

Report from the 2020 Prince Claus Awards Committee June 2020

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 principles, 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 are 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. This year the Prince Claus Awards are presented globally via the internet in December. They are also presented to the Laureates at ceremonies in their respective countries by the Dutch Ambassadors.

2020 Prince Claus Awards Committee

Manuel de Rivero (Chair), Architect and Urbanist, Lima, Peru
Hoor Al Qasimi, Curator and Visual Artist, Sharjah, Emirate of Sharjah
Sandra den Hamer, Director of the EYE Film Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Amar Kanwar, Visual Artist and Filmmaker, Delhi, India
Neo Muyanga, Composer and Musician, Cape Town, South Africa
Fariba Derakhshani, Programme Coordinator of the Awards and Secretary to the Awards Committee.

2020 Data

For the 2020 Prince Claus Awards, 223 people were invited to make nominations. A total of 83 nominations was received and researched by the Bureau. The Prince Claus Awards Committee met on 5-6 December 2019 and drew up a shortlist for further research and second opinions from experts and advisors. During their second meeting via zoom on 19-22 May 2020 the Awards Committee conducted in-depth assessments of the 45 shortlisted candidates for the awards. The Awards Committee's recommendations were presented to the Board of the Prince Claus Fund in June 2020.

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 2020 Prince Claus Awards

2020 Principal Prince Claus Award

Ibrahim Mahama

Ghana
Visual Arts

Ibrahim Mahama (1987, Tamale) is a visual artist who is actively concerned with improving social conditions. His powerful artworks bring attention to the precarious, frustrated lives many people endure and call society to account.

Mahama completed a BFA (2010) and MFA (2014) at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). While still a student he closely examined and saw potential in the jute sacks used to make plaster casts. Originally part of the global trade system and restricted to one-time use for the export of luxury commodities such as cocoa, these sacks return to Ghana as waste and are then continuously used and reused to transport goods, store belongings or repurposed as bedding, furnishings etc. Highly valued by disadvantaged communities and handled by hundreds of people, the sacks carry evidence of people's lives in the accumulated marks of use and ownership: company logos, handwritten names and addresses, residues of charcoal, rice, grease and sweat, signs of damage, decoration and repair. Mahama uses these old sacks and other similarly impregnated materials in huge installations at significant public sites, as well as sculptures and wall pieces.

Out of Bounds (2015), installed in a vast passage on the edge of the Venice Biennale's main exhibition space, its towering walls hung with patched-together sacks, offered a long, emotionally devastating walk through the history of exclusion and impoverishment. During the economic crisis between Greece and Germany/the EU, Mahama presented *Check Point 1901-2030*, a historic gatehouse in Kassel shrouded in sacks that had been stitched together by Greek people in Athens' Syntagma Square. A sombre line of battered World War II ambulance stretchers with remnants of people's lives caught in the folds, *A Grain of Wheat 1918-1945* evokes old and ongoing emergencies. In 2019, Mahama replaced the UN-country flags around New York's Rockefeller Center skating rink with 50 sack flags and empty flagpoles.

In Ghana, Mahama's work challenges the authorities' failure to carry out the visionary hopes and plans of independence, build infrastructure and provide opportunities and basic needs for citizens. His long-term *Occupation* series has used huge swathes of sacking to draw attention to disintegrating industrial projects, dilapidated housing units and moribund public institutions including university buildings, churches, national theatre and museum, among others. *Exchange/Exchanger* involved simultaneously wrapping 22 sites across Accra, mapping the extent of post-independence decay. The daily struggle to survive on city streets is the subject of *Non-Orientable Nkansa* (2017), an assemblage of hundreds of well-used shoe-repair boxes made from scraps and personalised with loving detail by their owners.

The value of human labour is central to Mahama's work and important in its production. He collaborates with hundreds of people from all sections of society in gathering and assembling materials, discussing options and direct input. *Parliament of Ghosts* (2019), an installation of salvaged remains from abandoned railway infrastructure, includes the names and photographs of the tattooed arms of people who collaborated in its production.

