



Prince Claus Fund for
Culture and Development

Report from the 2012 Prince Claus Awards Committee June 2012

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, organisations or institutions whose cultural actions have a wide and 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 the human need for culture is not met or is restricted and where there are limited resources for cultural expression, creative production and cultural heritage.

Procedures

The Fund invites members of its network and experts in relevant fields to nominate candidates for the awards. Research is carried out by the Fund's Bureau and second opinions on the nominations are solicited. The Prince Claus Awards Committee, which is composed of experts in the field of culture and development, considers the information about the nominated candidates and presents its recommendations to the Board of the Prince Claus Fund.

In December of each year, the Principal Prince Claus Award is presented to the Principal Laureate at a ceremony in Amsterdam in the presence of members of the Royal family and an international audience. The ten Prince Claus Awards are presented to the recipients in their respective countries by the Netherlands Ambassadors.

A total of 96 nominations were received for the 2012 Prince Claus Awards. Research and documentation on these nominations was considered and a shortlist was drawn up at the first meeting of the Prince Claus Awards Committee in December 2011. Further research was carried out on the shortlisted candidates and second opinions received from experts and advisors. During June 2012, the Awards Committee conducted in-depth assessment of the shortlisted candidates and selected 11 recommended recipients of the 2012 Prince Claus Awards. The Awards Committee's recommendations were presented to the Board of the Prince Claus Fund on 22 June 2012.

2012 Prince Claus Awards Committee

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

Rema Hammami, Cultural Anthropologist, East Jerusalem, Palestine

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

Ong Keng Sen, Theatre Producer and Artistic Director, Singapore

José Roca, Curator, Bogota, Colombia

Fariba Derakhshani is Secretary to the Committee.

Criteria and considerations

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

The Fund aims to support cultural initiatives that stimulate development in difficult contexts and to provide protection to culture in places where it is threatened. The awards are given to individuals, groups and organisations based primarily in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. The Fund's themes, the Zones of Silence and Beauty in Context, and its current focus, Culture and

Conflict, are taken into consideration in the selection of the laureates. The creation of interactions and fostering of commonalities between different cultures are highly valued.

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 that are relevant in the contemporary context. They legitimise experimentation and innovation, recognise audacity and tenacity, support inspirational leadership and seek to enhance the impact of cultural expression on societies.

Policy

The Prince Claus Fund maintains a broad view of culture that accommodates all types of artistic and intellectual disciplines. This open approach encompasses the transmission of culture and achievements in education, media and the applied arts. It includes sciences and technologies that interact with culture and development. Proposals from every area of potential are welcomed. The Fund seeks originality, experimentation and groundbreaking initiatives. The Fund considers mutual exchange, interculturality and the transcending of borders as priorities and has a keen interest in vocabularies and vernaculars that develop into universal languages linking people in different cultures.

Recommendations for the 2012 Prince Claus Awards

2012 Principal Prince Claus Award

Eloísa Cartonera Argentina

Eloísa Cartonera (2003, Buenos Aires) is a graphic arts and publishing co-operative that creates handmade books of outstanding aesthetic and literary quality. It started as an innovative counteraction to Argentina's political crisis and economic collapse in 2001. Unemployment rose and people were forced onto the streets to make a living. Many of them survived by collecting rubbish for recycling, and became known as *cartoneros*, or 'cardboard people'. In this state of crisis, the cultural sector was badly affected: people couldn't afford books, artists couldn't sell work and authors couldn't get published. Writer Washington Cucurto and visual artists Javier Barilaro and Fernanda Laguna began making artistic books using waste cardboard. In solidarity with the unemployed, they altered their objective from art books to making literature accessible to everyone. They sold their books at affordable prices, paid the *cartoneros* a better price than the recycling centres, and, as mutual respect increased, some *cartoneros* joined the production team and the co-operative was established.

