

# A DRESS FOR MARY

Design competition

Design a dress for Our Lady of Aachen

Submission deadline: 27th September 2018

## DESIGN BRIEF

The Cathedral Chapter of Aachen, on the occasion of the celebration of “Aachen Cathedral – 40 years as a UNESCO World Heritage Site”, invites entries for the “A dress for Mary” design competition. This miraculous statue in Aachen’s Cathedral stands in front of a column to the right of the Carolingian octagon, alongside the main altar. For centuries this depiction has been revered by believers and pilgrims, and many of the 1.3 million people from all around the world who visit each year light a candle and direct their personal requests and concerns to the Mother of God.

This reverence is also expressed in the abundance of the treasury of the miraculous statue. Gifts to the figure include crowns, chains, broaches and other items of jewellery, but above all garments for mother and child. The wardrobe of the Madonna and Child Jesus holds 43 sets of festive clothing for the pair, the oldest from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. To match the liturgical colours and for holy feasts, the garments are changed around 16 times through the ecclesiastical year.

This veneration of the figure, observed over centuries, is also part of our intangible cultural heritage. The Cathedral Chapter intends to advance the tradition of dressing the miraculous Madonna into the present day, and is therefore announcing a competition to design a new dress. In contrast to the previous garments, however, it is not intended to be a festive robe. Mary was a woman of the people, a figure with whom many believers identify, and an intermediary between God and man. She is to be returned from her most elevated sphere, in which she is adorned with costly garments, crowns, sceptres and jewellery, and to be portrayed as a person and as our fellow. What is required, then, is a modern garment for the everyday. Colours and character of the design can be chosen freely, and likewise, entrants are free to choose whether they will also create a garment for the Child Jesus. Entrants are also free to choose whether to create head coverings or jewellery.

The aim of this competition is to enhance the sensory and design quality of the liturgy and of the church space, and to modernise the practice of veneration – and to do this by engaging with contemporary art. So artists, costumiers, designers and tailors, both from Germany and abroad, are invited to participate.

## COMPETITION RULES

This is an open competition. It is to create a proposal for the design of a garment for the statue of the Madonna. Entrants are free to choose whether also to propose a garment for the Child Jesus, jewellery and/or head coverings.

The following are required:

- a drawing, to scale and descriptive, or a model,
- a description (max. two A4 pages,) in both German or English,
- Specification of the materials, and details of the design,
- a cost estimate for realisation (maximum 5000 Euro).

The garment to be realised must be easy to handle, so that a minimum of effort is needed for the dressing. Please note that the statues of the Mother and Child are carved from a single piece, so they cannot be separated: this should be recognised in the design. No materials may be used which might cause problems for the conservation of the sculpture, for example rough textures, fabrics treated with chemicals or similar.

One entry is permitted per participant. Submitted entries may not be adaptations of any existing work. The entry must not yet have been entered into any other competition, nor published in any relevant publication. Participants must have created the submitted artwork themselves. Works which can normally only be created in collaboration with others must be decisively influenced by the participant. Teamwork for designs and artwork is permitted, but this must be expressly noted in the entry description.

### **DETAILS AND DEADLINES**

The competition is run under the patronage of Isabel Pfeiffer-Poensgen, Minister for Culture and Science for the State of North Rhine-Westphalia.

The competition organiser is the Cathedral Chapter of Aachen.

Project Director: Dr. Birgitta Falk

Contact person: Barbara Jacobs M.A.

The drawings and/or models, with accompanying documentation, must be sent with all postage paid by the 27<sup>th</sup> September 2018 (as evidenced by the postmark date).

Entries sent after this will not be accepted.

Send entries to:

Attn Frau Barbara Jacobs  
Aachen Cathedral Treasury  
Klosterplatz 2  
52062 Aachen, Germany

On Thursday 12th July 2018, from 6 pm, a colloquium will take place in the Cathedral, at which there will be an opportunity to examine the sculpture at close range.

On the 1st February 2019, the eve of Our Lady's Candlemas, prizes will be awarded to the top three entries, and the dressing of the miraculous statue in the realised garment will take place in a ceremony in Aachen Cathedral.

For more information:

[info@aachener-domschatz.de](mailto:info@aachener-domschatz.de)

[www.aachener-domschatz.de](http://www.aachener-domschatz.de)

Additional images, and measurements of the sculpture, can be accessed [here](#).

### **JURY**

Manfred von Holtum, Dean of Aachen Cathedral

Gregor Huben, Aachen Cathedral Chapter

Dr. Birgitta Falk, Aachen Cathedral Treasury

Father Dr. Philipp Reichling, O.Praem, Hamborn Abbey

Dr. Andreas Beitin, Ludwig Forum, Aachen

PD Dr. Stefanie Seeberg, Grassi Museum for Applied Arts in Leipzig

Monica Paredis-Vroon, Aachen Cathedral Treasury

Monique Eillebrecht, Maastricht Academy of Fine Arts and Design, MAFAD

Prof. Dipl.Des. Ulrike Nägele, AMD Akademie Mode und Design Munich

Prof. (em.) Dr. Albert Gerhards, Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät, Universität Bonn

## **JUDGING AND PRIZES**

The jury will meet shortly after the closing date for entries. Evaluation of the submitted entries will take place using criteria of idea and concept, implementation and design, as well as practicality. Critical factors in judging the quality of the garment designs will be the innovation of the approach, use of materials and the overall impression created. The jury's decision is final, and legal recourse is excluded.

To be awarded are:

One 1<sup>st</sup> prize of 5000 Euro,  
One 2<sup>nd</sup> prize of 3000 Euro,  
And one 3<sup>rd</sup> prize of 1000 Euro.

The jury has the right to alter the distribution of the total prize fund with reasonable justification.

## **EXHIBITION AND PUBLICATION**

Entries awarded by the jury, and if deemed appropriate, additional selected artworks, will be displayed from the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2019 in an exhibition open to the public in the Aachen Cathedral Treasury. An exhibition catalogue will be produced.

Participants declare their agreement that their competition entries may also be displayed at other exhibition venues. The organisations participating in this competition and exhibition reserve the right to publish, without royalties and free of charge, the designs displayed, the realised design and/or parts of these. Participants guarantee that no rights of third parties, especially copyright or usage rights, will be infringed by such publication. In this regard they absolve the organiser from any third party claims.

## **SUBMISSIONS, RETURN, INSURANCE, PRACTICALITIES**

Acceptable delivery methods are general courier services or delivery in person. All artworks must be packaged for transportation, even if delivered in person. The cost of sending competition entries to Aachen, and of return transport, are to be covered by competition participants themselves. During the exhibition, the entries will be insured by the organiser under standard museum terms and conditions. It is essential for this insurance that the insured value (max. 2000 Euro) is declared on the entry description. On removal a formal acknowledgement of receipt must be completed. The entrants take on all additional risks. To ensure that the anonymity of participants is preserved for the jury, please ensure that no name is legible on the entry. Each entry is instead to be clearly marked with a seven-digit number, and this number should also be provided on the description which is to accompany each entry. Also accompanying the entry should be a sealed envelope, marked with the number, containing the name and contact details of the entrant, as well as a photo of the entrant suitable for publication.

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Photos: Anne Gold, Aachen; Andreas Steindl, Aachen