



EMYA2023

Annual Conference & Awards Ceremony

3-6 May 2023 · Barcelona



THE WINNERS OF EMYA2023 ARE ANNOUNCED!

PRESS RELEASE – 6 May 2023

The European Museum Forum is happy to announce the winners of the European Museum of the Year Awards for 2023. The winners in different categories under the EMYA scheme were presented on the last day of the EMYA2023 Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony that was held on 3-6 May 2023 in Barcelona.

Organised by the European Museum Forum and hosted by the Barcelona History Museum - MUHBA, the event took place in a traditional EMYA format with a physical, rich and intense annual conference and award ceremony and brought together members of the EMYA community including this year's nominees, former winners, partners and friends.

This year, the main theme of the conference was defined as “Democracy and Democratization: Urgent Challenges Today”.

The European Museum Forum expresses its gratitude to the 33 nominated museums who kept faith with EMYA in applying and in welcoming the judges. Special thanks go to our sponsors and partners for their continuous support for EMF, as well as to its almost 300 participants who joined us in Barcelona and kept the event alive.



THE EMYA – EUROPEAN MUSEUM OF THE YEAR AWARD

Presented by Amina Krvavac, Chair of the EMYA Jury

Each year, the European Museum of the Year Award goes to a museum which contributes profoundly to our understanding of the world as well as to the development of new paradigms and professional standards in museums. Within a distinctive overall atmosphere, the winning museum shows creative and imaginative approaches to the production of knowledge, to interpretation, presentation and social responsibility - all from a transparent base of core values of democracy, human rights, and inter-cultural dialogue, a commitment to sustainability, a practice of inclusion and community participation, and a recognition of conflicts and the courage needed to confront them.

The 2023 winner of the European Museum of the Year Award, L'Etno, Valencian Museum of Ethnology operates with a strong ethical foundation and a passionate commitment to effecting positive change in the region. It bravely confronts the past in order to navigate an uncertain future. The museum values open and inclusive dialogue, and strives to provide universal access for visitors. Through the sharing and discussion of hidden histories, the museum seeks to honour the right of local communities to understand their past and acknowledge their painful experiences.

The Winner of the EMYA - European Museum of the Year Award 2023
[L'Etno, Valencian Museum of Ethnology, Spain](#)



Photo credit: Permanent exhibition “Not Easy to be Valencian”. The City: Global and Local. Tower of electrical appliances. Author: Hector Juan © L’ETNO

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE MUSEUM PRIZE

Represented by Constantinou Efstathiou, Cyprus, Committee Representative of the Council of Europe Museum Prize

The Council of Europe Museum Prize is awarded to a museum that has contributed significantly to upholding human rights and democratic citizenship, to broadening knowledge and understanding of contemporary societal issues, and to bridging cultures by encouraging inter-cultural dialogue or overcoming social and political borders. The Prize aims to highlight Europe's diverse cultural heritage and the interplay between local and European identities.

Selected by the Culture Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) on 5 December 2022 and awarded at a special ceremony that took place on 25 April 2023 in Strasbourg's Palais de L'Europe, the prize was given to the Workers Museum, Copenhagen, DENMARK, an institution and a museum which combines the history of its symbolic building and the history of the Danish Labour movement with present-day concerns about how workers' culture could be more relevant to society. Through different programs and activities, the museum contributes to broadening visitors' knowledge and understanding of contemporary societal issues and ideas of democratic citizenship and supporting social and political activism today.

The Winner of the Council of Europe Museum Prize 2023

[The Workers Museum](#), Denmark



Photo credit: "Bricklayer for a day" event: Family-oriented holiday event at The Workers Museum involving bricklayer apprentices. © The Workers Museum

THE KENNETH HUDSON AWARD FOR INSTITUTIONAL COURAGE AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY

Presented by Joan Roca, Trustee, European Museum Forum

The Kenneth Hudson Award for Institutional Courage and Professional Integrity is given by the European Museum Forum board to a museum, a group or an individual – not necessarily an EMYA candidate - to celebrate courageous, at times controversial, museum practices that challenge and expand common perceptions of the role and responsibilities of museums in society.

