

**The Hague University of the Arts  
Royal Academy of Art (KABK)**

**Advisory report to NVAO**

**Master Interior Architecture INSIDE  
CROHO 49238**

**October 2021**



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## **Summary Judgement**

This document reports on the assessment of the Master programme Interior Architecture (INSIDE) offered by the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague (KABK). As the institution is participating in a pilot of the Dutch Ministry of Higher Education, the panel only assessed the programme's intended and achieved learning outcomes. In the run up to the visit, the panel received extensive information on the standards to be assessed, as well as on the background of the programme and its intentions for the future. The assessment visit took place at KABK on 15 and 16 September 2021. The panel has appreciated the open atmosphere during the discussion rounds with students, staff, alumni and professional field. It sensed not only a positive spirit among all interviewees but also a clear commitment to INSIDE and KABK.

In so far as the intended learning outcomes of the programme are concerned, the panel considers that INSIDE has a clear profile, which is operationalised in relevant characteristics that set it apart from other interior architecture programmes in the Netherlands. The panel thinks highly of this profile and of the courage of the programme to try and broaden the concept of interior architecture within the professional domain. The intended learning outcomes are formulated adequately and reflect not only the nation-wide professional and educational frameworks but also the specific characteristics of INSIDE. Furthermore, the panel considers that the input from the professional field – both formally through the advisory committee and tutors from professional practice and informally via individual contributions of alumni – is very relevant and supportive of the past developments and future ambitions of the programme. If anything, the panel considers that the focus of the programme on the 'real world' (i.e. embedding projects beyond their spatial context and within the economic and political context) is not yet sufficiently embedded in the intended learning outcomes. In this regard, the notion of 'place' – a characteristic that was added to the programme profile recently whereby students are to acquire a reliable, workable and personal picture of the changing spatial situation in relation to their own design assignment - can be more explicitly mentioned in the final qualifications.

In order to establish the quality of the achieved learning outcomes, the panel has reviewed a representative sample of graduation projects. The panel considers that students who pass the graduation exam have indeed achieved the learning outcomes and demonstrate a level of competency that can be expected of a master interior architecture. The panel found the topics of the graduation projects diverse, relevant, personal and authentic. As it often noticed a disbalance between the good quality research and the average quality design components in the graduation projects, the panel considers this a point of improvement and structural attention for INSIDE. Moreover, the panel considers that INSIDE prepares students for a career in the field of interior architecture or the related domain of culture. Alumni emphasised that INSIDE had made them discover their qualities and had helped broadening their vision on architecture and interior architecture. Graduates who wish to pursue a registration as interior architect (in the Netherlands) are qualified to do so, according to the panel.

Furthermore, the panel addressed two issues that have been of key importance for INSIDE and KABK in the recent past. In so far as COVID-19 is concerned, the panel found that the pandemic has certainly had an impact on the practical and community-building aspects of education. However, it did not seem to have a major negative influence on the didactic set-up of the programme nor on the quality of the student work. With regard to the newspaper article of October 2020 and independent report of March 2021 on the social safety at KABK, the panel noticed that the revelations on transgressive behaviour in the academy have led to intensive discussions among students and staff, also at INSIDE. Moreover, KABK has strengthened the offer of student services that handle issues of social safety in a professional way.

Based on the information provided and the discussions during the site visit, the panel considers that the INSIDE programme meets the quality requirements set by NVAO's Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands for limited programme assessments and relevant for this particular external assessment visit: intended learning outcomes and achieved learning outcomes. The panel therefore issues a positive advice to NVAO on the quality of the master programme Interior Architecture submitted for accreditation by the Royal Academy of Art The Hague.

The chair and the secretary of the panel hereby declare that all panel members have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in the report. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

On behalf of the assessment panel,

Chris van Langen  
Chair

Mark Delmartino  
Secretary

Date: 15 October 2021

## **Introduction**

This document reports on the assessment of the Master programme Interior Architecture (INSIDE) offered by the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague (KABK). The master programme in its current form goes back to 2011 when the “Wet op de Architectentitel” was changed, requiring interior architecture graduates to have a master degree in order to register as an interior architect. It is one of six master programmes in Interior Architecture in the Netherlands. Since a few years, the programme is referred to as INSIDE.

