



Prince Claus Fund for
Culture and Development

Report from the 2015 Prince Claus Awards Committee May 2015

The Prince Claus Awards

The Prince Claus Awards honour outstanding achievements in the field of culture and development. The awards are presented annually to individuals, groups and organisations whose cultural actions have a positive impact on the development of their societies.

In keeping with the Prince Claus Fund's guiding principle that 'culture is a basic need', the awards highlight significant contributions in regions where resources or opportunities for cultural expression, creative production and preservation of cultural heritage are limited.

Procedures

The Fund invites cultural experts from its global network to nominate candidates for the awards. Research is carried out by the Fund's Bureau and second opinions sourced for all nominations.

The Prince Claus Awards Committee meets twice a year to consider the information about the nominated candidates and presents its recommendations to the Board of the Prince Claus Fund.

In December each year, the Principal Prince Claus Award is presented to the Principal Laureate and ten further Laureates in a ceremony at the Royal Palace in Amsterdam in the presence of members of the Royal Family and an international audience.

The Prince Claus Awards are also presented to the recipients at ceremonies in their respective countries by the Dutch Ambassadors.

2015 Prince Claus Awards Committee

Bregtje van der Haak (Chair), Filmmaker and Journalist, The Netherlands

Suad Amiry, Architect and Writer, Palestine

Salah Hassan, Professor of African Art History and Visual Culture, Sudan / USA

Kettly Mars, Writer, Haiti

Ong Keng Sen, Theatre Producer and Artistic Director, Singapore

Gabriela Salgado, Independent Curator, Argentina / UK

Fariba Derakhshani, Coordinator Awards Programme and Secretary to the Awards Committee, The Netherlands

For the 2015 Prince Claus Awards, 250 people were invited to make nominations. A total of 103 nominations was received and researched by the Bureau. The Prince Claus Awards Committee met in December 2014 and drew up a shortlist for further research and second opinions from experts and advisors. During their second meeting in May 2015, the Awards Committee conducted in-depth assessments of the 38 shortlisted candidates and selected 11 recipients for the 2015 Prince Claus Awards. The Awards Committee's recommendations were presented to the Board of the Prince Claus Fund in June 2015.

Policy and Criteria

The Prince Claus Fund maintains a broad view of culture open to all artistic and intellectual disciplines.

The Prince Claus Awards are presented to artists and intellectuals in recognition of both the excellent quality of their work and their significant impact on the development of their society.

The awards are given to individuals, groups and organisations based mainly in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Outstanding quality is a *sine qua non* for a Prince Claus Award. The quality of a laureate's work is assessed in professional and personal contexts and for its positive influence on cultural and social fields. The Prince Claus Awards recognise artistic and intellectual qualities, experimentation and innovation, audacity and tenacity. They seek to foster inspirational leadership and to enhance the positive impact of cultural expression on societies.

Recommendations for the 2015 Prince Claus Awards

2015 Principal Prince Claus Award

Newsha Tavakolian

Iran

Visual Art, Photography, Media & Journalism

Newsha Tavakolian (1981, Tehran) is a trailblazing artist and photojournalist whose work offers a compelling insider's perspective on contemporary life in Iran and the Middle East. Putting people at the centre of her practice, she fuses artistic work and documentary reportage to create intimate portraits and unexpected human stories that enable us to look deeply inside societies.

A self-taught photographer, Tavakolian started working at age 16 when there were only a handful of professional female photojournalists in Iran and since then she has shown her commitment to bring news from her country and beyond, despite numerous challenges. She covered the 1999 student riots in Tehran, worked for reformist newspapers and extended her practice to Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Yemen. Fearlessly recording events in often dangerous situations, her photographs have been widely published in international media.

When it became difficult to work as a photojournalist in Tehran after the 2009 elections, Tavakolian searched for quieter, more allegorical ways to evoke Iranian realities. Moving seamlessly between photojournalism and visual photographic art and referencing contemporary global art discourses, she developed a strong, personal aesthetic and visual vocabulary. The complex layered narratives expressed in Tavakolian's stills, videos, installations and photobooks challenge stereotypes and the simplification of Iranian lives and perspectives. *Look*, a series of candid images of her friends and neighbours, conveys the uncertainty and insecurity of middle-class youth. *Listen* enables Iranian women, forbidden to sing in public or to record CDs, to perform silently through her camera. Other series explore female Kurdish fighters, the measures governments take to influence youth, Iranians affected by sanctions, and elderly women whose sons died in the Iran-Iraq war.

