

PRESS RELEASE
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Amsterdam

Principal Prince Claus Award Honours Visual Artist from Sudan

The Prince Claus Fund announces the 2019 Prince Claus Awards. This year's laureates are:

Principal Prince Claus Laureate

Kamala Ibrahim Ishag (visual artist, Sudan)

Prince Claus Laureates

Ambulante (documentary film organisation, Mexico)

Mariam Kamara (architect, Niger)

Bill Kouélany (visual artist, writer, Congo-Brazzaville)

Djamila Ribeiro (philosopher, Brazil)

Anocha Suwichakornpong (filmmaker, Thailand)

Next Generation Prince Claus Laureate

Mónica Ojeda Franco (writer, Ecuador)

HRH Prince Constantijn, Honorary Chair of the Prince Claus Fund Board, will present the Awards during the ceremony at the Royal Palace, Amsterdam on 4 December 2019. On 3 December, the 2019 Laureates will tell their stories during *Louder than Words*, a public talk show at the Compagnietheater in Amsterdam.

The Prince Claus Awards honour visionary individuals and organisations for their excellent, ground-breaking work in fields of culture and development.

This year all the Prince Claus Laureates are women or women-run organisations. Although the Fund did not emphasise gender in its requests for nominations, the nominations received reflected a trend of exemplary women making strides in their fields.

'The Laureates this year put exceptional women front and centre. The nominations received and the Awards Committee's final selection of 2019 Laureates just reinforce the fact that women are increasingly at the forefront of innovation, ground-breaking thought and creative initiatives. These Awards are a recognition that their achievements are outstanding, and have an impact not only on the lives of women and girls but benefit their societies as a whole.' — Joumana El Zein Khoury, Director of the Prince Claus Fund

2019 Principal Prince Claus Laureate

Kamala Ibrahim Ishag (Omdurman, Sudan, 1939)

Kamala Ibrahim Ishag has been a pioneer in African visual art since the 1960s. Among the first women to graduate from the College of Fine and Applied Art in Khartoum, in 1960 she was a foundational figure in the modern art movement in Sudan. She was associated with the Khartoum School, which forged a modern artistic identity for the newly independent nation, drawing on both its



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Arab and African traditions. A decade later, Ishag's ideas had evolved. She rejected the Khartoum School's emphasis on heritage and its seemingly male-dominated world view. With a number of her students, she founded what came to be known as the Crystallist Group. Their manifesto (1976) characterised the world as infinite and unbounded, like a crystal with its transparencies, multiple angles and reflections. Her own work has focused on the intangible aspects of women's lives in Sudan, Africa and the Arab worlds. Her interest in women's lives led to field research and large-scale paintings of Zār, a traditional Sudanese women's ceremony that entails spirit possession and trance-like performance. The works and writing of William Blake and Francis Bacon were a large influence in Ishag's portraits of distorted figures. Ishag has remained active in organising exhibitions with younger generations of women artists. Hence her participation in current social movements where women play a central, visible role. She continues to be an intellectual catalyst and inspirational force among a younger generation of Sudanese artists.

2019 Prince Claus Laureates

Ambulante (Mexico City, Mexico, 2005)

Ambulante supports the creation and dissemination of documentary films in a way that stimulates social change. Its travelling documentary festival is the largest in the country and the majority of its shows are free. Through the festival and its education programme, Ambulante Beyond, the organisation brings films and training to places in Mexico where they are rarely available. During the festival, screenings are held in numerous diverse venues from multiplex cinemas to community halls, public parks, the national Senate building and even metro stations. Screenings are followed by discussions with filmmakers and local NGOs, and linked to workshops, seminars and forums. Ambulante Beyond's workshops, which take place in rural and indigenous communities, foster independent filmmaking, provide equipment and training to young people, and encourage independent visions and voices. Founded by Gael García Bernal, Diego Luna, Elena Fortes and Pablo Cruz, Ambulante is run by Paulina Suárez (director), Roxana Alejo (director of operations), Meghan Monsour (programming director) and María Inés Roqué (production and education director).

Mariam Kamara (Niamey, Niger, 1979)

Mariam Kamara uses architecture as a means to serve communities and improve lives. Although she acquired a Master's degree in computer science and worked for seven years in IT, she became convinced she could achieve more for people through architecture and went back to school to become an architect. Her first built project in Niger was a housing complex designed to serve the city's expanding population. It drew inspiration from pre-colonial traditions, rejecting high-rise towers in favour of compact 2- and 3-storey homes that offer both intimate, private spaces and communal areas. Kamara works closely with local professionals and craftspeople, adapting local building materials to create sustainable solutions. Her designs for public spaces give women in this dominantly Muslim culture more freedom of movement.

Bill Kouélany (Brazzaville, Congo-Brazzaville, 1965)

Bill Kouélany is a leading figure in the arts in Congo-Brazzaville and was the first sub-Saharan woman invited to participate in documenta. She brings together multiple art forms, from writing and collage to painting and stage design, in imaginative ways that respond to a wide range of issues. In 2012 Kouélany founded Les Ateliers Sahn, a contemporary art centre that is unique in Congo-Brazzaville.



