



April 20, 2018

Embargoed until 15:00 on April 20, 2018.

*ars viva 2019*

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### Winners of *ars viva 2019*

#### Niko Abramidis & NE | Cana Bilir-Meier | Keto Logua

Berlin/Cologne. The Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft im BDI e. V. (Association of Arts and Culture of the German Economy at the Federation of German Industries e. V.) announces the winners of the 2019 *ars viva* Prize. The awardees were named at "Es lebe die Kunst! 65 Jahre *ars viva*. Künstler und Förderer im Gespräch" (Long live art! 65 years of *ars viva*. Artists and sponsors in conversation), an event at ART COLOGNE on April 20, 2018.

This year, the *ars viva* Prize for visual art has been awarded to Niko Abramidis & NE (\*1987), Cana Bilir-Meier (\*1986), and Keto Logua (\*1988). Since 1953, the Kulturkreis has presented this prize to outstanding young artists living in Germany, whose works are distinguished by a unique language of form and an awareness of contemporary issues. The prize includes two exhibitions at prestigious contemporary art institutions within Germany and Europe and an arts residency on Fogo Island (Canada). Each artist receives a stipend of 5,000 Euro. In addition, the Kulturkreis will produce a bilingual catalog published by Kerber Verlag. This year's jury selected 12 finalists from 49 nominated artists. Finalists presented their works in studios and at KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin.

**Niko Abramidis & NE's** work reflects on power structures, future utopias, and global urban development. Beginning with sketches made in a notebook or on a cell phone, he produces peculiar parallel worlds: spatial installations that resemble office rooms, playing with traditional symbols of power, a fictional corporate identity, and images of the city. His drawings, objects, and digital prints are characterised by a subversive sense of humor and diverse references, for example to science fiction, philosophy, and economics.

**Cana Bilir-Meier's** film and sound works centre on materials from her family's archive. Starting with episodes from her own family history, the artist, a grandchild of Turkish immigrants, approaches universal narratives and collective memories. Of central importance to the work is the process of sifting through materials like image and sound recordings, letters, newspaper articles, and documents. Revealing how such materials are evaluated and contextualized gives rise to a distinct artistic language and perspective.

**Keto Logua's** sculptures and films often refer to natural phenomena and socio-cultural issues. The artist takes a critical and conceptual approach to found and constructed objects, submitting them to processes of compression and transformation. Examples of this include a 3D print of the world's first flower, which was reconstructed by a team of scientists last year, or a large sculpture made from elements of a beehive. In another work, Logua designs survival scenarios using everyday objects, thus calling into question the relationship between fiction and reality.

The jury, chaired by Ulrich Sauerwein, included members of the Kulturkreis' Committee for Visual Arts, Mathilda Legemah and Franziska Rieger (Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft), and cooperating partners Julia Höner (KAI 10 | Arthena Foundation), Dr Nina Zimmer (Kunstmuseum Bern), Zita Cobb (Shorefast Foundation/Fogo Island Arts), and Nicolaus Schafhausen (Kunsthalle Wien, Shorefast Foundation). Bettina Steinbrügge (Kunstverein Hamburg) served as an adviser.

An exhibition of works by the 2019 *ars viva* winners opens on October 6, 2018 at KAI 10 | Arthena Foundation in Düsseldorf. A subsequent exhibition will take place in the summer of 2019 at Kunstmuseum Bern.

## **Artist Biographies:**

Niko Abramidis & NE, born 1987 in Munich, studied Architecture at the Technical University of Munich and Fine Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts, Munich. In 2017 he was awarded a residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris. His works have been exhibited at such venues as Kunstverein München and C-Gallery, Munich. He is the founder and curator of the project space "easy!upstream" in Munich, which was initiated in 2015.

Cana Bilir-Meier, born 1986 in Munich, studied Art Education and Art and Digital Media at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. In 2016 she received the Birgit-Jürgenssen-Prize. Her works have been exhibited at such venues as Tensta Konsthall (Stockholm), Kunsthalle Wien, mumok (Vienna) and "Diagonale – Festival for Austrian Film".

Keto Logua, born 1988 in Sukhumi, Georgia, studied Painting at the Tbilisi State Academy of Arts and Berlin University of the Arts. In 2017 she was a fellow of the Berlin Program for Artists. Her works have been shown at such venues as Between Bridges Berlin (Berlin), KW Institute for Contemporary Art (Berlin), and the goEast Open Frame Award competition at Museum Wiesbaden.

Press photos are available at: <https://tinyurl.com/yahaylzm>

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