Deeply committed to her society, Tavakolian actively mentors young Iranian photographers and her art is inspiring a new generation of photographers across the Middle East. She is a founding member of the EVE international collective of women photojournalists, and facilitated the formation of the Rawiyah collective of photographers.

Newsha Tavakolian is awarded for her beautiful and moving testimony of the complexities and ambiguities of contemporary Iran; for effectively combining photojournalism and art in a potent visual language; for her commitment to women's voices and her support of young photographers; for courageously persevering in conveying social and political realities of Iran's history and culture, providing critical insight; and for evoking human bonds through photography, creating intercultural understanding and compassion.

2015 Prince Claus Awards

Latif Al-Ani

Iraq

Photography, Cultural Heritage

Latif Al-Ani (1932, Karbala) is a perceptive witness and pioneering photographer whose work provides a unique record of everyday life in Iraq from the 1950s to the 1970s. His prolific practice documents the spirit of that period, the diversity of an active society, the changes and modernisation going on. Alongside photojournalistic reports on urban construction, new architecture and industrial projects, he records street scenes, shop windows in bustling city centres, workers, students and families, holiday outings, festivals, official gatherings, social and domestic events as well as rural landscapes and seaside resorts.

Al-Ani's skillful compositions and sharp contrasts of light and depth capture a lively sense of animated daily life. Part of a generation that engaged innovatively with modern art, his beautiful, mainly black and white images perceptively reveal the social narratives of the time: the status of women, the robust civil society, the construction of national culture and Iraq's relationship with the world. They provide insight into this flourishing and culturally significant time in the region and, in the wake of Iraq's destruction, open channels for research of social, historical and personal importance.

Al-Ani established the photography department at the Ministry of Information, played a leading role in the Iraqi Society for Photography, and is considered the founding father of photography in the country.

Latif Al-Ani is awarded for creating an extraordinarily rich and multi-layered archive of unique historical images of Iraqi society; for providing Iraqis and the world with an essential memory bank that bears witness to the modern, prosperous and forward-looking country Iraq was before the devastation of the Gulf War; and for his leadership in the development of documentary photography in Iraq.

Amakhosi

Zimbabwe

Culture & Development

Amakhosi (1980, Makokoba, Bulawayo) is a dynamic, community-oriented theatre group empowering people through collective creativity and social activism. Presenting stories of ordinary citizens in down-to-earth, engaging and often humorous performances, their subjects include the politics of land, wealth and ethnicity, marriage, the family, AIDS, corruption and abuse of power – always looking at how these impact on people's everyday lives. Grounded in local society and aesthetics yet open and experimental in approach, Amakhosi's productions combine local performance styles incorporating dance, comedy and song with international theatre traditions.

Founding director Cont Mhlanga is the author of numerous hard-hitting plays and satires such as *Nansi Le Ndoda*, *Workshop Negative*, *Stitsha*, *The Members*, *Dabulap* and *The Good President*. He believes artists should be the conscience of society and continuously questions his own role. Passionate about art's transformative power, Mhlanga is outspoken in defence of artistic expression and human rights in the face of censorship and arrests.

Based in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second largest city, Amakhosi Cultural Centre has activated the country's performing arts for more than 30 years, training several generations in theatre, dance, music, video/film and arts management. Alongside practice spaces, its open-air stage hosts performances, concerts and open sessions where youth groups and individuals show works and receive critiques. Constantly looking to reach wider audiences, Amakhosi has recently set up two radio stations.

Amakhosi is awarded for its engaging, humorous and perceptive portrayals of the struggles of ordinary people; for mentoring and supporting critical voices and empowering people to shape their own future; for extraordinary resilience in upholding the value of art in society; for putting the needs of the community at the heart of their activities; and for creating courage, reflection and laughter in a difficult context.

Jelili Atiku

Nigeria

Performance Art

Jelili Atiku (1968, Ejigbo, Lagos) is an imaginative performance artist whose provocative spectacles use striking attire, unsettling body language and unusual props to open up dialogue and influence popular attitudes. He drops himself right into the heart of Lagos, into the realities of the streets, of densely populated, poor areas, and entices people to interact and respond to his visual presentations.