Drawn to Eloísa's social solidarity, both established and emerging Latin American writers, including *cartoneros*, donate short stories, novels, poetry, plays, children's literature and avant-garde texts. Among the more than 200 titles are César Aira's *Everything Ploughs Nothing*, Ricardo Piglia's *The Pianist*, Martín Adán's Peruvian classic *The Cardboard House*, and bilingual volumes of poems by Brazilian Haroldo de Campos.

Texts are photocopied or simply printed, collated by hand and bound with cardboard covers with striking hand-painted designs. This collective, small-scale method – which Eloísa Cartonera shares through workshops – produces books that are much cheaper than conventional paperbacks. It provides income and cultural benefit to many at all levels of Argentinian society: readers, rubbish collectors, authors, artists and its own workers. The relevance and impact of the *cartonera* model transcends borders. More than 60 independent *cartonera* publishers are currently operating in countries across Latin America and one has started in Mozambique.

Eloísa Cartonera is honoured for creating beauty, intellectual stimulation and income for many in a context of financial crisis and poverty; for pioneering a sustainable model for small-scale, craft-based cultural production that counteracts the neoliberal paradigm; for highlighting the importance of storytelling and providing a platform for Latin American literature that links manual

and intellectual aspects of knowledge production; for revitalising the logic of the co-operative encouraging communal bonds, values, responsibility and respect; and for democratising literature, reaching readers ignored by traditional publishers and transforming the book from an unattainable object into a widely accessible source of pleasure, knowledge and self development.

Ten 2012 Prince Claus Awards

Sami Ben Gharbia Tunisia

Sami Ben Gharbia (1967, Tunis) is a cyber-activist who works mainly through blogging and Twitter as well as through face-to-face training and workshops. He was the co-founder in 2004 of the popular web portal Nawaat.org, a Tunisian blog collective on news and politics that played an important role in the Tunisian revolution.

Ben Gharbia began fighting online censorship in early 2000. Government interference made operating inside Tunisia impossible so he moved to the Netherlands in 1998 to maintain free online debate, criticise corrupt practices, cover topics ignored by mainstream media and champion cross-posting advocacy. Through his commitment to accurate reporting and thoughtful critique, Nawaat built solidarity among the growing protestors and became a primary news source for international media including Al Jazeera. In November 2010 Ben Gharbia launched Tunileaks to broadcast Wikileaks' evidence of Tunisian government abuses; in December 2010 the revolution exploded. During the media blackout, Nawaat was a rare source of reliable information, publishing in Tunisian dialect, Arabic, French and English, and providing first-hand testimony, videos from the streets and human rights reports.

Now based in Tunis, Ben Gharbia shares his skills and knowledge of new media's diverse potentials through workshops and public discussions. He is active in the 'open government movement' and is the Director of Advocacy for Global Voices, an organisation dedicated to protecting free expression and free access to information online. He is a co-founder of the Arab Techies Collective and a co-organiser of the Arab Bloggers Conference.

Sami Ben Gharbia is awarded for his innovative use of digital media for social change and democratisation; for providing critical information on the Tunisian situation to local and international publics; for linking Arab peoples in a cyber community for change and development; for creating a self-reflexive and critical model of how to use new media to challenge authoritarianism in many contexts; and for his integrity and commitment in supporting the freedom of information essential for both culture and development.

Habiba Djahnine Algeria

Habiba Djahnine (1968, Béjaïa) is a feminist, writer and filmmaker whose main focus is documentary cinema and its potent role in reconstructing identity and society. Committed to an accurate portrayal of Algerian realities through daring multi-layered explorations of painful histories and their contemporary consequences, her documentaries include *Safia, une histoire de femme* (2011) about the struggle against domestic violence, *Avant de franchir la ligne d'horizon* (2010) on continuing activism, *Autrement Citoyens* (2008) on engaged civil society, *Retour à la montagne* (2010) examining rural challenges and sustainable development, and *Lettre à ma soeur* (2006) questioning the use of violence as the solution to social conflict and difference. Djahnine's voice is both poetic and political. It reveals hidden stories, provides subtle insight into often controversial issues, and critically evaluates responses to them. Refusing an adversarial approach, her films promote a pluralist society in which difference is celebrated and diversity is viewed as an asset.