The assessment visit took place at KABK on 15 and 16 September 2021. The assessment was performed by an independent panel of peers, which was approved by NVAO and consisted of:

- Chris van Langen (NL), chair
- Petra Pferdmenges (DE/BE), member
- Paulien Bremmer (NL), member
- Márton Kabai (HU/NL), student-member

The panel was accompanied by Mark Delmartino (BE), an external secretary who liaised between the panel and the programme and ensured that the visit complied with NVAO procedures. All members and the secretary signed a statement of independence and confidentiality. Annex 2 contains a brief presentation of the panel members.

To establish the quality of the INSIDE programme, the panel has followed the Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands, which is described in the NVAO publication of September 2018. As the KABK, under the umbrella of The Hague University of the Arts, obtained accreditation at institutional level, its programmes can be assessed according to the limited evaluation framework of NVAO, which consists of four standards. Moreover, the university’s participation in a pilot of the Dutch Ministry of Higher Education allows its programmes to follow a different accreditation process: the external assessment on standards 1 (intended learning outcomes) and 4 (achieved learning outcomes) needs validation by NVAO, while standards 2 (teaching-learning environment) and 3 (student assessment) can be assessed by an external panel without the involvement of NVAO. In the underlying document, the panel gives a substantiated judgement on NVAO standards 1 and 4 on a three-point scale: meets the standard, partially meets the standard or does not meet the standard. The panel subsequently recommends a final conclusion regarding the INSIDE programme on a three-point scale: positive, conditionally positive or negative. This weighted and substantiated appreciation serves as advice towards NVAO when taking a decision on the re-accreditation of the master programme Interior Architecture at KABK.

Prior to the visit, three panel members attended the programme’s Graduation Show in July 2021. Furthermore, the panel chair and the external secretary discussed the set-up of the assessment, as well as the role of the chair and the site visit programme. The secretary was in contact with KABK representatives to work out the programme of the site visit (presented in Annex 3) and agree on the materials to be made available (listed in Annex 4). The final arrangements were validated by the panel chair. In order to allow the panel to prepare for its

tasks, INSIDE produced a Self-Evaluation Report providing relevant background information on the programme and addressing extensively the issues covered by the NVAO standards under review. The NVAO standard on achieved learning outcomes is tested among others by examining a sample of end level products. The panel secretary organised the graduation project review with KABK and supported the panel members in their work. In line with NVAO requirements, the panel reviewed the graduation projects of fifteen students who graduated between September 2018 and August 2021. Based on a list of 30 student numbers, the chair and the panel secretary selected 15 graduation projects who had obtained a variety of scores and had been supervised by a variety of tutors.

The site visit was held on Wednesday 15 and Thursday 16 September 2021. In the run-up to the visit, the panel members studied the self-evaluation report, reviewed a sample of graduation projects and reported on their findings. The secretary compiled the findings in a discussion note which was used at the preparatory panel meeting on site. The programme also featured an open consultation hour for INSIDE students, teaching and support staff; eventually nobody made use of this opportunity to speak individually and confidentially with the panel. KABK decided not to include a separate development dialogue during the site visit but to organise it at a later stage.

This report covers the external assessment of the master programme INSIDE. The next chapter constitutes the core of the report as it presents the findings, considerations and conclusions of the panel with regard to the intended learning outcomes and the achieved learning outcomes of the programme. After the site visit, the secretary wrote a draft version of this report and circulated it to the panel members for review and feedback. Their comments were incorporated in a pre-final version, which was validated by the chair. The final draft was sent to KABK for a check on factual errors on 11 October 2021. Their feedback was discussed in the panel that modified the text where it thought this was appropriate. The chair then established the final version of this report, which was sent to KABK on 15 October 2021.

The panel wants to express its gratitude to the quality assurance team at KABK who has been instrumental in ensuring a good and timely information flow from the programme to the panel.