Ibrahim Mahama chooses to stay in Ghana to ensure Africans benefit from art and ideas rather than just exporting artworks internationally. He has used his resources to set up the Savannah Centre for Contemporary Art, a free-access, artist-run, non-profit hub for cultural events with hundreds of students visiting on a daily basis to participate in workshops, use the library or attend film screenings.

Mahama spreads his ideas in local forums and collaborates with KNUST's Department of Painting and Sculpture to document and exhibit the works of emerging and older artists, as well as donating equipment and library books.

Ibrahim Mahama is honoured:

- for creating original, emotionally powerful and intellectually engaging artworks that resonate locally and globally, altering perceptions and challenging established systems;
- for his innovative forensic approach to materials, recovering and manifesting the life and significance within them;
- for visually disrupting the histories and politics of public spaces and structures, subverting their hierarchies of arrogance and privilege;
- for his engaged representation and critique of global trade, exploitation of labour and distribution of wealth;
- for his energy, generosity and strong social commitment, increasing opportunities and supporting others, especially the disadvantaged and younger generations;
- for exploring and expanding the collectivist potentials of art production, combining his collaborators' physical work with creative dialogue and direct input, as well as providing opportunities for employment and personal development;
- for his visionary contribution to the activation of Ghana's cultural scene, building infrastructure, promoting research, education and events in diverse cultural fields; and
- for raising awareness of injustices and failures, urging the need to take responsibility and playing a leading role in improving people's lives through his artwork and activities.

2020 Prince Claus Awards

Açık Radyo

Turkey

Media/Journalism

Açık Radyo (1995, Istanbul) is an independent public radio station that fosters fundamental human freedoms and pluralist democracy. True to its name, which translates as ‘Open Radio’, it encourages active participation in its structures and programmes. A collective with more than 50 trustees, the station is largely funded by audience donations and maintained almost entirely by volunteers. More than 1,090 programmers from 21 countries and more than 20,000 local and international guests have contributed to Açık Radyo’s high quality broadcasts.

Founded by Ömer Madra, a former professor of international law and human rights, Açık Radyo was started soon after legal reforms in 1993 allowed non-State broadcasting. Its mind-opening interviews and critical exchanges are conducted in a respectful and humanist manner. Listener participation is actively encouraged and humour plays a part in creating empathy and a broader ground for discussion. One of the most popular programmes, ‘Open Newspaper’, offers in-depth analysis on current events that aims to uncover and understand the real story. Through co-operation with broadcasters across the world, foreign reports and eyewitness accounts are read on air and compared with local media coverage of the event. The station keeps a close eye on Turkish and international media. Its critical series, ‘Media Talks’, examines journalism ethics, the role of advertising, restrictions on press freedom and freedom of information, and the functioning of ombudsmanship. Environmental issues are also high on Açık Radyo’s agenda, with a weekly ‘Green Bulletin’ featuring experts and local activism.

Taking a non-nationalistic approach, the station presents information and debate on every topic of public interest. Committed to diversity and social equality, it interviews people with different backgrounds - opinion leaders, citizens, spokespersons for civic bodies, rights organisations, NGOs and grass roots organisations, academics and politicians - on subjects such as censorship, Turkey and the EU, citizens’ responsibilities, Armenian-Turkish relations, and Turkey’s human rights record. Açık Radyo has aired programmes on disaster preparedness and it has often served as a crucial platform in emergencies. When the earthquake struck Turkey in 1999 killing thousands of people, the station immediately became a centre for communications, and throughout the 2020 covid scenario it has proactively provided information, support and inspiration.

