

Freelance Journalists Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah and Abe Streep Named 2019 Recipients of the American Mosaic Journalism Prize

Los Altos, Calif. (February 5, 2019) – The Heising-Simons Foundation announced today that freelance journalists Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah and Abe Streep are the 2019 recipients of the [American Mosaic Journalism Prize](#). Both writers were surprised with an unrestricted cash prize of \$100,000. The prize is awarded for excellence in long-form, narrative or deep reporting about underrepresented and/or misrepresented groups in the American landscape.

Ms. Ghansah and Mr. Streep join 2018 recipients Jaeah Lee and Valeria Fernández as the freelance journalists to receive this new journalism prize, first awarded last year.

The prize is based on confidential nominations from leaders in journalism throughout the country. The recipients were selected by 10 esteemed judges who this year included journalists from the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, NBC/Telemundo, NPR, BuzzFeed News, Columbia University and Barnard College, and freelance journalism.

The [American Mosaic Journalism Prize](#) recognizes journalism’s critical ability to foster greater understanding and aims to recognize and empower exceptional freelance journalists. It recognizes that in today’s journalism, freelancers are both vulnerable and valuable. Many journalists work without the support of an institution and with limited resources. And yet, some of the most important works of journalism come from freelance journalists who commit long periods of time to their subjects.

The 2019 Recipients:

Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah

“Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah’s deeply reported and essayistic writing pushes the form of longform journalism, ranging from a poignant profile of master painter Henry Taylor to a searing exposé of the hotbed of racism and white supremacy that fueled the heinous murder of nine African-Americans in Charleston, South Carolina. Her power of observation and nuanced writing both shines light on Black Americans and dares us to look at the forces that shape race in America.” –2019 Prize Judges

Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah is a journalist, essayist and critic whose work on such figures as Toni Morrison, Missy Elliott, and Kendrick Lamar has been widely acclaimed. Her writing has appeared in The Paris Review, The Believer, and The New York Times Magazine, amongst several other outlets and publications. “If He Hollers Let Him Go,” an essay on comedian Dave Chappelle, was a National Magazine Award finalist and has been called a classic. In 2017, her essay on James Baldwin was selected for The Best American Essays, and this year, “A Most American Terrorist: The Making of Dylann Roof,” won the National Magazine Award for Best Feature Writing and was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Feature Writing. She was also selected for the Root 100’s 2018 list as one of the most influential young African Americans working in the US today. Her first book,

The Explainers & the Explorers, is forthcoming. It will be published by Scribner in the States, and by Penguin in the UK. She lives in New York.

Ms. Ghansah was recognized for "[A Most American Terrorist: The Making of Dylann Roof](#)," a profile published in GQ magazine and "[Henry Taylor's Wild Heart Can't Be Broken](#)," published in New York Magazine/Vulture.

"It's more difficult than ever for writers and essayists and critics to do their jobs with a bedrock of security and a sense that their work is truly valued as a total commitment—a commitment to the craft and the form and also to the truth," noted Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah. "And I think for me it heightens my obligation to not only do good work but to also write stories that are full of intention and rigor."

Abe Streep

"Abe Streep's reporting bursts with compassion and urgency as he lifts up stories of often-overlooked communities in the American West, such as a Syrian refugee family building a new life in Montana, or a Native American high-school basketball team grappling with a flurry of suicides in its community. With great sensitivity, his work reveals the rich tapestry of cultures and lives that intersect in a part of the country far too often characterized by the stereotypes of an urban-rural divide." –2019 Prize Judges

Abe Streep is a journalist based in New Mexico. A contributing editor at *Outside* and a contributing writer at *The California Sunday Magazine*, he has also written for *The New York Times Magazine*, *Harper's*, *WIRED*, *The Atavist*, *The New Republic*, and other publications. He has reported on high-school basketball in Montana, minor league baseball in New Mexico, refugee resettlement, coal miners in Wyoming, rodeo, conflicts over America's public lands, and emergency medicine along the U.S.-Mexico border. His writing has been noted in Best American Essays, Best American Sports Writing and Best American Science and Nature Writing. He is expanding his article from *The New York Times Magazine* about the Arlee Warriors basketball team into a book for Celadon Books.

Mr. Streep was recognized for his New York Times feature titled "[What the Arlee Warriors Were Playing for](#)" focused on a high school basketball team from the Flathead Indian Reservation, and "[The Last Best Place](#)," a Harper's magazine feature focused on a Syrian refugee family in Montana.

"To be recognized by these judges and to be mentioned in the same breath as Rachel is a profound honor," said Abe Streep. "I am overwhelmed and deeply grateful—first and foremost to the Abdullahs and the Arlee community for trusting me to tell these stories."

The following is a list of the 2019 Prize Judges:

- Hannah Allam, National Reporter, BuzzFeed News
- Jennifer Boylan, Anna Quindlen Writer in Residence, Barnard College & contributing opinion columnist, New York Times
- Valeria Fernández, Freelance Journalist & 2018 Recipient, American Mosaic Journalism Prize
- Stephanie Foo, Freelance Journalist & Former Producer, This American Life
- Samuel G. Freedman, Professor of Journalism, Columbia University

- Jaweed Kaleem, National Race and Justice Correspondent, Los Angeles Times
- Jaeah Lee, Freelance journalist & 2018 Recipient, American Mosaic Journalism Prize
- Wesley Lowery, National Correspondent, Washington Post
- Mirta Ojito, Senior Director of Standards, NBC/Telemundo
- Keith Woods, Vice President, Newsroom Training & Diversity, NPR

For more information about the American Mosaic Journalism Prize, visit <https://www.hsfoundation.org/prize/>.

About the Heising-Simons Foundation

The Heising-Simons Foundation is a family foundation based in Los Altos, California. The Foundation works with its many partners to advance sustainable solutions in climate and clean energy, enable groundbreaking research in science, enhance the education of our youngest learners, and support human rights for all people. For more information visit, www.hsfoundation.org.

###