An intellectual activist who returned to her country to transmit her knowledge and skills, Djahnine is a generous educator and mentor. Her atelier, Béjaïa Doc, runs a year-long course for Algerian youth covering all aspects of film production and distribution, including film history and

script writing. The students are selected from diverse areas and each produce a film on life in their respective community.

A dynamic force in the Algerian cultural scene, Djahnine is a democratising organiser and energetic networker. Co-founder of Association Kaïna Cinéma (2003) and Cinéma et Mémoire Association (2007), she directs Rencontres Cinématographiques de Béjaïa, a festival that screens 50 to 60 new films annually and brings local, regional and international cinema professionals together to debate, share knowledge, make links and create exchanges. Djahnine also contributes in advisory and curatorial capacities at regional cinematographic events.

Habiba Djahnine is honoured for breathing new life into Algerian cinema; for creating sensitive, challenging and insightful documentaries on contemporary realities; for her egalitarian vision and commitment to inspiring, training and mentoring new generations of socially engaged cinema professionals; and for courageously championing freedom of expression and widening key debates in Arab cultures.

Yassin al Haj Saleh **Syria**

Yassin al Haj Saleh (1961, Raqqa) is a writer, public intellectual and voice of reasoned analysis in the midst of the current Syrian crisis. While a medical student in 1980, he was arrested for membership of a communist pro-democracy group and imprisoned for 16 years. He read extensively in prison to keep his sanity. On release aged 35, he took up his studies and qualified as a doctor but realised that the strongest contribution he could make to democratic change in his society would be as a writer. Publishing under threat of imprisonment, his work focuses on criticism of the regime and explaining the deeper socio-cultural aspects of political conflict relevant to the region. Refusing sensationalist discourse and media-generated rumours, his lucid analysis dissects the functioning and strategies of the regime and the opposition, while posing fundamental questions necessary for any democratic transition.

Haj Saleh provides insight on a wide range of political, social, and cultural subjects relating to Syria, the Arab world and their international geo-political relations. A long-time secular, leftist and nationalist, he offers rational, open and tolerant debate on democracy and contemporary Islam. He has a wide following both on the internet and in print, and has published four books: *Syria from the Shadow: Glimpses Inside the Black Box* (2010); *Asateer al Akhireen* ('The Myth of the Successors', 2010) subtitled 'A Critique of Contemporary Islam and a Critique of the Critique'; *Al-Sayr ala Qadam Waheda* ('Walking on One Leg', 2011) comprising 52 articles written between 2006 and 2010 on the social circumstances and motivations that led Syrians to revolt; and *Bil-Khalas Ya Shabab* (2012) on his prison experience.

Yassin al Haj Saleh is honoured for the clarity and depth of his writings on the complex realities of social and political change in the contemporary Middle East; for sustaining reasoned and self-reflective analysis and a principled vision in the midst of violent conflict and crisis; for upholding the role of the intellectual in the face of authoritarian power and sensationalist media; and for his crucial contributions to global understanding of the Arab world.

Widad Kawar **Jordan**

Widad Kawar (1931, Tulkarem) is a collector who has rescued and preserved important cultural heritage that would have been lost forever without her passion and commitment. Over more than 60 years she has gathered more than 2,000 examples of the textile artistry of Palestinian, Jordanian, Syrian, Bedouin and other Arab cultures. The earliest item is more than 120 years old and the most recent is an 'Intifada dress' created in refugee camps.

Growing up in Bethlehem, historically a thriving textile centre, Widad Kawar was attracted by the fine aesthetics of women's embroidery that was used to adorn their traditional dress. Her collecting began seriously after the 1948 destruction and dispossession, and became more urgent with the 1967 war and the subsequent continuous attempts to negate Palestinian identity. Opening a

research centre in Jordan, she undertook meticulous documentation and interpretation. Her interviews with women who made and wore the clothes provide rare insight into their lived experience, and her detailed analysis of patterns and stitches has established a vocabulary for 'reading' the embroidery.

