

Press release

Amsterdam 2 September 2009

Prince Claus Fund for
Culture and Development

Prince Claus Awards 2009 Announced

Colombian architect Simón Vélez to receive Principal Prince Claus Award of € 100.000,-

The Principal Prince Claus Award of € 100,000 goes to Colombian architect Simón Vélez. The Awards ceremony will take place on 16 December 2009 at the Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ in Amsterdam. In addition, ten other laureates will receive awards of € 25,000 each in the Dutch Embassies in the countries where they live in 2010. The Prince Claus Awards have been given out every year since 1997 to artists, intellectuals and cultural organisations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Culture and Nature

Through its 2009 Awards Programme, the Prince Claus Fund seeks to highlight and celebrate artists, cultural networks and organisations that make a significant contribution in the interaction between Culture and Nature and introduce new ideas and approaches to environmental issues.

Simón Vélez (b. 1949, Manizales, Colombia)

Simón Vélez's aesthetic and technical innovations in bamboo have enhanced its construction potential and challenged mainstream architectural trends. After completing his studies at Universidad de los Andes, Bogota, Vélez moved away from the predominant international stream to focus on indigenous architectural practices. He invented a new method to build foundations and roofs, which transformed one of the world's oldest building materials, namely bamboo, into a modern resource that meets the strictest international construction regulations and can even outperform steel. Vélez has successfully synthesised natural design, avant-garde technology and ecological processes. In the book, *Grow Your Own House*, and in his seminars and workshops he demonstrates that bamboo is an efficient and aesthetic building material, with profound implications for social development and the environment. Its cultivation and processing are ecologically sound and sustainable, and bamboo is one of the plants which most efficiently absorbs carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Simón Vélez is internationally recognised and has designed buildings in the United States, Germany, France, Brazil, Mexico, Jamaica, Panama, Ecuador, India and China, but is still very active in his home country Colombia. For his valuable contribution to architectural practices and sustainability, Simón Vélez receives the Principal Prince Claus Award. The award also recognises his work in integrating sustainable design practices and social development, and his focus on the relationship between culture and nature.

The Prince Claus Fund establishes active co-operations with partners globally in the field of culture and development. It provides immediate rescue as well as support to sustainable cultural processes and takes initiatives to raise awareness of the importance of culture in relationship to development. This is in recognition of what Prince Claus believed, that one cannot develop people, but that people develop themselves. The Prince Claus Fund is based in Amsterdam and is supported by the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation and the Dutch Postal Code Lottery.

Herengracht 603
1017 CE Amsterdam
The Netherlands

t +31.20.344.91.60
f +31.20.344.91.66
info@princeclausfund.nl
www.princeclausfund.org



Simón Vélez, 2009
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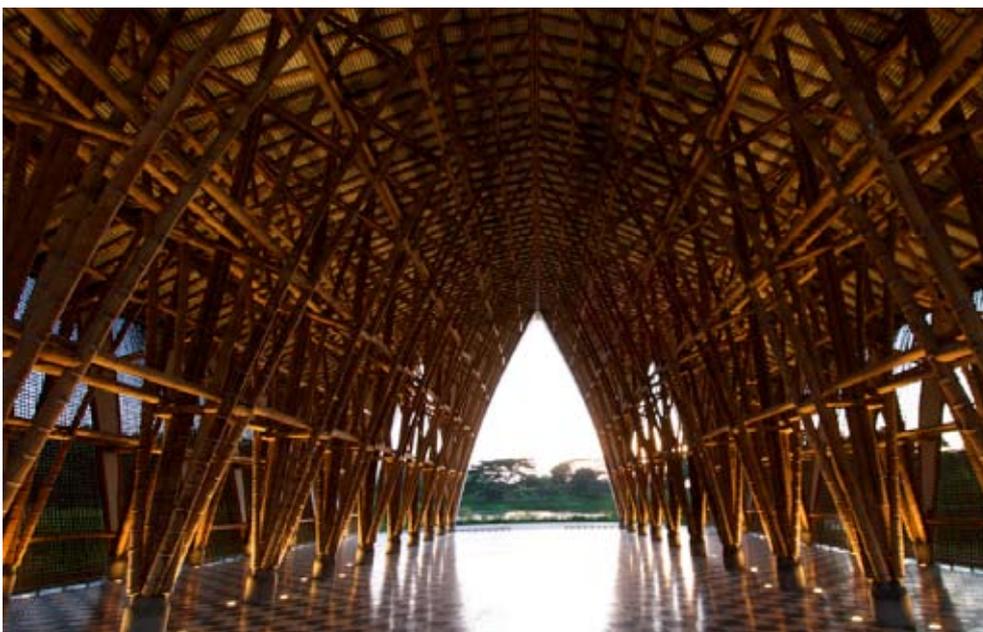


Fonds

Prince Claus Fund for
Culture and Development



Temporary Catholic Cathedral, Pereira, Colombia (built in 2004, demolished in 2005)
© Simón Vélez



Church without religion, Cartagena, Colombia (still in construction)
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The ten other laureates (each receive a grant of € 25.000,-)

Visual Arts

El Anatsui (b. 1944, Anyako, Ghana, living in Nigeria)
Doual'art (founded 1991, Douala, Cameroon)
Liang Shaoji (b. 1945, Shanghai, China)
Jivya Soma Mashe (b. 1934, Dhamangaon, Maharashtra, India)

Photography & Film

Sammy Baloji (b. 1978, Lubumbashi, DR Congo)
Santu Mofokeng (b. 1956, Johannesburg, South Africa)

Collective Memories & Journalism

Kanak Mani Dixit (b. 1956, Lalitpur, Nepal)
Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamérica (founded 1987,
Managua, Nicaragua)
Desiderio Navarro (b. 1948, Camagüey, Cuba)
Gaston Acurio (b. 1967, Lima, Peru)

For the Jury report, additional information and visual material on the 2009 Prince Claus Awards please see the press section of our website www.princeclausfund.org/press

To schedule interviews or for additional information, please contact:
Mr Sebas van der Sangen, s.vandersangen@princeclausfund.nl +31 (0)20.344.91.60, mob +31 (0)6.196.383.46



Crosswater Ecolodge, Nankun Mountains, China