

# The Children in Museums Award

The first decade

Children in  
Museums  
Award

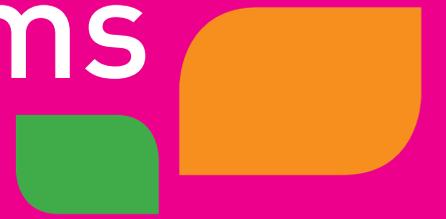




## **The Children in Museums Award**

The first decade

# Children in Museums Award



## Partner organisations



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. EMA members of the Jury of the Award are also members of the EMA Pool of Experts.

President: Andreja Rihter

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



Hands On! International Association of Children in Museums is a non-profit network of museum professionals with its office located in Graz, Austria. Currently the organization consists of approximately 120 members from 40 different countries. These range from large organizations to committed individual museum professionals.

Hands On! aims to make museums and science centres relevant places for children, to professionalize the field of children's museums and to support the exchange of good practices and know-how among museum professionals in this area.

President: Joerg Ehtreiber

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

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## From Children's Museum Award to Children in Museums Award

Annemies Broekgaarden, Wim van der Weiden

The growing maturity of a relatively new field for the museum profession inspired the European Museum Academy (EMA) and Hands On! International Association of Children in Museums (HO!) to establish the Children's Museum Award in 2011.

The two partner organisations had noticed the wide variety of initiatives all over the world to encourage children to visit museums and find creative and new ways to learn by play. That is why they wanted to enhance the recognition of excellence in the sector of children's museums.

How can museums be inspirational, challenging and attractive to children? That is the basic question. How do you connect children in an exciting way to heritage, art and science in a museum?

Museums must be places where children can discover, learn and experience, in a creative and informal environment. The cognitive and emotional level of the world by children must be the starting point for the design of a learning experience. In the present world museums cannot lack a child centred policy with carefully thought-out concepts and programmes which are constantly monitored and improved.

The 10 international judges of the Award have all this in mind when they make their decisions. During the first editions of the competition, we found out that the notion of a Children's Museum Award was too limited. Many museums have a children's section. So, 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 and science centres.

In the ten years of its existence the Children in Museums Award has promoted the sharing of experiences among museums, inspiring one another. A collection of successful practices came into being which can be used, adopted by other museums or can be at least a source of inspiration. We herewith express a big thank you to Mercis bv. Their continuous support for this Award makes inspiring, creative and innovative learning spaces for children visible.



Winner 2019

Ker ImagiNation, Dakar, Senegal

# Celebrating the First Decade of the Children in Museums Award: Future Challenges

Gail Lord

8 Jean Piaget, the great scholar of child development, expressed it all so simply: "Play is the work of childhood". The Children in Museums Award celebrates the visionary work of museums who create places and spaces where children can focus on their proper work—play.

It's worth remembering that children's museums and children's activities in museums date back to a time when child labour was the norm in what we today think of as the global North (the first children's museum, the Brooklyn Children's Museum, was founded in 1899). Today, child labour is still the norm in many parts of the world. Children in museums can be seen, at least in part, as restoring play to childhood.

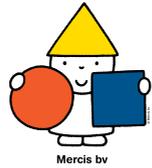
This award – and I am so very honoured to have been one of the advisors at its inception – rewards the creativity of educators, designers, artists, community volunteers and advocates for childhood. The result has been to stimulate a flowering of quality in children's museums and in spaces for children in all types of museums.

At their origin, children's museums promoted the idea of hands-on experience in a museum world that was not only hands-off but out of reach with display cases perched on plinths suited to standing adult height. The explanations were typed on small labels in language suited to experts. The message was clear – children, elders, persons with disabilities and non-experts are not welcome. Early children's museums were places of wonder with 'handling collections' that children of all ages and adults could explore, storytelling, games, arts, crafts, and fun.

By the 1960s, hands-on science learning became the dominant mode of another new kind of museum—the science centre which often used replicas to provide a hands-on learning environment including scientific experiments. Science centres provided science learning for older children who had arrived at a stage of cognition (here is Piaget again) while children's museums focused more on younger children and encouraging learning through the senses.

The subject of children in museums is a reminder of the distinction between children and childhood. A child is a person of a young age while childhood is a culture that is created by larger social and economic forces. In many places, war, poverty, violence and exploitation lead to suffering and death of children and the destruction of childhood. Climate change threatens childhood everywhere. The commercialized culture of childhood has itself become a threat to children especially as a result of 24/7 media promoting entertainment, food, violence, and consumerism that is harmful to the health and well-being of the young. Childhood is in danger. And when childhood is in danger so are children. This is challenging for the museum sector which is increasingly dependent on commercial sponsorship for its survival. Spaces for children in museums are more important than ever for restoring childhood to children as well as restoring play to childhood.