While rooted and anchored in the experience of one particular individual and one particular cultural minority group, the museum receiving the Kenneth Hudson award this year, 23,5 Hrant Dink Site of Memory, communicates that human rights are indivisible and universal. It sheds light on the past while also acting for the future, fostering empathy and mutual understanding, and contributing to social transformation and democratization.

The Winner of the Kenneth Hudson Award for Institutional Courage and Professional Integrity 2023

[23,5 Hrant Dink Site of Memory](#), Türkiye



Photo credit: “Salt and Light” installation created by Sarkis based on the metaphor of “creating diamonds from pain” © 23,5 Hrant Dink Site of Memory



THE PORTIMÃO MUSEUM PRIZE FOR WELCOMING, INCLUSION AND BELONGING

Presented by *Teresa Mendes, Councillor of Culture, Municipality of Portimão*

The Portimão Museum Prize for Welcoming, Inclusion and Belonging celebrates a friendly atmosphere of inclusion, where all elements of the museum, its physical environment, its human qualities, its displays and public programmes, contribute to making everyone feel they are valued and respected and belong in the museum.

The museum which has won this award, Chillida Leku, is an art museum with an active social agenda. The museum is dedicated to both an artist's work and his core values relating to human rights, social justice, music, and philosophy. A true meeting place dedicated to bringing people together, it offers a wide range of programmes and activities that utilize multi-sensory and multi-creative expression to promote dialogue and tolerance.

The Winner of the Portimão Museum Prize for Welcoming, Inclusion and Belonging 2023
[Chillida Leku](#), Spain

