

# 2030 FOR THE ARTS

**HKU**

University of the Arts Utrecht



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2030 FOR THE ARTS





# HKU: PIONEER WITH A RICH TRADITION

We are heading towards 2030, while working from the solid foundation of our history as the first arts university in the Netherlands. In this, we rest upon a rich tradition of Utrecht-based arts and education. As early as the 17th century, Utrecht had both a university school, which was an early predecessor of higher education.

In Utrecht, spurred on by the artists Van Scorel, Bloemaert, Uiterwaal en Rietveld, saw the emergence, for the first time, of the workshop as a concept in itself: as an environment for learning, studying, creating, and reflecting. Design became an autonomous art form, that presented new technological developments, applications and crafts to the public. Following upon this development, the Academie voor Beeldende Kunsten ('Academy for the Fine Arts') opened its doors in 1938. Utrecht also had the first types of institutionalised arts education, sprouting from the initiatives such as Kunst & Wetenschap ('Art & Sciences') – strongly public-focused ways of combining and presenting art and innovation. In 1875, Utrechts Conservatorium was founded and established in the Gebouw voor Kunsten en Wetenschappen ('Building for the Arts and Sciences'). And the Akademie voor Expressie door Woord en Gebaar (Academy for the Expression through Words and Gestures) followed in 1956. The latter brought about a radical change in the world of theatre: it aspired to a social function, strongly and outspokenly, where the audience itself was taking the floor, with theatre no longer being played out at a distance, but right amidst the audience.

All these movements were brought together at the Stichting Hogeschool voor de Kunsten Utrecht, or HKU in short, on 1 January 1987. This new university had three faculties, each with its own character: Music (formed by Utrechts Conservatorium, The Nederlands Instituut voor Kerkmuziek ['Dutch Institute for Church Music'] and the Nederlandse Beiaardschool [Dutch Carillon School]), Theatre (the former Akademie voor Expressie door Woord en Gebaar) and Fine Art and Design (the former Academie voor Beeldende Kunsten Utrecht). Already at its founding, the young HKU had a department for Research & Development. In the search for collectivity, people found each other in internationalisation and computerisation.

From the first hour on, HKU has been researching, in every way possible, connections between art and technology, science, and society. In 1989, HKU started the fourth faculty: Art, Media and Technology in the city of Hilversum. By offering art management, a mature economic education in the arts arose. And thanks to a large donation of Apple computers, HKU became part of an international digital network of universities. At Utrechts Conservatorium, there were experiments with electronic music and in 1987, the first students started the then still unknown study of Music Technology. The first games design programme on the European continent started in 1998 in Utrecht – which marked the start of our city as a hub for the games industry, which would later lead to the initiative for the Dutch Game Garden.

We are on our way of becoming a knowledge institute. The link between education and research fosters innovation, dissemination of knowledge and partnerships with, among others, Utrecht University, the Utrecht Summer School and the Betweter Festival. Since 2023, Meaningful Artistic Research (MAR) perpetuates a long-term cooperation between HKU and the University for Humanistic Studies (UvH) in the field of art and science. The purpose is to share knowledge and creativity, and grow into a broad and lively platform for researchers, scientists, artists, designers, curators, creators, students, teachers, student coaches and curious professionals.

Although professors were not legally linked to universities of applied sciences until 2017, HKU already had its first professors by the turn of the millennium. Internationally, we have built a solid knowledge network, and we are one of the founding institutions of the European League of Institutes of the Art (ELIA). In this way, our position has historically always been strongly intertwined both beyond the national borders and within the local cultural infrastructure of Utrecht. Our alumni are impactful and creative cultural professionals and artists with regional, national and international networks. Our education and research engage in durable partnerships, projects and exchanges with partners in the arts sector and the creative industry. HKU has thereby always been a connector that links societal challenges, citizens, and the corporate sector.

*We are interwoven with our past, present and future. What would it be like to look back in another 150 years from now on the year 2030 and the next milestone for HKU?*

# PREFACE



# NOVE

## 6 FOR THE ARTS



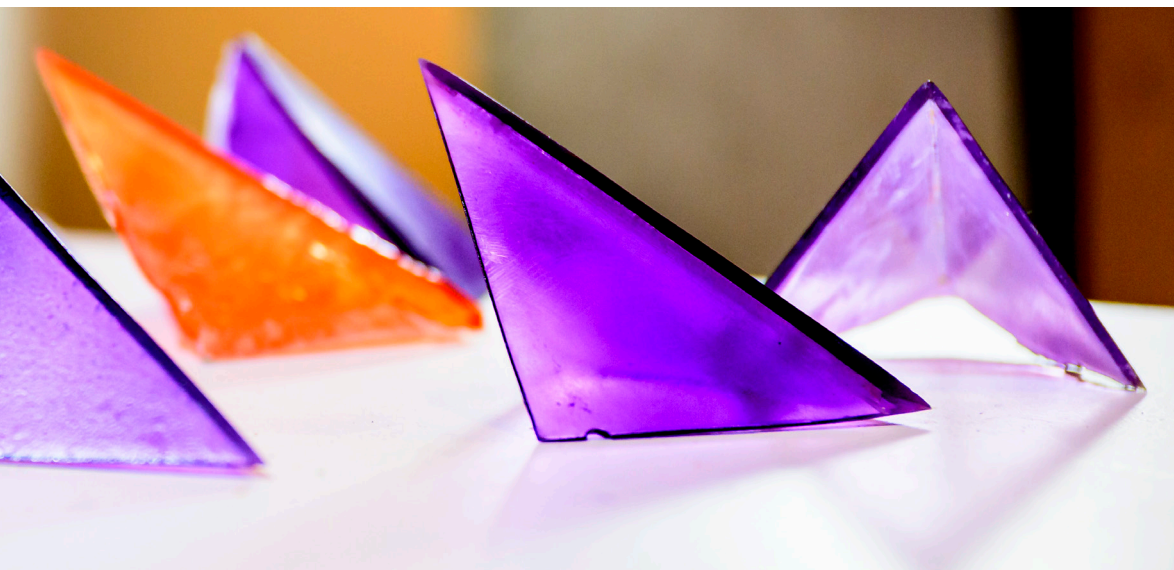
*"The most powerful driver of change is evoking a desire for change. Essential for this is the power of imagination. The world does not determine who we are. Instead, we, with our stories, define what the world is."*

**Floris Alkemade, Chief Government Architect 2015-2021 (Translation by HKU) *De toekomst van Nederland. De kunst van richting te veranderen.***

Of beauty and consolation. Of originality and mastery of materials. Of ethics and entertainment. Of timbre and music technology. Of form and meaning. Of conceptual and final product. Of busy life and silence. Of the collective and the solo. Of quality and reflection. Of utility and purpose. Of research and creation. Of activism and polyphony. Of the world's best and regional significance. Of worldwide art history and dynamic canons. Of transdisciplinary and specialists. Of resistance and connection. Of knowledge and expertise. Of student wellbeing and study credits.