Açık Radyo’s 24-hour broadcasts includes a wide range of cultural programmes covering all the artistic fields, local, regional and global trends, cultural diversity, history and heritage, including controversial issues such as the ongoing gentrification of Istanbul. It has created podcasts, maintains a public archive of its past programmes, and has been instrumental in the publication of 15 books, including the translation of the world’s first graphic novel on climate change. A rare local platform for

artists, culture entrepreneurs and academics to publicise their work, it is expanding the audience for arts and culture.

Popular for its irreverence, intellectualism and joie de vivre, Açık Radyo broadcasts to the greater Istanbul area and via internet with a weekly audience of around 120,000 listeners including high-ranking politicians. It has inspired the formation of other listener-supported public radio stations and assists them by sharing technical expertise and effective practices.

Açık Radyo is honoured:

- for its richly informative, entertaining and inspiring programmes featuring controversial issues, opposing viewpoints and honest critical analysis;
- for nurturing the principles of pluralist democracy, rule of law, universal human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- for representing, serving and strengthening its community and civil society by offering a space for dialogue and exchange of opinions where alternative, marginalised and minority voices can be heard;
- for staunchly upholding journalistic integrity and ethics in a period of ‘fake news’ and deceptive media;
- for clearly demonstrating that, even in today’s digital landscape, radio continues to be a popular and effective medium for social and political change;
- for emphasising that openness to multiple perspectives and respect for dissenting ideas form the only real and vital basis of true democracy; and
- for its remarkable resilience in pioneering and sustaining a free and open voice in a complex context, providing a model for sustainable and independent media.

Diamantina Arcoiris **Colombia** **Design**

Diamantina Arcoiris (1981, Bogotá) is a fashion designer who has turned her passion and skills into a means to help others. Known for her punk creativity under the brand name Aerodinamic, Diamantina ran a successful fashion business in Bogotá’s glamorous Chapinero neighbourhood for more than a decade. Four years ago, everything changed due to the appearance of her brother Camilo’s body - he had been killed in 2007 and had been missing for more than nine years. He was one of the 5,000 young people who went missing in operation “Falsos Positivos”, where the Colombian army recruited vulnerable citizens (such as the homeless and drug-users like Camilo), killed them and dressed them up as “guerrilleros”, so it looked like the army was winning the war. From that moment Diamantina changed her life. She started going to rehab centres to teach and share her fashion skills, especially the art of embroidery, as a form of therapy to build bonds, share her pain and talk through art. Then she moved to Barrio Santa Fé, a hardcore district abandoned to poverty, drug dealers and crime, and gradually established Fundación Rediseñandonos (Redesign Ourselves Foundation).

Using her old bus as a café and studio, Diamantina went out one night every week after 11pm when most of Santa Fé’s displaced people and drug users were on the streets. She invited them to

join an embroidery workshop where they could be together and tell their story. This became a safe space with no demands, just respect, companionship, creativity and laughter. As numbers grew, the workshop moved from the bus to the front yard of her house. Then she opened her studio to those who wanted to come at other times and opened her house to those who needed a meal, a bath, clothes, a place to sleep. The embroidery pieces made by these young homeless drug users and displaced Indigenous people were incorporated into Diamantina's designs, transforming her Aerodinamic brand, and success in selling the clothes has led to members' work being recognised and monetised, giving them an alternative, a way to progress in their rehabilitation. Some members now live in the house and continue to learn and create in a more organic and free way. They still go out one night a week to invite new people to the project.

Diamantina engages friends to act as ambassadors, raise funds and promote the foundation's work. She has motivated people in Bogotá's fashion world to participate in events with the people of Santa Fé and Rediseñandonos is recognised by the Colombian fashion industry as a sustainable fashion revolution. During the pandemic, 22 members have been living in quarantine in the house, creating a new collection. The foundation survived this difficult stage thanks to Aerodinamic's former and new clientele and to donations from supporters.