## Programme Assessment

### Standard 1 – Intended learning outcomes

*The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the programme; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.*

#### Profile

The master programme Interior Architecture in its current form goes back to 2011 when the “Wet op de Architectentitel” was changed, requiring interior architecture graduates to have a master degree in order to register as an interior architect. It is one of six master programmes in Interior Architecture in the Netherlands. In the first accreditation phase up to 2015, the programme matured organisationally. In the second accreditation period, INSIDE has become a stable programme with a clear set of final qualifications and a constant intake of 10-12 students with different educational and geographical backgrounds. The panel acknowledges this situation and understands that these features have allowed INSIDE to adjust its contents based on experiences gained and to incorporate current topics in the curriculum.

INSIDE distinguishes itself from the five other master programmes Interior Architecture by its emphasis on cultural and social challenges that can be met by the discipline and its focus on socially relevant spatial assignments. According to the self-evaluation report, the profile of an INSIDE interior architect consists of thirteen characteristics, which form a complete array of attributes that define the mentality, working methods, focus areas and positions of the interior architect educated at INSIDE and refer directly to the educational profile. Further to its discussions on site with staff, students, alumni and professional field, the panel recognises this INSIDE profile and its operationalisation in characteristics.

Furthermore, current and former students have indicated both in the self-evaluation report and during the site visit that the contemporary interpretation of interior architecture as taught in INSIDE was a main incentive for them to apply for the programme. They very much welcome the wide variety of perspectives on contemporary spatial design, which gives them the opportunity to develop a position of their own. Students also emphasised that the external presentation of INSIDE gives a clear picture of what to expect in terms of content, and that the programme delivers on the promises it makes/made. The panel subscribes to the students’ opinion that the confrontation with different approaches, methods, and techniques is what makes INSIDE such a rich programme.

#### Intended learning outcomes

The panel gathered from the self-evaluation report that the programme’s final qualifications are based on a set of different frameworks: in fact, the intended learning outcomes of INSIDE take on board the master qualifications of the Dublin Descriptors, the master profile for Fine Art and Design, the competencies listed in the national professional and educational profile

for interior architecture, and the entrance criteria of the Dutch Architect Title Act. The final qualifications also encompass most of the above-mentioned INSIDE characteristics.

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel noticed that the combination of all these elements results in 15 learning outcomes, clustered around five headings: research, design, development, presentation and position. The panel acknowledges that these learning outcomes have been leading qualifications in the organisation of education and the assessment of student work.

The build-up of these final qualifications is summarised in an impressive scheme, which was created at the time of the previous accreditation in 2015 and has been further adjusted since. The current version reflects among others the OBK master profile issued in 2017 and some of the more recently added INSIDE characteristics. Over the past few years three characteristics have been incorporated in the final qualifications: the role of place, the relationship between research and design, and the so-called bandwidth of positions.

Comparing its initial impressions with the discussions on site, the panel thinks that the way the intended learning outcomes are formulated is very relevant. While the more recent INSIDE characteristics ‘relationship between research and design’ and ‘bandwidth of positions’ are clearly incorporated in the final qualifications, the ‘role of place’ requires a more explicit operationalisation in the programme’s intended learning outcomes.

### **Ambitions**

In addition to presenting INSIDE’s profile and intended learning outcomes, the self-evaluation report contained an extensive and highly informative reflection on the programme’s ambitions towards the future. One element that was addressed in all discussions, is the way in which the programme positions itself to the (professional) field of interior architecture. The panel understood from both internal and external stakeholders that INSIDE is struggling to define its position on the continuum between on the one hand interior architecture as a profession with admission requirements and an educational endeavour that looks more broadly at developments in design of how space is created and functions. INSIDE has always focused more on the latter perspective without losing sight of the first.

The panel acknowledges the statement in the self-evaluation that since the previous accreditation a bandwidth has emerged within which students find their positions. It unfolds from the architecture based spatial design approach, passes through the strategy based spatial design approach to reach the intervention based spatial design approach and aims at practicality or at creating awareness. The bandwidth functions as a framework of consciousness for the future profession. In this respect, the panel understands the position taken up by some students and tutors that while INSIDE does a lot for the development of one’s own design position and broadens one’s horizons in the field of spatial design, the majority of students does not expect to qualify for a job in the classic professional field of interior architecture. Given that a traditional interpretation of interior architecture prevails in

the professional field, they suggest to change the programme name into Spatial Design or similar, as this would prevent misinterpretation of one's skills or orientation.

