



ECF ROUTES PRINCESS MARGRIET AWARD, 4th edition PRESS RELEASE

Amsterdam, 13 October 2011

Laureates John Akomfrah and Charles Esche announced!

The European Cultural Foundation is pleased to announce that the independent Award Jury have unanimously agreed to offer film-maker John Akomfrah and museum director and curator Charles Esche the 4th Routes Princess Margriet Award of 25.000 euros each. John Akomfrah was chosen for his ground-breaking film oeuvre woven from perspectives often hidden from the accepted narratives of European history; Charles Esche for his exceptional leadership in rethinking centres and museums of contemporary art as public spaces that show us the power and value of art in engaging with the contemporary world.

The Award laureates were selected from a list of 90 nominations of internationally renowned cultural thinkers and practitioners, nominated by network of eminent cultural actors from all over Europe.

The Jury members of the 4th edition ECF Routes Award are: chair person *Hilary Carty*, former Director, Cultural Leadership Programme, United Kingdom; *Sudeep Dasgupta*, Associate Professor, Department of Media & Culture, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands, *Jan Dibbets*, artist, Netherlands; *Maria Lind*, curator and director Tensta Konsthall, Sweden; *Els van der Plas*, Director Premisela, Dutch Platform for Design and Fashion, Netherlands.

Both laureates will be presented the Award by HRH Princess Margriet of the Netherlands during a ceremony dedicated to them and their work in Brussels on 19 March 2012. To broaden the public exposure and discussion around the laureates work, the ECF is also developing a programme which involves screenings and talks to take place in Brussels and the Netherlands in the months following the ceremony.

ECF Routes Princess Margriet Award

The ECF Routes Princess Margriet Award is a tribute to HRH Princess Margriet of the Netherlands, president of ECF from 1983-2007. By giving this Award ECF wishes to enhance the unique role of the arts in challenging cultural divisions in Europe and to show how cultural change-makers can shift our perceptions, taking us beyond our comfort zones and along new 'routes'. The Routes Award is an initiative of the ECF in cooperation with the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the generous support of the Rabobank Foundation.

European Cultural Foundation (ECF)

The ECF is an independent foundation based in the Netherlands, presided over by HRH Princess Laurentien, that has been operating across Europe since 1954. ECF gives Europe's many and diverse voices the chance to tell their stories and be heard. With partners in more than 50 countries, our programmes support young media-makers and cultural actors of change throughout wider Europe, our grants support creativity across borders, and our advocacy puts culture firmly on the agenda.

The ECF is supported financially by BankGiro Loterij, De Lotto and De Nationale Instant Loterij via the Prins Bernhard Cultural Fund. For more information on the ECF, go to www.eurocult.org

ECF ROUTES PRINCESS MARGRIET AWARD, 4th edition JURY STATEMENTS

JOHN AKOMFRAH

Born Accra, Ghana (1957), lives and works in London
Film-maker, cultural activist

John Akomfrah's films are at once poetic and essayistic - creative dialogues that pose intriguing questions about culture, migration, integration and intercultural exchange. He explores both urban and rural landscapes, using diverse perspectives to challenge accepted narratives of history and give prominence to its unheralded changemakers. The jury lauded the development of Akomfrah's oeuvre from his earliest film the ground-breaking *Handsworth Songs* (1986) to his latest film, *Nine Muses* (2010), an artistic meditation on migration, myth and memory which creatively weaves together layers of original footage, archival clips, sound and poetry. In its entirety, Akomfrah's longstanding body of work is a profound and multi-layered creation championing voices often hidden from the mainstream discourse of European pasts.

CHARLES ESCHE

Born Harrogate, England (1962), lives and works in Eindhoven and Edinburgh
Museum director, curator, writer

The jury chose Charles Esche, director of the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, for the span of his curatorial oeuvre in which he has opened up the museum as a public space of active engagement that reaches out to both local and international communities. His impressive record of challenging programming (exhibitions, debates, symposia), has developed a conversation between art and society, a conversation which imagines how individual citizens can live and enact a future society together. Since the 90s, Esche has, together with a roster of artists and with the teams of Tramway (Glasgow), Rooseum (Malmö) and the Van Abbemuseum explored the many potential functions of contemporary art centres and museums as important agents in and of the public sphere. At a time of increased entertainment of culture and decreased access to public spaces, Esche's work as a curator and leader of institutions is of utmost value. His ability to create meaningful and urgent debates within and beyond contemporary art is followed by many practitioners around the world and acts as a powerful inspiration.

For all enquiries, please contact:

Wietske Maas

Routes Award coordination and event curator

European Cultural Foundation

T: +31 (0)20 573 3868

M: +31 (06) 2529 0443

E: wmaas@eurocult.org