



European Museum Academy

**On Thursday 19 September 2013 in the city of Bologna, on the occasion of The Learning Museum Project International Conference, the European Museum Academy will present its Prize to the Europeana Foundation.**

**The event will be held under the patronage of the Mayor of Bologna.**

### **Motivation for giving the EMA Prize to Europeana**

*Europeana* is a European-funded initiative which provides free access to the trusted sources of more than 2,200 cultural institutions across Europe: museums, archives, libraries and audio-visual collections.

In the present context of the rapid evolution of ICT, which can be defined as the 'digital era', museums are no longer stand-alone organisations. The digital dimension of museums and their interaction with the internet which amplifies enormously the potential audience which can be engaged in museums' activities is the most important challenge for museums in the information age. After years of debate it is now accepted that more than a thread for physical objects, digital objects originated by museums represent an opportunity in a society where contents are widely distributed and people are offered great opportunities to participate in the building of the museum narrative. Museum collections on the web add a new environment to the contemporary life of heritage: the experience of visiting exhibitions in a three-dimensional space is supplemented (inside and outside museums) by several forms of digital interaction. Digitized objects are more than 'copies of': they make the museum wider, more complex and more engaging. Virtual museums make available millions of objects currently not exhibited for shortage of space, but more fundamentally they can enrich the public meaning of heritage through people's memories and interpretations. In this complex process, museums are fully engaged in a transition which implies a conceptual and methodological revolution.

The experience of *Europeana* has offered so far important opportunities of visibility and accessibility to several collections as well as tools to stimulate the active participation of users. The very idea of a 'virtual museum' has been better defined and enriched by the results achieved by *Europeana*. Thanks to *Europeana Professional* librarians, curators and archivists share their digital experiences. Digital data are not just available on line. Staff members of *Europeana* also use them for - often interactive - virtual exhibitions as showcases of the content in many languages.

*Europeana* is dynamically involved in a context whose cultural, technological, political and economic horizons are rapidly changing. *Europeana* has also changed, and its evolving identity is maintained through a continuous realignment with new constraints and contemporary challenges. Examples are projects like '*Europeana Fashion*' and '*Europeana Creative*', which are outlining innovative relationship between cultural institutions and creative industries.

*Europeana* is projecting itself into the cultural landscape of tomorrow, through a wide and constant dialogue with its network, cultural institutions and new cultural actors, like Wikipedia. *Europeana* is searching its path in the digital world by using new tools, finding new partners and experimenting innovative models of participation. This daring and stimulating vision is the heritage of *Europeana* – it is something which should be shared, endorsed and actively sustained.

[www.europeana.eu](http://www.europeana.eu) [www.theeuropeanlibrary.org](http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org)

### **Rationale for establishing the EMA Prize**

The EMA Prize has been established with the aim of recognising the outstanding results of organisations, researchers and cultural institutions in creating pioneering museums or producing studies and carrying on projects of European relevance which are destined to influence the development of museological discourse at the international level.

It is an award given by experts with a proven European background to a museum or an institution which displays outstanding museological expertise, or to a person whose contribution to museums studies or museums projects is likely to change the course of museum thinking or museum practice, nationally and internationally. The EMA Prize, which is held by the winner for one year and is not necessarily presented every year, consists of a piece of contemporary sculpture by the Swiss artist, Etienne Krähenbühl (1953- ) and is given by the EMA Board on the basis of proposals submitted by its Pool of Experts, National Representatives, Institutional Supporters or other groups that are involved in EMA activities during the year. The winner of the first edition of the European Museum Academy Prize (2011) was the Galileo Galilei Museum in Florence.

[www.europeanmuseumacademy.eu](http://www.europeanmuseumacademy.eu)