The discussions have shown according to the panel that INSIDE is very much about exploring and expanding the borders of interior architecture as a discipline. Nonetheless, several domestic and international students think the reference to interior architecture should remain in the title of the programme as the Architect's Register (or its namesake abroad) is still interesting to apply for. The panel endorses this position and sees an opportunity for this programme – in cooperation with its fellow programmes in the Netherlands – to enter into discussion with the professional organisations in order to expand the concept of interior architecture within the boundaries of the profession. One way to strengthen the position of INSIDE in this discussion would be for KABK to appoint a professorship (lectoraat) to research the concept of interior architecture in the light of the huge contemporary societal issues and the role of spatial design disciplines such as interior architecture to meet those issues.

### **Considerations**

The panel considers that the master programme Interior Architecture at KABK has a clear profile, which is operationalised in relevant characteristics that set itself apart from other interior architecture programmes in the Netherlands. The panel thinks highly of this profile and of the courage of the programme to try and broaden the concept of interior architecture within the boundaries of what is acceptable. In this regard, the panel welcomes the development of the bandwidth of positions as a canvas in which INSIDE students and alumni can move.

According to the panel, the intended learning outcomes are formulated adequately and reflect not only the nation-wide professional and educational frameworks but also the specific characteristics of INSIDE. The panel is very positive about the scheme which visualises the convergence between these frameworks and the programme qualifications. Moreover, the panel finds it a particularly strong point that there is a direct link with student assessment.

Furthermore, the panel considers that the input from the professional field – both formally through the advisory committee and tutors from professional practice and informally via individual contributions of alumni – is very relevant and supportive of the past developments and future ambitions of the programme.

The panel thinks positively about INSIDE's focus on interior architecture and the real world, i.e. the attention of the programme to embed projects beyond their spatial context and within the economic and political context. However, this reference to the real world is not yet sufficiently embedded in the intended learning outcomes, according to the panel. Furthermore the panel proposes to engage with the (public) actors involved in the transformation of the site in order to allow for durational impact through projects. Looking at the INSIDE

characteristics, the panel suggests that also the notion of place can be more explicitly mentioned in the final qualifications.

Finally, the panel supports the search of INSIDE to broaden the concept of interior architecture. It advises the programme to pursue on this path by also involving KABK and by joining forces with other interior architecture master programmes in the Netherlands in order to bring the debate to the Architect's Register.

### **Conclusion**

In sum, the panel considers that the intended learning outcomes are formulated in such a way that they align nicely with the objectives of the programme and the profile of the institution. Moreover, the ILOs are sufficiently concrete with regard to content, level and orientation. As a result, **the panel judges that the INSIDE programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

### **Standard 4 – Achieved learning outcomes**

*The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.*

#### **Quality of end level products**

In line with NVAO requirements, the assessment panel reviewed a representative sample of graduation projects, i.e. the set of products presented by fifteen students who graduated between September 2018 and August 2021. In order to make a valid selection of the graduation projects, INSIDE provided an overview of all students whose graduation file had been submitted and accepted in 2018-2019, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. This overview contained the student number, the score, the date of thesis submission and the name of the graduation project tutor. In their selection, the chair and panel secretary ensured that the fifteen students had obtained a wide range of scores, belonged to different cohorts and had been supervised by different tutors. INSIDE provided a link to each of the selected graduation files, which contained the research deliverable, pictures - and where available a video - presenting the design deliverable, and the intermediate and final evaluation forms. Prior to the site visit, the panel members reviewed and reported on the quality of the end level products. Given that the underlying assessment report to NVAO only covers standards 1 and 4, the panel was asked to focus on the quality of the graduation projects. For each student the experts answered three questions: (i) Are the graduation projects of sufficient quality to pass? (ii) Do you agree to the score (and constituent criteria) given by the tutor? (iii) Is the score adequately motivated in the evaluation? Furthermore, panel members were asked to report on their impressions regarding the overall quality of the sample they had reviewed. Once all contributions were gathered, the secretary drafted a note which was discussed at the preparatory meeting.

