

Kenya artist wins 2012 Prince Claus Prize

The annual Prince Claus Prize, named after the late husband of Dutch Queen Beatrix, is awarded to people who make a difference in terms of culture or development. One of the winners of the 2012 prize has been awarded to Kenyan photojournalist turned graffiti artist, Boniface Mwangi.



Boniface Mwangi

Mwangi is an award-winning Kenyan photojournalist who has made a name for his social-political activism under the theme, 'Kenya Ni Kwetu' (Kenya is our Home). He is based in Nairobi and strives to enable a patriotic citizens' movement to take bold and effective actions in building a new Kenya. He has become popular for his images on the post-election violence that hit Kenya in 2007-2008.

He is also the founder of Picha Mtaani, a youth-led peace initiative that primarily seeks to create space for young people to reconcile and become agents of reconciliation to their respective communities.

Before turning to graffiti, Mwangi was a photographer. During the violence in the run-up to the 2007 election in Kenya, his pictures were published worldwide, however his photos were censored in Kenya. The violence left him so disillusioned with his country's politicians that he decided to put down his camera and take up graffiti activism.

Together with nine other artists, filmmakers and organisations, Mwangi received the €25 000 award. The Principal Prince Claus Prize was awarded to an Argentina publishing house, Eloísa Cartonera, which publishes handmade books using recycled material.