

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Vilcek Foundation honors Immigrant Designers with \$250,000 in Prizes

*Designers Ramon Tejada, Wael Morcos, Juan Carlos Noguera and Maryam Turkey are recipients of the 2024 Vilcek Foundation Prizes in Design.*

**NEW YORK, February 6, 2024**—The Vilcek Foundation announces the recipients of the 2024 Vilcek Foundation Prizes in Design. Totaling \$250,000 in awards, the prizes celebrate immigrant professionals in graphic design, industrial design and product design whose work has had a profound impact in their specific field of work, as well as on design and design thinking and practice more broadly in the United States. The Vilcek Foundation Prizes in Design are awarded as part of the Vilcek Foundation’s prizes in the arts and humanities, awarded annually as part of the Vilcek Foundation Prizes program to build awareness of the vital role immigration plays in enriching intellectual and cultural life in the United States.

“Design enables us to interact with the world with elegance and artistry,” says Vilcek Foundation Vice Chair and Cofounder Marica Vilcek. “With the Vilcek Foundation Prizes in Design, we celebrate four immigrant vanguards whose work exemplifies the perspective, innovation and creativity that immigrants bring to business and society in the United States.”

The Vilcek Foundation Prizes comprise four individual awards: The Vilcek Prize in Design—a \$100,000 award—and three \$50,000 Vilcek Prizes for Creative Promise in Design.

### **The Vilcek Prize in Design**

The Vilcek Prize in Design is awarded to a designer whose career and work has had a profound impact in their field. The recipient of the Vilcek Prize in Design receives a cash award of \$100,000 and a commemorative trophy. The Vilcek Foundation is delighted to award the 2024 Vilcek Prize in Design to Ramon Tejada.

“Ramon Tejada’s designs bring deeper meaning and efficacy to form,” says Vilcek Foundation President Rick Kinsel. “His projects address important social issues including race and the impacts of colonialism. He describes his practice as both a designer and teacher as ‘puncturing’—breaking the surface to reveal the social and political frameworks that have historically underwritten bias in design standards and practices. His work reframes questions about diversity, accessibility, and equity in design.”

Tejada receives the Vilcek Prize in Design for his leadership and commitment to accessibility and decolonization in design practices, and for his pedagogical approach that centers collaboration, inclusion and radical innovation. Born in the Dominican Republic, Tejada is an associate professor at the Rhode Island School of Design. He has taught at Pratt Institute, the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Parsons/The New School and CUNY-Queens College.

## **The Vilcek Prizes for Creative Promise in Design**

The Vilcek Prizes for Creative Promise in Design recognize immigrant designers under the age of 40 whose work represents an important contribution to their field, and exemplifies the potential for design to change the way people interact with the world.

Wael Morcos receives the Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Design for his approach to typographic and graphic design that incorporates complex cultural and political histories to create socially relevant visual identities and campaigns. Born in Lebanon, Morcos is a founder and partner of Morcos Key; he is an alumnus of the Rhode Island School of Design.

Juan Carlos Noguera receives the Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Design for his equitable approach to product design, especially for his work to develop accessible wheelchairs and educational tools that democratize society by promoting social and scientific engagement. Born in Guatemala, Noguera is a professor of industrial design at the Rochester Institute of Technology. He earned his Master's in Industrial Design at the Rhode Island School of Design.

Maryam Turkey receives the Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Design for her practice that seeks to bridge cultural and societal divides while simultaneously challenging the status quo; through organic sculptural forms and surfaces she deconstructs gender norms, revealing a powerful humanity. Born in Iraq, she is an alumna of the Pratt Institute and she was a MAD Museum Artist in Residence in 2019. Her work has been exhibited in galleries and at prominent art fairs throughout the United States.

## **The 2024 Vilcek Foundation Prizes**

In addition to the Vilcek Foundation Prizes in Design, in 2024 the foundation is awarding \$250,000 in prizes to immigrant scientists with the Vilcek Foundation Prizes in Biomedical Science. The Vilcek Prize in Biomedical Science—a \$100,000 award—is bestowed on Luciano Marraffini (b. Argentina); the recipients of \$50,000 Vilcek Prizes for Creative Promise in Biomedical Science are Gerta Hoxhaj (b. Albania), Tomasz Nowakowski (b. Poland) and Takanori Takebe (b. Japan).

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## **The Vilcek Foundation**

The Vilcek Foundation raises awareness of immigrant contributions in the United States and fosters appreciation for the arts and sciences. The foundation was established in 2000 by Jan and Marica Vilcek, immigrants from the former Czechoslovakia. The mission of the foundation was inspired by the couple's respective careers in biomedical science and art history. Since 2000, the foundation has awarded over \$7 million in prizes to foreign-born individuals and has supported organizations with over \$6 million in grants.

The Vilcek Foundation is a private operating foundation, a federally tax-exempt nonprofit organization under IRS Section 501(c)(3). To learn more, please visit [vilcek.org](http://vilcek.org).