

Sheikh Zayed Book Award Ninth Session Winners Announced

Palestinian Novel “*The fools of Bethlehem*” named winning title in
Literature

Abu Dhabi, April 06, 2015 – The Sheikh Zayed Book Award announced today the four winners in its 9th session (2014/2015);

The ‘Literature’ Award went to Osama Alaysa from Palestine for his novel “Majaneen bait lahem” (The fools of Bethlehem), while Hanawa Haruo from Japan was named winner of the ‘Translation’ Award for his Naguib Mahfouz’s Cairo Trilogy (Palace Walk, Palace of Desire and Sugar Street) translated to Japanese. The ‘Arab Culture in Other Languages’ Award went to Sugita Hideaki from Japan as well, for his book “Arabian-Naito to Nihon-Jin” (The Arabian Nights and the Japanese), whereas The Arab Scientific Publishers Inc. from Lebanon won ‘Publishing and Technology’ Award.

From his side, Dr. Ali Bin Tamim, Secretary General of Sheikh Zayed Book Award, congratulated the winners of all categories for their achievement, stressing that their work deserve this grand recognition, specially that the Sheikh Zayed Book Award thrives to live up to the name it holds and honors in memory of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, and its mission to celebrate outstanding writers, intellectuals, publishers as well as young talents whose writings and translations of humanities have scholarly and objectively enriched Arab cultural, literary and social life.

Bin Tamim explained that the winners’ selection came after extensive discussions between the Awards’s Board of Trustees and the Scientific Committee of the results submitted by the judging panels across the Award’s nine Categories. The judges independently evaluated submitted works from over 31 countries worldwide in this year’s session, which were translated in a longlist and a shortlist of contenders towards the selection of the winning titles.

Bin Tamim also expressed his gratitude to members of the Board of Trustees, Scientific Committee, the judging panels and reading panels for their efforts and dedication. He also thanked universities and cultural entities for their nominations, and acknowledged the hard work put forth by the nominees this year.

2015 Sheikh Zayed Book Award Winners

First: The ‘Literature’ Award

Majaneen bait lahem (*The fools of Bethlehem*) a novel by Osama Alaysa from Palestine, published by Nofal- Hachette Antoine (2013).

The novel emerges as a unique literary creation that narrates the history of the place, traces the changes it went through by using the motif of madness in a way that reflects an entire intellectual period in the Arab World. The work finds inspiration in the traditional narrative forms as such as those of the Arabian Nights and makes use of the more recent narrative techniques, perceptively linking history and reportage, and mixing realistic presentation with magical realism. The wealth of character types and of subsidiary tales harmonizes beautifully with the main narrative line.

Second: 'Translation' Award

Naguib Mahfouz's Cairo Trilogy (Palace Walk, Palace of Desire and Sugar Street) translated to Japanese language from Arabic by Hanawa Haruo from Japan, and published by Kokusho Kankokai (2013)

The translation of Naguib Mahfouz' Cairo Trilogy into Japanese by the researcher constitutes an achievement that transcends the linguistic dimension, and constitutes a cultural dialogue between the Arab and the Japanese worlds through what the translation reveals about the social history of Egypt and the transformations that occurred in the decades between the 1920s and the 1950s.

Third: 'Arab Culture in Other Languages' Award

Arabian-Naito to Nihon-Jin (The Arabian Nights and the Japanese) by Sugita Hideaki from Japan, published by Iwanami Shoten (2012)

The book constitutes a turning point in the development of the way the Japanese, unshackled by Western Orientalist attitudes, viewed Arab culture. It traces the influence of the Arabian Nights on all aspects of modern Japanese culture, starting with the reforms of the enlightened Meiji Era (1868-1912) until the present time, on Japanese children's literature, and on Japanese theatre, fiction, cinema, travel literature, translation, comparative literature, and other fields of knowledge in Japan.

Fourth: 'Publishing and Technology' Award

Arab Scientific Publishers Inc. from Lebanon

The publishing house continued, ever since it was established thirty years ago, to work within the framework of a cultural project, which is keen on publishing scientific, intellectual, and creative works contributing to the movement of enlightenment, and aiming at raising Arab consciousness by this kind of publishing. The publishing house continued to publish serious and significant works targeting all age groups, and showed keen interest in translating from the modern languages, and in participating in book fairs held in Arab foreign countries.