Widad Kawar is active in the regeneration of Palestinian embroidery skills in the refugee camps, and also works with an organisation revitalising Jordanian embroidery practices through training and support.

Her collection is shared through exhibitions around the world, access to her extensive research database, photo archive and library, and her publications, which include *Weaving in Jordan* (1981), *Palestinian Embroidery, Traditional Fallahi Stitch* (1992) and *Threads of Identity: Preserving Palestinian Costume and Heritage* (2011).

Widad Kawar is honoured for her passionate commitment to rescuing and conserving a superb collection of the textile arts of Arab cultures; for her energetic documentation and dissemination of the intellectual content of the collection; for demonstrating the importance of women's arts in understanding history and culture; for re-asserting and strengthening Palestinian identity and challenging misrepresentations of Middle Eastern societies; and for her invaluable contribution to securing global cultural heritage.

Teresa Margolles **Mexico**

Teresa Margolles (1963, Culiacán, Sinaloa) is a visual artist who examines the social causes and consequences of death. Early work with the underground music group SEMEFO focused directly on death through gruesome images, but her experience in the city morgue, which receives the bodies of victims of violence, those who cannot afford a funeral and the unrecognised and unclaimed, led her to deeper social engagement. For Margolles, the morgue accurately reflects society, particularly her home area where deaths caused by drug-related crime, poverty, political crisis and government's brutal military response have devastated communities. She has developed a unique, restrained language in order to speak for her silenced subjects, the victims discounted as 'collateral damage' and nameless statistics.

Subtle and seductively minimal, Margolles' works initially offer a pleasant aesthetic experience. Viewers walk through mist before realising that it is made of the water used to wash the dead bodies of destitutes. A single line of delicately coloured and knotted thread is made of threads, stained with body fluids, that were used in the autopsies of murder victims. A small concrete block basking in the glow of a spotlight in a vast, empty room contains a stillborn foetus that would have been disposed of if the impoverished mother had not pleaded with Margolles to save it. *What else could we talk about?* at the 2009 Venice Biennale displayed blankets used to cover the corpses of executed drug traffickers, while in another room of the palazzo a janitor washed the marble floor with a mixture of water and blood from murdered people. Such intimate proximity to the material of death produces visceral shock and psychic fear that initiates profound self and social interrogation.

Teresa Margolles is honoured for creating powerful artworks that demand attention to violence, poverty and alienation; for exposing the social and economic order that renders violent and destitute deaths an accepted normality; for her courage and integrity in transgressing social and artistic conventions; and for speaking truth to power through public exposure of government complicity in violence and poverty, not only in Mexico, but throughout the world.

Boniface Mwangi **Kenya**

Boniface Mwangi (1983, Taveta) is a photojournalist and exemplary photo-activist. Inspired by photography's role in raising consciousness of the Ethiopian famine, he taught himself photographic skills and submitted images to the *East African Standard's* 'Face the Facts' column. The newspaper offered him a job and Mwangi, aged 24, covered Kenya's 2007 election campaign and its terrible

aftermath. Despite great personal danger, he recorded the intercommunity violence that left more than 1,500 dead and hundreds of thousands injured or displaced.

Determined to make a difference, Mwangi quit his newspaper job in 2008 and set up Picha Mtaani ('street exhibitions') to promote non-violence and reconciliation by engaging people directly. He took his photos of the post-election violence onto the streets in the 10 most affected cities and towns, often at the actual sites where violence occurred. More than 700,000 Kenyans, including many victims and perpetrators, came face-to-face with the graphic evidence and participated in dialogue and counselling. Some 35,000 individuals completed surveys giving their views on community violence and national healing, and 61,000 signed a peace pledge. Many mini exhibitions were also held in smaller centres, more than 20 in 2010-11 alone.