Rooted in Yoruba performance traditions, Atiku brings local elements to international performance practice, creating an extraordinary mix of action, symbolism, storytelling, disguise, costume, colour coding and theatricality. A rigorous researcher, his subjects include commentary on Nigerian human rights in the *Assassination of a Political Prisoner*; politically charged critiques of the ruling class and Boko Haram; site-specific interventions on climate change, e-waste and fuel subsidies; and *Araferaku* (loosely translated as *A Part of Me is Missing*), a moving personal eulogy to his father.

Breaking new ground in contemporary performance art in Nigeria, Atiku's sustained experimentation is pushing the boundaries of artistic communication and strengthening public understanding, participation and appreciation. He is an inspirational figure for younger generations and a voice of the future.

Jelili Atiku is awarded for creating a new artistic language combining Yoruba traditional art forms with international performance practice; for his thought-provoking performances that challenge assumptions and stimulate dialogue in an unconventional and dynamic form of community education; for taking personal and artistic risks in order to open new possibilities and reach wider audiences; and for his pioneering dedication to establishing space for contemporary performance art in Nigeria.

Jean-Pierre Bekolo

Cameroon

Film

Jean-Pierre Bekolo (1966, Yaounde) is an avant-garde filmmaker and socio-cultural activist whose imaginative work overturns stereotypes of Africa and African cinema. His entertaining films operate on multiple layers, engaging viewers with thrilling stories, biting humour and dramatic aesthetics.

An advocate of artistic freedom, Bekolo is committed to realising Africa's philosophies and cultures. *Quartier Mozart* shows the hybridity, complexity and humour in urban Yaounde in a playful, hip-hop reinvention of a traditional tale about gender, power, magic and politics. *Aristotle's Plot* parodies rules and definitions, action movies and 'African' cinema made for European audiences, while aesthetically reflecting on the nature of existence, its ambiguities and absence of rigid categories. Aiming to incite viewers to conceive an alternate reality, his fake documentary *The President* is a hilarious, biting satire on African leaders who cling to power, and his dystopian, sci-fi comic thriller with stunning surreal visuals, *Les Saignantes*, presents extreme corruption, feminism, social decay and intergenerational conflict for review.

Bekolo's work on the re-representation of Africa also includes insightful documentaries that seek to educate, such as *Grandmother's Grammar* on groundbreaking Senegalese filmmaker Djibril Diop Mambety, and *Les Choses et Les Mots de Mudimbe* on the renowned Congolese philosopher, multi-linguist and uber-polymath.

Jean-Pierre Bekolo is awarded for his creative resistance, irreverence and eclectic African reworking of dominant cinema conventions; for creating a unique body of innovative work that both entertains and transmits profound socio-political messages; for his highly original aesthetics; for challenging misrepresentations of African cultures; and for re-affirming the power of film.

Etcetera

Argentina/Chile

Visual Art

Etcetera (1997, Buenos Aires) is a provocative, public-art collective that responds to and creates awareness of political and social problems. Bold, direct and transgressive, their accessible, playful yet serious interventions are characterised by theatrical display, parody, absurdity, confusion and surprise. Generating active participation, they blur the boundaries between art and life.

Co-founded by Loreto Garín Guzmán (1977, Valparaíso) and Federico Zukerfeld (1979, Buenos Aires) together with other artists and activists, Etcetera takes art to the streets at specific sites and political events and also presents problematic social and political issues in official art institutions.

Etcetera staged stunning theatrical pieces, such as masked people playing out torture scenes with huge dummies, to protest against the impunity of Argentina's military dictatorship in the 1990s and the 2001 crisis. In 2005 they founded the International Errorist Movement – with the manifesto declaration 'We are all errorists' – to protest George W. Bush attending the Summit of the Americas. Actions included the landing of an errorist army carrying toy guns, triggering a major police deployment, and the invasion of Buenos Aires streets by masked errorists driving commando trucks and armed with cardboard machine guns emitting the word 'Bang', satirically reproducing the constructed enemy in the war on terror and denouncing its absurdity. Their intervention on religion's relation to global financial crises, *Errar de Dios (Erring from God)*, is a theatrical installation featuring characters like Angela Merkel, God, Monsanto, St Paul and Goldman Sachs among others, and includes a 'Petition to Pope Francis for the final abolition of hell'.

Etcetera is awarded for developing participatory art practices and public interventions in Argentina and internationally; for their creative originality; for their refusal to allow the normalisation of injustice; for insisting on relating history to the present moment and the local to international struggles; and for their profound, responsible social engagement and mobilisation of communities in Argentina and beyond.

