure (YASAS), which participates as an equal partner in the Science Advice for Policy by European Academies (SAPEA), part of the European Commission's Science Advice Mechanism (SAM). In 2025, Noel de Miranda was elected president of YASAS.

The Young Academy also 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.

Membership of international organisations and cooperation with them:

- The Young Academy promotes international cooperation in exchanges with other young academies and organisations in a European and global context.
- The chair and the holder of the Internationalisation portfolio attend the annual European National Young Academies meeting. In 2025, the meeting took place in Bern, Switzerland.

- The Young Academy is a member of the European Young Academies Scientific Advice Structure (YASAS), which participates as an equal partner in SAPEA, part of the EU's Science Advice Mechanism (SAM). Through this membership, The Young Academy contributes to science for policy and the publication of (evidence-based) recommendations for the European Commission.

Highlights in 2025 that align with the first objective

Refugee scientists/scholars

Following The Young Academy's 2023 report *Support for At-Risk Scholars in the Netherlands. Facilities, problems, and recommendations for structured support for at-risk scholars in the Netherlands*, members have frequent conversations with the relevant parties about how to improve the system, including Stichting voor Vluchteling-Studenten UAF and the Dutch Research Council. The Young Academy also issued a critical review of the new Tulip Fund in 2025, calling on institutions to base nominations for grants from the fund not only on scholarly excellence but above all on the need to protect scholars who are unable to carry out their work in safety. The fund should also focus on young academics from across the entire scientific and scholarly spectrum. Coordination between organisations eligible to request funding is therefore essential.

Highlights in 2025 that align with the second objective

A Beginner's Guide to Dutch Academia 2.0

The Young Academy published *A Beginner's Guide to Dutch Academia*, a handbook of information about the higher education and research system in the Netherlands, in 2018. An updated version appeared online in 2022. The Young Academy hopes this publication will help researchers who are new to the Netherlands get started in the Dutch system and its work culture. The guide will be updated annually.

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*, WIB], introduced in Parliament in response to concerns about a preponderance of international students at many Dutch universities and meant to promote the use of Dutch as the language of instruction in higher education. The Young Academy consistently stresses the importance of internationalisation and the risks that these interventions may pose to the quality of education and research. We will continue joining forces with institutional partners – and universities in particular – in championing internationalisation as a cornerstone of Dutch academia.

In 2025, The Young Academy published a statement in which we argue that academic internationalisation must be preserved to strengthen Dutch society. The Young Academy published this statement in response to UNL's package of self-regulation measures, which include a proposal to discontinue English-taught psychology programmes in Amsterdam, Utrecht, Rotterdam, Tilburg, and Leiden. The Young Academy considers these plans inefficient and believes they would make universities vulnerable to more harmful political influence in the future. In its statement, The Young Academy therefore warns UNL not go along with the narrative of internationalisation as a 'problem'. We also argue that the proposed self-regulation only makes matters worse. The Young Academy believes that the best way forward is to scrap the WIB and proposed self-regulation measures while promoting the Dutch language at the universities.

6. THE ARTS AND SCIENCE THEME

The Young Academy introduced The Arts and Science theme in 2025 as a joint theme with the Society of Arts. It brings 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 and launch interdisciplinary projects on a regular basis. The theme seeks a robust approach to continuing events, such as Mingler Live, which brings together artists and scientists from inside and outside the Royal Academy, showcases art/science projects and encourages collaborative partnerships.

Arts x Science x Society

Collaboration between the two domains on socially relevant themes, both fundamental and applied, can offer new perspectives on such issues as climate change, 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 is never greater than the sum of its parts. The aim of Arts x Science x Society is to change this by making such efforts visible, systematically examining what they signify, and reinforcing the role that they play for society. In 2025, members of the working group built 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.

Room for Wonder

Not so long ago, scientists and scholars were 'all-rounders'. They did not restrict themselves to a single field or niche; their interests transcended disciplines. The embodiment of this universal curiosity often took the form of a 'cabinet of curiosities' (in German aptly named a *Wunderkammer*), in which natural specimens, *objets d'art*, technical apparatus, and a great deal besides together symbolised the whole of science, representing an all-embracing sense of wonder.

The Young Academy wishes to recapture this sense of wonder, of all-encompassing science and scholarship within a single space. In collaboration with the Society of Arts, we intend to construct a compact cabinet of curiosities, within which artists and scientists will jointly capture various forms of scientific research in objects that invite exploration of science. We plan to take this cabinet of curiosities on tour to libraries across the Netherlands, so that everyone can marvel at it.