Based on the individual review of graduation projects and their discussion in the preparatory meeting, the panel found that the overall quality of the graduation projects is good. The quality of the graduation projects differs, but this difference is in line with the range of scores that were given to individual projects. All but one project demonstrated a (more than) sufficient to (very) good graduation trajectory. In one case, the panel had doubts whether the project had indeed reached the minimum quality threshold; in this case, the project had received the lowest possible pass score. The evaluation form showed that the tutor had similar concerns on the quality of the project as the panel. According to the panel, the quality of this work and the justified criticism in the evaluation form could have led equally well to a fail, possibly with the option of a second attempt at the resit. In two other cases, the panel found that the grading had been rather high. In one of these cases, the - again justified - criticism in the evaluation form did not seem to match the final score. Notwithstanding its critical findings, the panel thinks that the graduation projects – whether realised in ‘free times’ (2018-2019), during lockdown (2019-2020) or after a whole year of COVID-19 restrictions (2020-2021) – demonstrate that students at INSIDE invariably achieve the programme’s final qualifications.

Looking at the entire sample of graduation projects, the panel noticed that the subject of the projects have a high relevance. Students address urgent themes and approach them in a personal and authentic way, which the panel finds appealing. According to the panel, this is possible because the second year of the programme is entirely dedicated to graduation. Students start by orienting themselves on their graduation plan and often do so by taking a situation in their country of origin. The panel agrees to the findings of external stakeholders that this approach where projects have a tight connection to the hometown of the students - enriches the spectrum of projects very much. The panel is impressed by the diversity of the projects and thinks highly of the way in which INSIDE encourages students to engage with their own subjects and allows them to focus with their projects on situations in the countries they come from.

Furthermore, the panel is positive about the research dimension in the student projects, which gives depth to the work and makes the projects intriguing. The panel also appreciates that INSIDE students engage with current social and cultural issues in society: several projects are embedded within the socio-spatial context of the site, with students taking social responsibility and applying for example the reuse of materials. The panel noticed that by doing so, students live up to the characteristics that are part and parcel of the INSIDE profile.

The panel also indicated in the review that several students have been using film as a medium to inform the public about the trajectory of the graduation project. The usage of this medium intensified during the COVID period and is there to stay. The panel thinks film is a very good medium to do so and helps the viewer – including the panel member reviewing graduation projects – to understand the project as the output is often within the socio-spatial process and not always visible within the physical output.

One point that according to the panel requires attention is the sometimes considerable difference in quality between the rather strong research component and the often very average quality of the spatial design component in the graduation project. As this point has been on the radar of INSIDE for some time, it will be addressed more extensively in the section ambitions.

Although it is not part of the assessment standards in this accreditation exercise, the panel did notice – and informed the programme – that the comments in the evaluation forms were not always helpful. The form itself is very useful and allows to establish in a one-on-one relationship that the intended learning outcomes have indeed been achieved. Moreover, the panel members found that the overall score and the sub-scores on the constituent criteria were in most cases in line with the respective appreciations of the panel. However, the written feedback on the overall grade and the sub-scores was often not completed in an insightful way: most comments related to a general appreciation of the student/work but did not motivate why tutors had given a particular score on the respective criteria. In fact, the panel noticed that such insightful feedback motivating the (sub-)score was often only present in cases of poor achievement, leading the panel to wonder why some of the severe comments did not lead to an overall lower score. Finally, it was not always clear from the evaluation form whether the scores and comments related to the design component, the research component, or both.

### **Performance of graduates**

Another way to demonstrate the achievement of the learning outcomes is to look at the whereabouts of the graduates. The information provided in the self-evaluation report demonstrates that while INSIDE does not exclusively educate for a specific position in the interior architecture market, the vast majority of alumni are working either in the field of INSIDE or in related activities in the cultural sector. According to a survey among alumni who graduated between one and five years ago, 40% found work in a studio and worked in (interior) architecture, 11% had started their own business and were building a career in interior design and realisation or in spatial research. Investigating a bit deeper into the 45% of alumni saying they started doing something else, the survey found that also these graduates build a career that is often related to the world of culture and architecture.