Perhat Khaliq

China

Music

Perhat Khaliq (1982, Ürümchi) is a charismatic singer-songwriter and guitarist whose music comes straight from the heart. He sincerely expresses deep human values and emotions in an authentic voice that resonates with people's inner beliefs. Khaliq's music fuses traditional Uyghur music with rock and blues styles, and his poetic lyrics, mostly in the Uyghur language, have strong personal and local relevance.

A self-taught musician from the Autonomous Uyghur Province of Xinjiang, Khaliq earns a living playing with his band in bars in his home city. In August 2014, watched by an audience of many millions, he was runner-up in the Voice of China contest playing an acoustic guitar and one of his own songs. Singing passionately in his gravelly voice, his performance spoke deeply to people of all ages who are tired of facile music and the commercialisation of life. Taking his personal social impact beyond his music, a stunning moment for the massive Voice of China audience was Khaliq's choice not to have his hand raised in victory showing that in the Uyghur ethos respect and friendship are more valued than the individual triumph so promoted in many societies. Ethnic differences fall away in the face of the direct human connection Khaliq makes with his compelling music and gracious character, bridging fissures in the complex multi-ethnic Chinese landscape.

Perhat Khaliq is awarded for his skilled, expressive vocals, poetic lyrics and outstanding musical performance; for breathing new life into traditional Uyghur musical forms, both conserving and extending this unique cultural heritage; for bringing his music beyond his community and demonstrating that music can be used to communicate authentically with millions of people; and for bridging cultural differences, touching people's hearts and minds.

Fatos Lubonja

Albania

Literature, Media & Journalism

Fatos Lubonja (1951, Tirana) is a journalist, author, television commentator and leading critical voice in his country, often shocking the nation into necessary reflection. Seventeen years of imprisonment for 'agitation and propaganda' – due to critical writings and for supposedly belonging to a dissident underground movement – only strengthened his fiercely democratic approach. While in solitary confinement, Lubonja wrote *The Final Slaughter*, a compelling Stalinist-Albanian re-interpretation of the Oedipus story, and later published *The Second Sentence* describing his incarceration and the totalitarian labyrinth. Released when everyone was praising the new so-called democratic government, Lubonja was one of the first to denounce the ongoing human rights abuses including those against his prisoners, former functionaries of the deposed regime.

Consistently objective in his analysis and maintaining complete independence from all political parties, Lubonja speaks out against oppression and wrongdoing in different guises regardless of the

perpetrator. He exposes the frauds and abuses of those in power as well as those who seek to replace them, both on the left and the right. His semi-fictional book *The False Apocalypse* reports his experience of the political struggle in 1997 and Albania's descent into anarchy.

A regular contributor to newspapers and television, Lobonja edits and publishes the periodical *Përçjekja (The Endeavour)*, which tackles sensitive issues such as Albanian nationalism, identity and myths, the growth of crony capitalism and the destruction of local architectural heritage.

Fatos Lubonja is awarded for his honest and lucid literary accounts of crucial episodes in Albania's recent history; for maintaining his intellectual integrity and independence in extreme circumstances; for continuously fighting for democracy, human rights, free speech and the right to tell his country's story in a context where that freedom remains fragile; for broadening the scope of public debate and providing platforms for other critical voices; and for fearlessly speaking truth to power.

Ossama Mohammed

Syria

Film

Ossama Mohammed (1954, Latakia) is a humanist filmmaker who powerfully conveys aspects of Syria's complex history showing how abusive power destroys the fabric of society. *Step by Step* documents young men's experiences with ideology and authority and their recruitment into the army. *Stars in Broad Daylight* is a scathing satire of authoritarianism, patriarchy and corruption. Innovative and artistically bold, with striking imagery and visual composition, it contributed to defining the language and aesthetics of Syrian cinema and profoundly impacted local culture.

Although public screenings were forbidden by the regime, his films were clandestinely watched and discussed, inspiring social and artistic courage. Until his exile following a statement on political prisoners at Cannes film festival in 2011, Mohammed ran a weekly show and debate on art and cinema, supported fellow filmmakers and was behind manifestos such as the 1999 Framework for the Development of Syrian Cinema.

