

VILCEK FOUNDATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:
Joyce Li
The Vilcek Foundation
[(212) 472-2500] or [joyce.li@vilcek.org]

Foundation Honors Immigrants in Culinary Arts with \$250,000 in Prizes

Prizewinners include chefs and food writer of Mexican, Ethiopian, Indian and Cambodian Descent

New York, NY, February 4, 2019 — The Vilcek Foundation has announced the winners of the 2019 Vilcek Foundation Prizes for Culinary Arts, awarded to immigrants who have made significant contributions to the field. Chef **Marcus Samuelsson** will receive the \$100,000 Vilcek Prize, while chefs **Fabián von Hauske Valtierra** and **Nite Yun**, and *New York Times* journalist **Tejal Rao** will each receive a \$50,000 Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise.

The winners were selected by a panel of experts in the culinary arts, including chef Tom Colicchio; *Bon Appétit's* Andrew Knowlton; *Food & Wine's* Jordana Rothman; and James Beard Foundation's Mitchell Davis. The last Vilcek Prize awarded in the culinary arts was awarded to chef José Andrés in 2010, who used the accompanying cash award to establish the non-profit World Central Kitchen.

“Immigrants make enormous contributions to the United States, and this year we are spotlighting their contributions to American culinary arts,” says Marica Vilcek, co-founder of the Vilcek Foundation. “They bring their talents to the most renowned kitchens across the country, bringing the technical excellence and worldly perspective that has made American restaurants among the best in the world.”

The Vilcek Prize for Arts and Humanities is awarded in a different category each year, and the foundation selected culinary arts as the 2019 category because of the abundance of immigrant influence in the field, from chefs to beverage professionals to food writers. To further recognize and honor these achievements, the Vilcek Foundation will release a cookbook featuring the stories and recipes of 40 of the U.S.'s greatest foreign-born chefs (Prestel Publishing, fall 2019).

The Vilcek Prize, awarded to individuals who are legendary in their field, is this year bestowed to Ethiopian-born and Swedish-raised Marcus Samuelsson. He first made waves in 1995 as the youngest chef to receive three stars from the *New York Times*, and is now the owner of several restaurants, including Red Rooster Harlem, and the author of cookbooks such as *New American Table*, and the award-winning memoir, *Yes, Chef*. Samuelsson is the host of *No Passport Required*, a PBS television show exploring immigrant traditions that shape culinary culture in the U.S. In 2009, he served as the guest chef for President Obama's first state dinner.

The Vilcek Prizes for Creative Promise are awarded to emerging artists who have shown exceptional promise early in their careers. The recipients of the Creative Promise Prize in Culinary Arts are:

VILCEK FOUNDATION

Tejal Rao, born in the U.K. to parents from Kenya and India, is the *New York Times*' California restaurant critic and a columnist for *The New York Times Magazine*. Her food writing tells stories about politics, culture, science, and history, highlighting people whose work often goes unseen. Previously she was a restaurant critic for *The Village Voice* and *Bloomberg News*. She has received two James Beard Foundation awards for her writing and was named to Forbes' "30 Under 30" list of notable young innovators.

Fabián von Hauske Valtierra, born in Mexico, is the co-chef and co-owner of Contra, Wildair, Una Pizza Napoletana, and a forthcoming wine bar, all in New York City. Von Hauske Valtierra has built a reputation for combining diverse, international influences into a voice that is ambitious, experimental, and accessible, and he has received several honors, including Michelin stars in 2017, and 2018, and has been named to the lists of *Eater*'s "Young Guns"; *Zagat*'s "30 Under 30"; *Forbes*' "30 Under 30"; and *Food & Wine*'s "Best New Chefs".

Nite Yun, born in a Thai refugee camp to Cambodian parents, is the chef and owner of Oakland's Nyum Bai. The restaurant, an homage to her parents, quickly gained national renown within months of opening for its introduction of masterful, authentic Cambodian cuisine to the American culinary scene. Yun has received many honors, including being named the *Eater* 2018 Breakout Star of the Year; an *Eater* Young Gun; a *San Francisco Chronicle* Rising Chef; and having Nyum Bai listed as one of *Bon Appetit*'s "2018 Best New Restaurants."

In addition to culinary arts, the 2019 Vilcek Foundation Prizes also recognize immigrant contributions in biomedical science and art history. The prizewinners will be honored at a gala ceremony in New York in April 2019, presented by Padma Lakshmi, *New York Times* best-selling author and host/executive producer of *Top Chef*.

The Vilcek Foundation was established in 2000 by Jan and Marica Vilcek, immigrants from the former Czechoslovakia. The mission of the foundation, to honor the contributions of immigrants to the United States and to foster appreciation of the arts and sciences, was inspired by the couple's careers in biomedical science and art history, as well as their appreciation for the opportunities they received as newcomers to this country. The foundation awards annual prizes to immigrant biomedical scientists and artists, sponsors cultural programs, and manages the Vilcek Foundation Art Collections. To learn more about the Vilcek Foundation, please visit vilcek.org.