The discussions during the visit with both recent graduates and somewhat older alumni confirmed the findings of the survey. In all cases, the interviewees indicated that INSIDE had opened their eyes, had made them discover their qualities and had made them understand what they really liked to do. Alumni mentioned among others that INSIDE brought them more confidence as designer and that it had helped broadening their vision on interior architecture. Finally, the panel was told several times that working on the graduation project was highly rewarding - “for the first time I could dig deep into the matter and got good guidance” - and proved a stepping stone for their career upon graduation.

Further to what was mentioned in the ambitions under standard 1, the panel found that many graduates who had entered INSIDE with a previous education in (interior) architecture, build a professional career in which interior architecture (INSIDE style) is important. While these graduates are very satisfied that they combined an often traditional bachelor education with a unconventional master programme, they do continue in the field of interior architecture. Moreover, the panel was informed by representatives of the professional field advisory committee that students who graduate the INSIDE programme do possess the competences to enrol on the two-year placement period that will eventually lead to a registration as interior architect in the Netherlands.

In sum, the panel thinks that the professional whereabouts of the INSIDE alumni confirm that students who graduate the programme have indeed achieved the final qualifications of a master interior architecture, INSIDE style.

### **Ambitions**

In addition to presenting the graduation work and professional careers of INSIDE alumni, the self-evaluation report contained an extensive and highly informative reflection on how INSIDE wants to adjust its programme to further increase the quality of the graduation projects. Over the past few years, several external stakeholders have been rather critical about the average quality of the spatial design component in the INSIDE graduation projects. Similarly, the panel noticed in its graduation project review that the biggest differences in quality are found in the spatial design component. While the quality tends to be sufficient, many projects seem to be insufficiently worked through for the often classical way in which they are shown and elaborated.

The panel noticed in the self-evaluation report and in the discussions with the professional field and the teaching staff that the programme shares that criticism at least partially. In this regard the programme team recognises that after extensive research in the graduation trajectory, the design results of students are often more convincingly promising than fully developed. According to the programme, the artistic rather than polytechnical context of the education at INSIDE contributes to the fact that the focus of its education is not on training technical skills but on stimulating the development of a personal design attitude and positioning in the professional field of the student. As mentioned before, students think this is a very important feature of INSIDE and highly valued by both incoming students and alumni. This education approach in turn leads in the graduation trajectory to a thorough research with a personal approach that is highly valued by external stakeholders, including the panel when it visited the graduation show and reviewed a sample of graduation projects.

In contrast to the appreciation for the research within the programme, however, there is criticism on the level of spatial design. And although INSIDE observes a balance between the two main categories of its education, it does notice that both components are not always delivered to the same quality at the end of the programme and now strives to bring spatial design to the same level as spatial research. According to INSIDE, the improvement of the

quality of spatial design is to be found in strengthening the bonds between spatial research and spatial design and in making a specific location more central to both research and design. In this regard, the two new INSIDE characteristics ('Relationship between research and design' and 'Place', see standard 1) play a role. According to the panel, the willingness of INSIDE to improve on such an important topic is positive. However, it remains unclear how the proposed improvements will actually take form and will eventually cause an enhancement of the quality of spatial design. Based on its review of fifteen graduation projects and its visit to the graduation show, the panel thinks that there is a lack of using design as a research tool in the research phase of the graduation project trajectory, as well as a lack of adequate design tools to translate the research outcome into a grounded spatial design, strategy or intervention. One way of overcoming this flaw, might be to connect the two parts of the graduation trajectory more strongly, to integrate research and design much more, and to have the research and design tutors support and supervise students more simultaneously rather than consecutively. It is not up to the panel in this report to issue recommendations on issues that concern the curriculum (standard 2, teaching and learning environment). Nonetheless, in view of the established quality of graduation projects, it does advise the programme to think about ways to redesign the graduation project trajectory.