Shot by '1,001 Syrians' and co-filmed with Wiam Simav Bedirxan, a Kurdish activist in Homs, *Silvered Water, Syria Self-Portrait* combines shocking atrocities captured on mobile phones and collected on YouTube, the desperation of an exile watching from afar, and moving footage shot by Bedirxan on the streets of Homs in her courageous quest to be a reliable witness. Unflinching and poetic, it brings us to our emotions and the realities of the Syrian conflict in a profound way.

Ossama Mohammed is awarded for his potent use of film to interrogate humanity, power and conflict; for his innovative, poetic, aesthetic and practical contributions to Syrian cinema; for confronting numerous predicaments and obstacles in realistic and creative ways; for opening up debate about Syria and the use of violent images; for inventing a new cinematic mode based on social media to talk about the realities of exile and war-torn homeland in a dense pluralistic narrative; and for reaffirming the human need to bear witness and use the power of creativity and culture during conflict.

Oksana Shatalova

Kazakhstan

Visual Arts

Oksana Shatalova (1972, Rudny) is an influential artist, curator and art critic living in a small industrial town in the Central Asian region. Her engaged practice interrogates Kazakh society and its

representations in sophisticated photographic and video-based work dissecting the Soviet past and daily social and economic problems.

The state-citizen relationship is explored with irony in *The Romantics*, which examines workers' attitudes to the shift from socialism to capitalism, and in *Conservation*, which questions state-endorsed norms of progress through depiction of abandoned buildings. Her works on the politics of the body offer witty feminist commentary on Kazakhstan's current context of inherited patriarchy and commercialisation in videos that deploy her own body as a coquettish witch (*Witches*), a mechanical slave doll (*Biotech*), a factory worker (*Red Flag*), and women doing facial exercises (*Tortures of Beauty*) or in a milk-and-roses bath (*Mummification*).

Shatalova's curatorial work, such as 'Stills', a Central Asian photo project involving more than 80 artists and at the Central Asian Pavilion at the 2011 Venice Biennale, demonstrates how artists move in and out of the centres and peripheries, looking both ways. One of the most active art critics in Central Asia, she frequently publishes incisive contributions on the state of art in her region and abroad in catalogues, art journals and online. She is a co-director of the School of Theory and Activism – Bishkek, a cultural and research institution, giving regular lectures and mentoring young Tadjik, Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Kazakh artists.

Oksana Shatalova is awarded for her exceptional commitment to multiple art roles in an isolated and difficult context; for combining her complex awareness of Kazakh society and contemporary conceptual languages to express meaningful realities across cultural boundaries; for intelligently articulating a critical position and sharing her ideas through her writings; for consistently turning her artistic work to socially relevant issues particularly gender inequality; and for generously mentoring, curating and promoting Central Asian artists.

Y'en a Marre

Senegal

Music, Media & Journalism

Y'en a Marre (2011, Dakar) is a multidisciplinary collective of popular rappers and investigative journalists using hip-hop culture to refashion citizenship. Fed up with recurring problems and knowing that everyone had that Y'en a Marre feeling ('We're Fed Up. Enough's Enough'), co-founders Thiat, Kilifeu, Fadel Barro, Denise Sow, Aliou Sane, Djily Bagdad, Ahmed Seck, Abdoulaye Niass, Fou Malade and Simon decided to use their celebrity and skills to produce change.

Their first action was a citizens' petition, '1000 Complaints to the Government'. The collective then mobilised protests to stop President Wade changing the constitution to retain power, and played a leading role in motivating voters to prevent his re-election in 2012 through campaigns and songs like 'Register and Vote, That's Your Weapon'.

Y'en a Marre performs directly in community spaces as well as rapping and rhyming their messages via concerts, radio, mobile phones and internet. They use both French and Wolof and incorporate colloquialisms, attracting all social groups. The track 'Walking with Your Community' and Observatory of Democracy and Good Governance strategy assist citizens to take ownership of local affairs and make elected officials accountable.

Independent of political parties, committed to peaceful means, and in the face of police violence, arrests and bribes, Y'en a Marre is nurturing strong civic responsibility. Its spirit and strategies are spreading to young activists across Africa.

Y'en a Marre is awarded for re-inventing Senegalese rap through their socially-engaged lyrics and music; for putting hip-hop at the heart of their campaigns in an potent culture-and-activism mix; for

their courageous and energetic commitment to informing and mobilising citizens to peacefully reclaim their role in governance and shaping the future; and for creating popular songs and strategies that speak convincingly to youth, inspiring action and reawakening the democratic spirit across West Africa and beyond.