7. UNIVERSITY TEACHING THEME

A decision was taken in 2025 to establish a University Teaching theme. By doing this, The Young Academy wishes to emphasise the importance of teaching for scientific and scholarly pursuit. The continuing emphasis on research at Dutch universities (including in academic career policy) the close relationship between teaching and research and the importance of that relationship. In addition, the rising competition for research funding is at the expense of university teaching. Academics who are successful in acquiring external research funding see their research workload increase, leaving them less time to invest in teaching.

In recent years, a number of projects have therefore been initiated with the explicit aim of highlighting just how important teaching is in academia. The aim of this theme is to promote and contribute to quality teaching, and to stress the importance of quality and interdisciplinary teaching for scientific and scholarly pursuit. The theme has just been launched and will be expanded on in the year ahead.

'Bij de les'

Dutch academia is groaning under the weight of plans for major cutbacks, and it is not inconceivable that university staff will be made redundant. Meanwhile, there is a significant shortage of teachers at secondary and primary schools, and communication between schools and universities needs improvement. Existing initiatives that encouraged synergy between universities and primary and secondary schools – such as the Doctoral Grant for Teachers (awarded by the Dutch Research Council) – were scrapped or scaled back in 2025. As a result, much of the potential, energy and enthusiasm around teaching may go unused. In the Synergy with Schools project, The Young Academy intends producing a strategic vision document that identifies opportunities to harness this potential and effectively match academics to shortages in primary and secondary education, allowing them to teach in primary and secondary schools while continuing to perform their main duties at university.

Negative Impact of Student Evaluations

A project studying the Negative Impact of Student Evaluations aims to shed light on the detrimental effect of student evaluations in higher education and to spark a debate on how teaching is assessed at universities. That is because research shows that student surveys do not actually measure the quality of teaching but do have an overly negative impact, including verbal abuse, a culture of blame and disrupted student-teacher relationships.

8. YOUNG ACADEMY COMMITTEES

The Young Academy has two standing committees:

The Young Academy project grants committee

Young Academy project grants make it possible for members to work together to develop plans and ideas that fit in with The Young Academy's objectives (see Section 1.1). If a plan contributes to one or more of those objectives, it may be eligible for funding. The associated project or activity need not be relevant for all members of The Young Academy. The Young Academy's project grants committee is responsible for allocating a limited number of grants. As usual, there were two rounds of allocations in 2025. See Appendix 3 for a list of projects that were allocated a Young Academy project grant.

In 2025, the members of the project grants committee were:

- Daphina Misiedjan (committee chair and responsible Board member)
- Tazuko van Berkel
- David Fernandez Rivas
- Lizzà Hendriks
- Jim Portegies

Selection committee

The Young Academy selection committee consists of four members, two from The Young Academy itself and two from the Royal Academy. The technical chair of the selection committee is the chair of The Young Academy. The committee selects ten new members of The Young Academy each year.

A total of 82 candidates (79 of them unique) were nominated for selection in 2026. During the first selection round, points were awarded based on the content of the nominations, taking into account the criteria set out in *The Young Academy's Selection Regulations*.

Based on this round of assessment, twenty candidates were invited for an interview with the selection committee, with further assessment being based on the following criteria:

- fascination with and passion for scientific/scholarly research and teaching;
- a wish to play an active role in The Young Academy and interesting ideas about how they would do so;
- enthusiasm for such topics as science policy, science and society, the connection between research and teaching, interdisciplinary collaboration, or internationalisation.

After the interviews, ten candidates were selected as members. Appendix 2 lists those selected (in 2024) to join The Young Academy as members in 2025.

