

Craig Foster (My Octopus Teacher) and the Dudamel Foundation World Happiness Awards 2021 Laureates for the Arts Category

We welcome any creation that sparks dreams, imagination, and community building.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, USA, October 28, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- This year, the [World Happiness Awards](#) is once again ready and eager to recognize and celebrate organizations and individuals that are realizing a world with freedom, consciousness, and happiness for all! Our World Happiness Award Laureate in the Category of Arts (Individual) is Craig Foster for My Octopus Teacher.



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We refer to Arts as any artistic expression that brings happiness, joy, and energy to communities and societies.”

Luis Gallardo, Founder & President - World Happiness Foundation

Craig Foster for My Octopus Teacher.

In 2010, a natural-history filmmaker Craig Foster began free-diving in a cold underwater bamboo kelp forest at a remote location near Cape Town, South Africa. He was fascinated with the beauty and diversity of the natural world down there and soon started documenting his experiences. At that time, he met a curious young female octopus from the Common Octopus family that captured his attention. This was the beginning of what turned out to be one of the best nature documentaries, which won over

fifteen awards, including BAFTA and Oscar for the Best Documentary Feature.

Burned out by his work and suffering from depression, Craig Foster wanted to find a way to heal and reconnect with his family when he started free-diving near his home. It was during one of the first dives that he spotted the octopus. That’s when he asked himself what would happen if

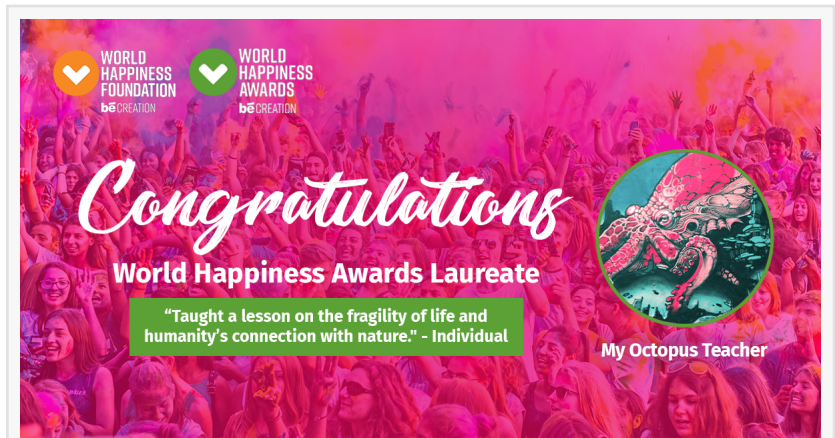
he just went every day?

My Octopus Teacher tells the profoundly moving story of forging an intimate relationship with a wild animal, but it also talks about healing, connection, love, and compassion. Foster managed to form a strong bond with the octopus. He would play with the animal and be allowed to follow her into her world and see where she slept, lived, and ate. He also struggled with his emotions, especially when the octopus was threatened, giving the documentary another level of complexity.

The documentary was shot over a decade and opened the viewer's eyes to life under the sea and the daily life of this little, mysterious, rarely-studied creature. The Sea Change Project, a nonprofit organization founded by Craig Foster, helped make this film in collaboration with Netflix and Off the Fence, a production company from Amsterdam. The movie splendidly captures the various transformations of the octopus and the beauty of the surprising and yet intimate relationship between two extremely different creatures, one human, one cephalopod. Foster took the time to form the bond, eventually swimming together and the creature hopping into his arms and chest, waiting for pets. Foster suffered when she was hurt; however, her recovery coincided with a period of his own healing. As he says: 'In a strange way, our lives were mirroring each other.'

Although happy that the movie is so loved worldwide, Foster explains: 'I just wanted to share the daily joy and wonder and curiosity this ecosystem kindles in me, with all of its wonderful creatures, and the absolute privilege of that one particular octopus who chose to let me into her secret world. I just wanted to honour that and show that deep connection and empathy with nature was an absolute possibility and that it's also the need of the hour.'

The mentorship-like relationship the octopus provided him has taught Foster a lesson on the fragility of life and humanity's connection with nature. This helped Foster to create a deeper bond with his son. The inspiring story and the important message behind this movie are something we can't ignore. That is why we are proud to see this heartwarming documentary and its creator as a World Happiness Award laureate for 2021. Join us in our celebration of people



My Octopus Teacher - World Happiness Awards



Dudamel Foundation - World Happiness Awards

and communities, making this planet a better place for all!

The World Happiness Award Laureate in the Category of Arts (Community) is – The Dudamel Foundation

The Dudamel Foundation

As an internationally renowned conductor, Gustavo Dudamel has been driven by a profound belief in music's power to transform lives, inspire, unite, and change the world. Through his work on stage and his tireless advocacy for education in arts, Dudamel has introduced classical music to new audiences worldwide and has helped provide access to the Arts for numerous people in underserved communities. One of his projects is the Dudamel Foundation.

The Dudamel Foundation is dedicated to believing that the Arts play a vital part in creating a more just and peaceful society. Music, in particular, provides a universal language that transcends differences between people and has a unique capacity to build bridges of understanding among all people. But, music does more than nourishing the human spirit. Its very practice instills focus and discipline, respect for others, a spirit of collaboration, and many other positive values that promote social justice and make us better world citizens. The goal of the Dudamel Foundation is to expand the opportunity to experience music for as many children and communities as possible.

Led by Gustavo Dudamel and an actress and humanitarian Maria Valverde, the Dudamel Foundation collaborates with institutions across the globe to enrich lives through four program areas: bridging communities, educating young musicians, training global leaders, and social justice through creativity. Their most notable projects are The Neighborhood project, Encuentros, Dudamel Foundation Artists at the Peralada Festival in Spain, and Fidelio. The Neighborhood project was initiated through a five-year Dudamel Foundation grant and launched in 2020. It is a collaboration between the foundation and Trenton Arts at Princeton, bringing Princeton University Concerts artists to Trenton's public schools and bringing Trenton's public school students to recitals at Princeton University Concerts. The grants also support the Trenton Youth Orchestra (TYO), whose members receive free coaching and private instruction from Princeton University student musicians and faculty.

Encuentros (English: 'encounters') is a project created in 2018 through the Dudamel Foundation to explore cultural unity and celebrate harmony, equality, dignity, beauty, and respect through music. This project has traveled to Europe, where the Dudamel Foundation presented its first Encuentros in Spain in June 2021. Through this project, the foundation inspires and teaches a new generation of young leaders to build a better world. The foundation brings together students from the Americas (Mexico, the US, Chile, Bolivia, Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Peru, and Spain) to work together in the Orquesta del Encuentro con Dudamel.

In 2019, the foundation collaborated with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra to educate 41

Dudamel Foundation Artists through guided mentorship and performance to encourage intercontinental dialogue through music. Students from all over the world, alongside their teachers from the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, represented citizens of 22 countries across five continents. The foundation organized a two-day seminar, underscoring the educational and philanthropic role of the foundation as a catalyst for uniting people through music.

Music has the advantage of being loud, attracting attention, and influencing opinions. It can help in healing, in breaking down barriers and borders, and it can also educate. It is a form of artistic expression that can be an actual igniter of change. As Gustavo Dudamel says: 'I cannot say that music is the only thing that will save the world, but we have to put art somewhere far more central to the main sense of our society.'

That is why we couldn't be happier to have them as our laureates for the 2021 World Happiness Awards! Join us in our celebration of people and communities, making this planet a better place for all!

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