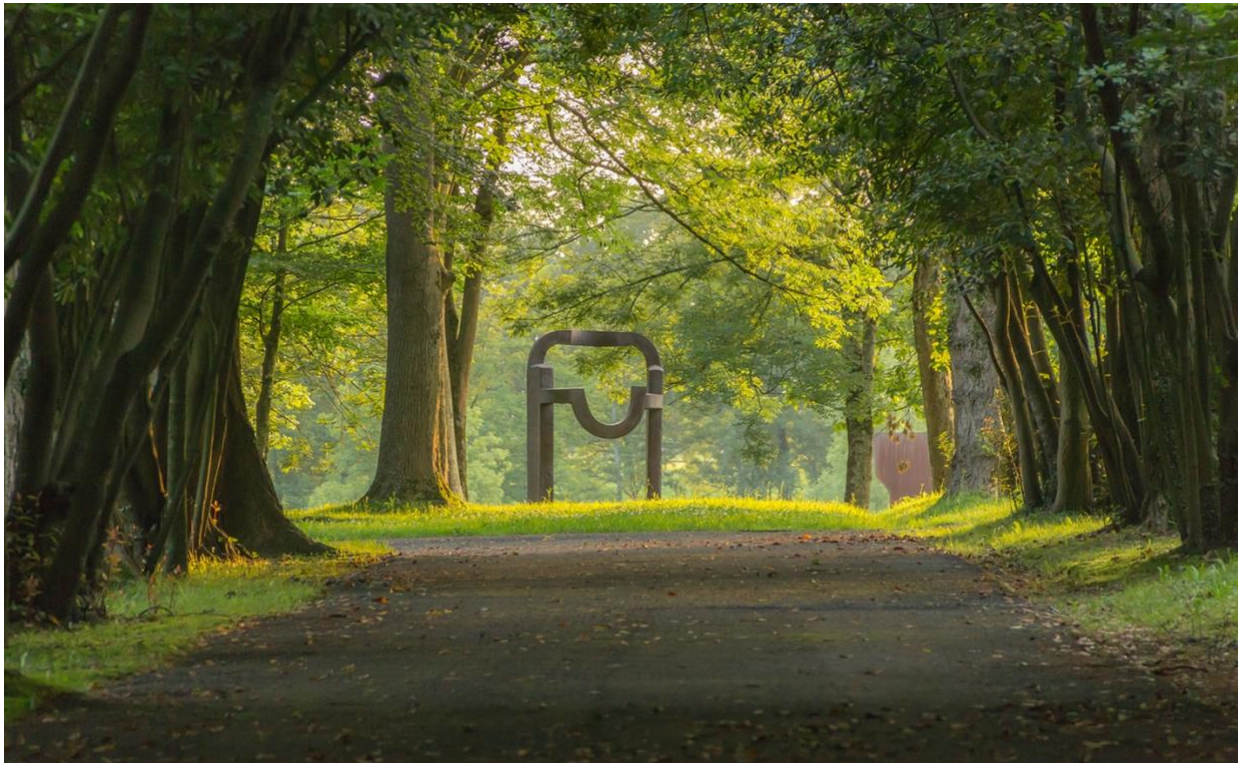


Photo credit: General view of the museum with Arco de la Libertad (Arch of Freedom) in the background. Courtesy of the Estate of Eduardo Chillida and Hauser & Wirth. © Zabalaga Leku. San Sebastian, VEGAP, 2022. Photo: Mikel Chillida



THE SILLETTO PRIZE FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Presented by Carol Jackson, Silletto Trust

The Silletto Prize for Community Participation and Engagement celebrates a deep, continuous and empowering involvement between a museum and its stakeholders, that places the museum as a point of orientation and reference at the centre of its communities, whether these be local, national, global or otherwise defined.

The museum which has won this award is a community-run museum with a powerful force for raising awareness of critical issues relating to society, culture, and education. Through its volunteer projects and programs, it actively engages the local community in safeguarding, preserving, and revitalizing the city's archaeological site. The Otar Lordkipanidze Vani Archaeological Museum of Georgian National Museum offers a range of community programs that prioritize the involvement of younger audiences and disadvantaged groups. By embracing inclusivity and diversity, the museum creates a welcoming space that encourages dialogue and encourages visitors to connect with the city's rich cultural heritage.

The Winner of the Silletto Prize for Community Participation and Engagement 2023
[Otar Lordkipanidze Vani Archaeological Museum of Georgian National Museum](#), Georgia



Photo credit: Vani Archaeological Museum, Photo: Annie Davarashvili © Georgian National Museum



THE MEYVAERT MUSEUM PRIZE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Presented by Stijn Verstraete and Steven De Tollenaere, Meyvaert/Haerens Group

The Meyvaert Museum Prize for Environmental Sustainability is conferred on a museum which shows an exceptional commitment to reflecting and addressing issues of sustainability and environmental health in its collecting, documentation, displays and public programming as well as in the management of its own social, financial and physical resources.

At the Swiss Museum of Agriculture, visitors engage with their local community through a variety of enjoyable, hands-on learning activities that illuminate the journey of food from farm to table. By exploring the resources required to grow food and the impact of food waste, visitors gain a deeper understanding of our relationship with the environment. As a central regional hub, the museum connects local producers, agricultural workers, and companies to create meaningful links that allow citizens to comprehend the complexities of food production and the key players involved.