### **Considerations**

Based on its review of 15 graduation projects, the panel considers that students who pass this graduation exam have indeed achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes and demonstrate a level of competency that can be expected of a master interior architecture. The panel found the topics of the graduation projects to be diverse, relevant, personal and authentic. The panel is also positive about the artistic dimension of projects and the way in which student engage with social and cultural issues in society. The use of film as a medium to inform the public is a value added according to the panel and indeed deserves to stay as a good practice after the pandemic.

The written information as well as the discussions with recent graduates, alumni and the professional field demonstrate according to the panel that INSIDE prepares students for a career in the field of interior architecture or perform related professional activities in the domain of culture. Moreover, students who wish to pursue a career as a registered interior architect (in the Netherlands) are qualified to do so. It goes to the credit of the INSIDE programme according to the panel that interviewed alumni emphasised that INSIDE had opened their eyes, had made them discover their qualities, had brought them confidence as designer and had helped broadening their vision on Architecture and Interior Architecture.

In addition to these positive considerations, the panel did notice that there often was a disbalance in quality between the research and the design component in the graduation project, with the latter element requiring structural attention of INSIDE. Hence the panel's suggestion to think about ways how to redesign the graduation trajectory. Similarly, the panel found that the highly relevant evaluation form can be completed in a more insightful way, motivating more explicitly the overall grade and the sub-scores per criterion. In this regard,

the proposed reflection / redesign of the graduation trajectory may also lead to a more balanced evaluation of the respective graduation project components.

### **Conclusion**

In sum, the panel considers that students who pass the graduation project invariably achieve the intended learning outcomes and are therefore entitled to graduate. Moreover, INSIDE graduates manage to find relevant employment and very often build a career in the broad domain of interior architecture. As a result, *the panel judges that the INSIDE programme meets standard 4, achieved learning outcomes.*

### **Additional topics: COVID-19 and social safety**

Although the panel is formally expected to assess only the intended and achieved learning outcomes of the INSIDE programme, important developments in the recent past require specific attention in this report.

#### **COVID-19 pandemic**

At the start of the pandemic in March 2020, the KABK buildings were locked and education temporarily moved to online environments. While the INSIDE programme places great emphasis on physical spatial work and one-to-one experimentation, the unforeseen emergency situation did not make it impossible for the students to complete their projects in time and within the applicable quality criteria. Students graduating in summer 2020 had finished the research part of their graduation trajectory by the time of the lockdown but still had quite some work to do on the design part. This required a good deal of flexibility and improvisation from both students and tutors. Students confirmed to the panel that everyone involved has made an effort in dealing with the special and challenging situation.

At the start of the academic year 2020-2021, the KABK reopened as the Academy was recognised to provide practical education. This meant that students could work at least part of the time in the studio space again. However, structural contacts with other departments, with fellow students from other programmes and even with the other cohort of INSIDE students were not possible. While some of the practical aspects of education – including the first-year component travel - could not be run as foreseen, the programme did organise a successful online guest lecture programme featuring speakers who would otherwise not have been able to join. Moreover, it was decided to include film as a means to present student work and to share project narratives. The use of film proved successful – also the panel was positively surprised by the added value of film to present graduation works - and will be maintained after the pandemic.

In sum, the panel gathers from the self-evaluation report and the discussions on site that the pandemic has certainly had an impact on the practical and community-building aspects of

education. However, there does not seem to be a major negative influence on the didactic set-up of the programme, nor on the quality of the student work.

### **Social safety**

A newspaper article from 2020 about transgressive behaviour at KABK led to a wave of personal experiences, revelations and accusations, and an independent investigation into the safety culture of/at the academy. Following the publication of this report in March 2021, the KABK director resigned. According to the self-evaluation report, conversations with INSIDE students showed on the one hand that they had not been exposed to the education and organisation related complaints from the report; on the other hand, students did recognise the underlying thoughts identified in the report. Discussions during the site visit confirmed that INSIDE students want to discuss the concepts of diversity, inclusivity and safety. However, none of the students or alumni referred during the visit to any personal case of harassment, nor did anyone make use of the open consultation moment.

