

Press Release

The Hague, 11 October 2004

Prince Claus Fund for
Culture and Development

The 2004 Prince Claus Award goes to the Palestinian Poet Mahmoud Darwish

1 December Presentation of the 2004 Prince Claus Awards

On Wednesday 1 December, this year's Principal Prince Claus Award of €100,000 will be presented to the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish at the Royal Palace. Darwish has been granted this award for his powerful and world-famous poetry that depicts his life as an exile and his desire for his native country. The award reflects the Fund's new focus on the positive results of asylum and migration. The other nine laureates will be presented with their awards in their own countries.

Since 1997 the Prince Claus Awards have been presented annually by the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development to artists, thinkers and cultural organisations that are mainly located in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Through these awards, the Fund pays homage to the laureates for their oeuvre and their dedication to culture and social engagement. This year, the laureates have been honoured for their contributions to theatre, literature, sport, dance, cultural heritage and social involvement. For the first time, awards have been granted to laureates in Palestine, Myanmar (formerly Burma), Tajikistan and Bhutan.

Laureates whose work reflects the positive results of asylum and migration:

The Principal Award of €100,000:

Mahmoud Darwish (1942, Palestine) is one of the most important contemporary Arab poets to achieve international fame. His award has been granted for his impressive oeuvre in which he articulates his personal experiences as a poet in protracted exile in simple but powerful language. His work draws attention to the consequences of forced migration and he consistently emphasises the power of beauty in difficult circumstances. Darwish was born in 1942 in Berweh near Acre, Palestine. When the state of Israel was founded in 1948, he fled with his family to Lebanon. He later returned and worked as a journalist in Haifa. However, his political activities resulted in his deportation from Israel in 1970. He studied in Moscow and spent 26 years in exile in Beirut, Cyprus, Paris, Tunis and Amman. He returned to Ramallah in 1996. Darwish's impassioned oeuvre revolves around a longing for peace and his personal quest for identity and his native country.

The Prince Claus Fund is a platform for intercultural exchange. It works jointly with individuals and organisations that are mainly located in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, on the realisation of activities and publications reflecting a contemporary approach to the themes of culture and development. The Prince Claus Awards form a part of this policy.

Prince Claus Fund
Hoge Nieuwstraat 30
2514 EL The Hague
The Netherlands

tel +31.70.427.4303
fax +31.70.427.4277
info@princeclausfund.nl
www.princeclausfund.nl





Fonds

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Appendices:

- I: The 2004 Prince Claus Awards
- II: An Explanation of the 2004 Prince Claus Awards
- III: The Prince Claus Laureates 2003–1997

The 2004 Prince Claus Awards of € 25,000:

Jawad Al Assadi (1947, Iraq) is one of the most authoritative and innovative experimental theatre-makers in the Arab world. He has been granted this award for his dedication to freedom of cultural expression. Al Assadi believes that theatre contributes to a critical social awareness.

Tin Moe (1933, Myanmar, formerly Burma) was unofficially known as 'the national poet' long before he fled his country. He was selected for a Prince Claus Award on the basis of the quality of his work and for his efforts to maintain culture as a source of power, inspiration and identity.

Laureates who are involved with the areas of music, dance, sport, cultural heritage and social engagement:

The Bhutan Archery Federation (1970, Bhutan) is an active voluntary organisation that strives to maintain and develop traditional archery as a national sport. The organisation has been granted its Prince Claus Award for its tireless efforts on behalf of the traditional form of archery.

Ivaldo Bertazzo (1949, Brazil) is a choreographer, dance teacher and movement therapist. He has developed a series of innovative training schemes for underprivileged young people to make them aware of their creative and physical potential. He also stimulates respect for both the body and the mind, and he gives these youngsters a sense of confidence in the future.

Halet Çambel (1916, Turkey) has carried out important archaeological research involving excavations and the restoration of the famous Karatepe Aslantaş fortress in Anatolia. She has also set up the first open air museum and has worked on countless TV programs. Çambel has made an essential contribution to the preservation of Turkish cultural heritage, and it is for this reason that she has been granted a Prince Claus Award.

Omara Khan Massoudi (1948, Afghanistan) is the director of Kabul's National Museum. He managed to safeguard important parts of the Museum's collection during the Taliban regime at considerable risk to his own life. He has been granted the Prince Claus Award for his work to rehabilitate the Museum and to prevent the looting of important historical and cultural locations.

Aminata Traoré, (1947, Mali) is a social and cultural activist who emphasises the relation between economy, politics and culture. Traoré is a writer and the co-ordinator of the Forum for Another Mali. She has been selected for the award because of her militant contribution to the international debate on a different form of globalisation as based on cultural and political creativity.

Memoria Abierta (1999, Argentina) is an alliance of seven human rights organisations that work to preserve the memory of state terrorism in Argentina. This organization has been granted an award for its contribution to promoting an awareness of this past that in turn reinforces democratic culture.

Farrokh Ghasim (1948, Tajikistan) has modernised Tajiki theatre through his work as an actor and director. He blends Tajikistan's diverse cultural traditions through the performances of his theatre group Akhorun. Ghasim's award is for his engagement and artistic contribution to the theatre and literature of Tajikistan.

Carlinhos Brown and the Prince Claus Fund Journal #11

The presentation at the Royal Palace will include a performance by the Brazilian musician and 2003 Prince Claus laureate **Carlinhos Brown**. To mark the 2004 Prince Claus Awards, the Fund is publishing the **Prince Claus Fund Journal #11** on the positive results of asylum and migration. This issue will be co-published by **Biblio: A Review of Books** (India) and edited by Tabish Khair.

For information about the Prince Claus Awards (interviews/visual materials):
The Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development, tel: +31(0)70.4274303
Christine Wagner: +31(0)6.55577790, c.wagner@princeclausfund.nl
Lieke Vervoorn: +31(0)6.10713224, l.vervoorn@princeclausfund.nl
www.princeclausfund.nl