The Winner of the Meyvaert Museum Prize for Environmental Sustainability 2023

[Swiss Museum of Agriculture](#), Switzerland

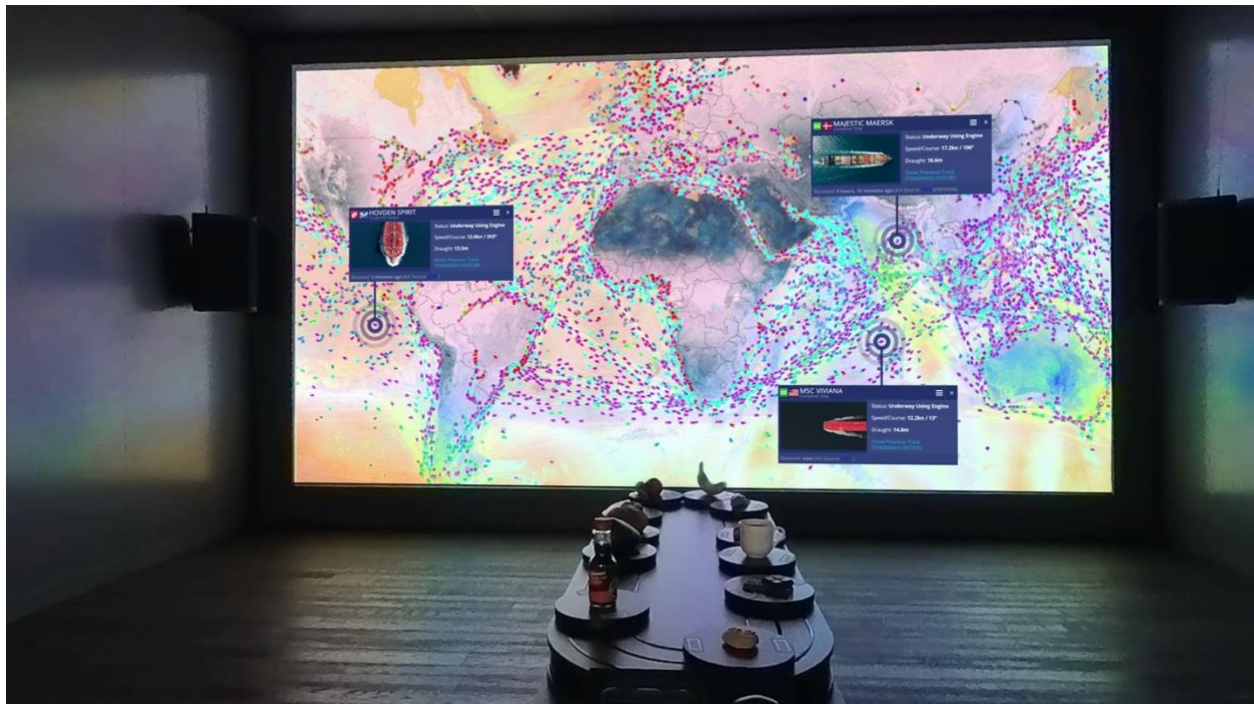


Photo credit: The Swiss Museum of Agriculture vividly show the interconnections between what's on your plate, national and international agriculture, and the impact on farmers around the world. © Swiss Museum of Agriculture Burgrain



THE SPECIAL COMMENDATIONS

Presented by Amina Krvavac, Chair of the EMYA Jury and Mark O'Neill, EMYA Judge

Special Commendations are given to museums that have developed a new and innovative approach in specific aspects of their public service and from which other European museums can learn.

Six special commendations were given by the Jury in 2023. (see page 9 for photos)

Thackray Museum of Medicine, United Kingdom

The first special commendation goes to Thackray Museum of Medicine, a museum that serves not only as a learning space for exploring past healthcare practices and medical heritage but also as a transformative force for bringing together people from diverse backgrounds. Located in one of the most deprived areas for employment, education, and housing, it takes proactive measures to engage with underprivileged communities, seeking ways to create meaningful connections and promote social cohesion.

Ilia Chavchavadze Literary Memorial Museum. Museum of the Tbilisi Museums Union, Georgia

The following special commendation goes to a museum that pays homage to one of the most prominent national figures of the 19th century, whose actions are celebrated as symbols of national freedom, liberation, and progress. In the spirit of this legacy, the museum invites its visitors to reflect on the historical struggles and draws inspiration from them to tackle the contemporary challenges of society.

Graz Museum Schlossberg, Austria

The next commendation goes to Graz Museum Schlossberg, an archaeological museum that serves as a vital component of the city's identity, offering visitors a chance to reflect on its cultural history, natural sciences, and archaeology from a multi-perspective, interdisciplinary viewpoint of the museum's site. Its efforts to ensure full accessibility to all visitors, including through dedicated public transport connections, underground pathways, and tactile models and reliefs of the city, are admirable.



FeliXart Museum, Belgium

The following special commendation goes to a community museum which breaks down barriers between art, cultures, and languages. It provides ways for building community across differences by creating opportunities for people to come together, build, repair, and create while claiming a shared space of belonging. The FeliXart Museum serves as a platform for fostering connections and promoting a sense of community among its visitors.