And that's just a few of the elements from our research and the education at HKU. Of the subjects on which students, professionals, experts and staff members are sharing knowledge, are learning and – always – creating. These same elements also returned in the many, sometimes intense, dialogue sessions, and in interviews with students, teachers, staff members, policy makers, artists, art connoisseurs, and scientists. We are very grateful for all those contributions that lead to a constructive creative process. And here you see the result of it: HKU 2030 Strategic Plan, inspiring and stimulating. In the coming years, we will be working on this new strategic course, rising up to the challenges, articulating the ambition to make our art education and practice-oriented research the best possible preparation for a career as professional creator with an impact on people and society.

HKU is shaping the future, in a society that is facing great challenges: the climate crisis, living together harmoniously with respect for individuality, war, scarcity of resources...



Exposure 2024

As Marlene Dumas says in the exhibition *Miss Interpreted* in the Van Abbe Museum: *“I believe that art has the power to heal, to bring people together, and to inspire change.”* Through its art education and art research, HKU is training artistic and cultural professionals who can apply new techniques and methods so that their imaginative power can bring beauty, entertainment, and change.

The people of HKU show courage in their decisions and embrace the complexity of society and the arts themselves. HKU stirs up debate and enables students and professionals to express their ideas about complementarity, beauty, polarisation, fear, gender constraints, and freedoms. Students learn to incorporate diverse perspectives and to express narratives in music, imagery, design, creative technology, fashion and other art forms.

They reflect on art from their knowledge of the cultural-historical context. In This HKU 2030 Strategic Plan, we explicitly mention this profound interaction between the artistic and the

academic, and their mutual balance.

HKU people contribute to a better society for individuals and the collective. This means we are an open community, highly ambitious and caring for each other: inclusive, diverse, dynamic and sustainable.

We warmly welcome you to help us shape HKU in the coming years. Let’s do this together, so we can celebrate our collective results in the year 2030.

For the arts, and for imagination!

Heleen Jumelet  
Edwin Jacobs  
HKU Executive Board

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# 1. HKU IN 2030

## MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

### OUR MISSION

With our arts education and practice-oriented research, we create the best preparation for the student's career as a professional creator who has an impact on people and society.

### OUR VISION

The future demands artistic imaginary power. HKU offers a learning environment in which we can discover and shape the future together. We teach our students to develop their artistic talents through education and research in interaction with the world around them. Students do this from their own individuality and on a foundation of knowledge and skills. HKU distinguishes itself through artistic quality, by being at the intersection between the artistic and academic front, by combing inclusivity with excellence, and by pioneering with creative technology and entrepreneurship.



Graduation Project for  
HKU Photography during  
Exposure 2024



## OUR CORE VALUES

The four core values of HKU are multivocality, openness, entrepreneurial, impactful and interconnectivity. These values are interconnected. multivocality is our basic attitude: the way in which we look at the world and people. Openness is how we do this: curious and non-judgemental. Entrepreneurial means that we subsequently take initiative to actively interact with the world. Lastly, impactful expresses our desire to affects others with these actions, from smaller to greater impact.

**MULTIVOCALITY** HKU is multivocal in all its aspects. Our view on humanity and the world is pluriform. Our students learn that their work should always include multiple perspectives. We broaden and enhance our education, research and organisation. The art of HKU offers society new perspectives, inspires, and thereby defines and explains the various societal challenges.

**OPEN** HKU is open in its thoughts and actions. We welcome new insights and allow ourselves to be surprised and inspired. We are without prejudice, inclusive, committed. Transparency marks our actions. Always in connection with our surroundings. Eager to share the arts with newer generations through our art and education.

**ENTREPRENEURIAL** HKU is entrepreneurial, sees opportunities, and knows that impact does not come spontaneously. We make students resilient and help them gain an entrepreneurial mindset and ownership of their own long-term career. HKU knows how to appreciate art and artisanship, and how to convince others of their value.

**IMPACTFUL** We make a lasting impact, inclusive and responsibly, linked to our HKU guiding lights. HKU is convinced that our students are capable of great deeds. In Utrecht, the Netherlands and the world. We mutually share our vision and talent, always have an eye for the chemistry between the creator and the public; the artefact and the context. Artistically pushing the boundaries within and between disciplines. We are making the difference.

### HKU GUIDING LIGHTS

The guiding lights of HKU seek to express our vision on art, culture, society and the world that is created by the works of our students. These guiding lights track the areas in which our students make art and our teachers educate, and the perspectives from which they do this. In the optimal sense, they can be recognised in every aspect of HKU, even up to our daily operations. After all, we are already doing a lot with respect to our guiding lights – often even more than we realise. Our current creations already shine a light upon our intended direction for the future. They direct our choices as an organisation, our contents and our portfolio. The guiding lights, however, are explicitly not intended as a top-down instruction. They stem from what we are already doing, and stimulating us to keep moving forward in those directions. They are an example of how we are continuously learning, reflecting, and looking ahead.

# POSITION AND HKU

**IN SOCIETY  
WHAT MAKES  
MEANINGFUL**

## 16 2. POSITION IN SOCIETY AND WHAT MAKES HKU MEANINGFUL

### 2.1 WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE STAND FOR

HKU is the broadest professional arts university of the Netherlands, with strong regional, national and international ties. Our 4,000+ students choose from a rich palette of over 50 graduation paths, at the levels of associate degree, bachelor, master, and third cycle (i.e. doctoral). HKU has a rich mix of disciplines, such as design, theatre, music, fine art, games, art and economics, and media, as well as a high-quality selection of courses for aspiring art teachers.

The many crossovers between these disciplines offer lots of opportunities. The broad range of education enables flexible learning paths, attuned to individual talents. This allows student to both specialise and diversify, as musician, designer, theatre producer, art director, teacher, or lots of other roles.

As an arts university, we put inclusive talent development high on our priority list. With our preparatory courses and professional art classes, we contribute to early talent development.

Our broad range of educational options offers room for a new generation of professional creators. Our research leads to deeper insights for both the educational sector, the professional field, and our partners in society.

In recent years, the application of our education and research gained coherence by means of our three guiding lights: The Art of Healthcare and Wellbeing, the Art of Identity and Inclusion, and The Art of Sustainability and Circularity. The choice for these guiding lights was based on the works of our own students and the societal challenges they are focusing on. The guiding lights are our windows to the world. They strengthen the meaning and impact of our art. While emphasising interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary work, HKU is stimulating a community that fosters creative development and explores new perspectives and roads towards solutions. The guiding lights are a source of inspiration in this for our artists, who wield the power of their imagination and empathy to get towards meaningful actions.

### 2.2 WHAT WE OBSERVE AROUND US

HKU stands in connection to the world around us. We can see six major developments.

- The profession of the artist is broadening.
- Employment opportunities in the creative sector are growing.
- The development of creative technologies is accelerating.
- Global challenges demand global cooperation.
- Divisions in society are getting deeper,
- (the region around) Utrecht is growing and changing.

The profession of the artist is always changing. Sometimes the emphasis lies on the artist as an artisan crafter, with a recent reappraisal of authentic craftsmanship. At other times, artists form an intellectual vanguard in the search for meaning through form and content. What's also becoming more apparent, is the societal impact of artistry and the uniting function that this demands from the artist. We see more collective forms of creation, more conceptual art, with the artist serving as the director in a greater whole. Generative AI opens up new worlds for artistic exploration. HKU focuses itself on a stronger position of artistry and creative professionals within our society. We notice that this can only be achieved through artistic quality. How we achieve this, is clarified in the next chapter about education and research.