Diamantina Arcoiris is honoured:

- for radically reinventing her life to focus on care and respect for others;
- for her innovative vision of a way to teach skills and share knowledge and resources that is founded on social equality and embodies the right to cultural expression;
- for creating a safe, welcoming community and inspiring activities that offer marginalised people alternatives and life-changing opportunities;
- for clearly demonstrating that culture is a universal need that contains immense potential to provide personal meaning and practical living support;
- for her eclectic, high quality designer fashions which draw on Colombia's rich multi-ethnic and multi-cultural heritage;
- for highlighting the need to redesign societies so that there is respect for all people and greater effort to assist and care for those who are disadvantaged by the current system;
- for showing the power of the arts to transform lives, that crafting things by hand with attention to detail, patience and care is a source of mental and emotional healing;
- for her generous commitment to inspiring and empowering people to gain self-esteem and redefine their lives; and
- for being an inspirational role model, exploring new modes of inclusive, collective organisation for today's world.

Fendika Cultural Center

Ethiopia

Music/Performance/Culture & Development

Fendika Cultural Center (2016, Addis Ababa) is a creative hotspot for popular Ethiopian culture, experimenting with contemporary performance as well as reinventing traditional forms of expression.

Originally Fendika was an 'Azmarî Bet' (Azmarî House), a place where people gather to listen to ballads by Ethiopia's poet-singer-musicians (*azmarî*) playing unique local instruments and improvising verses and stories that are often humorous or satirical. In the 1990s there were many such places in the central Kazanchis neighbourhood but due to internationalisation of the city and Kazanchis designation as a high-rise zone, Fendika is now the only local music space in the area. It is owned and run by Melaku Belay, who as a teenager did odd jobs at Fendika and slept under the bar for seven years while training to become a dancer, choreographer and musician. He gradually gained international recognition for his art, began to manage the space in 2008, and ultimately crowdfunded to purchase a 100-year lease on the property to ensure its continuance. While similar low-rise buildings made of the iconic, brightly painted, corrugated iron sheeting are being torn down and residents forced to move out, Fendika Cultural Center, inaugurated in 2016, has kept its authentic local character and expanded its activities.

Alongside *azmarî* performances, Fendika's nightly music line-up includes celebrated local stars such as the Negarit Ethio-Jazz Band, Kayn Lab or Ethiocolour, as well as promising new groups and individual performers. Hip hop, rap, jazz and blues mix with Ethiopian sounds and rhythms from different regions and eras. There may be rock guitars, electronic techno or traditional instruments, a tribal dance or local version of a 1970s hit, and at the end of the evening the whole audience often joins in the 'shoulder dance'. The bar buzzes, serving traditional tej among others, and the restaurant offers an eclectic menu.

The visual arts are showcased in Fendika's gallery, which also offers exhibition space free of charge to emerging artists. Poetic Saturdays is a monthly open mic session highlighting the many local languages, oral traditions and experimentation. There are symposiums and lectures as well as rehearsal spaces, classes and workshops. Young dancers and musicians from rural areas are invited to perform and train. Those who become part of Fendika's community are sent to school and, like Melaku, many begin by doing odd jobs while developing their art. Several dancers and musicians who started out at Fendika now have their own club or career in music.

Fendika connects international artists with local voices and a wide audience. It also collaborates with local cultural groups and institutions to host activities, for example, the Addis Video Art Festival. It is a unique meeting place for creative people and a hub of progressive thought on cultural development in Ethiopia.

Fendika Cultural Center is honoured:

- for its inspiring vision of a vibrant multi-dimensional Ethiopian identity and a constantly evolving Ethiopian culture;
- for establishing an accessible and popular community space, making artists visible and enabling them to reach a wide audience beyond the elite enclaves;
- for its creative enhancement of indigenous forms, instruments and styles, bringing performers together with diverse influences to stimulate experimentation, and improvising them into the contemporary;

- for its generous and empowering role as a springboard for young generations, offering training, mentoring, practical support and opportunities to develop their ideas and talents;
- for its active promotion of freedom of cultural expression, keeping an open alternative platform for arts discourse in a complex context;
- for recognising the importance of culture in the city and devising intelligent strategies to survive commercialisation and gentrification;
- for building bridges between generations, between the traditional and the contemporary, between the city and the countryside, between different ethnicities and cultures, between Ethiopia and the world; and
- for exploring new modes of inclusive, collective organisation for today's world.

