

## Press Release

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**Winners of *ars viva* 2020**



Kulturkreis  
der deutschen  
Wirtschaft

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## Karimah Ashadu | Thibaut Henz | Cemile Sahin Winners of *ars viva* 2020

**Berlin. The winners of the *ars viva* 2020 prize for Visual Arts have been announced: The Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft im BDI e. V. (Association of Arts and Culture of the German Economy at the Federation of German Industries e. V.) awards this year's prize to Karimah Ashadu (\*1985), Thibaut Henz (\*1988), and Cemile Sahin (\*1990).**

Since 1953 the Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft has awarded the *ars viva* prize to outstanding young artists based in Germany. The focus is on positions that make it possible to recognize an autonomous stylistic idiom and an awareness of contemporary cultural and social questions. This year's award includes exhibitions at the Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig and the Kunstverein in Hamburg as well as an artist residency on Fogo Island (Canada). Each artist receives a 5,000 Euro stipend. In addition, the Kulturkreis will produce a bilingual catalogue published by Kerber Verlag. The jury selected this year's awardees from 49 nominated artists under the age of 35.

**Karimah Ashadu's** video works examine the topic of labour. The protagonists of her films are often shown within the socioeconomic context of Nigeria: workers in a sawmill on the Lagos State Lagoon, farmers extracting palm oil, or boxers in Nigeria's slums. Her films frequently focus on male-dominated structures that have developed independently and in parallel to the political conditions in the country. In her works, the artist weaves documentary elements with fiction and draws on unconventional technical means to challenge the perception of the viewer.

In **Thibaut Henz's** photographs, unusual perspectives and details often take centre stage. Snapshots and portraits are arranged into series featuring strong contrasting colours and diverse image formats. Surprising image combinations emerge as a result. In his exhibitions, Henz frequently assembles these series into displays that extend across the wall, often even stretching around the corners. His image compositions play with new aesthetics and viewing habits in the digital era.

The use of word and image plays a crucial role in **Cemile Sahin's** artistic practice. In her cinematic work, for example, she stages film-noir-style crime stories that leave the question of the perpetrator unanswered. The plot is formed through contradictory accounts narrated by the film's actors, each of whom claims to have committed the murder. These narratives are interwoven with close-ups of expressive faces and depictions of different actions that occur simultaneously. Her work also includes collages of text and image as well as lecture performances. In addition, she also writes novels.

The jury, chaired by Ulrich Sauerwein, consisted of members of the Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft's Committee for Visual Arts along with cooperating partners Julia Schäfer (Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig), Bettina Steinbrügge (Kunstverein in Hamburg), Zita Cobb, Willem de Rooij and Nicolaus Schafhausen (Fogo Island Arts), and Dr Franziska Nentwig and Mathilda Legemah (Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft). Dr Stephanie Rosenthal (Gropius Bau) served as an adviser.

The exhibition of this year's *ars viva* prize winners will open on October 12, 2019 at Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig. A second iteration will take place at Kunstverein in Hamburg.

### **Artist Biographies:**

Karimah Ashadu, born 1985 in London, studied Fine Art and History of Art and Architecture at the University of Reading School of Arts in Berkshire, UK. She later completed her master's in Spatial Design at Chelsea College of Art and Design in London. From 2014 to 2016 she was a fellow at De Ateliers in Amsterdam. She has received prizes at the Ann Arbor Film Festival, Euro Video, and Split Film Festival and is the winner of the 2018-20 Edith Breckwoldt Fellowship at Künstlerhaus FRISE, Hamburg. She is a nominee for the Han Nefkens Foundation-Arco Madrid Video Art Production Award 2019.

Thibaut Henz, born 1988 in Liège, Belgium, studied Visual Communication and Architecture at Bauhaus University in Weimar. His work has been exhibited at institutions including Kunsthalle Wien, Kulturfabrik Apolda, and Kunsthaus Erfurt. He has published in "Der Greif", the "Bauhaus Journal 2017-2018", and in the catalogue "Grand Ouvert – Bauhaus Photography at its finest".

Cemile Sahin was born 1990 in Wiesbaden. She studied Fine Art at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London and is a master's student at Berlin University of the Arts. She has exhibited at Cumberlandschen Galerie, Galerie Pankow, and Berlin University of the Arts. Her texts have been published in Zeit Online, Korbinian Verlag, and Das Wetter magazine. She is the winner of a 2019-20 scholarship from the Akademie der Künste Berlin. Her novel "TAXI" (working title) will be published by Korbinian Verlag in October 2019.

Press photos and further information are available at: <https://www.kulturkreis.eu/presse/>

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