



EUROPEAN  
CULTURAL  
FOUNDATION

Princess Margriet Award for Culture

ECF  
PRINCESS  
MARGRIET  
AWARD FOR  
CULTURE

2008 - 2015

## ABOUT THE ECF PRINCESS MARGRIET AWARD FOR CULTURE

The aims of the ECF Princess Margriet Award for Culture are embodied by the laureates – all of them extraordinary and exemplary artists, thinkers or collectives.

The award is a tribute to Princess Margriet, the ECF's former President from 1984 to 2007. It was first presented in 2008, when it became clear that the recurrence and rise of xenophobia was a threat to a progressive European project. Resistance to the rising of populism linked to xenophobia is seen most eloquently in art and thought that includes the excluded and helps us all imagine and shape the future together.

ECF is an Amsterdam-based foundation, but we took this annual award to the heart of European political life, Brussels, as a clear signal of our belief that culture is central to the creation of an inclusive, democratic Europe. The making of a more inclusive Europe needs to be continually rethought by the dynamic and creative contributions of Europe's cultural sector.

Coming from broader Europe, the Award laureates have been as varied as the cultural fields in which they work, such as the performing and visual arts, literature, music,

cultural activism, critical thinking, architecture, digital and media culture. Annually ECF invites a network of leading and connected thinkers to nominate candidates across Europe. The laureates are selected by an esteemed international jury.

Brilliant, innovative, daring, compassionate – the individuals and collectives honoured by the ECF Princess Margriet Award for Culture are all these, and more. Their work has helped change the terms of and reframe the debate in Europe, offering democratic alternatives to the status quo, and shining a light on lives that are full of untapped potential. This dovetails with what we, at ECF, seek to do in our work with local cultural change-makers: to catalyse broad citizen initiatives that engage people and realize positive change through culture.

Katherine Watson  
*Director of the European Cultural Foundation*



The team of Visual Culture Research Center, Kiev. Photo ©Max Savchenko

## 2015 LAUREATES: VISUAL CULTURE RESEARCH CENTER AND ATHENS BIENNALE

Founded in Kiev in 2008, the **Visual Culture Research Center** offers a dynamic platform for collaboration between academics, artists and activists and is making an unprecedented contribution to the regional cultural debate. It connects diverse audiences from Ukraine and beyond, helping to develop a more complex understanding of how art and critical cultural thinking can equip us with skills like open-mindedness and imagination that are so vital to a progressive democratic society.



Athens Biennale co-founders Poka-Yio & Xenia Kalpaktoglou. Photo ©Spyros Staveris

2015

The **Athens Biennale** has re-imagined the model of the art biennale as a collective space for cultural debate and grassroots organising in contemporary Greece – encouraging wider civic engagement and solidarity locally and internationally. The most recent biennale in 2013 was organised in the format of an agora for contemporary times. Faced with severe funding cuts, the Athens Biennale has demonstrated the power of self-organisation and building common ground through culture.



Still from the Teodor Celakoski award film by Marta Popivoda

## 2014 LAUREATES: **TEODOR CELAKOSKI AND TEATRO VALLE OCCUPATO**

**Teodor Celakoski** is a leading cultural activist and change-maker based in Zagreb, Croatia. His work is guided by a vision of culture as an agent for transformation. The platforms he has (co)initiated include the Multimedia Institute, which develops new media forms of cultural networking, and the collaborative platform Clubture, which connects independent cultural organisations in Croatia. He also threw his weight behind Zagreb's Right to the City alliance, which engages different citizens and communities in reclaiming the public sphere.



Teatro Valle Occupato. Photo © Tiziana Tomasulo

2014

In reclaiming Italy's oldest theatre (1724) in Rome and transforming it into a space of encounter between the arts and broader society, **Teatro Valle Occupato** made a significant contribution to reinvigorating urban life in the heart of Rome. In 2011, a diverse group of performers, directors, technicians and citizens occupied the theatre, sparking the creation of one of Europe's most active cultural venues. In constructing and defending culture as a commons, this community has inspired wider processes of grassroots urban democratisation across Europe and beyond.



Yoel Gamzou. Photo © Angel Sanchez, El Pais

## 2013 LAUREATES: YOEL GAMZOU AND DAN & LIA PERJOVSCHI

Artistic director and principal conductor of the International Mahler Orchestra and 1st Kapellmeister and vice music director of the Staatstheater Kassel, **Yoel Gamzou** was selected for his exceptional talent and energy in inspiring different generations of musicians and diverse audiences across Europe. Gamzou's artistic direction of the International Mahler Orchestra is just one of many examples of how he is re-thinking classical music and in doing so, challenging the conventional reception of the classical music genre.