Artistry has a large economic impact. We see a growing importance of the creative sector, to which we are explicitly related. This sector is one of the main top sectors and crucial for the Dutch economy, with a turnover of 21 billion euros per year. With an annual 2,9 percent of employment growth between 2019 and 2022, employment in the creative sector shows strong growth compared to the average 1,6 percent in the general economy. In terms of

Gross Domestic Product, growth is even higher, with 4,2 percent compared to the average 3,4 percent. Across the whole decade 2012 – 2022, employment growth in the creative sector saw an annual average of 2,7 percent, against a total job growth in the general economy of 1,2 percent per year (source: Monitor Creatieve Industrie Nederland, 2023). The unemployment levels among graduates in the arts sector are at 3,6 percent, which is significantly lower than the sectors agriculture and food and economics, which are respectively at 4,9 and 3,9 percent (source: HBO Monitor 2023).

Utrecht has an important role in this, ranking second in the Netherlands as city with high employment. This is important because our alumni do not only end up in the autonomous arts, but in various other sectors, both inside and outside the creative, artistic and cultural fields. We also see the emergence of new professional fields and areas of application.

Technological innovations have always occurred, but seem to be accelerating rapidly in current times due to the countless applications of artificial intelligence. AI is not just a regular innovation, but a systems technology, like the introduction of the internet was before it.

Students from the final year of HKU Acting performing in *Zomergasten live 2024*



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The economic and social consequences, but also its impact on art education and research, cannot yet be overseen. The opportunities are immense, but the development of AI also raises ethical questions that demand our attention. From generative AI to fake news; from intellectual property to the meaning of art for humans. The AI transition also requires resilient and entrepreneurial students. As HKU, we will therefore keep investing in creative technology.

We also see an era of increasing international tensions. Between countries, cultures and world views. Our ability to reach out to each other from a shared reality and truth, is under pressure, along with the values of democratic governance, and the respect for individual and collective human rights. This demands a revived attention for international cooperation, mutual understanding and dialogue. Polarisation also permeates into the perspectives on the international dimension of higher education: a border-free knowledge development versus an issue within a larger immigration question. For HKU, this means that we embrace multivocality and discuss (sometimes apparent) divisions in an open dialogue with each other. The added value of internationalisation for our education and research will be presented more explicitly. And will we positively contribute to social challenges. There are also lots of societal transitions that require an international approach. Climate change and biodiversity are the most striking examples of this. The arts are capable to explore these challenges, imagine alternative futures and create connections.

In the Netherlands, social divisions are getting deeper. As a society, we are insufficiently capable of discussing this issue and getting to solutions. HKU wants to make a positive contribution and critique to the social cohesion in our

society. We want to stimulate our students to be engaged and resilient, while taking an open view on their conduct within a greater context. This requires us to create even stronger ties between our learning and working environment and the people around us.

In the educational field, we see a continued development of the 'onderwijswaaier' (the restructuring of the intermediate, higher and scientific levels of education into a less hierarchical 'ladder'). For higher vocational education, this development offers more room for the knowledge position by means of practice-oriented research and the third cycle of (postdoc) education. This demands, among others, a strengthening of the research culture in higher (hbo) education and a further integration between research and education. Art education has its own special relation to this development, and HKU wants to maintain its leading role in this.

In Utrecht specifically, we see a strong growth in the city population, with a predicted 400,000 residents in 2029. This development demands creative solutions for countless larger and smaller social challenges. As the city grows, the cultural infrastructure and supply should grow along. HKU is perfectly suited to play a role in this. In addition, we see that the diversity among the population of Utrecht is also increasing, which is something that we want to reflect in our community of students and staff members as well.

All these developments are significant for the creative professional and their relation to society and the professional field. And thus they have an impact on the future of HKU.

## 2.3 WHAT WE AIM FOR

HKU 2030 is based on a plurality of voices and continuous development. Yet it provides no detailed directions. Our multiannual strategy offers a shared narrative for students and staff members about the kind of arts university we want to be. We make way for the creative talent of our students and the professional drives of our staff members. Art is about amazement, discovery and reflection. In our art education, we lay a foundation of knowledge, skills and distinctiveness to support this.

### WORLD BUILDING GAMING AND ART IN THE DIGITAL AGE

*Centre Pompidou-Metz (2024)*  
centrepompidou-metz.fr

An exhibition focused on gaming and art in the digital age. In 2022, about 3,03 billion people – a third of the world population – played videogames. Curator Hans Ulrich Obrist emphasises that this hobby has become “the biggest mass phenomenon of our time. Many people spend hours per day in these parallel worlds. Videogames are the 21st century’s equivalent of movies in the 20th century and books in the 19th”. Johan Huizinga already theorised in *Homo Ludens* that play is a basic driver for humans. He regards the new ways of bringing people together through play as a source of culture. World-building was the first transgenerational, multinational exposition that explores in such a large scale how diverse modern artists have tried to mould the aesthetics and technology of gaming as a means of expression.

A visitor during the exhibition of HKU Games, Exposure 2024



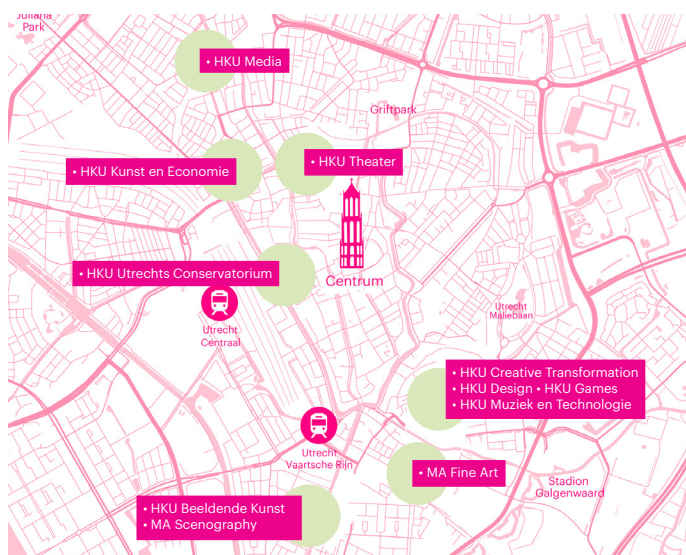
# EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN 2030



# EDUCATION AND RESEARCH 2030

## 22 3. EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN 2030

The art of HKU gains shape in our education and research. We do this at an urban campus rooted in Utrecht, with over 50 graduation paths, 5 research areas and 28 workshops. As an arts university, we profile ourselves through artistic quality, craftsmanship and academic skills. To be recognised as such by students, as well as internationally, we will rename our current schools to academies and Utrechts Conservatorium.



HKU City Campus

### UP TO DATE & ADAPTIVE

We are proud of the fact that our students select very diverse career paths. They range from independent entrepreneur or pioneers in the creative sector to professional arts teachers and countless other directions in which their creativity proves valuable. HKU prepares students for a broad field of work.

We want to be the first choice for students who want to make a difference to society with their art. We feel the urgency of our research and education that stems from the changes in society, the demands of the art and cultural

sector and the value of the arts in all aspects of society. This requires us to be adaptive and up to date in our education and research.

