



# NAT AWARD 2019

Natural Science Museum of Barcelona



## The second edition of the Nat Award distinguishes African science disseminator, Elisabeth Rasekoala

- ✓ *Elisabeth Rasekoala, Chemical Engineer, and president of African Gong, wins the Nat Award, granted by the Natural Science Museum of Barcelona, for her struggle in favor of diversity, socio-cultural and gender inclusion in the dissemination, learning and practice of science in Africa.*
- ✓ *The Nat Award, commemorating the 140th anniversary of the foundation of the Museum, is an honorific distinction that rewards annually people or institutions that have brought a novel perspective on the dissemination of science.*

Elisabeth Rasekoala received on 12 June in Barcelona the **Nat Award**, an honorary distinction created by the Natural Science Museum of Barcelona, that is granted to a person or institution that have contributed prominently to natural history by adopting a novel perspective on bringing science to the public, enriching knowledge, fostering careers and promoting nature conservation. The Nat Award consists of a main award and honourable mention. Awardees receive a piece of art especially designed for the occasion by the prominent sculptor Antoni Llena.

The NAT award was created by the Natural Science Museum of Barcelona in 2018 to celebrate its 140 years in existence and mark this key date in a very special way. The winner of the first edition of the Nat Award was the prominent biologist and primatologist, Frans de Waal.

With a trajectory of 141 years, the Natural Science Museum of Barcelona is especially committed to nature conservation and participates actively in local and international efforts to conserve, study and communicate biodiversity and geodiversity. Through the Nat Award, the Natural Science Museum of Barcelona aims to foster natural science communication in a context of environmental crisis, given that more efforts than ever are needed to open up new perspectives on connecting people and the natural sciences. Engraved on the trophy are lines in Catalan — by the poet and cultural manager Jordi Carrió — that reflect the Natural Science Museum of Barcelona's commitment to the sustainability of the planet:

**“Coneixes l’abast dels límits. Només una Terra, només una vida” [You know the scope of the limits. Only one Earth. Only one life.]**



## **Nat Award winners 2019**

The jury has decided to grant the Nat Award 2019 to Elisabeth Rasekoala and the Honourable Mention Nat to Jorge Wagensberg.

### **Nat 2019 Award**

**Elisabeth Rasekoala**, chemical engineer and president of African Gong, for her struggle in favor of diversity, sociocultural and gender inclusion in the dissemination, learning and practice of science, which has contributed to the democratization of the science, creation of scientific vocations and sustainable development in Africa.

### **Nat Honourable Mention 2019**

**Jorge Wagensberg**, a physicist, thinker and communicator of science, for his great contribution to scientific culture as director of the science center *Cosmocaixa* (Barcelona), which changed the paradigm of science museums with a creative and multidisciplinary perspective with interactive museographies and a clear social vocation.

### **The Nat Award Jury is formed by:**

**Dacha Atienza**, head of research and collections at the Natural Science Museum of Barcelona

**Mara Dierssen**, research director of the Center for Genomic Regulation of Barcelona.

**Martí Domínguez**, writer and director of *Mètode*, the Science communication journal of the University of Valencia

**Xavier Duran**, TV journalist and writer

**Teresa Garnatje**, director of the Botanical Institute of Barcelona

**Anna Omedes**, director of the Natural Science Museum of Barcelona

**Joandomènec Ros**, president of the Institute of Catalan Studies



## **Elisabeth Rasekoala**

Elisabeth Rasekoala is an independent professional expert in diversity, sociocultural and gender inclusion in the practice, learning and communication of science in Africa and Europe, with a background in chemical engineering education and industry internationally. It was through this experience that Elisabeth Rasekoala became aware of the masculine, white and euro-centric perspectives that impregnated the world of science. This was how she initiated her involvement and struggle in favor of the inclusion that she has carried out from three fronts: research, the leadership of organizations such as **African Gong: the Pan-African Network for the Popularization of Science & Technology and Science Communication**, in Africa, among many other initiatives, and the provision of advisory expertise to multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, the European Commission and the African Union Commission.

### **About African Gong**

Established in 2014, **African Gong** is the Pan-African Network for the Popularization of Science & Technology, and Science Communication in Africa. It is developed with the strategic support of the UNESCO Africa Region. It aims to create a strategic platform from which Africa can contribute to global structures and institutional capacities for the advancement of science communication, science and society studies and the public learning and understanding of science (PLUS). The **African Gong** website is at: [www.africangong.org](http://www.africangong.org)

## **Jorge Wagensberg, (Barcelona, 1948-2018)**

Doctor of Physics and professor of Theory of irreversible processes at the University of Barcelona, Jorge Wagensberg was the pioneer of scientific communication in Spain and creator of the science centre *Cosmocaixa*, who transformed into a world reference of museography.

In addition to teaching and scientific dissemination, his role as a stimulator of the ideas debate earned him the National Prize for Thought and Scientific Culture of Catalonia (2005). He published about twenty multidisciplinary essay books and worked regularly with the media where he opened debates on topics as varied as animal rights, the environmental crisis or the latest scientific advances.

As a researcher, Wagensberg was the author of a hundred research projects on issues as diverse as thermodynamics, palaeontology or scientific museology.



## Museu de Ciències Naturals de Barcelona

The Museu de Ciències Naturals de Barcelona (Natural Science Museum of Barcelona) is an institution founded over 140 years ago whose natural heritage collections in the fields of mineralogy, petrology, palaeontology, zoology and botany comprise more than three million specimens.

The Natural Science Museum of Barcelona is housed in different buildings located in three strategic areas of the city, and includes two botanical gardens.

### An all-inclusive museum

The Museum sees **inclusiveness** as all-encompassing, both physically and socially, and is therefore committed to developing a series of programmes inspired by the values of equality, accessibility and participation as the democratic expression of its project to reach all members of the public and contribute towards social change by combating exclusion. These values pervade all aspects of Museum activity, which is based on the aforementioned three concepts: **equality, accessibility and proximity**.

### For more information about Elisabeth Rasekoala:

**Elisabeth Rasekoala** is currently based in Cape Town, South Africa, and her contact details are as follows: **E-mail:** [info@africangong.org](mailto:info@africangong.org)

### For more information about the Museum:

Museu de Ciències Naturals de Barcelona

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