

PRESS RELEASE

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Principal Prince Claus Award Honours Two Outstanding Socially Engaged Cultural Practitioners

Documentary filmmaker Vincent Carelli (Sao Paulo, Brazil) and new media designer and environmentalist Ma Jun (Qingdao, China) will jointly receive the Principal Prince Claus Award from HRH Prince Constantijn of the Netherlands on 6 December. During the Awards ceremony at the Royal Palace Amsterdam five additional Laureates will also be honoured with awards. They are documentary filmmaker and women's rights activist Khadija Al-Salami (Yemen), public art association L'Art Rue (Tunisia), environmental scientist and gender diversity activist Brigitte Baptiste (Colombia), visual artist and social activist Amar Kanwar (India) and architect Diébédo Francis Kéré (Burkina Faso). The Prince Claus Awards Ceremony will be held in the presence of members of the Dutch Royal Family and invited guests.

Prince Claus Fund Director Joumana El Zein Khoury: *"There is a strong marriage of culture and social engagement with all our Laureates this year. Although our two Principal Laureates, Vincent Carelli and Ma Jun, are using different media in different disciplines and are working on opposite sides of the globe, they both have enormous influence in their respective societies. They are both committed to the struggle to protect people and the environment. They both emphasise the importance of hearing people's voices and showing people the power they can have to protect their own environment and make their societies more just."*

For the past 21 years, the Prince Claus Fund has honoured visionary individuals and organisations for their excellent, ground-breaking work in fields of culture and development.

2017 Joint Principal Prince Claus Laureates

Vincent Carelli (1953 b. Paris, moved age 5 to Sao Paulo, Brazil) is a documentary filmmaker and activist for indigenous rights who has brought video making to indigenous communities. In 1986 he founded a collaborative production centre, Video in the Villages (VÍdeo nas Aldeias). VNA supplies indigenous schools with videos in their own languages and has created an exchange network among different indigenous communities. VNA's programmes, made and directed by indigenous filmmakers from 50 different indigenous communities, have been widely disseminated in Brazil and internationally. They have been instrumental in changing Brazilian public perceptions of indigenous lives. By initiating a creative way for indigenous peoples to document their own cultures, Vincent Carelli has found an effective means to counter prejudice and promote peaceful interethnic relations.

Ma Jun (1968, Beijing, China) is a new media designer and environmentalist who is empowering citizens to take action against industrial pollution. In 2006, he set up the non-profit Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs (IPE) which collects and analyses official data on pollution, making it understandable and available to the general public. Ma Jun and IPE have developed an innovative app that, among other things, allow people to see air quality in 300 Chinese cities and report evidence of pollution in their neighbourhoods. Ma Jun highlights best practices and presses for transparency. He co-founded a network of environmental NGOs. He reaches a broad audience of consumers,

corporations and government with information about environmental issues through social media, lectures, workshops and publications.

2017 Prince Claus Laureates

Khadija Al-Salami (1966, Sana'a, Yemen) is a documentary filmmaker and activist for women's rights in Yemen. Her films have depicted the prejudice and abuse faced by Yemeni women and the injustice of forced childhood marriage. Al-Salami trains local technicians and uses local people as actors. Although the ongoing conflict and conservative religious pressures in Yemen have closed all but a few movie theatres, the public can buy Al-Salami's films on the black market. They are widely distributed throughout the Arab world, copied, shown in neighbourhood screenings and can be seen for free on YouTube. Her film about a 13-year old girl sentenced to death contributed to civil efforts to reverse the sentence and ultimately to changes in the legal status and rights of women prisoners. She has further started a foundation that supports 550 girls to attend school.

L'Art Rue (2006, Tunis, Tunisia) is an association that is transforming life in Tunis through re-appropriating public space for creative expression and public participation. Founded in 2006 by choreographers and dancers Selma and Sofiane Ouissi, L'Art Rue runs a range of activities. It takes art to children and teenagers in schools, organises workshops for artists and urban professionals, provides residences and initiates collaborative research, reflection and production. It has started a free quarterly review of critical contemporary writing on art in public space and the relationship between art and civic and political life that is distributed in North Africa and Europe. In 2007 it started Dream City, a festival of contemporary arts in public spaces, using the medina, which was then nearly deserted. L'Art Rue has developed cultural programmes for marginalized people that strengthen respect for the rights of minorities. It lobbies politicians for the structural support of culture and collaborated in raising voices that call for social justice.

Brigitte Baptiste (1963, Bogota, Colombia) is a scientist, an advocate of gender diversity and an inspiring public intellectual. She has been an important contributor to the concept of socio-ecosystems, which takes an integrated approach to nature and society, a concept successfully applied in protecting Colombia's wetlands. She is director of the Alexander von Humboldt Biological Resources Research Institute and has been key in developing environmental policies for Colombia's post-conflict areas. A charismatic speaker, a highly visible transgender woman and an LGBTQI activist, Baptiste has raised awareness that cultural diversity is part of nature's diversity. She has been a professor of ecology at the Jesuit-run Javeriana University for more than 20 years. The author of 15 books, a popular TV series and regular newspaper columns as well as a presence on social media, Baptiste is an inspiring figure whose innovative research and alternative narratives have eroded prejudice, built bridges and generated social change.

Amar Kanwar (1964, New Delhi, India) is a visual artist and social activist committed to developing art as a vehicle for social justice. He documents such difficult topics as oppression, sexual violence, poverty and the appropriation of land and resources. He draws on poetic imagery, archival material and the voices of those affected to create a multilayered narrative at the interface between art, documentation and activism. Although his work focuses on South Asia, it has global relevance. Kanwar adapts his installations and innovative hybrid art forms to connect with diverse audiences, from local film clubs and associations where the topics are most urgent, to art exhibitions and film festivals around the world.

Diébédo Francis Kéré (1965, Gando, Burkina Faso) is an architect who creates buildings of great beauty that meet people's needs. He shows that architecture can be a generous profession dedicated to increasing people's well-being. His designs are based on ecological principles and sustainability. He uses local materials and merges local building traditions with contemporary construction techniques. Kéré engages deeply with the local community to create a sense of pride and ownership in his

projects. He explains his plans and methods, trains local people in modern construction techniques and employs them in the building process, so they are keen to maintain the structures and have the skills to undertake further development on their own.

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, following extensive research and the sourcing of second opinions by the Fund's bureau.

2017 Prince Claus Awards Committee

Emile Fallaux (Chair), Cultural Advisor, Filmmaker and Journalist, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

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

Defne Ayas, Curator/Director of Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, the Netherlands

Solange Farkas, Curator, Sao Paulo, Brazil

Dinh Q Lê, Visual Artist, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam

Neo Muyanga, Composer and Musician, Cape Town, South Africa

Manuel de Rivero, Architect and Urbanist, Lima, Peru

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

Note for the Editors

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