

Pakistan's Naiza Khan wins 2013 Prince Claus Award



By Brittney

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Cassandra Naji, Naiza Khan, Prince Klaus Award

Visual artist Naiza Khan is honoured for her “complex and nuanced” art works.

Pakistan's Naiza Khan, a visual artist known for her meditations on gender and society, has been selected as one of the eleven 2013 Prince Claus award winners. The annual award, which honours “individuals or organisations whose cultural actions have a positive impact on their societies,” was announced on 6 September in Amsterdam.

 Nazia Khan making one of her works, which offer a "complex and nuanced" view of Pakistani society.

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[Naiza Khan](#) is the only Asian visual artist, and one of only three women, among the eleven 2013 [Prince Claus Award](#) winners, or 'laureates', as they are known. Born in Pakistan, Khan studied in the United Kingdom before returning to her home country to create art which, according to the Prince Claus website, is "[not afraid of dealing with contentious subjects](#)."

Naiza Khan is honoured for her strong body of work which offers complex, nuanced perspectives on Pakistani society today; for her courage in raising public awareness on controversial social and political issues; for being a role model for women artists in a male-dominated context; and for her significant contribution to the development of arts and culture in Pakistan and the region.

 Naiza Khan, 'Henna Hands', 2003, site specific project, henna pigment on wall.

Naiza Khan, 'Henna Hands', 2003, site specific project, henna pigment on wall.

Naiza Khan: Written on the (female) body

Khan's works, which have been exhibited internationally in events such as the [Manifesta European Biennial of Contemporary Art](#) (2010), often focus on the female body and its place within the social order. Her 2003 work *Henna Hands* saw Khan imprint life-size female figures on the walls of public areas in Pakistan's second city of Karachi; "The Skin She Wears", a 2008 exhibition, used steel sculpture to examine "contradictions around the sensuality and control of the female body", in the words of Prince Claus Award organisers.

Khan has also commented upon urbanism and displacement through works such as *Homage* (2009), a video piece in which she used the rubble of a demolished school to examine forced evictions and unjust social hierarchies. Her painting series *Karachi Elegies* (2013) delves into the realities of a life disrupted by political violence and natural disaster.

In 2003, Khan founded the [Vasl Artists' Collective](#), a Pakistan-based organisation supporting artists through residencies, dialogue and collaborations within a regional network.

[Click here to watch an interview with Naiza Khan on YouTube.com](#)

Prince Claus Awards

Founded in 1996, the Prince Claus Fund supports freedom of cultural expression in developing countries through its annual Awards. Honouring eleven individuals or groups working in cultural development every year, the Award focuses on those who not only produce successful art but are also "role models and are an important source of inspiration for all those around them."

The Principal Prince Claus Award 2013 was won by Egyptian poet Ahmed Fouad Negm, who will take home prize money of EUR 100,000. The ten other winners, including Khan, are awarded EUR 25,000 each.

The 2013 winners are:

- [Ahmed Fouad Negm](#), poet (Egypt)
- [Zanele Muholi](#), photographer and visual activist (South Africa)
- [Carla Fernandez](#), fashion designer (Mexico)
- [Alejandro Zambra](#), writer (Chile)

- [Teater Garasi](#), performing arts collective (Indonesia)
- Orquesta de Instrumentos Recicladados Cateura, youth orchestra (Paraguay)
- [Oscar Muñoz](#), visual artist (Colombia)
- [Idrissou Mora-Kpaï](#), documentary filmmaker (Benin)
- [Lu Guang](#), photographer (China)
- Naiza Khan, visual artist (Pakistan)
- [Christopher Cozier](#), visual artist & cultural activator (Trinidad and Tobago)

Cassandra Naji

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