In 2025, the members of the selection committee were:

- Bernet Elzinga, Professor of Stress-related Psychopathology, Leiden University (Royal Academy member)
- Asghar Seyed-Gohrab, Professor of Iranian and Persian Studies, Utrecht University (Royal Academy member)
- Bas Borsje, Associate Professor of Nature-based Flood Protection, University of Twente (Young Academy member)
- Vicky Kosta, Assistant Professor of European Law, Leiden University (Young Academy member)
- Eddie Brummelman, The Young Academy's chair, served as the technical chair of the selection committee.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Members as of April 2025

Name	Date of inauguration	Institute	Discipline(s)
Marjolijn Bol	1-4-2021	Utrecht University	Art history and architectural histo-ry
Shari Boodts	1-4-2021	Radboud University Nijme-gen	Classical language and literature, Middle Ages
Eddie Brummel-man	1-4-2021	University of Amsterdam	Psychology, pedagogics
Sanli Faez	1-4-2021	Utrecht University	Measurement, development of sci-entific equipment, nanotechnology
Carolien van Ham	1-4-2021	Radboud University Nijme-gen	Political science and public admin-istration
Chiel van Heerwaarden	1-4-2021	Wageningen University & Research	Gases, fluid dynamics, plasma physics
Lizzà Hendriks	1-4-2021	Maastricht University Medi-cal Centre (MUMC+)	Oncology, pulmonary diseases
Jeroen Leijten	1-4-2021	University of Twente	Nanotechnology, biotechnology, orthopaedics, organs and organ systems
Cynthia Liem	1-4-2021	Delft University of Technol-ogy	Book sciences, library and infor-mation sciences, information sys-tems, databases
Michel Vols	1-4-2021	University of Groningen	International law, mixed jurisdic-tions, constitutional and adminis-trative law
Tazuko van Berkel	1-4-2022	Leiden University	Antiquity, classical language and literature, philosophy
Irene Dedoussi	1-4-2022	Delft University of Technol-ogy	Atmospheric sciences, environmen-tal studies, energy
Caroline Gevaert	1-4-2022	University of Twente	Artificial intelligence, expert sys-tems
Lisa Herzog	1-4-2022	University of Groningen	Philosophy
Noel de Miranda	1-4-2022	Leiden University Medical Centre (LUMC)	Cancer, immunology, serology
Jim Portegies	1-4-2022	Eindhoven University of Technology	Artificial intelligence, expert sys-tems, mathematics
Else Starkenburg	1-4-2022	University of Groningen	Astronomy, astrophysics
Pooyan Tamimi Arab	1-4-2022	Utrecht University	Arts and cultural studies, cultural anthropology, theology and reli-gious studies
Joeri Tijdink	1-4-2022	Amsterdam University Med-ical Centre, AMC site	Psychiatry, medical psychology
Fleur Zeldenrust	1-4-2022	Radboud University, Don-ders Institute	Bioinformatics, biomathematics, biomechanics, artificial intelligence
Bieke Cattoor	1-4-2023	Delft University of Technol-ogy	Landscape architecture
Pieter Coppens	1-4-2023	VU Amsterdam	Digital humanities, theology and religious studies
Scott Douglas	1-4-2023	Utrecht University	Governance

Max van Duijn	1-4-2023	Leiden University	Artificial intelligence, expert sys-tems, digital humanities, language and literature
Kristina Ganzinger	1-4-2023	University of Amsterdam	Immunology, serology, biophysics, clinical physics
Léonie de Jonge	1-4-2023	University of Tübingen	Political science
Rogier Kievit	1-4-2023	Radboud University Nijme-gen	Psychology
Vasiliki Kosta	1-4-2023	Leiden University	International law
Ingrid Leijten	1-4-2023	Tilburg University	Constitutional and administrative law
Daphina Misiedjan	1-4-2023	Erasmus University Rotter-dam	International law
Bas Borsje	1-4-2024	University of Twente	Hydraulic engineering, ecology
David Fernandez Rivas	1-4-2024	University of Twente	Life sciences, physics, technical sciences
Romy Gaillard	1-4-2024	Erasmus University Medical Centre	Paediatrics
Valentijn Kare-maker	1-4-2024	Utrecht University	Geometry, topology, logic, set theo-ry and number theory, algebra
Olya Kudina	1-4-2024	Delft University of Technol-ogy	Philosophy and ethics of technolo-gy
Stéphanie van der Pas	1-4-2024	VU Amsterdam	Artificial intelligence, expert sys-tems
Saskia Peels	1-4-2024	University of Groningen	Antiquity, classical language and literature
Ward Rauws	1-4-2024	University of Groningen	Spatial planning
Fenneke Sysling	1-4-2024	Leiden University	Modern and contemporary history
Joris van der Voet	1-4-2024	Leiden University	Governance
Max Birk	1-4-2025	Eindhoven University of Technology	Computer graphics, psychology, digital humanities
Jeroen Dera	1-4-2025	Radboud University Nijme-gen	Humanities, the arts and culture
Felix Hol	1-4-2025	Radboud University Medical Centre	Microbiology, infections, parasitol-ogy
Björn Hoops	1-4-2025	University of Groningen	Private law and civil procedure
Eline van der Kruk	1-4-2025	Delft University of Technol-ogy	Bioinformatics, biomathematics, biomechanics, human movement science
Vanessa LaPointe	1-4-2025	Maastricht University	Medicine
Esther Metting	1-4-2025	University of Groningen / Groningen University Medi-cal Centre	Artificial intelligence, expert sys-tems, medicine, digital health
Petter Törnberg	1-4-2025	University of Amsterdam	Artificial intelligence, expert sys-tems
Lilly Verhagen	1-4-2025	Radboud University Medical Centre	Infections, parasitology, medicine, immunology, serology
Mariëlle Wijer-mars	1-4-2025	Maastricht University	Internet governance