Mwangi produced *Heal the Nation*, a film documenting the interventions, which he made publicly available on YouTube. He is involved in graffiti activism, launched Pawa254 as a collaborative space in Nairobi offering visual media resources and youth training, and has given talks on reconciliation in Kenya, Ethiopia and Congo. Picha Mtaani is now being used as a model in other African countries.

Boniface Mwangi is awarded for his evocative photographs on challenging social issues; for creating a powerful new approach to processes of community and communal self-reflection and dialogue; for highlighting the importance of direct grassroots interaction to achieve post-conflict reconciliation; and for his brave efforts to reduce violence and build peace through culture.

Phare Ponleu Selpak Cambodia

Phare Ponleu Selpak (1994, Battambang) is a cultural organisation that empowers youth and redresses poverty by providing multidisciplinary arts training and opportunities. Set up by young Cambodians who learned about art in the refugee camps as a means of coping with trauma, Phare Ponleu Selpak (PPS), which means 'the brightness of art', is an influential activator of culture and development in the post-conflict context.

Working mainly with disadvantaged young people and emphasising self-development and sustainability, PPS teaches circus skills, theatre performance, music and a range of visual arts. It combines local traditions and practices with new and innovative genres. Daring athleticism is integrated with locally relevant narratives, for example, escape from tyranny is depicted through tightrope walking. The dark subject of *Distant Haze*, a young girl trying to deal with memories of atrocities, is relieved by breathtaking acrobatics in which seemingly impossible goals are achieved. Other productions include *Rouge*, a drama about the genocide, and H el ene Cixous' play on Norodom Sihanouk.

Over 18 years, PPS has become a cultural and educational resource with far-reaching impact. Its art gallery in Pnomh Penh and public performances inspire people in a war-devastated context. PPS graduates have income-generating skills; they teach, perform and have set up independent cultural initiatives. The circus theatre group performs regionally and internationally, and recent tours to Bangladesh and Thailand included circus workshops for disadvantaged teenagers. PPS also organises the important annual Tini Tinou International Circus Festival, which facilitates cross-cultural exchange and collaboration.

Phare Ponleu Selpak is awarded for their dedicated and inspirational application of culture's capacity to confront and transform trauma; for energetically generating resources and opportunities to empower disadvantaged youth and communities; for championing creative expression, sustainable self-development and sharing of talent for communal benefit; and for successfully integrating local traditions with new ideas to uplift, support and enrich Khmer culture.

Ian Randle Jamaica

Ian Randle (1949, Hanover) is a pioneering publisher who transformed knowledge production and circulation in the Caribbean context. He learned the book trade as an employee of foreign publishers

but in 1991, throwing off the shackles of external control, he launched the first local independent publishing house in the English-speaking Caribbean. He focused on academic publishing, opening doors for local scholars to express and spread their ideas on subjects from a local perspective. This was a practical and profound breakthrough in the decolonisation of knowledge in the Caribbean.

Ian Randle Publishers (IRP) produces high quality books by notable authors on all things Caribbean that would otherwise be unavailable. The current catalogue lists around 300 titles including: *Cultural Politics of Trinidad's Carnival Music*; *Gender Discourses in the Caribbean*; *Making West Indian Literature*; *Yet We Survive: The Kalinago people of Dominica*; *Picturing the Post-Colonial Nation*; *Globalisation, Diaspora and Caribbean Popular Culture*. IRP also publishes popular subjects and locally written textbooks which are important for transmitting local values to new generations.

Working consistently and with foresight, he built an extensive network, licensed books in many countries, and promoted co-publication to ensure affordability. He lobbied regionally on issues such as copyright, organised conferences for example on publishing strategies for HIV/Aids education, trained young people and fostered independent publishers through capacity-building workshops. In 2000 he founded the Caribbean Publishers Network (CAPNET) bringing French, Spanish, Creole and English publishers together. Active in international bookfairs, notably in Africa where IRP has been an influential model, Randle gained CAPNET entry to major bookfairs enabling wider dissemination of Caribbean books.