We teach our students to always investigate and create from diverse perspectives and thereby give substance to the idea of multivocality. This multivocality knows various interpretations. We want to think and act from the conviction that every person is influenced by their own specific context. From perceiving the societal challenges to the choices in materials when creating – we always aim for this

perspective-oriented thought; to keep creating and training our consciousness to always involve multiple perspectives and integrate multivocality.

The personal character of the artistic, cultural and creative sector puts unique demands upon our education and research. This development in, and connection between, our education

and research are captured in our HKU Onderwijskompas en Onderzoeksvisie ('HKU Education and Research Vision'). We will also develop the impact of our artistic profile in the coming years, both in artistic and academic terms, interwoven with creative technology and entrepreneurship. We will do this with inclusivity and ambition.

Our education and research will gain shape by following six core themes:

- Artistic quality
- Artistic and academic
- Inclusive and excellent
- Creative technology
- Entrepreneurship and life-long development
- Regional, national and international



Graduation work at Exposure 2024

## 24 3.1 ARTISTIC QUALITY

The people of HKU make unique and personal works. The artistic value of this offers them a place in our society and the creative work field. The dialogue about artistic quality is indispensable and will become more and more commonplace within our HKU culture. In the coming years, we aspire towards a layered and shared understanding of artistic quality, in which artefact, creation process and societal context are each important and brought into balance with each other.

Determining artistic quality is a complex responsibility that we treat critically and consciously. It leads to both inclusion and exclusion, and thus for fields of tension: between classical art genres and popular genres, between the traditional and the experimental, between famous and unknown. Artistic quality is therefore not a neutral term, and its assessment is never a values-free process. We acknowledge this by including four central values in our HKU Onderwijskompas (derived from the PhD research by Pieter Bots, 2024, from which we perceive artistic quality.

**SINGULAR VALUE** What is the unique signature of your creation? What makes this art typical for you, and when do you ‘sign’? To what extent are you developing yourself as artist and/or art professional? How does the creation of entrepreneurship relate to the development and expression of your distinctive voice?

**MENTAL VALUE** What is the experience of the person exposed to the art expression? What new methods of observing and responding does the audience gain by the interplay of perception, intellectual insights and emotional experience that is created by the artist? What aesthetic experience does the audience go through: to what extent is there beauty in the art or not?

**PARADIGMATIC VALUE** How is the artistic quality assessed from the professional perspective? To

what extent does the professional field ascribe the status of work of art to the artefact, and the status of artist to its creator?

**REFLECTIVE VALUE** To what extent does the artistic expression critically question society? Does the work have the capacity to reflect and influence society by laying bare the social order, to question, and construct new hierarchies? How does the artistic process translate itself to challenges? To what extent does it have social impact?

These values are relevant in all art disciplines. From musician to designer and from director to actor. Together they capture the layeredness of the definition of artistic quality.

It is remarkable how the artistic process is found everywhere in the education and research of our institution. Developing and offering arts education is in many aspects an artistic creation in itself. How does the perspective of the teacher influence the education. How is the interaction with the student and their perspective shaped? What is the mutual interaction with the professional field and society like? By perceiving our art education as an artistic creation process, we apply the values of art to our education as well.



Pianist Maarten Boogaard during the award ceremony of the EMIR Steyerberg Prize 2020

## IN 2030

- All students, teachers and researchers have a broad understanding of the layeredness of artistic quality in the context of the study programmes. And students can, from this layered understanding, develop, create and position the artistry of their works of art.
- The artistic quality of HKU is evident and unique for the professional field and society.

*"I have shown that science has the potential to be an art of inquiry, and that art, by the same token, can be a practice of science. Where science and art converge is in the search for truth. By truth I do not mean fact rather than fantasy, but the unison of experience and imagination in a world to which we are alive and that is alive to us. It is a great mistake to confuse the pursuit of truth with the pursuit of objectivity. For if the latter prescribes that we cut all ties with the world, the former demands our full and unqualified participation."*

– Tim Ingold  
Anthropology and/as education



## 26 3.2 ARTISTIC AND ACADEMIC

In the Netherlands, the distinction is made between hbo ('applied sciences') and universities. Art academies maintain a special position within this binary system, because we are in both worlds. With one foot we are standing in a tradition of applied knowledge and skills; with the other in a tradition of academic analysis, defining meaning and research. The interaction between both the artistic and the academic is what makes the education and research at HKU special.



Graduation work for HKU Fine Art, Exposure 2024





HKU Fine Art graduation work,  
Exposure 2024



HKU Theatre Design graduation work,  
Exposure 2024

## MAKING IS CENTRAL, ARTISTRY IS PARAMOUNT

At HKU, we bring the centuries-old art disciplines and the modern genres together. In the artistry of HKU artists, both the process, the product and the context are addressed – and especially the tensions between them. We train creators for an enduring career as a professional creator: as independent artists, in the creative sector, in education and in countless other professional fields. This requires a solid foundation of knowledge, skills and personality.

In our educational vision, group coaching and self-reflection skills go hand in hand with the exchange of knowledge and coaching mastery.

‘Learning to learn’ remains a crucial element in our education, although we realise that a student, to be able to handle knowledge critically, must also receive knowledge. From our aspiration towards a contemporary art pedagogy, we choose not just for a student-focused, instructions-based educational vision, but mostly for a world-oriented vision. When giving substance to the curricula, we critically question our own convictions about this in an open dialogue with mirroring external partners. We create room for our students for silent reflection time, to explore expertise(s) and expand by means of, for example, crossovers.

“An art academy such as HKU would become, through your ‘old’ course, more of a Socio-Cultural Education in a new style. You are now seeking more balance between autonomy and artistic quality. That is a good decision: it increases your right to exist as an arts university.”

– Deidre Carasso  
Director Library of Utrecht



HKU Fashion Design graduation work,  
Exposure 2024

## 28 OLD MASTERS, NEW MAKERS

HKU wants more attention for the balance between shape and substance. As simple as this may sound, it is anything but. It invites to create a culture within HKU where there is room for discussion and a permanent contemplation on the best form of arts education in the arts. This is exactly how new expressions within the arts about our current times can gain attention. In this room, questions can rise about the role of fully autonomous expression as creator. What is the meaning of art in its diverse contexts? And what does rewriting the Western modernist canon in our society mean exactly?

Every artist positions themselves in their work, implicitly or explicitly, in relation to other makers. It is necessary that students know about the (historical and contemporary) context of their profession. We must be aware of the influences on our disciplines and on ourselves, how these developments interact with each other, related to the context of that time and of

today. This demands critical reflection on what is highlighted and what has remained unexposed. Required for this, is a tangible frame of reference and a method for dialogue. One catalyst of this collective dialogue is the 'dynamic canon': a contemporary and audacious cabinet of sources that is in constant development.

This canon must be explicitly activating, explorative and dynamic; an instrument for reflection, and not a rigid and static focus on the past. A new interpretation of the definition of 'canon': as a means for critical reflection from the context of the influences that foster the artistry. Developing such a canon is not an easy task and will vary per study programme. We regard this as a collective journey of discovery. A way of stimulating our curiosity, broaden our horizon and foster our professional fields and context.

