

ARTS AND CULTURE



Donatien Freminot



Tony Joubert - aka Raspyek (left)



Johanna Didon (right)



Looking back at past Arts Awards

As the momentum is set for the upcoming Arts Awards 2025, let's take a pause and in retrospect contemplate on our past achievers or awardees. It is noteworthy to remember that the first Arts Awards was held in the year 1991 and the second one in 2006. After a long pause it was revived in 2017. Then it followed with another one in 2019. This year's Arts Awards will take place on July 26 at the ICCS in Victoria and will be broadcasted live on SBC. The aim of such awards is to acknowledge individuals who have made significant contribution and impact in their field of expertise, and here we are addressing all genres of different art forms from films to theatre production, traditional and cultural development champions.

Let's take a look at the past awardees

The event that took place at the ICCS in Victoria was one that many still remember until today. Especially that it was the first time to have such award here locally. In a glamorous atmosphere so was the stage set for the laureates to receive their awards. Let's have a look at the awardees for 2017 and 2019 within their categories.

For male Life Achievement Award we had John Wirtz as the winner and for the female Life Achievement Award, we had Marie-Therese Choppy. Mr Wirtz is a renowned local musician with popular song like 'Bal dan Penpen' and 'Lavi'. Whereas Mrs Choppy is a writer and a pioneer in promoting the Creole language. In 2019 for the same category, the winners were Egbert Marday – an artist, and Marie-Madelaine Matombe – a traditional promoter. Mr Marday is also the designer of the coveted trophies that winners take home.

When it came to Young Promising Talent, in 2017 Isham Rath snatched the prize in front of other talented peers. However, in 2019 he was not able to retain his title as this time around Aaron Jean was the jurist's favourite. Both of them are artists with their own albums who have known a great amount of popularity among the islanders.

If we move on the Music category, for 2017, it was Jean-Marc Volcy who won the trophy. A very prominent singer of the 'sega' rhythm here in the Seychelles who have represented the country on numerous international scenes. In 2019, for the same category, we saw Patrick Victor as the winner. Mr Victor is an old-time vedette when it comes to the local music industry. A composer and creator who never seems to stop mesmerizing the population with his romantic ballads.

For the Tradition category, the prize was won by Jessie Freminot in 2017 and Fernande Ladouce in 2019. Mrs Freminot, who hails from the Beau Vallon district, has been an advocate of the Creole tradition for all her life. Fernande Ladouce on the other hand won the award in the year 2019 for the same category.

Let's move on to the other categories

Literature was another category with some interesting finalists. In 2017, it was Mrs Maggie Faure Vidot who had the honour of lifting the trophy for this category. Mrs Vidot is a writer and poet who produces work in English, French and Creole. In 2019, the award went to Tony Joubert (aka Raspyek) who outshone the two other nominees – Maggie Faure Vidot and Loura Barra.

If we move on to Traditional Music category, Brian Matombe won the trophy in 2017. Famous for his traditional music such as 'Vals' and 'Kamntole', Mr Matombe has left a long lasting impression on both the locals and visitors. Another well-known artist who took a trophy home for this same category in 2019 was John Vital – a singer well

known for his piercing and quaint musical arrangements that is hard to hear from any other local musicians.

What about Music Production? Music production is the process by which music is created, captured, manipulated, and preserved so that it can be distributed and enjoyed. The jury in 2017 believed that Eddie Telemaque was the star of the moment for this category. But in 2019, the trophy went to famous artist and musical icon Patrick Victor. This means that Mr Victor won two trophies in 2019. What will be his fate for the 2025 Arts Award?

For the Dance category, in 2017, Daniela Rose received the first prize in his discipline. Just to remind you, Miss Rose specialises in ballet, jazz, contemporary and national (traditional) dance. However, in 2019, Ruth Barbe was crowned the winner for the same category. She won the award ahead of her peers Virna Fanny and the L'Echo Band.

As for the Photography category, Urny Mathiot got the first place in 2017 while Michel Desnousse was the winner for 2019. It is important to note that both candidates have contributed significantly in their field and who knows, maybe they might be among the finalists for this year in this category.

A category that has a never ending novelty in trend is Fashion. For this category in 2017 it was Santasha Hoareau who had the honour to lift the trophy in first place and in 2019 Johanna Didon was the trophy winner surpassing other contenders in her category.

When it came to Theatre, it was the famous comedian and artist Joseph Sinon who received more points from the judges. This is a category with many local talents but Mr Sinon was the light of the show that night. Nonetheless, in 2019, for the same category, Angelin Marie was the best of all the actors. His theatrical ability won him the first prize.

Film and Audio Visual is a fierce category here in the Seychelles and for sure the jurists had heated debates as to whom should be the winner for 2017. At the end there had to be one, and it was Raymond Clarisse. A young Seychellois with many talents, Raymond has carved a legacy for himself at a very young age in the entertainment industry. In 2019, however, there was a new face. Johnny Volcère. His plethora of work was enough to convince the judges that he deserved the first place.

The final category for 2017 was Visual Arts. Arts has always been a major aspect of cultural and traditional development here in the Seychelles. The well-known local artists, with a far-flung collection of works that have reached international audience, Leon Radebonne received the prize for best visual artist for that year. In 2019, it was not surprising to see another well established and honoured artist, George Camille, holding the trophy for the same category in first place. His name speaks for himself!

In 2019, there was at least four new categories that were added to the list. Artistic Director, and the winner was again Raymond Clarisse. Artisanal, was another new category where Donatien Freminot won the prize for this one. Then there was the prize for Local honorary which went to Marcel Rosalie and followed by the International honorary. This one was won by Daniel Delord.

Now, as we get closer to the Arts Awards 2025, there can be many questions asked. Will there be other new categories? Will we see new winners? Will some win a double like Patrick Victor in 2019? Well, one thing is for sure; the battle to find a winner for each category has already begun among the jury.

The accompanying photos show some of the past winners in the different categories.

Contributed



Johnny Volcère



Raymond Clarisse (right)



Fernande Ladouce



Michel Desnousse (left)



Egbert Marday & Marie Madelaine Matombe