Ian Randle is awarded for his leadership in reclaiming local ownership of Caribbean intellectual property; for publishing foundational resources of local knowledge; for transcending language barriers to build capacities in Caribbean publishing and increase dissemination of Caribbean thought to the rest of the world; and for championing independent local publishing and self-representation in other post-colonial contexts.

Maung Thura, alias Zarganar Burma

Maung Thura (1961, Yangon) is a comedian and social activist who uses humour as a potent weapon in the struggle against tyranny and injustice. A charismatic performer from childhood, he took the stage name Zarganar ('tweezers') while studying dentistry and, despite qualifying, believed he could do more good as a comedian than as a dentist. Forming his own troupe Mya Ponnama Anyeint in 1986, he started performing full-time. Zarganar transformed the Burmese tradition of *anyeint*, a combination of song, dance, dialogue and slapstick clowning that had historically been an integral part of many secular and religious events. Giving the lead role to comedians rather than singers and introducing political satire, he brought *anyeint* back to popularity.

Audiences delight in Zarganar's sharp social and political observations cleverly incorporated as puns and double entendres in seemingly silly banter and vaudevillian routines. The authoritarian government responded with arrests and bans. Zarganar has spent a total of 11 years in prison, including five in solitary confinement for cracking jokes at political rallies. When prohibited from performing, he found alternatives – producing, directing and acting in more than 22 films and 15 videos, and training and mentoring young performers.

Zarganar's concern for people's welfare goes beyond his art. He provided food to protestors in 2007, and when he organised emergency relief for communities devastated by Cyclone Nargis and informed international media about the regime's criminal negligence, he was sentenced to 59 years in prison. Since his release in the 2011 general amnesty, he has campaigned to pressure the government to fulfil its pro-democracy proposals.

Zarganar is honoured for his skilled and sustained use of humour in an oppressive environment; for revitalising the unique tradition of *anyeint* bringing laughter, solidarity and hope to Burma; for courageously employing cultural creativity to support social and political activism; and for nurturing a new generation of cultural activists.

**Maxamed Ibraahim Warsame, alias Hadraawi
Somaliland, Somalia**

Maxamed Ibraahim Warsame (1943, Togdheer) is a poet who is known among the Somali people as Hadraawi, 'the master or father of speech'. Interweaving striking imagery and metaphor with philosophy and social commentary, Hadraawi's poems explore universal subjects and specificities of Somali culture and context. At his charismatic recitals, audiences revel in his mastery of classical and colloquial language and his experimental use of metre and alliteration.

Hadraawi has composed more than 70 lyric songs and 200 epic poems. His early work was widely broadcast, set to music and performed by leading singers. As the social and political criticism in his poems increased, their broadcasting was stopped and in 1973 Siad Barre's regime imprisoned Hadraawi for five years. Following release, Hadraawi orchestrated debate through the popular local form of 'chain' poems and his strong new work, composed in secret, was memorised and passed from person to person.

Leaving his homeland to join the Somali National Movement based in Ethiopia, he became the voice of resistance and self-determination and wrote one of his great poems, 'Gudgude', a social vision. Experience of exile and time in the Somali diaspora in London inspired another masterpiece, the 800-verse 'Dabo Huwan', which includes anti-colonial critique, satirical passages on Darwin's *Origin of Species* and Barre's 'government', and an articulation of a Somali modernity.

Returning home, Hadraawi led a 'March for Peace' promoting understanding and reconciliation across the Somali regions and the diaspora. Hadraawi teaches, encourages budding writers, and the Center for Hadraawi Literature in Hargeisa hosts workshops, reading programmes and seminars.

Hadraawi is honoured for creating profound and beautiful poems that enrich and expand the centuries-old oral poetry tradition that is central to contemporary Somali culture and identity; for sustaining shared historical awareness and inclusive discourse in divisive times; for his lifelong commitment to community development and social justice; and for building bridges, providing inspiration and promoting peace through poetry.