

A New Constellation of Arab Innovators Win 15th Edition of Al Owais Cultural Awards (2016-2017)

The Sultan Bin Ali Al Owais Cultural Foundation has announced the winners of the 15th edition of Al Owais Cultural Awards (2016-2017). The winners are: Shawqi Bazi', Huda Barakat, Abdel Khaliq Al Rikabi, Hammadi Sammoud and George Qirm.

According to a press release by His Excellency Abdul Hamid Ahmed, Secretary General of the Sultan Bin Ali Al Owais Cultural Foundation, the winners were selected by the Award's jury committee from among 1,662 candidates who had been nominated for the current edition of the Award. "They were granted the awards in recognition of the depth and authenticity of their experience, their force of expression and their contribution to contemporary Arab culture," he said.

Moreover, HE Abdul Hamid Ahmed stated that the poet Shawqi Bazi' has been granted the Poetry Award for his authentic poetic experience which revolves around three pivotal themes; the homeland, women, and time. "He skillfully works on various forms of traditions that have been passed down through the generations and merges them with modern aesthetic patterns, which underline their human depth and creative imagination," he explained.

Meanwhile, the "Short Story, Novel and Drama" Award was jointly won by Huda Barakat and Abdel Khaliq Al Rikabi in recognition of the exquisite narrative techniques they employ in their creative texts and their ability to create narratives that are responsive to the changes of reality and which reflect the deepest thoughts and feelings of the human self.

The works of Huda Barakat tackle themes of bereavement, loss and violence as she searches for meaning amidst the chaos around her. She writes in a highly expressive language about characters and history and her novels are characterized by autobiographical and narrative styles of writing.

On the other hand, Abdel Khaliq Al Rikabi's writings present an eclectic mix of philosophy, sculpture, music, plastic art and even audio-visual texts. His wide knowledge has enabled him to produce sophisticated narratives that work on various symbolic levels and has also assisted him in weaving intricate plots and in developing new themes.

Furthermore, HE Abdul Hamid Ahmed added that the "Literary Studies and Criticism" Award was granted to Dr. Hammadi Sammoud in recognition of his contribution to the enrichment of the field of contemporary Arabic criticism, as he has developed new ideas and approaches in Arabic Eloquence and Rhetoric. "He is one of very few scholars whose writings are characterized by the highest degree of depth and accuracy and he always

succeeds in tracing great findings of human knowledge to their roots in Arab culture," HE Abdul Hamid Ahmed explained.

Meanwhile, the "Humanities and Future Studies Award" went to Dr. George Qirm, for the comprehensive scope of his writings and deep analysis of issues and his realistic approach to tackling economic problems and concerns. "He provides us with forecasts and scenarios of the future that question many givens as he avidly monitors regional and international developments and transformations," HE Abdul Hamid Ahmed said.

In addition, the Secretary General of the Sultan Bin Ali Al Owais Cultural Foundation said that the total number of candidates nominated for the different categories of the prize was 1,662 nominees, and were grouped as follows:

Poetry Award: 293 candidates

Short Story, Novel and Drama: 401 candidates

Literary Studies and Criticism: 263 candidates

Humanities and Future Studies: 468 candidates

"We have also received 237 nominations for the Cultural and Scientific Achievement Award, which is granted by the Foundation's Board of Trustees, and the winner will be announced at a later date," HE Abdul Hamid Ahmed said.

The Foundation's Secretary General also congratulated all the winners for this edition of Al Owais Cultural Awards, wished them more success and hoped that their contributions to Arab culture will continue. In conclusion he announced that the Award Distribution Ceremony will be taking place in mid-March, 2018.