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It not only brings artists together to experiment and exchange ideas, it also provides space and materials for them to work in a wide variety of disciplines. Kouélany is committed to fostering young artists and to gender equality, creating opportunities for women through scholarships for art materials. Kouélany initiated RIAC, an annual month of performances, workshops and seminars by international experts as well as a residency programme that invites African and international artists to work with Congolese artists on specific themes. Ateliers Sahn also runs weekly workshops that support vulnerable children. In addition, she organises the participation of young artists in Dakar Biennale's fringe programme, advancing their careers.

Djamila Ribeiro (Santos, Brazil, 1980)

Djamila Ribeiro is a public intellectual, writer and philosopher, a social justice activist, and one of the most influential leaders in the Afro-Brazilian women's rights movement. A prolific essayist, Ribeiro was one of 51 authors from 25 countries invited to contribute to *The Freedom Papers* (2018). She is the author of two significant books including *Quem tem medo do feminismo negro?* ('Who is afraid of black feminism?', 2018), a collection of articles on topics such as social mobilisation, racial quota policies, and the origins of black feminism in Brazil and America. Ribeiro is committed to sharing the thinking of others, through the editorial initiative, Sueli Carneiro's Seal. Ribeiro's book, *Lugar de Fala* ('Place of Speech') was the first publication of *Feminismos Plurais* (Plural Feminisms), a collection within Sueli Carneiro's Seal that publishes black writers' works at affordable prices. Ribeiro is an online columnist, blogger and regular columnist for the daily paper *Folha de Sao Paulo* and *Marie Claire Magazine*.

Anocha Suwichakornpong (Chonburi, Thailand, 1976)

Anocha Suwichakornpong is an experimental filmmaker who pushes the boundaries of aesthetics, vocabulary and form to reflect on contemporary Thailand and its history. Her films have ranged from an early meditation on patriarchy and artistic expression (*Mundane History*, 2009) to an exploration of memory and history (*By the Time it Gets Dark*, 2016). In 2017 she was the first woman to win the Best Director award from the Thailand National Film Association. Suwichakornpong is actively involved in stimulating independent filmmaking in South East Asia. She teaches locally and internationally. Her company, Electric Eel Films, also produces works by emerging talents and first-time directors. She co-founded (2017) and is artistic director of Purin Pictures, a film fund committed to promoting underrepresented voices, particularly female filmmakers.

2019 Next Generation Prince Claus Laureate

As part of the Prince Claus Fund's focus on developing and supporting activities with and for young people (ages 15 – 35) the Next Generation Prince Claus Award is presented to an individual under the age of 35 for outstanding achievements and contributions in the field of culture and development. It honours an individual who is a role model for younger generations and whose cultural actions have a positive impact particularly on young people in their society.

Mónica Ojeda Franco (Guayaquil, Ecuador, 1988)

Mónica Ojeda Franco is a writer who is unafraid of taboos. She is the author of a volume of poetry, a short story collection and three novels, the latest of which is *Mandibula* ('Jaw', 2018). Her unflinching depictions of fear and pain, power and vulnerability, perversion and sexual desire encompass new genres that appeal to a younger generation. She writes from various points of view; taking in not only



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a young person's perspective, but also feminist, political, social and psychological perspectives. She says things that cannot be said about difficult subjects, including abominable, abject and obscene elements of contemporary society. In 2017, the Bogotá39 named Ojeda one of the best contemporary writers in Latin America under age 40. Ojeda has a degree in Social Communication with a minor in Literature, a master's degree in Literary Creation, and a second master's in Theory and Criticism of Culture. She has taught literature at the Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil.

Note on selection

The Prince Claus Awards Committee is comprised of independent international professionals in fields of culture and development. They select the Prince Claus Laureates from among nominees put forward by the Fund's global networks on the basis of criteria such as quality, innovation and impact of their work. The selection process includes extensive research and the sourcing of second opinions by the Fund's bureau.

Award amounts

Principal Prince Claus Award: € 100,000

Prince Claus Awards: € 25,000

Next Generation Award: € 20,000

2019 Prince Claus Awards Committee

Manuel de Rivero (Chair), Architect and Urbanist, Lima, Peru

Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi, Curator and Visual Artist, Sharjah, Emirate of Sharjah

Sandra den Hamer, Director of the Eye Filmmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Amar Kanwar, Visual Artist and Filmmaker, Delhi, India

Tejumola Olaniyan, Professor of African and English Languages and Literature, Madison, US

Fariba Derakhshani is Programme Coordinator of the Awards and Secretary to the Awards Committee.

Note for the Editors

The press kit is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5cr7jyu>

For interview requests, additional information or visual materials, please contact:

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For more information about the Prince Claus Awards: princeclausfund.org/awards