Tunakaimanu Fielakepa

Tonga

Cultural Heritage

Tunakaimanu Fielakepa (1936) is an expert on *koloa*, the unique textile arts of Tongan women, and an activist for Tongan cultural heritage. Her broad spectrum of knowledge supports the continuation and revitalisation of traditional techniques and practices amongst contemporary communities across the Pacific region.

Making *koloa* is an ancient practice imbued with socio-political complexity. The textiles express female wealth and self-empowerment. Some are items of regular use. Others, of finely woven barkcloth inscribed with intricate symbolic patterns, are kept for ceremonial occasions marking milestones from birth to death, passed down through generations, and deeply integrated into communities' social relationships. Designs, *kupes*, have specific values and meanings. One highly ranked *kupes* reflects the footprints of the Tuli bird, conveying a message of the need for ceaseless activity. A design based on the ornamental tree fern praises the miracle of creation. Others record events such as the arrival of Christianity or Tongan funds donated to the UK to purchase warplanes during World War II. Research into the origins and meanings of some designs is ongoing.

Lady Fielakepa was first aware of the art of barkcloth at an early age watching her grandmother and a group of women making *ngatu*. It was not until 1959 as a married woman that she learned the art of barkcloth from women of knowledge and discovered local variations in technique, interpretations and social practices in different communities during travels through the islands. This deep knowledge underlies her commitment and promotion of *koloa* as a source of social strength and cultural sovereignty.

One of the first Tongan women to get western-style education, Lady Fielakepa has carefully balanced the two systems through her long career as a teacher (1958-74) and as Tonga's Education Administrator and Senior Chief Education Officer (1975-98). She was Chairperson of Village Committees (1996-2010), President of Tonga National Handicraft Association (2009-12) and Technical Advisor to the National Council of Women (1996-2013). Her work continues as a Cultural

Expert with the National Council of Women and the Langafonua Centre for women's customary arts, which she has been involved in from 1953 to the present. As well as organising workshops and school visits, the centre has a gallery and shop selling diverse handicrafts thereby providing income for women and communities.

Lady Fielakepa has travelled internationally to promote Tongan textile arts and handicrafts. In 2019 she curated 'Koloa: Women, Art and Textiles', an exhibition of historical and contemporary *koloa* that challenges the persistent colonial-legacy categorisation of indigenous artworks as 'craft' and therefore of lesser value. The exhibition opened at the Langafonua gallery and travelled to Hong Kong, where it was expanded to include barkcloths from other areas of the world and contemporary pieces by women artists working within the aesthetics of the Pacific region. Lady Fielakepa's research is featured in the 2014 UNESCO anthology *Traditional Knowledge and Wisdom: Themes from the Pacific Islands*, as well as the renowned publication *Tapa: From Tree Bark to Cloth: An Ancient Art of Oceania, from Southeast Asia to Eastern Polynesia*.

Tunakaimanu Fielakepa is honoured:

- for her immense contribution to the ongoing vitality of the women's textile arts, demonstrating that *koloa* is a living cultural form and an integral part of Tongan culture;
- for increasing knowledge of *koloa* through research and documentation, ensuring the preservation of this unique cultural heritage for future generations;
- for her commitment to excellence, emphasising the use of traditional materials and techniques to convey the deep meanings and symbolic values of *koloa*'s rich aesthetic lineage;
- for highlighting women's significance in society as the creators of *koloa*, as well as encouraging and supporting women's groups and networks;
- for strengthening Tongans' cultural identity by sharing her knowledge of indigenous values with young generations through her role as a teacher;
- for upholding Tonga's rich traditional culture, counteracting the colonial legacy that devalued indigenous art forms, and resisting globalisation and neo-colonisation by commercial corporate international style; and
- for stimulating better understanding of Pacific cultures by providing expertise and advice to both local and global heritage groups, institutions and academics on their research and collections.

