

# DEPARTEMENT CULTUUR, JEUGD & MEDIA

**ULTIMAS 2016**  
**Flemish Culture Prizes**  
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## ULTIMA 2016 GENERAL CULTURAL MERIT RAF SIMONS

Raf Simons (born in 1968, Neerpelt) graduated from the Hoger Instituut voor Visuele Communicatie (Higher Institute for Visual Communication) in Genk, where he studied industrial design. In 1991 he started his career as a furniture designer for galleries and individual clients. He did an internship at Walter Van Beirendonck design studio, where he worked on the presentation and decoration of the showrooms and collections.

Encouraged by Linda Loppa, then head of fashion design at the Koninklijke Academie voor Schone Kunsten (Royal Academy of Fine Arts) in Antwerp, he emerged as a designer and launched his own eponymous men's collection in 1995. Narrow, straight silhouettes are characteristic of his style. He draws a lot of inspiration from youth culture and subcultures.

From then on it all went extremely fast: in October 2000 Raf Simons was appointed senior professor of the fashion department at the Universität für angewandte Kunst (University of Applied Arts) in Vienna, where he taught until 2005. In 2003 he won the first Swiss Textiles Award.

He celebrated the 10th anniversary of his label by publishing the book 'Raf Simons Redux'. The book was presented at 'Raf Simons 1995-2005', a fashion and art event held at the Giardini di Boboli (Boboli Gardens) in Florence.

Between 2005 and 2012 he was the creative director for both the men's and women's collections at Jil Sander.

In April 2012 he was appointed artistic director at Christian Dior for the women's haute couture collection as well as the ready-to-wear and accessories collections. Raf Simons presented his first haute couture collection in July 2012. In 2014, Simons won Best International Designer at the CFDA (Council of Fashion Designers of America) Awards. In 2014 Frédéric Tcheng made the documentary 'Dior and I' about this new era at the fashion house and Raf Simons's creations.

In addition to his work for Dior and for his own label, Simons also works with Eastpak, Fred Perry, Adidas and the Danish brand Kvadrat.

With the spring 2017 collection the Raf Simons label pays homage to the famous photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, who died in 1989.

Since August 2016, Raf Simons has been the Chief Creative Officer at Calvin Klein. In February he brought out his first collection for the brand during New York Fashion Week.

He was recently twice honoured with the Designer of the Year award for both menswear and womenswear by the American fashion sector at the 2017 CFDA Awards.

<http://rafsimons.com>