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Niekolaas Lekkerkerk Wins Inaugural Demergon Curatorial Exchange and Award

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Courtesy the Whitechapel Gallery

From Left: Nayia Yiakoumaki, Nico de Oliveira, Dimitris Daskalopoulos, Elina Kountouri (Director of Demergon Foundation), winner Niekolaas Lekkerkerk, Iwona Blazwick (Director of Whitechapel Gallery), and Daniel F. Herrmann

by Coline Milliard

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The winner of the first **Demergon Curatorial Award** was announced during a ceremony at the [Whitechapel Gallery](#) this evening: [Niekolass Lekkerkerk](#) was singled out for his exhibition proposal “News from Spetsopoula Island.”

The award is the fruit of a collaboration between the Whitechapel Gallery’s **Curating the Contemporary MA programme** (delivered in collaboration with **London Metropolitan University**) and the **Demergon Daskalopoulos Foundation for Culture and Development** set up by the Greek collector [Dimitris Daskalopoulos](#).

Eleven students from the MA were invited to submit proposals based on the Daskalopoulos Collection, and it was Lekkerkerk’s unusual idea won the jury over.

“The proposed exhibition posits artists as explorers, treating their artworks as field-reports from a semi-

fictitious island,” explained **Daniel F. Herrmann**, chair of the jury, Eisler Curator and Head of Curatorial Studies at the Whitechapel Gallery. “Inventive, poetic and with much critical acumen, the proposal not only reflects the depth and quality of the Daskalopoulos Collection, it also takes into account the collection's specific heritage. Using the process of curating as a medium, Niekolaas' proposal demonstrates the relevance of contemporary art as analytical commentary in everyday life.”

The Award is the culmination of an exchange designed to foster relationships between emerging curators based in Greece and in the UK. Last July, fledgling curators from various Greek institutions came to London on a research trip, and the London students were in turn welcomed in Athens. From next year, the Demergon Curatorial Award will be open to students from the [Courtauld Institute of Art](#), [Goldsmiths](#), and the [Royal College of Art](#).

by Coline Milliard, [Visual Arts](#), [Contemporary Arts](#),

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