m7red

Argentina
Architecture

m7red (2005, Buenos Aires) is an independent activist network that empowers people to deal with changes and developments in public space. Originally part of a conventional building practice, it was founded by Mauricio Corbalan and Pio Torroja, formerly professors at the University of Buenos Aires' Faculty of Architecture, Design and Urban Planning.

m7red work closely with citizens, particularly marginalised groups disproportionately impacted by spatial injustice. Their activities include forums, such as Chat Theatre (2007), a series of public

conversations on issues such as citizenship, immigration and the role of new media, and scenarios in which participants set up their own police, health care, or currency. They produce graphics to illustrate the multiple aspects of a problem and create interactive simulations to facilitate understanding. Emphasising direct participation, role playing and effective communication, they invent devices to enable participants to virtually experience a situation. For example, ‘inundacion! inesperadas posibilidades urbanas para Buenos Aires’ (‘flood! unexpected urban possibilities for Buenos Aires!’) is a board game that puts players in the moment of disaster. Everyone, from residents and community leaders to municipal authorities, local businesses, NGOs and civic bodies, can try out different responses, explore changing roles and responsibilities, and suggest possible actions.

Two ongoing projects concern conflicts at the shale gas deposit at Vaca Muerta, which is the ancestral land of the Mapuche communities, and glyphosate pollution in the Argentinian Pampas. In each case m7red has built relationships with all the people and institutions involved as well as strategic associations with diverse experts, and identified the different elements of the situation and researched the aims and approaches of the various stakeholders. They then created multi-dimensional maps that synthesise and express the data for the specific situation, site and context, and make visible the power relations, vested interests, political pressures and social issues of concern. These maps expose impacts and also reveal potential means of resistance and possible outcomes for affected populations.

m7red’s publication *Mil cuencas* (‘Thousand river basins’) provides insights into their numerous projects on the interactions of citizens, ecology and politics in watersheds, including their collaboration with local groups and NGOs to monitor and address impacts of Buenos Aires’ highly polluted Riachuelo river basin.

In 2015 when the non-human rights of orangutan Sandra were legally recognised, m7red collaborated with Forensic Architecture to map and expose the way city authorities weaponised their relationship with professional architectural bodies and media in order to stop debate on their decision to close the Buenos Aires Zoo. In *Sandra Persona No Humana* (Sandra a non-human person), m7red interrogates the consequent ethical crisis concerning the spatial rights of animals and the vast human appropriation of non-human territory.

m7red is honoured:

- for thinking differently, providing incisive analysis and bold perspectives that call for changes in the processes of public decision-making;
- for empowering people to better negotiate for their own issues and claim their rights in public space;
- for translating technologies across disciplines and inventing transformative devices that enhance people’s understanding of the multiple, often concealed aspects of today’s increasingly complex situations;
- for their long-term commitment to working with under-represented communities in and around Buenos Aires and La Plata, particularly visualising and exposing how they are impacted by various public developments;
- for raising awareness of the ‘architecture’ of contemporary social and economic systems - the hidden foundations, convoluted means of access and ‘structures’ that protect some and deny others;

- for emphasising the role of genuinely democratic communication between different groups involved in a conflict situation;
- for demonstrating the benefits of taking a multidisciplinary and collaborative approach, interconnecting local and global experts and issues;
- for critiquing conventional architectural practice, which tends to overlook its social impact and complicity in reducing people's rights in public spaces; and
- for challenging the hegemony and strategies of power within today's systems, confronting the encroachment of exclusionary neoliberal urban development and countering political sectors and media dominated by corporate rationale and interests.