Lia & Dan Perjovschi. Photo © Angel Sanchez, El País

2013

Visual artist couple **Lia & Dan Perjovschi** from Romania were chosen for the active role their art has played in Romanian culture and community building since the late 1980s, as well as its wider European relevance and impact. While Lia Perjovschi gained prominence for her time-based performance works and setting up the Contemporary Art Archive/Center for Art Analysis, Dan Perjovschi translates social, cultural and political life into temporary drawings – a powerful and poetic form of graffiti drawn onto the walls of contemporary art spaces all over the world.



Still from the John Akomfrah award film by David Lawson & Lina Gopaul

## 2012 LAUREATES: JOHN AKOMFRAH AND CHARLES ESCHE

Living and working in London, Ghanaian-born artist and activist **John Akomfrah** makes films that pose intriguing questions about culture, migration, integration and intercultural exchange. Akomfrah's longstanding body of work is a profound and multi-layered creation, championing voices that are often hidden from the mainstream discourse of European pasts. Since 1998, Akomfrah has been Director of the film and television production companies Smoking Dogs Films (London) and Creation Rebel Films (Accra). One of his most recent films is *The Stuart Hall Project* (2013).



Still from the Charles Esche award film by Stijn van der Loo

2012

Curator, writer and director of the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, **Charles Esche** was chosen for the span of his curatorial oeuvre and his exceptional leadership in opening up centres and museums of art as public spaces that show us the value of art in engaging with the contemporary world. His impressive record of discursive programming (exhibitions, debates, symposia) has instigated a conversation between art and society, a conversation that imagines how citizens can live and enact a future global society together.



Still from the Šejla Kamerić award film by Timur Makarevic

## 2011 LAUREATES: ŠEJLA KAMERIĆ AND KUTLUĞ ATAMAN

The work of Sarajevo born artist and film maker **Šejla Kamerić** is able to connect intimate, individual perspectives to a wider social context and urgency. In her films, photography, sculptural works and public installations she shows us that deeply personal realities are part and parcel of a diverse society. Her body of work compels us to imagine life differently in the face of prejudice.



Still from the Kutluğ Ataman award film by Meral Uslu

2011

Artist and film maker **Kutluğ Ataman** portrays the diversity of individual belief systems, cultures and social backgrounds that follow the biographical, historical and contemporary routes of different lives, with all their idiosyncrasies and contradictions. Ataman's work defies conventional subject categories, demonstrating that a new aesthetic and understanding can emerge from the transformative power of storytelling.



Borka Pavićević. Photo © Mich Van Den Berghe

## 2010 LAUREATES: BORKA PAVIĆEVIĆ AND STEFAN KAEGI

A theatre-maker and dramaturge, **Borka Pavićević** is also a tireless cultural activist working across the region of former Yugoslavia. She has devoted her career to all art forms, and particularly theatre as a podium for public debate and expression that acts against intolerance and cultural homogenisation. This all comes together in her work as director of Belgrade's Centre for Cultural Decontamination which, in spite of truly difficult conditions, continues to create a valuable space that enables creative minds to articulate their responses to the events around them.



Stefan Kaegi. Photo © Toni Suter

2010

Living in Berlin and working in cities around the world, Swiss-born **Stefan Kaegi** has developed a documentary form of theatre that explores the unseen networks between different cultures, cities, countries and continents, revealing the hidden lives of globalisation. He investigates the realities and unexpected situations of everyday life beyond the headlines and behind the statistics. Kaegi chose to share his prize with two of his artistic collaborators, Juliane Männel and Jörg Karrenbauer – the latter for his work on *Cargo Sofia-X*, which explores how the transport of goods also reveals stories and places that cannot be seen on a map.



Stuart Hall. Photo © Maarten van Haaff

## 2008 LAUREATES: STUART HALL AND JÉRÔME BEL & PICHET KLUNCHUN

One of Europe's most radical intellectuals, professor **Stuart Hall** was praised by the jury as a giant in the field of cultural studies whose hugely influential work has helped to make sense of our multifarious, multicultural society. Honouring Hall was a gesture of recognition for his visionary contribution to a constructive understanding of cultural diversity and an acknowledgement of his continued influence on European intellectuals and artists.





Jérôme Bel & Pichet Klunchun. Photo © Maarten van Haaff

2008

The jury selected **Jérôme Bel** and **Pichet Klunchun** for their collaborative artistic performance called *Pichet Klunchun and myself* – a thoughtful, humorous dialogue between a French contemporary choreographer (Bel) and a traditional Thai dancer (Klunchun). The piece consisted of a staged conversation between these two professional dancer-choreographers with very little in common. Bel and Klunchun turned a dialogue based on cultural difference into a moving and often hilarious encounter that questioned what is usually taken for granted when two cultures meet.



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