*Muslims have been studying dots and lines – the research that seemed so novel when Kandinsky did it – since the first century of Islam.”*

Saloua Raouda Choucair (1916-2017, painter/sculptor) argued with this statement that the roots of abstract art were not only found in the work of Europeans such as Kandinsky and Paul Klee, but as far back

as the earliest forms of Islamic art. Nevertheless, she was proclaimed as the first abstract artist of Lebanon. It was only when she reached the age of 97 that her heritage was acknowledged with a retrospective exhibition in Tate Modern in London. A fact that proves that a canon is never really static. (Original Dutch Source: Kunstenars over kunst, 2021. Translation by HKU).



Inside the Ceramics Workshop at HKU location IBB

## PORTFOLIO

With over 50 graduation paths, HKU's educational portfolio offers a rich palette of art education. This portfolio remains in development to offer room for innovations and to match with current developments and demands. In the coming years, we will strengthen the integral dialogue between the various areas of professional content and supporting disciplines. We will create room for a discussion on strategic outlooks, internal and external (multidisciplinary\_ cooperations, and effectiveness. HKU is open to new impulses and will pioneer where necessary. This translates itself into a strong HKU profile that is made versatile by innovation, and by the broadening and enhancement of existing and new courses. The portfolio development is aimed at maintaining and strengthening the long-term employability of our students. This requires us to make decisions in the development of the portfolio that may also mean the phasing out of

programmes. Responding to the environment for a strong and financially sound position are important conditions in this. We do not aim to increase our total student population, but aspire towards an attractive and relevant portfolio composition within the current number.

HKU is ahead in practice-oriented research and wants to remain so. Highly qualified talent, after all, plays a key role in the stimulation of innovation. Therefore we are exploring a possible expansion of our range of Master's courses and investing in PhD and PD tracks. The development of our current range of associate degrees is aimed at increasing the accessibility and flow rate. In this way, we work on a range of courses within which students can follow continuous learning paths.

**“The academic and artistic are inseparably linked: knowledge is the craft and the craft is knowledge. Because all the knowledge is tied to what you gain during what you will do with what you gain is linked to craftsmanship is bound to knowledge, because what you are doing, or are bound to find out through experience.”**

– Gerben Buijze  
Student HKU Music in Education and chair  
of its course committee



Mozart's Requiem in Jacobikerk, 2023

## 30 LEARNING AND RESEARCHING IN THE ARTS

In the arts, education and research go hand in hand. Through research, we innovate our knowledge, enhance our understanding and enrich our makership. Research at HKU is focused on practice: research questions stem from practice and research outcomes are put into practice. With its practice-oriented research, HKU acts as an innovator towards both the professional field and to its own educational practices, among others, by means of our own masters and the pioneering role in the development of third-cycle education within the arts. We do this through our professorships, our educational curriculum and in our regional, national and international partnerships. Within our unification of the artistic and the academic, our students learn to gain knowledge and critically reflect on their context, for the purpose of applying this in their own makership.

Our research gains coherence by the three guiding lights:

- The Art of Healthcare and Wellbeing;
- The Art of Identity and Inclusion;
- The Art of Sustainability and Circularity.

The continuation of these guiding lights enables us to offer depth and context to our combination of education and research. We also make a visible contribution to these three social challenges. We create room in the curriculum for both topicality (time-dependent) and stillness (timeless), making our education more open to the learning questions that are posed by the world around us.

We find it important that students get more opportunities to participate in research activities and thereby develop their research skills. Students at HKU conduct research together with the professorships, and all master students can actively participate in the research project that

are characteristic for HKU. Study programmes professorship navigate together towards the quality of research, and towards the involvement of students and staff in research by means of research requests and projects, targeted professionalisation, and/or participation in dissemination activities. In this way, we make research accessible for all our students and staff members, while creating opportunities for increasingly meaningful applications of research within our education.

For this purpose, we invest in a solid infrastructure for research and a strong research culture, in connection with our education and the workshop, from associate degree to professional doctorate. We cooperate intensively with our international networks and our partners in Utrecht (Utrecht University, UMC Utrecht and University for Humanistic Studies, professorships at the Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, and the 'practoraten' (practice-oriented research units) in intermediate vocational education). As university of the arts, we embrace the academic aspects of our work fields so that we can come to new insights. This comes with extra efforts for secondary and tertiary financial streams for research and the long-term integration of research within the organisation.





Graduation work,  
Exposure 2024

## IN 2030

- The interaction between the artistic and the academic within HKU's education and research is a permanent factor of our development.
- HKU has an agile and distinctive educational portfolio, with stronger emphasis on master's and third-cycle programmes. The portfolio offers a palette of graduation paths that enable our students to reflect, enhance, or broaden within various cooperative forms or flexible learning paths.
- Our research is interwoven with our context and education, from an innovative research vision and matching professorships.
- Each student has a unique and solid foundation of knowledge and skills. Every course has (as method for disclosing existing and new knowledge) formed, in a collective dialogue, a dynamic canon from both a historical and contemporary context, and this canon is part of the curricula.

## 32 3.3 INCLUSIVE AND EXCELLENT

The concepts of inclusive and excellent are deliberately put together in the vision of HKU; inclusion as a precondition for excellence, and the ability to excel because of inclusion. This stems from our core value of multivocality; a pluriform world view and view on humanity that makes students learn to always incorporate diverse perspectives. We do this from the realisation that everyone brings along their personal perspective and that talent knows many dimensions. The connection between these concepts offers a learning environment free of exclusion mechanisms that impede students to excel.

Inside the Metal Workshop at HKU location IBB



We prepare students for a competitive labour market. Creative entrepreneurship and the courage to stand out are part of this optimal preparation. This starts with having room for experiment, daring to make mistakes, not being afraid to ask, and being free to not know certain things yet. A stimulating and safe learning and working environment is crucial for this. An environment where diversity is embraced and appreciated in every aspect, shaped on the basis of equality. This also applies to our staff members and organisational culture.

Broad excellence, however, is not without obligation. Artistry demands a creative drive, discipline, knowledge and skills, reflection capabilities and meaning. And above all: artistic quality. That's why we are building an open and ambitious culture of quality. Our academies are responsible for the quality of education and particularly focus their attention on the match between the educational and professional fields.

## BROAD TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Developing artistic quality is a process for the long term and often starts at a young age. However, we see that many youths have no or very little opportunity to develop their artistic talents. This has an effect on our population of potential students, and eventually on the professional field. As HKU, we thus want to contribute to this broad talent development by investing in our preparatory courses and courses for art in education.

Art education at HKU goes beyond our formal programmes and permeates into the DNA of our institution. Our courses for art in education are the beating heart of experimentation and research in and by the arts. They offer room to test and experience pedagogic and didactic methods of failing and unlearning, and to develop and share up-to-date knowledge. In our three BA and one MA art in education programmes, education is treated as an art form, led by artistic principles such as creation, connection, imagination, speculation, experiencing and openness. Our internally connecting and cooperating Art Education Platform emphasises creative making and learning as being the central theme. Inclusive pedagogies are also one of the central themes of our research. In this way, our art-in-education programmes create opportunities for all of the courses at HKU.

Furthermore, we actively contribute to the Utrecht Creative Community to enhance the connection between our courses and the local region. We want to play a more significant role in the arts and culture policy of Utrecht and the artistic development of the city residents. We do this in partnership with schools and cultural youth centres.

Also important for broad talent development, is our admission policy. We keep searching for ways to welcome the most diverse possible range of talents, and to actively incorporate them into our education. From this broad radius, we succeed in creating the multivocality that we aspire to.

