

Madelon Vriesendorp, Co-Founder of OMA, Receives the 2025 Soane Medal

Dutch artist Madelon Vriesendorp has been named the recipient of the 2025 Soane Medal, becoming the first UK-based female artist to receive the award since its launch in 2017. A co-founder of Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), Vriesendorp is widely recognized for her surrealist and humorous visual language that has shaped how modern and postmodern architecture is represented and understood. Her work, which blends playfulness with critical thought, has provided architecture with vivid, memorable imagery that continues to influence generations of architects.

Born in 1945 in the Netherlands, Vriesendorp studied at Central Saint Martins in London before moving to New York in 1972, where she co-founded OMA alongside Rem Koolhaas and Elia & Zoe Zenghelis. Her paintings became an integral part of the firm's early conceptual identity, appearing on book and magazine covers and helping translate theoretical ideas into accessible narratives. One of her most recognizable works, *Flagrant Délit*, depicts a love affair between the Empire State Building and the Chrysler Building, illuminated by the torch of the Statue of Liberty. The image became the cover of *Delirious New York* and is still considered emblematic of OMA's early years.

As OMA expanded from conceptual proposals to built work, Vriesendorp's artistic vision remained a defining feature of its identity. Notably, her mural for the Netherlands Dance Theatre in The Hague exemplifies the lasting connection between her art and the firm's architecture. Her work has been featured in international exhibitions, including "World of Madelon Vriesendorp," first shown in 2008. The exhibition, which brought together decades of her paintings, traveled to institutions such as the Architectural Association, Aedes Architecture Forum, Venice Biennale, and the Swiss Architecture Museum. The 2025 Soane Medal acknowledges her enduring contribution to architecture through her imaginative visual storytelling and her lasting influence on architectural culture.

The medal will be awarded on November 18 at the Royal Academy of Arts in London, where Vriesendorp will deliver a public lecture. Presented annually by Sir John Soane's Museum, the Soane Medal continues John Soane's legacy of encouraging a broader understanding of architecture's role in society. Recipients receive a replica of the gold medal originally presented to Soane in 1835. Vriesendorp was selected by a jury of architects, critics, and curators chaired by Amin Taha, joining previous laureates such as Hanif Kara, Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal, Peter Barber, Marina Tabassum, Denise Scott Brown, Kenneth Frampton, and Rafael Moneo.

Images courtesy of Madelon Vriesendorp; portrait © Tilly Buckroyd. Works referenced: Après l'Amour; Flagrant Délit; Captive Globe; the Netherlands Dance Theatre mural; OMA Press Review. © ArchDaily (ISSN 0719-8884); transcription for the artist's own archive.