Dutch Design Awards announces three Emerging Talents as winners of 2026

Jun Fujisaku, Ori Orisun Merhav, and Esmay Wagemans represent Dutch design at its most radical, opening up new possibilities in uncertain times

Eindhoven, 17 October 2026 – **The three winners of the Dutch Design Awards 2026 were announced at the awards ceremony hosted at the Piet Hein Eek workshop in Eindhoven, celebrated amongst the Dutch design community. Jun Fujisaku, Ori Orisun Merhav, and Esmay Wagemans received the 2026 Emerging Talent Awards from jury chair Borre Akkersdijk, recognized for their distinct signatures, rigorous methodologies, and the expansive worlds they construct around their work. The Netherlands' most prestigious design prize positions the next generation of Dutch design. The awards come with a cash prize of €10,000 each, supported by the Keep an Eye Foundation, and a special edition trophy by former winner Vera van der Burg. Additionally, Studio ACTE (Estelle Barriol & Fanny Bordes) received the SolidNature Residency. A showcase of the Dutch Design Awards nominees can be seen at the Strijp TX Building during Dutch Design Week.**

Winners

The three winning designers stand out for their daring experimentation around materials, adaptability and technologies that reshape the human body and its environment.

Jun Fujisaku brings "next-level modularity" to living, according to the jury. Grounded in architecture and cabinetmaking, his shape-shifting furniture dismantles the traditional order of the home - interrogating the unseen labour of domestic routines by staging small-scale spatial interactions with brutalist rigor and sharp wit.

Ori Orisun Merhav has developed "a singular ecological signature," according to the jury. Working with a specific insect-derived biomaterial, her research and artistic practice bridges traditional craft and additive manufacturing to expand how design can emerge from the intersection of nature, animals, and technology.

Esmay Wagemans offers the jury a "vision of the future when looking at her work." Sculpting and casting directly against the body, she presents an evocative synthesis of technological shifts and the human condition - asserting the body's fluidity, autonomy, and cyborg possibilities directly onto the skin.

Jury chair Borre Akkersdijk about the winners: *"With uncompromising authorship, these winners do more than ask questions - they open the potential for transformation. Through their critical perspectives and strong visual language, seemingly fixed categories of gender, nature, and the human body begin to shift, demonstrating how design can actively reshape visions of the future and the now. In a landscape of intense pressure, the three winners refuse predetermined commercial tracks. Instead of blending into the*

field, Jun Fujisaku, Ori Orisun Merhav and Esmay Wagemans, set their own rhythm, claiming the freedom to probe uncomfortable realities and dismantle traditional expectations of the discipline. Their practices stand as autonomous, deeply personal, and ready to go even further."

SolidNature

Residency Next to the primary awards, the SolidNature Residency was presented to Studio ACTE, who will embark on a unique collaborative project with SolidNature with a €5,000 stipend. SolidNature specialises in exceptional natural stone for high-end architectural and interior projects worldwide.

Studio ACTE explores new forms of resilient architecture through low-tech, geo-sourced design and radical material reuse. Led by Estelle Barriol and Fanny Bordes, the Rotterdam-based studio prioritises hands-on research, craftsmanship, and collective building processes.

Dutch Design Awards presents the Class of 2026: 15 finalists for the Emerging Talent Award driving the conversation in Dutch design into new territories. They are the new generation, at the forefront of contemporary practice.

Class of 2026

The Dutch Design Awards Class of 2026 consists of Necim Abiadh, Ülkühan Akgül, Colette Aliman, Rosalie Apituley, Hsin Min Chan, Jun Fujisaku, Julia Janssen, Ori Orisun Merhav, Yuro Moniz, Maggie Laylon Saunders (Striptopia), Gijs Schalkx, Sondi, Studio ACTE (Estelle Barriol & Fanny Bordes), Esmay Wagemans and Yorick Westerkamp.

Jury

The internationally-renowned jury has brought together pioneering voices that show the power of design and creativity today, and recognize the need to regain a shared momentum in the field.

Imruh Asha (Dazed Magazine), Gabriele Chiave (Controvento), Karin van Gilst (FOAM Museum Amsterdam), Afaina de Jong (AFARAI), Christian Luiten (Avant Arte), Nalden (Nternet Company) and Hussein Suleiman (Daily Paper) judged the shortlist and winners under the leadership of jury chair Borre Akkersdijk (BYBORRE/Patience) of the Dutch Design Awards Class of 2026.

Partners

Dutch Design Awards 2026 are made possible in part by partners Keep an Eye Foundation, Dutch Design Foundation, and the City of Eindhoven. DDA thanks The Social Hub, USM Modular Furniture, SolidNature and Cor Unum for supporting the Dutch Design Awards 2026 programme.

Dutch Design Awards

The Dutch Design Awards (DDA) shine a spotlight on designers who are leading the way through their radical imagination, exceptional talent and collaboration. For more than two decades, impact has been at the heart of the Dutch Design Awards, which spearhead the debate on how Dutch design continues to chart the course for the future.

Trophy Design

In 2024, the Dutch Design Awards broke with the tradition of identical trophies. Each year, a past winner is invited to interpret the trophy, passing the physical baton and trust forward to the incoming generation, and highlighting the importance of connection. Christien Meindertsma, Borre Akkersdijk, and now Vera van der Burg are part of this lineage.