The professionalism of our staff members also contributes to inclusive excellence. We invest in the continuous development of our staff members, so that they can keep applying their knowledge, skills, and personality within HKU. We do this in our education, our research and our supporting processes, which sets high demands for our professionalisation processes, and requires an open attitude and willingness to learn. Our working environment is also a learning environment.

## 34 SOCIAL DISCOMFORT WITHIN SOCIAL SAFETY

Creating art can lead to discomfort. By exploring this discomfort, art contributes to the search for meaning. Sometimes this can be at the level of society, aimed at smaller or larger social injustices, either investigative or activist. And sometimes it's about personal discomfort, by putting yourself in a vulnerable position as an artist and by experimenting. This is only possible in a learning environment that guarantees social safety. Discomfort should never be unsafe. Together, we ensure a learning and working environment that is socially safe, with permanent attention for the wellbeing of students and staff members. With clear boundaries and an open culture of dialogue. All of us take up the responsibility to stay sharp in this, detect problems and allow discussion, and to help each other. We want to understand and question without prejudice.

As student at HKU, you are part of a multi-voiced community and receive future-oriented art education that is centred on learning, researching and creating together.

You never create art all by yourself. In our vision on art education, the central point is that students learn to always incorporate multiple perspectives when they are creating, learning, and re-searching. This is done to prepare them for a multi-voiced professional practice and society, in which the creative professional usually works in a multi-perspective context. In our art education and in the structure of our organisation, we always expect students and staff members to go an extra step in grasping the concept of multivocality; to truly understand what you are doing, why you are doing this, and how your actions relate to what has already been done, thought and made before, and to what is happening around you currently.

An HKU student can be immediately recognised by their approach to art, the professional field and society: their open attitude, their wondering about - and critical reflection on - history, present events and the future. To proliferate ourselves even further in this, we strongly focus our efforts on providing our students with a multi-voiced knowledge base. Our principle in this is: listen to every voice and then decide to take your own path. Not without obligation, but always with a free mind. A safe basis and mutual trust are exactly the conditions that create the ability to explore discomfort; to not shy away from complexity.



Graduation work for HKU Theatre Design, Exposure 2024

## IN 2030

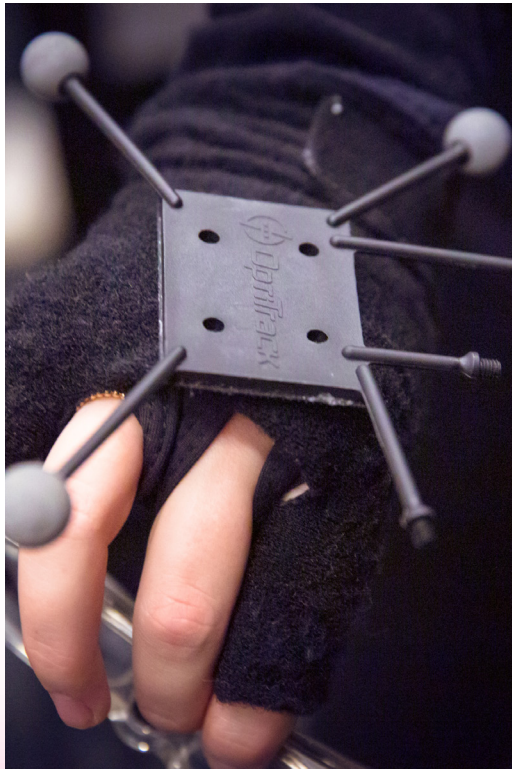
- We can connect inclusivity and broad excellence, from the starting principle of multivocality, to our education and research in an open and ambitious culture of quality.
- Our community of students and staff members is a more accurate representation of society.
- A safe learning and working environment is guaranteed for both students and staff members. An environment in which you can be yourself yet search together for discomfiting questions and answers.
- HKU is playing a larger role in the artistic and cultural education in order to offer a long-term career in the artistic and creative sector to a broad range of talents.

## 36 3.4 CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY

With the rise of (generative) AI, a new era is dawning for creative technology in all disciplines – from design and games to music and theatre. HKU has established a profile for the application of technology in creative making processes and plays an important role in the public debate about the consequences of this technology. Towards 2030, we want to further expand on this and give it a central role in our positioning, because creative technology is now an integral aspect of the future career of professional creators.

This demands a huge effort. The pace of technological developments is difficult to reconcile with a multi-year strategy. Therefore, we work from strategic ambitions and an annually updated creative technology agenda for education and research.

Experiment in the Blackbox at HKU location Oudenoord





Students working with VR at HKU location IBB

## CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY AND ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT

Our artistry is partly fostered by the opportunities and consequences of creative technology. HKU is at the vanguard in the development and application of creative technology in the arts, as well as in the public debate about this. This creates a need for curious students who are dealing proactively, yet also critically, with creative technology.

New technology pushes the artistic envelope. Artists experiment with, and reflect on, the possible meanings of interactive and immersive technology. Our students play with technology to create art and inventive creative applications, working together across the disciplines. This requires all academies to adjust creative technology to the context of their courses and embed it within their curricula, paired with state-of-the-art facilities both inside and outside the workshops. Additionally, we place creative technology at the

heart of various cross-disciplinary projects. The HKU Onderwijskompas provides directions for the knowledge and skills that are made available to students. Creative technology must be made accessible to every student, in line with their development as professionals.

In addition, we play an important role for the professional field, as expected due to our position as a knowledge institute that develops new insights. We involve the professional field in our search for the meaning and added value of creative technology in the arts, while also supporting their own development and professionalisation in this matter. The knowledge generated through this process brings practice and education closer together.

## 38 CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

Technological developments lead to a different relation between artists and their audience: it changes the interaction, reproducibility and experience of artistic creations. This creates wholly new opportunities that are embraced by us at HKU. Yet this also comes with risks. For example, what does AI mean for copyrights? And how can we ensure that creative technology will be ethical and sustainable? What challenges for inclusivity arise from new technologies, and what are the effects of immersive environments on the issue of social safety? A responsible development and application of creative technology forces us to provide

answers to such questions. This is part of our education and research.

Technology and society are also getting more closely intertwined. This offers opportunities and challenges where the arts are specifically well-positioned to allow exploration and critical discussion. We want to make use of the possibilities of creative technology, but also put them under careful scrutiny. This poses a challenge for HKU, as well as for the individual artists that we are educating.

### NOT SET IN STONE

Inherent to technological developments is that they usually go faster than education and research can keep up with. HKU needs a solid and smart foundation, yet one that is not to be set in stone. Our infrastructure within the organisation must be able to keep responding to developments that we currently cannot foresee, yet might be the new reality a year from

now. Creative technology must therefore be embedded in every layer of HKU. This ownership allows us to be, and stay, an arts university that is prepared for the rapid pace and impact of technological developments, and enables us to give technology a relevant function in our education, research and organisation.





## IN 2030

- HKU has incorporated creative technology in our vision on art and creativity and will be recognised and acknowledged for this in our external positioning.
- HKU is a pioneer in the application and use of creative technology, and at the forefront in the public debate on this topic.
- Creative technology features prominently in each curriculum and academy, and is a central theme of our education and research.
- We have a learning and working environment, including the HKU workshops, that challenges students, teachers, researchers and staff members to experiment and develop with creative technology in their own context.