In sum, the panel gathers from the self-evaluation report and the discussions that the newspaper article and the independent report have led to intensive discussions among students and staff, also at INSIDE, as well as to the creation / strengthening of student services at KABK that manage issues of social safety professionally.

### **Overall judgement**

In sum, the panel considers that INSIDE meets the two NVAO standards under consideration: intended learning outcomes and achieved learning outcomes. **The panel therefore issues a positive advice to NVAO on the quality of the master programme Interior Architecture submitted for accreditation by the Royal Academy of Art The Hague.**

## **Annexes**

### **Annex 1 – Administrative data on institution and programme**

#### **Administrative data on the institution**

Name of the institution: The Hague University of the Arts  
Royal Academy of Art The Hague

Status of the institution: publicly funded

Result of the institutional quality  
assurance assessment: positive (2020)

Contact person: Leo Capel (l.capel@kabk.nl)

#### **Administrative data on the programme**

Name: Interior Architecture

CROHO: 49238

Level: master

Orientation: professional

Credits: 120 ECTS

Location: The Hague

Mode of study: full-time

Language: English

Tracks: none

## **Annex 2 – Assessment panel**

### **Chris van Langen, panel chair**

Chris studied Architecture at the Eindhoven University of Technology. He worked for dS+V at the Municipality of Rotterdam and was until 1 October 2021 head of school of the Academy of Architecture and Urban Design in Rotterdam. Currently he is programme manager at Creative Industries Fund NL.

### **Petra Pferdmenges, member**

Petra studied Architecture at the Delft University of Technology after a first degree at the Fachhochschule Regensburg. She holds a PhD from RMIT Melbourne. In 2010, she founded the spatial agency Alive Architecture in Brussels. She also teaches design studios at KU Leuven – Campus Sint-Lucas.

### **Paulien Bremmer, member**

Paulien studied Architecture at the Delft University of Technology and holds a registration in the National Register of Architects. In 2005, she started her own studio in Amsterdam covering the wide range of architectural sub-disciplines. She teaches regularly at the Delft University of Technology and the Academy of Architecture in Amsterdam.

### **Márton Kabai, student-member**

Márton studied Graphic Design and is currently finalising his Master programme in Arts Education at the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam. He teaches at St Joost Academy in Den Bosch and practices as an artist.

### **Mark Delmartino, secretary / process coordinator**

Mark is managing director of MDM Consultancy in Antwerp, Belgium. He is certified by NVAO since 2010 and regularly accompanies panels on assessment visits.

### **Annex 3 – Programme visit**

**Venue:** KABK, director's office, Gipsenzaal, Studio Master Interior Architecture

#### **Wednesday 15 September 2021**

13h00 Arrival panel, lunch – review information table

14h00 Internal panel meeting

16h00 Session with students and recent graduates (on site)

17h15 Session with recent graduates (online)

18h00 Internal panel meeting

18h30 End of day 1

#### **Thursday 16 September 2021**

08h30 Arrival panel – internal meeting

09h00 Session with professional field and alumni

10h30 Break and internal panel meeting

11h00 Session with teaching staff and programme coordinator

12h30 Lunch and internal panel meeting

13h30 Clarification session with programme coordinator

14h30 Internal panel meeting

15h30 Feedback to programme stakeholders

16h00 End of site visit

An overview of the persons interviewed is available on request.

## **Annex 4 – Materials reviewed**

The panel studied following documents:

- Self-evaluation INSIDE, Master Interior Architecture, Royal Academy of Art The Hague, July 2021.
- Self-evaluation INSIDE. Part 2 – appendices
- INSIDE Magazine 2018-2019
- INSIDE Magazine 2019-2020
- Education and Examination Regulations 2020-2021 & 2021-2022
- Curriculum breakdown in course components and credits
- Admission requirements and selection procedure

Prior to the site visit, the panel reviewed a representative sample of 15 graduation projects and their evaluation forms selected among the 30 students who graduated between September 2018 and August 2021. A list of the selected student numbers and their graduation projects is available on request.

The panel was invited to attend the programme's 2021 Graduation Show at the KABK on 8 July 2021. Three panel members visited the exhibition.