



# Den norske Forfatterforening

## **Everyone understood everything was possible**

interview with Jael Uribe

recipient of The Norwegian Authors' Union's Freedom of Expression Prize 2016

**When did you receive the message that you were awarded the price, and how did you react?**

It was January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 10:24 am. I remembered thinking “Yeah, right! and I also won the lottery!” and laughed. Being an online “bird” since I was nineteen years old has taught me that, if something seems too good to be true, it usually is! So, my first reaction was thinking it was SPAM. My second reaction was “DELETE IT, DELETE IT”.

I was used to thinking there was no recognition for the work I've done, because I've never sought to it. Reading this wonderful news at a very hard moment in my life, was a surreal experience, as well as unbelievable. I followed my instinct, bought a calling card, contacted the Minister of Culture in Norway and asked them, first hand, if this award was legit. I was not embarrassed to do so; it was a natural reaction. I'm glad I didn't delete the email!

**Has the price influenced your work or situation, and in that case, how?**

Of course! In great manner! I had received the announcement that I would lose my house a month before receiving the award notification. For years, I've used everything I got to push my projects further and as a creative, sometimes I could not afford certain luxuries. My house was practically in ruins by that time, still, a house is a house. It was my

headquarters and my battlefield. Having been awarded not only changed the housing situation for me and my family saving us from homelessness; but also allowed me the funds to continue pushing my cause to other necessary levels. Only a miracle could have helped us back then, and a miracle happened, indeed!

**How has the situation for writers in your country developed since the time you received the price?**

Ever since I started my project many other leaders have emerged but since I got the award, everyone besides me, understood everything was possible. Many other writers' friends came up with new ideas and projects to help spread Dominican literature in different ways. Many more groups were created incentivized by Woman Scream success and new leaders among young writers have stepped up, which makes me proud and glad at the same time.

**Would you like to share some of what you are currently working on?**

I'm always creating, innovating. I depend a whole lot on technology to push my ideas forward so, I'm working on teaching myself to go along with the times and learning new "tricks" I can apply to my project.

Right now, I'm designing two new international poetry anthologies in Spanish and English with poets and artists to raise awareness about women violence and celebrate the fourteen years of my cause. I have also recently launched an AI animated series online showcasing incredible women that have made history through the world for the public, so far, in Spanish.

I'm also getting reading for the new season of my Woman Scream Festival coming up next march: Seeking for volunteers, welcoming new coordinators, designing the campaign and building the upcoming international agenda.

**If you were to award the next price, who would you like to give it to?**

I would definitely encourage you to award any indigenous woman writer out there that's using her voice to defend her people's rights. Can't come up with a name right now but I guarantee you there're many. Search Australia, search United States and unquestionably, search Latin America!

**Why should we keep on giving this award?**

You must, otherwise people like me would never have a chance to stand out above the crowd. You must give a space to raise our voices, you must NOT stop.