

Karel Martens (1939, lives and works in Amsterdam)

The artist, graphic designer and tutor Karel Martens (b. 1939) can be characterized as the godfather of contemporary Dutch graphic design. Alongside his graphic design he has always made autonomous work. For his work he was awarded the 1996 Dr A. H. Heineken Prize for Art, and the 1993 H.N. Werkman Prize for the design of the architectural journal *Oase*. His monograph *Printed Matter/Drukwerk*, designed with Jaap van Triest was awarded the Goldene Letter, the first prize in the selection for ‘die beste Bücher der Welt’ in Leipzig, 1998. A renowned teacher of graphic design, Martens co-initiated the master programme *Werkplaats Typografie* in Arnhem, in 1997, and is a guest professor at Yale University.

Among his clients have been the publishers Van Loghum Slaterus (Arnhem) in the 1960s, and the SUN (Socialistische Uitgeverij Nijmegen) in the years 1975–81. As well as designing books and other printed items, he has designed stamps and telephone cards (for the Dutch PTT). He has also designed signs and typographic façades for a number of buildings.

Karel Martens likes to experiment with numbers, abstract figures, vivid colors and time based media as well as clocks. His autonomous work has already gained much attention internationally, with recent solo shows at Platform L in Seoul, P! in New York, Kunstverein Munchen and Design museum in Gent (BE) and is held in public collections including the Design Museum, New York (US), Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (US), SFMoMA, San Francisco (US), LACMA, Los Angeles (US) and Art Institute of Chicago (US)

Education

1961 Arnhem School of Art (NL)

Awards

2012 Gerrit Noordzijprijs
 1999 Nomination, Design Prize Rotterdam, for the façade of Veenman printing works, Ede
 1998 Leipzig Book Fair Gold Medal for *Printed Matter*
 1997 Nomination, Design Prize Rotterdam for *Printed Matter*
 1996 Dr A.H. Heineken Prize for Art
 1995 Honorary commendation, Design Prize Rotterdam, for design of PTT Telecom chip-cards
 1993 H.N. Werkman Prize for the design of the architectural magazine *Oase*

Teaching

Karel Martens has taught graphic design since 1977. His first appointment was at the Arnhem School of Art (until 1994). He was then attached to the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht (1994–99). From 1997 he has been a visiting lecturer in the graphic design department at the School of Art, Yale University.

In 1998 he was the co-founder of the Typography Workshop (WT-Werkplaats Typografie) for postgraduate education within the ArEZ, Institute for the Arts, Arnhem. From 2001 onward he shared the artistic supervision together with Armand Mevis and Paul Elliman. In 2006 the WT was accredited as a Master Programme. In 2014 he left the WT.

Martens is currently a mentor in the master's program at the Design Academy Eindhoven (department Contextual Design) and is invited as guesttutor for numerous, masterclasses, workshops and lectures all over the world.

Selected recent exhibitions and presentations

- 2020 *Borrowed Space and Regular Features*, groupshow at Projecte SD in Barcelona (SP)
- 2019 *Parallax*, groupshow at Wilfried Lentz Rotterdam (NL) curated by Artun Alaska Arasli
Karel Martens, solo show Team Thursday, Rotterdam (NL)
Karel Martens, RE-PRINTED MATTER: 60 YEARS OF BOOKS, Enter Enter, Amsterdam (NL)
Karel Martens in Dialogue with Bruni Munari, CFALive with Wilfried Lentz, Milan (IT)
- 2018 *Questioning Karel*, Kunstwerke Berlin (DE)
Colours on the Beach, Wilfried Lentz, Rotterdam (NL) - solo
Still Moving, Platform L, Seoul (ROK) - monographic show - solo
 Jubilee exhibition, 30 Years of the Heineken Prize, van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (NL)
- 2017 *Motion*, Kunstverein München (DE) - solo
Motion, Design museum Gent (BE) - solo
Colours on the Beach, Le Havre (FR) - public project
- 2016 *Recent Work, P!*, New York (US) - solo
- 2015 Carpenter Center for Visual Arts, Harvard University, Connecticut (US) - solo
 Panache, Antwerp with Marc Nagtzaam, Geert Goiris, Maria Barnas, Marijn van Kreijl
 Royal Academy of Art, The Hague - solo

- 2014 *Karel Martens: New Work* 212 Crescent House, London (UK)
Power Structures, P!, New York (US)
- 2013 *KM* at ginza graphic gallery, Tokyo (Japan) - solo
- 2012 *Process 01: Joy, P!*, New York (US)

Selected monographs

- Re-Printed matter* (2019) Roma Publications
OASE Journal #100, The Architecture of the Journal (2018), issue based on Martens' ongoing work as founding designer of the journal
Motion (2017) Kunstverein München Companion, Roma Publications, Amsterdam
Colours on the Beach (2017) Editions Non Standard, Le Havre
Print (2016) Roma Publications, Amsterdam
Reprint (2015) Royal Academy of Art, The Hague and Roma Publications, Amsterdam
Full Color (2013) on the occasion of the show at ginza graphic gallery (Tokyo, Japan) Roma Publications
Printed matter (1996, 2001, 2010), Heineken Foundation, Amsterdam and Hyphen Press, London
Counterprint (2004) Lecturis Eindhoven and Hyphen Press, London

Collections

- Design Museum, New York (US)
 Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (US)
 Whitney Museum of Art, New York (US)
 SFMoMA, San Francisco (US)
 Los Angeles County Museum (US)
 Art Institute of Chicago (US)
 Private and semi-public collections worldwide.