

## The Dutch Open Air Museum, Arnhem, winner of the 2021 Children in Museums Award

On Friday 12 November, in an online ceremony during the Hands On! Conference in Vienna the results of the 2021 Children in Museums Award were announced. The judges were delighted to give the Award to the Dutch Open Air Museum's *Restart* programme, which examines the reasons for immigration and brings to children's attention the reality of coming to a new country, with its frustrations and disappointments as well as its opportunities. 34 museums took part in the competition from 16 countries, with a shortlist of 12 finalists. This is the ninth time this Award has been handed out.

The winner receives a cash prize of 5,000 Euros and holds for one year a bronze statue of Miffy, the world-famous children's character, created by Dick Bruna. The sculptor is Marc Bruna, Dick Bruna's son.

### Background of the Award

The Children's Museum Award was established in 2011 by the European Museum Academy and Hands On! International Association of Children in Museums to enhance the recognition of excellence in the specific sector of international children's museums. In 2014 the name of the Award was changed to the Children in Museums Award, to reflect the wider range of provision for children in today's museums. Applications are welcomed from children's museums and from education, children departments in museums and science centres, both long-established and recently opened.

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### Background information

Summary from the Judges' Report:

The judges praised the Dutch Open Air Museum's *Restart* programme for schoolchildren aged 11-15, concerning universal experiences of immigrants when coming to a new country. After the first concept was mapped out the museum invited school classes to come in to pilot the game. Questionnaires and interviews helped to find out what the pupils liked and disliked, and necessary adjustments were made to the game. The programme begins at school, examining the main reasons for immigration. Young people need to be able to decide things for themselves, and students are tested on their knowledge, persistence and adaptability, as well as on their ability to be self-motivating. In the museum they are provided with iPads, they get basic instructions and must interact with museum staff, visitors and each other. It is not common practice for school groups to mix with other visitors. The iPad with its carefully constructed game structure, guides them through the park like a 'Gamemaster'. The assignments are varied; sometimes they need to be at a certain place at a designated time to meet someone, at other times they can calculate and decide for themselves which assignments are required to gain enough points. Real immigrants experience frustrations and disappointments, and the museum made a conscious decision in consultation with teachers and migrants to make rejection an integral part of the game. Only by experiencing these emotions for themselves can students truly appreciate the situations faced by migrants.

### 2021 Short-Listed Museums

Museum of Technology, Helsinki, Finland  
EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum, Dublin, Ireland  
National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland  
NEMO Science Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
Dutch Open Air Museum, Arnhem, The Netherlands  
Museum, Den Haag, The Netherlands  
Naturalis Biodiversity Center, Leiden, The Netherlands  
Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, The Netherlands  
National Museum, Stockholm, Sweden  
Nordic Museum, Stockholm, Sweden  
People's History Museum, Manchester, United Kingdom

### Previous Winners of the Award

- 2012** Tropenmuseum Junior, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- 2013** Please Touch Museum, Philadelphia, USA
- 2014** National Gallery of Denmark (SMK), Copenhagen, Denmark
- 2015** Lifetime Achievement Awards: Boston Children's Museum, USA and ZOOM Children's Museum, Vienna, Austria
- 2016** GeoFort, Herwijnen, The Netherlands
- 2017** National Museum of Science and Technology, Stockholm, Sweden
- 2018** The Keppel Centre for Art Education, National Gallery Singapore
- 2019** Ker ImagiNation, Dakar, Senegal

### The European Museum Academy (EMA)

EMA is a non-profit Foundation established to reflect museums at the international level, to promote research on museography and museology as a high cultural activity, to provide constructive criticism and promote discussion on new exhibitions and museums, and to disseminate museological knowledge and ideas among members of the profession. It aims to promote the conception and development of new as well as of traditional museums as tools of social change. EMA co-operates with Hands On! International Association of Children in Museums for this Award. European Museum Academy members of the Jury of the Award are also members of EMA's Pool of Experts.

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

### Hands On! International Association of Children in Museums

Hands On! International Association of Children in Museums is an international professional organisation representing and advocating for its non-profit member institutions. It actively stimulates the creation and development of children's museums (including science centres, large collections based institutions serving young visitors) and more space for cultural and educational activities for children and young people. Hands On! supports the important role of children's museums as centres where play inspires creativity, informal and lifelong learning.

[www.hands-on-international.net](http://www.hands-on-international.net)