The Board of Trustees announced withholding four awards in total this year; "Literary and Art Criticism", "Young Author", "Contribution to the Development of Nations" in addition to "Children's Literature" as nominations in these categories did not meet the Award's standards for winning.

The Sheikh Zayed Book Award's first installment was in 2007, intended to promote scholarship and creativity in Arab culture. It carries cash prizes totaling Dhs7 million - with Dh750, 000 per winner (equivalent to around USD 200,000) in all eight categories, and 1 million dirhams for the winner of the "Cultural Personality of the Year". The winners also receive a certificate of merit and a Gold Medal. The Awards Presentation Ceremony will take place in Abu Dhabi in May 2015 during the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair.

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Notes to the Editor

The foundation of the Award was laid out in memory of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, ruler of Abu Dhabi and President of UAE for more than 30 years, and his pioneering role in national unity and the country's development. It is presented every year to outstanding writers, intellectuals, publishers as well as young talents whose writings and translations of humanities have scholarly and objectively enriched Arab cultural, literary and social life.

The Sheikh Zayed Book award is an independent cultural award administered by Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority, with a total monetary value of seven million dirhams.

Award Objectives

1. Honor intellectuals, researchers, and writers, who have made significant contributions in literature, social sciences and the culture and knowledge of modern age
2. Honor prominent figures who have outstanding achievements at a regional and international level, and informing readers about them in the context of creativity and innovative thought
3. Appreciate the immense cultural role of translators who enrich culture, promote dialogue between civilizations, and bring nations together.
4. Encourage creativity of youth, and motivate them to research, and create a spirit of positive competition in this vital sector that represents the nation's present and future.
5. Honor institutions, research centers, Arab and international publishing houses that represent an inventive cultural project that caters for creativity, and promote the human values of dialogue and tolerance.
6. Encourage children and adolescent's literature, which seeks to develop this important segment of society, and their aesthetic taste, and constructs their cultural identity on the foundation of creative interaction between the past and present.

Categories

The award recognizes cultural achievement across one of the broadest and most diverse areas of any cultural awards internationally, including:

- **Contribution to the Development of Nations**
Consists of books in the fields of economics, sociology and law which contribute to a nation's advancement, whether the study is a theoretic review or documentation of practice.
- **Children's Literature [including adolescents books]**
Covers literary, scientific and cultural books addressing various children's groups and adolescents, whether it is fictional stories or simplified factual historical and scientific narratives, put in an artistic layout.
- **Young Author**
Recognizes works in science, literature, culture, fine arts and humanities, in addition to scientific theses that are published, produced by authors younger than 40 years
- **Translation**
Recognizes translated works, either to or from Arabic, provided it maintains loyalty to original source, linguistic accuracy, and maintaining the context.
- **Literature**
Represents works across various categories of literature including poetry, short stories, novels, biographies, theatrical plays and other types of arts
- **Literary and Art Criticism**
Covers Critique of art, cinema, and music, studies of image, architecture, sculpture, historical ruins, folkloric arts, and history of literature and theories.
- **Arabic Culture in Other Languages**

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Recognizes written works produced in languages other than the Arabic, tackling Arab civilization and culture, including humanities, fine arts, literature (novels, shorts stories, poems) and history.

- **Publishing and Technology**
The award includes publishers, distributors, research institutions and cultural institutions that promote culture through various forms of digital, visual and audio processes.
- **Cultural Personality of the Year (Open to individuals and organizations)**
Honors a prominent Arab or international figure (or organization) who has contributed to the advancement of the Arabic culture, embodies through his/her work tolerance and promotes peaceful coexistence.

Selection and Judging Process

- The award is supervised by a Board of Trustees and an Scientific Committee that manage a rigorous award selection process
- Every year, the Scientific Committee appoints a group of distinguished regional and international literary figures [judges] who serve on nine separate selection committees, one for each award category.
- There are 3 – 5 selection committee members [judges] per category, each of whom remain anonymous to maintain the independence and integrity of the selection process
- Each committee reviews all nominated works and submits its selections to the Scientific Committee.
- Scientific Committee reviews and approves the panel's suggestions, which are then officially endorsed by Board of Trustees, presided over by Sheikh Sultan Bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan, president of the Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority.
- The winners are announced ahead of the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair, culminating in a prestigious tribute ceremony on during March of every year.

Award's Address

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