*“Put the emphasis on the strength of HKU: design by new media. HKU has been a pioneer in this ever since the seventies, successfully bringing developments from the fields of media, film and animation – and today in digitalisation and gaming as well – to the visual arts.”*

– Rein Wolfs  
Director Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam



Graduation work during Exposure 2024

## 40 3.5 ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Entrepreneurship is ingrained in the DNA of HKU. Not just as an activity, but as an attitude and one of our core values. Entrepreneurship is about agency: the will and ability to transform meaningful concepts into impact. This goes for both our students and our staff members: they are open to change and act accordingly, think in terms of opportunities and are flexible.

The teaching of entrepreneurship is shaped integrally in each curriculum and supported by the department of OOI ('Research, Education and Innovation'). With this, we offer our students the best-possible preparation for a long-term career as professional creator. We aspire to create an optimal match between our education and the professional practice. One that is not just aimed at your first job, assignment or project after graduation, but instead on forging an enduring career.

In the creative sector, entrepreneurial conduct often leads to new opportunities. There are many experiments going on with new forms of organisation and collective value creation. By doing research into such experiments and by making entrepreneurship an integral part of our education, we are not just improving the match between education and professional practice, but actively shaping that professional practice.

We see that the creative sector is constantly changing, forcing people employed in the creative sector to permanently develop themselves. Technological and social developments demand new skills and ways of working. This is a challenge for a sector that is typically marked by a large proportion of small organisations and self-employed entrepreneurs. Consequently, many professionals lack a culture and structure that supports professionalisation. This opens up opportunities for offering Life-Long Learning (LLL) tracks.



Scene from the stage play  
*Zomergasten live 2024*

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HKU is well-positioned for playing a role in the development of a learning culture and in offering LLL, both for and together with the professional field. We respond to the developmental needs in the fields of entrepreneurship, technology, trans-disciplinary cooperation, new creator's skills and educational skills. With our partners in the regional network Utrecht Creative Community and fostered by the European project Cyanotypes, we are developing a broad supply of (partly online) tools, modules and training programmes for post-initial learning. The knowledge and partnerships arising from this get a place within all the education that HKU provides.

The training of our own staff members is given shape by a yet to be founded Centre for Teaching and Learning. We regard the curiosity and willingness to keep learning as important drivers for professional and personal development. Through informal and formal learning, we contribute to professionalisation and stimulate educational innovation. In this way, we offer a challenging learning environment to students and an inspiring working environment to our staff members.

A student of HKU Fine Art working in the studio at Pastoe Fabriek, 2022





Masterclass Ari Hoenig, 2020

## IN 2030

- All of our students are creative entrepreneurs. Whether they are working as independent professionals or salaried employees: they have the skills and reflective capacities required for continued self-development.
- Entrepreneurship features prominently in each curriculum and in our ways of working.
- HKU has created a broad Life-Long Learning supply for, and with, the creative sector (including the long-term development of our own alumni).

“Business and entrepreneurship really must be regarded as part of creative and artistic practice, as permanent subjects in higher arts education.”

– Kristel Casander  
Director Voordekunst





Opening of Exposure 2024, Pastoe Fabriek

# 44 3.6 IN UTRECHT, THE NETHERLANDS AND THE WORLD

With our education and research, we think and act both regionally, nationally and internationally. We are rooted in Utrecht, one of the most creative cities in the Netherlands. Yet we cooperate in national and international networks, which gives us a broad impact.



Graduation work for HKU Design, Exposure 2024



Show by students of HKU Fashion Design, Exposure 2024

## ACTIVE SUPPLIER OF CULTURE

Utrecht brings together a large and growing part of the creative sector. To illustrate: Utrecht ranks second in terms of job opportunities in the creative sector. With its rich cultural infrastructure, the city offers a diverse stage for new and established talents in all artistic disciplines. These factors contribute to the attractiveness of Utrecht.

With exhibitions, stage performances and festivals, such as HKU Exposure, we ensure the visibility of HKU's artistic talents in the city. We are an important supplier of culture and contribute to Utrecht's creative breeding grounds. For these purposes, HKU has close partnerships with the city's cultural institutions. In the

coming years, we want to expand and intensify such partnerships.

As an institute for higher arts education, we are actively contributing to the development of Utrecht as a centre of gravity for the creative, artistic, and cultural sectors. From day one, our students experience the vibrancy of their environment. We make visible art in the city, and in dialogue with the city. We do this from our city campuses at iconic locations in Utrecht. Each of these sites has its own identity and offers space to artistic developments within their specific discipline. And by their mutual connection, we offer interdisciplinary crossovers.

## 46 NATIONAL WORK FIELD AND EDUCATION

On a national level, HKU serves a role in two worlds: art and education. We are active in the further development of Fair Pay, the Governance Code Cultuur and other agreements to strengthen the position of artists. HKU also takes an active role in national educational issues, such as the debate on internationalisation and a new sector plan for the higher arts

education (KUO). As the largest arts university of the Netherlands, we work to serve the interests of the sector as a whole. And our research contributes to knowledge developments and finding new paradigms for the artistic practice and society.

Graduation project for the HKU Photography course, displayed during Exposure 2015



## INTERNATIONALLY CONNECTED

HKU is an arts university with an international orientation. Our students are mostly based in the Dutch labour market and often operate on the international playing field of the arts. Art and creativity, after all, are international and multicultural by definition. Art provides a language that everyone can understand and that connects cultures at the regional, national and global level. Internationalisation within the arts is therefore valuable for the Dutch knowledge economy, innovation capabilities and educational quality.

To prepare students for this international aspect, we add an international dimension to our education and research. These efforts are directed by our Vision on Education and Research, a strategic partnership policy and ethical framework. We put Utrecht's regional challenges into a global perspective and translate worldwide trends back to the context level

of Utrecht. The themes set out by our guiding lights offer coherence, since questions regarding inclusion, healthcare and sustainability are not limited by borders.

We shape our education and research partly through participation in international consortia. We create an open learning and working environment by collaborating with regional, national, and international partners on projects for education, research, and innovation. To this end, we enable international interaction, both physical and online. This includes short-term opportunities such as internships, exchange programmes, and staff exchanges, as well as long-term initiatives, such as admitting international degree students or committing ourselves to European funding programmes. The extent to which the international dimension is incorporated depends on the labour markets for which we are educating our students.

## IN 2030

- HKU is an indispensable partner in the growing creative sector of our region, and an important partner in the artistic and cultural policy of Utrecht, both in terms of talent development and in relation to the available stages in the city. We actively connect the art of our students to the city, including through our own stages such as Exposure.
- HKU is an explicit opinion leader in national debates on art, art education and art research. We contribute to a strong sector for higher arts education and to a collective and ambitious sector plan.
- Education and research are related to the international context, in interaction with international students, partners and researchers. Thereby each student and staff member is given the opportunity to develop international and intercultural competencies.

# HOW DO ORGANISE THIS?

OWIE  
SFF

# 50 4. HOW DO WE ORGANISE THIS?

Art and culture are always in motion, and thus the same goes for HKU. This movement is directed towards our mission: to have our professional arts education and practice-oriented research offer students the best preparation for a career as professional creator who makes an impact on people and society. Every aspect of HKU must support this mission: our education, our research and our organisation.

## DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA

This strategy provides HKU with a collective narrative. Our mission, vision and values define the ambitions for our education and research. We position ourselves through our artistic quality, artisanship and academic capacities, interlaced with creative technology and entrepreneurship. We do this at high level and in a way that is internationally recognisable. All this

together offers a framework for our actions in the coming years. This process will be further shaped in the Development and Implementation agenda. Each department of our organisation will translate this HKU 2030 Strategic Plan to its own context. And HKU-wide questions that stem from the HKU 2030 route will be tackled collectively.





## ORGANISATIONAL PRINCIPLES

We keep working together on HKU's abilities to operate and position ourselves. We do this in our structure and organisational culture. The goal is to spend a larger portion of our resources directly on research and education. For this purpose, our conduct is based on our organisational principle called ALLEN: Ambition, Courage (from the Dutch word 'Lef'), Logic, Easiness and Near. In these principles, the student perspective is always put at the centre. In our choices, we always choose what not to do as well, because (the experienced) work pressure is a justified concern. HKU 2030 is not a sprint, but a multi-year exercise that is not about the journey, but about the destination.

We appreciate the professionalism and drive of our staff members: our teachers, researchers and supporting staff that keep HKU going. Therefore we make sure that everyone working at HKU feels seen and heard; that every staff member is free to help shape HKU 2030. And that everyone can develop themselves to grow, both inside and outside HKU. A Centre for Teaching and Learning supports this development, in line with our ambitions.

Graduation work for HKU Theatre, Exposure 2024



## 52 SUSTAINABILITY

HKU aims to be climate-neutral in 2030. Sustainability is a focus point in every aspect of our organisation. We contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (specifically the goals for Quality Education, Climate Action and Partnership for the Goals). As educational institute, we set the write example, while stimulating our

students and staff members towards sustainable behaviour. This goes beyond merely energy consumption: we focus on every aspect of sustainable behaviour in our education, research and operations. These ambitions are fed by our guiding light 'The Art of Sustainability and Circularity.

## DIGITAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND IT

We use educational technology to make our education accessible and flexible. An HKU-wide Learning Management System provides courses the freedom to work towards an open and flexible curriculum across over academies. Students and staff members are relieved by a digital learning environment and IT facilities that are properly functioning, secure, and maximally tuned to the demands as defined by education and the student perspective.

We are exploring the applications of AI, in our education and research as well as our organisational processes. There are so many fields in which we see opportunities to make our work easier and better through AI. We equip our staff members for working with AI, with the purpose of letting this be to their own benefits. Naturally, we keep a close eye on the responsible application of AI and the related ethical aspects.

## GOVERNANCE

HKU upholds a well-functioning and active representation that involves both students and staff members. We do this by actively connecting to our course committees and central council of representatives. In addition to this, we want to start a pilot with a student assessor joining the Executive Board, ensuring that the student perspective is directly represented at all levels.



Graduation work for HKU Fine Art at Pastoe Fabriek, Exposure 2024

## IN 2030

- HKU is strongly positioning on artistic quality, artisanship and academic performance interlaced with creative technology and entrepreneurship.
- We rename the schools to the more distinctive academies, along with Utrechts Conservatorium, each with their own character, and with strong ties to each other and their environment.
- The executive and positioning power of HKU has increased in the structure and organisational culture, so that a larger portion of our research is spent on education and research.
- A Centre for Teaching and Learning is working on the professionalisation of staff members, with a robust professionalisation supply that is tailored to our ambitions.
- Our city campus has state-of-the-art facilities, workshops and IT infrastructure to support education and research.
- HKU is working from the organisational principles of ALLEN and is a healthy, inclusive and sustainable organisation:
  - HEALTHY** attention for work happiness and work pressure, supportive of a healthy lifestyle and facilitating a learning organisation.
  - INCLUSIVE:** attention for a safe learning and working environment, embracing diversity in all dimensions from the principle of multivocality, stimulate connections within and outside HKU.
  - SUSTAINABLE:** in 2030, HKU is climate neutral and both stimulating and facilitating sustainable conduct in in all aspects of our organisation.

## 54 ALLEN

**AMBITIE (AMBITION)** We always mirror our choices and decisions to our ambitions, their impact and their goals. We draw attention to the necessity of change, which brings about the movement that is required to progress. By sharing and celebrating successes, we maintain our faith in the possibility of that change. Directors and their teams have a central role and responsibility in providing direction and decision-making, both for their specific department and for HKU as a whole. They create room for the interplay between staff members and experts, and in doing so, they are responsible, in co-creation with the staff, for the 'triangle' of feasibility, affordability, and organizability of decisions. For making sound decisions with an eye to their impact, our facilities and experts are indispensable in both their preparations and execution.

**LEF (COURAGE)** We dare to go off the treaded paths and learn from our mistakes. Creators know as no other that making errors is a necessity, because the illusion of total control leads to stagnation and separates policy from reality. We know that risk-averse behaviour hinders development and therefore we think carefully about risk reduction. We stick to a limited set of rules and procedures, yet this never relieves us from our responsibility to think for ourselves and use our common sense.

**LOGICA (LOGIC)** We abide by logical design principles and clearly show what we do and why, tracking and explaining what is meaningful. Effectiveness trumps efficiency: we are willing to make concessions when they contribute to the overall quality. We give way to each other, and we do this responsibly: respecting the boundaries, keeping to agreements, giving and receiving feedback and feedforward, make informed considerations, regularly check our assumptions and communicate effectively.

**EENVOUD (SIMPLICITY)** As professional arts university, we know that ownership and freedom are prerequisites for making the right decisions and organise your own work. Easiness is our starting principle, and our systems and methods are organised for this. Easiness means aspiring to get to clear decisions and delineate them as well; not wanting to do everything, minimise fragmentation, and always ask yourself again: does this benefit the organisation and our ambition of providing our students the best education?

**NABIJHEID (PROXIMITY)** We strive to a cooperation in which we trust tasks to one another, because we are working from substantial goals and are confident that our colleagues take the collective interests into account. This is how we simplify our consultation structures, become effective and leaves us free to spend maximum time to our students and to the quality of our education and research. This is only possible when we recognise our core points, keep our eyes on the long term and permanently ask ourselves how we can be part of the solution. We organise our support and exchange of expertise close the execution, in line with our ambition to question with every step that we take what the effects will be on our primary process: the student and their education.

## DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA: WHAT, WHO, HOW AND WHEN

This HKU 2030 Strategic Plan is the starting point for realising our ambitions. In a collective agenda, we formulate the ambitions for 2030 in SMART terms and link them to the required common dialogue and activities. Some of these activities will be picked up by every part of the organisation. Others entail HKU-wide developments. The Development and Implementation Agenda further specifies how we are going to realise this strategy together.

New instruments such as the HKU Onderwijskompas and Research Vision will help to do this individually and in connection with the whole of HKU. From the regular responsibility cycle, the progress towards our ambitions is monitored and will be biannually evaluated with all aspects in combination.



Graduation work for HKU Design,  
Exposure 2024

“Creative people must be able to experiment in freedom”

“Collectively programming what Utrecht represents.”

– Eva Oosters  
Councillor for Culture



Scene from the stage play *Schaam* ('Shame'), 2022

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