Appendix 2. New members in 2025

The following individuals were inaugurated as members of The Young Academy on 27 March 2025, with their five-year term of membership commencing on 1 April 2025:

- Max Birk (computer science, Eindhoven University of Technology)
- Jeroen Dera (Dutch literature, Radboud University Nijmegen)
- Felix Hol (biophysics, vector biology, Radboud University Medical Centre)
- Björn Hoops (law, University of Groningen)
- Eline van der Kruk (biomechanics, Delft University of Technology)
- Esther Metting (epidemiology and psychology, Groningen University Medical Centre / University of Groningen)
- Vanessa LaPointe (cell biology, Maastricht University)
- Petter Törnberg (computational social science, University of Amsterdam)
- Lilly Verhagen (paediatrics, Radboud University Medical Centre)
- Mariëlle Wijermars (political science, Maastricht University)

In selecting new members, The Young Academy strives for a balanced representation of universities, disciplines, gender and other relevant dimensions of diversity within its membership, as well as members' command of the Dutch language.

Appendix 3. Project grants in 2025

The following projects were allocated a Young Academy project grant in 2025:

Lead applicant	Title of project
Chiel van Heerwaarden	'Bij de les'
Rogier Kievit	The Young Academy & the general election
Björn Hoops	A Gallery of Missed Opportunities
Joeri Tijdink	The Value of Science
Esther Metting	Who stays, who leaves?

Appendix 4. Participation by Young Academy members in Royal Academy councils, advisory committees, selection committees, assessment committees and juries and in the science committees of Royal Academy institutes

Table 1. Participation by Young Academy members in Royal Academy councils and advisory committees in 2025

Councils	
Council for Medical Sciences (RMW)	Hilde Verbeek, Joeri Tijdink, Lizzà Hendriks
Council for Natural Sciences and Engineering (RNTW)	Tim Baarslag, Caroline Gevaert
Social Sciences Council (SWR)	Carolien van Ham, Lotte Krabbenborg, Michel Vols

Advisory committees	
Committee analysing the funding system for Dutch universities	Caroline Gevaert
Contact group regarding the Academy's colonial past	Daphina Misiedjan
Committee for the Freedom of Scientific Pursuit (CVW)	Ingrid Leijten, Vicky Kosta
Legal safeguards for academic freedom	Ingrid Leijten, Vicky Kosta

Selection committees	
Investigation into the Academy's colonial past	Karwan Fatah-Black

Table 2. Participation by Young Academy members in juries and committees of the Royal Academy Science Funds in 2025

Juries and selection/assessment/advisory committees for Royal Academy Science Funds pro-grammes	
Faces of Science	Joeri Tijdink, Noel de Miranda
Royal Academy Education Prize	Fenneke Sysling, Ingrid Leijten, Jim Portegies, Joeri Tijdink, Pooyan Tamimi Arab, Caroline Gevaert, Lizzà Hendriks, Marjolijn Bol, Michel Vols
Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings	Liesbeth Janssen
KNAW Early Career Partnerships	Scott Douglas
KNAW Van Walree Fonds	Romy Gaillard
Statesman Thorbecke Fund	Carolien van Ham, Ingrid Leijten
KNAW Early Career Award	Bas Borsje, Esther Metting

Table 3. Participation by Young Academy members in the science committees/ advisory councils of the Royal Academy institutes in 2025

Science Committee of the Royal Netherlands Insti-tute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV)	Daphina Misiedjan
SEP Review Committee of the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS)	Karwan Fatah-Black