



Fonds

Prince Claus Fund for  
Culture and Development

**Press release**

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**First exhibition by young photographers from (Bamiyan) Afghanistan in the Netherlands**

**On Thursday, March 31 Ben Knapen, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, will open the photo exhibition *Fragments of Tradition, Beauty and Hope* in the Prince Claus Fund Gallery. The exhibition shows work from thirteen young men and women (amateur photographers) between 18 and 23 years from various districts in the province of Bamiyan. They were invited to explore the area through the lens of a camera. The exhibition is the result of workshops organised by the 3rd Eye Photo Journalism Center and supported by the Prince Claus Fund.**

The photographs illustrate the resilience of people in the midst of conflict. They also give a unique and personal insight into the geographic, social and political context of life in Afghanistan and the reconstruction and peace-building efforts that are going on. These pictures of Afghan society, culture and landscape enhance our understanding of Afghanistan through the eyes of young Afghan photographers. During the three month course in addition to photography, social issues were raised on the role of free and independent media in democracies. And the participants were encouraged to be actively engaged in the struggle for the emancipation of women and for women's rights – an ambition that finds its reflection in the composition of the course itself, in which virtually as many men as women are involved.

**Christa Meindersma** (director Prince Claus Fund): *"This exhibition shows Afghanistan through the eyes of young Afghan photographers. In their images and stories you can see beauty and feel the hope and optimism they have in the future. This hope offers a counterbalance to the one-sided picture of a country in conflict, as we know it through the media"*.

**Bamiyan Buddha's**

The province of Bamiyan in central Afghanistan is mostly known for the monumental Buddha statues that were destroyed by Taliban. The statues were blown up with explosives ten years ago, in March 2001. The exhibition does not focus on the destroyed Buddha's though many photos of the young photographers show the dramatic voids where the Buddha's once stood. During the workshops, much attention was paid to the historical heritage, cultural values and the beauty of the area, that like the rest of Afghanistan is rapidly modernizing and therefore finds itself torn between tradition and modernity.

**Prince Claus Fund and Afghanistan**

The Prince Claus Fund supported several cultural projects in Afghanistan in the past years and it granted Prince Claus Awards to visual artist Lida Abdul and Omara Khan Massoudi, the brave director of the National Museum of Afghanistan who hid historical treasures for the Taliban and in doing so saved them for present and future generations. The Fund also had a catalogue with photos of and information about these treasures translated to the local Afghan languages Dari and Pashtu.

*Fragments of Tradition, Beauty and Hope* will be opened by State Secretary Ben Knapen on Thursday, March 31, 16.00 hrs in the Prince Claus Fund Gallery, Herengracht 603, Amsterdam. The exhibition runs until June 17, 2011. The Prince Claus Fund is organising an educational programme together with a number of secondary schools in Amsterdam to stimulate Dutch young people to see through the eyes of Afghan people.

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**The Prince Claus Fund: Culture is a Basic Need**

The Prince Claus Fund actively seeks international cultural collaborations with partners of excellence in spaces of need. The Prince Claus Fund provides immediate cultural rescue as well as support to sustainable cultural processes. It takes initiatives to raise awareness on the importance of culture in everyday life and for development. The Fund works in the spirit of Prince Claus' belief that one cannot develop people, but people develop themselves. The Prince Claus Fund is based in Amsterdam and is supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch Postcode Lottery. [www.princeclausfund.org](http://www.princeclausfund.org)

More information about the workshops: <http://www.princeclausfund.org/nl/activities/bamiyan-photography.html>

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