



9 April 2016

Winner of the European Museum of the Year Award 2016 announced in San Sebastian, Spain

The European Museum of the Year Award (EMYA), organised by the European Museum Forum (EMF), was presented at the 2016 Award Ceremony held in San Sebastian, Spain, in collaboration with TOPIC, Tolosa's International Puppet Centre, on 9 April 2016. This year's ceremony, held for 39th time, was marked by the centenary of Kenneth Hudson, founder of EMYA and EMF.

The Ceremony was attended by over 200 people from 29 European countries.

The results of the 2016 Awards are as follows:

EMYA 2016

The European Museum of the Year Award 2016 goes to POLIN: Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Warsaw, Poland. The museum received the EMYA trophy, *The Egg* by Henry Moore, which it will keep for one year.



In its unique new building situated at the site of a once vibrant Jewish neighbourhood and later the site of the Warsaw Ghetto, the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews presents 1000 years of history of Polish Jews and their contribution to the region and to Europe, from the first settlement to the present time.

The long-shared history between Jewish people and other people of this region of the world is one of a continuously negotiated co-existence through conflict as well as cooperation, integration and assimilation. For very large and very diverse audiences the POLIN now serves as an absorbing place to confront and examine the perpetually relevant questions of how a co-existence, however fraught, can suddenly transfigure into an absolute rupture, into the near eradication of a whole population and destruction of a culture.

The Council of Europe Museum Prize 2016

The Council of Europe Museum Prize and the accompanying trophy, *La femme aux beaux seins* by Joan Miró, goes to the European Solidarity Centre, Gdańsk, Poland.



The European Solidarity Centre is a museum embedded in a larger context of an educational, research and academic centre, an archive, a library and multimedia library, a conference centre and home to a number of NGO's in a monumental new building situated in the symbolically significant neighbourhood of the Gdansk shipyard district, the site of the origins of the Solidarity movement.

The permanent displays comprise a rare, evocative and enticing narrative, dense with information and charged with emotional content, of workers in their work environment, of personal involvement, of an empowerment through solidarity between otherwise powerless people who proved resilient enough to make one of the world's toughest political systems stumble.

It defines itself as a place where history meets the future, and stretches the concept of a museum into a public meeting space focused on citizenship, democracy and solidarity.

The Silletto Prize 2016

The Silletto Prize recognises excellence in working with the local community and involving volunteers. It goes to the Vukovar City Museum, Vukovar, Croatia.

In 1991, during the war in former Yugoslavia, the Eltz castle on the bank of the Danube, that housed the Vukovar City Museum, was almost completely destroyed. Since 1997, after the end of the war, the museum, which had existed as a museum in exile, has been an active force in reconstructing social and cultural life in Vukovar. Barely 17 years after the end of the armed conflict, the Vukovar Museum presents tragedies of the past as things to be avoided in future, not in a spirit of revenge or glorifying military action, but concentrated on people's suffering and the need for peace-keeping.

The Kenneth Hudson Award 2016

The Kenneth Hudson Award is given in recognition of the most unusual and daring achievement that challenges common perceptions of the role of museums in society. It goes to Micropia, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

This unique and original museum presents, in an elegant and engaging exhibition, the world of microbial life. In order to show its living collections to the public, new techniques of shared and projected microscopy have been developed, and carefully designed didactic elements impart information in a

witty and effective manner. Integral to the success of the principal display is the biological laboratory staffed by volunteers and professional scientists working in a space fully visible to the visitor.

EMYA 2016 Judging Panel Special Commendations

The following museums have received Special Commendations:

Museum of Bibracte, Mont Beuvray, France (Special Commendation for Sustainability)

The museum, focused on the Celtic civilisation, is committed to environmental and social sustainability promoting smart management of the natural site, preserving landscapes, prioritizing low-energy equipment and developing projects for long-term employment in certain types of work, with a programme of activities aimed at local community.

The Archaeological Museum of Tegea, Tegea, Greece

Located in the heart of ancient Arcadia, the museum uses the rise of the *polis*, the city-state, as its central theme; it has placed the visitor at the centre of its thinking with integrated, state-of-the-art electronics, offering a coherent interpretive strategy and a clearly structured narrative.

BZ ´18– ´45. One Monument, One City, Two Dictatorships: permanent exhibition within the Monument to Victory, Bolzano, Italy

The exhibition reintegrates a controversial monument, which has long served as the focal point of battles over politics, culture, and regional identity. The project is a highly courageous and professional initiative to promote humanism, tolerance and democracy.

National Military Museum, Soest, The Netherlands

The museum, avoiding a mere militaristic approach, proposes a more social view of military intervention appealing to the visitors' intelligence and reflection. In presenting and explaining the moral dilemmas inherent in its subject matter, the museum addresses current issues and concerns, and exceeds visitor expectations in every way.

The Information Age Galleries, The Science Museum, London, United Kingdom

The museum traces the development of contemporary communication technology and its applications in civil society, scientific research, military affairs, as well as its social, political and economic impacts. The personal stories interwoven with the grand themes of scientific advances make this at once a very humane and scientifically authoritative exhibition.

The Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, United Kingdom

This university art museum has completely re-imagined itself as a beautifully displayed art collection in a new series of galleries perfectly wedded to a traditional 19th-century museum building. Elegant design, thoughtful and attractive architecture and meticulous attention to detail mark this museum of modest size as a beacon of elegance and intellectual sophistication.

[Notes for Editors]

European Museum Forum

The European Museum Forum (EMF) is an independent not-for-profit organisation. As a charitable company registered in the UK, it is dedicated to promoting innovation in museum practice and encouraging exchange of best practice and ideas across Europe. The Forum operates under the auspices of the Council of Europe and is involved in far-ranging activities throughout the cultural field. It is one of the leading organisations in Europe for developing the public quality of museums and has achieved recognition through 39 years of providing its service.

EMF recognises the value of public engagement in museums. It fosters excellence through a scheme of annual awards of which the European Museum of the Year Award (EMYA) and the Council of Europe Museum Prize are the main awards. The scheme also includes the Kenneth Hudson Award, the Silletto Prize and special commendations awarded at the discretion of the Judging Panel.

EMF stimulates networking and develops projects to foster not only excellence in museum practice but also exchange of knowledge, information and good relations between museum professionals, volunteers, patrons and supporters.

www.europeanmuseumforum.org

The TOPIC, Tolosa's International Puppet Center

EMYA 2016 Ceremony was hosted by the Tolosa's International Puppet Center, Siletto Prize winner in 2012.

TOPIC is the Tolosa Puppets International Centre. Opened in November 2009, it is a singular, attractive, interesting project with an emphasis on imagination, innovation and originality. It is the only integral centre for the art of puppetry in Europe.

As a comprehensive centre, TOPIC has also become a meeting point for puppeteers from all over the world. A place to learn, perform, do research, produce, and share experiences, information, reflections and to work in a, comfortable, functional, well-equipped, avant-garde environment.

TOPIC is available to everyone who shares the prospects of developing, promoting and perfecting the art of puppetry, from traditional to avant-garde; a place open for interaction with other fields of art. Combining documentation, research, exhibition, education, live performances and worldwide networking, TOPIC appeals to both, children and adults, as well as to the special audiences, who have become its enthusiastic public but also the active participants and volunteers in its programme events. TOPIC was winner of the Silletto Prize in 2012.

<http://www.topictolosa.com/>