Abbey Church of Payerne, Switzerland

The fifth special commendation goes to Abbey Church of Payerne, a museum housed in a masterpiece of Romanesque architecture and building technology of its time. This museum provides its visitors with a sensory, vivid, and emotional experience of the past and the people who once lived there. Through an innovative approach of using short and, at times, humorous stories told by individuals connected to the objects on display, it successfully reveals the complex history of the thousand-year-old building.

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Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen, Netherlands

The last special commendation goes to a museum that is committed to promoting openness, accessibility, and transparency through its innovative approach and efforts to make its collection publicly accessible. By doing so, Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen, challenges the traditional notion of an art museum and whom it is meant for. Visitors can experience its art collections, conservation practices, and the concept of an open city storage in a completely novel way.



Photographs of the museums receiving special commendations in 2023



Photo credits: Left: Thackray Museum of Medicine “Normal + Me 2” Photo by David Lindsay / Right: Inner Façade and yard of the Museum, Photo: Luka Qituashvili © Museum of the Tbilisi Museums Union



Photo credits: Left: Whole area of the museum, Photo: Mario Prevolnik © Graz Museum Schlossberg / Right: Heritage in action. Participation local schools Photo: Tine De Wilde © FeliXart Museum



Photo credits: Left: View from the north-east © Abbatiale de Payerne - Rémy Gindroz / Right: Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen by night installation Pipilotti Rist. Photo: Ossip van Duivenbode





ABOUT THE ORGANISER - EUROPEAN MUSEUM FORUM AND THE EUROPEAN MUSEUM OF THE YEAR AWARD

EMYA has proved to be the longest running and most prestigious museum award in Europe and provides an important platform for benchmarking, networking, exchange of reflections, experience and skills across the wider continent of Europe.

The European Museum Forum (EMF) provides the legal and organisational framework for the annual European Museum of the Year Award scheme (EMYA).

Overseen by the European Museum Forum, since 1977 EMYA has been dedicated to promoting innovation and excellence in public quality in museum practice, encouraging networking and exchange of ideas and best practices within the sector. EMF/EMYA works within an overall framework of a commitment to citizenship, democracy and human rights, to sustainability, to bridging cultures and social and political borders.

Museum candidates are either new museums, first opened to the public within the past three (4 years in 2022, 2023 and 2024), or established museums that have renewed their organisation and completed a substantial programme of modernisation and extension of their buildings and galleries.

Over the years the EMYA scheme has developed into a series of different awards, each with their own specific profile.



ABOUT THE HOST – BARCELONA HISTORY MUSEUM | MUHBA

The Barcelona History Museum (MUHBA), which belongs to the Barcelona City Council, is a heritage institution of urban knowledge, polycentric, with museum spaces throughout the city and collections that cover the long history of the city, from the Romans to our time. These heritage spaces support a choral narrative of the urban history of Barcelona that aspires to be relevant both to the citizens of the city itself and to tourists who come from far away. If we are interested in the future, it is worth asking about the choices made in the past.

As a hub for participatory urban knowledge, the museum's program ranges from research and debates to publications, permanent and temporary exhibitions, urban itineraries and educational projects. The museum aspires to be an agora museum and a school museum and works in cooperation with other institutions and citizen associations.

To carry out its mission, the MUHBA adopts a multiscale perspective, from neighbourhoods to the city as a whole and its insertion into the world. In its role as an R&D&I centre in urban history, heritage care and public programming, the museum must be able to disseminate and even export knowledge. The results must be reflected both in the virtual world, understanding the web as a true hub of knowledge, and in museum spaces, face-to-face activities and urban tours.

The Barcelona History Museum (MUHBA) was opened in April 1943. This year, the MUHBA is celebrating the 80th anniversary of its inauguration.



Photo credits

Plaça del Rei © MUHBA – Barcelona History Museum

MUHBA Olivia Artes © MUHBA – Barcelona History Museum

OTHER IMPORTANT SOURCES

[EMYA2023 on the EMF Website](#)

[EMYA – The Awards](#)

[Winners Brochure 2023](#)

[Candidates Brochure 2023](#)

[Barcelona History Museum | MUHBA](#)

[MUHBA's Conference Website](#)

[CoE Museum Prize](#)

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