9 These threats to childhood have created new demands on children's museums and in museums that engage with children. In the past the focus was on exploring the material world through the senses. This reflected the culture of museums which were defined as being about 'real' objects and authentic experience. In the future the challenge will be to explore values such as fairness, equality, caring, inclusion, anti-racism and democracy. Restoring childhood to children also means providing the opportunity for children to create childhood for themselves. This just might be the biggest challenge of all.



## Dick Bruna's mission

Marja Kerkhof

**Why is the Children in Museums Award so important?**

**Dick Bruna believed that, to be happy as adults, children need to feel safe and fulfilled in their early childhood. They can then step out into life with a suitcase of wonderful memories.**

**Being able to imagine, read, draw and do handicrafts, see theatre and films, sing and play all contribute to a child's development and happiness.**

**A museum for children or a dedicated department in a general museum can encompass all of these activities and experiences.**

**How great to be able to go to such a place regularly as a child.**

**To promote the creation of environments like this all over the world, in memory of Dick Bruna, Mercis supports the Children in Museums Award.**

**The trophy, which the winner holds for one year, is a bronze statue of Miffy by Marc Bruna, Dick Bruna's younger son.**

**The award was launched ten years ago and we hope it will be presented for many years to come as more and more museum environments for children are created all over the world.**

**If we inspire and support each other, I am sure this will happen.**

## Can children's museums survive the 21st century?

Claudia Haas, Petra Zwaka

For almost three quarters of a century children's museums were the only museum type that exclusively welcomed and served children and their families. Reflecting and adapting to the constant changes in society and their surrounding communities, as well as embracing the newest pedagogical methods, they were highly successful throughout the 20th century.

By the beginning of the 21st century however, their unique position has significantly changed. They were and are confronted with a cultural landscape in which children are a much-desired audience by all museums.

Today it is a familiar picture to see children sitting with their drawing pads in front of famous paintings or using/working on interactive installations with their parents in science museums. School groups have access to the newest equipment in labs of natural history museums. Creative spaces for encounter, children's paths through exhibitions or even integrated children's museums are now common state of the art.

While action and interaction were once the distinctive and unique feature in the concept of children's museums, the hands-on principle now seems to belong to the general repertoire of museums, regardless of its mandate or provenance.

Since classical museums have started targeting a young audience, children's museums have lost their prior exclusivity. This poses the question of the relevance of children's and youth museums today and in the future.

When and why has this change of paradigm in museums taken place?

In the last quarter of the 20th century children were discovered as potential audiences. At this time major reductions in public funding have put museums under pressure to demonstrate 'healthy visitor numbers'. An increase in audiences were seen as indicators to prove that museums were successful. By inviting schoolchildren, they were able to open up to new communities. This, furthermore, helped to show the museum's relevance in communities with rapidly changing demographics.

When serving new audiences museums had to adapt to these new target groups by offering action and interaction in their exhibitions, workshops, and child friendly programmes. Methods previously exclusively used by children's museums were copied.

How can children's museums compete with this development, especially as other museums are better equipped financially and in terms of staffing, offering highly budgeted blockbuster exhibitions as well as more advanced facilities and better equipped workshop spaces?

What are the consequences for children's museums?

These new developments can best be illustrated by the winners of the Children in Museums Award, which was established in 2011, celebrating the best children's museum worldwide. First only called the Children's Museum Award it quickly adapted to the new situation in 2014 when it changed its name to the Children in Museums Award by opening up to applicants from all museum types to reflect the wider range of provision for children in today's museums.

Over the last years a significant shift in the structure of the competing museums must be noticed.

The number of applications from children's museums have significantly decreased while those from other museums have increased. Representatives of practically all museum types from science museums, natural history museums, historical museums to even art museums are now competing with traditional children's museums.

The diversity of the museums, in terms of their financial and organizational potential, made it hard for the jury to judge small, underfunded children's museums which were competing with big national or regional institutions.

Objective criteria that gave small institutions with more limited resources a chance to compete had to be defined.

The jury agreed on the following criteria:

- Innovation
- Creating immersive learning environments
- Embracing and reacting to the Digital Revolution
- Creative ways to use collections
- Addressing contemporary issues
- Enforcing social impact
- Participation

**Innovation.** Being innovative was a hallmark of the children's museum movement since its early days, but what was once a breathtaking idea soon became mainstream. Interactive installations as well as programmes offering self-directed learning can nowadays be found in most science and natural history museums as well as historical museums.

So, what are the new creative ideas implemented in museums that can be judged as being innovative?

Creativity, action and interaction, using artistic-aesthetic methods, playing with all the senses and connecting this with intercultural and global learning are here a few of the key words associated with innovative museums today which put children in the centre. But above all, it is the risk taking, the leaving of the beaten paths, trying to be pioneers, changing of the paradigm and the serving as a model to other institutions that convinced the jury to judge a museum as innovative.

**Immersive learning environments** aim to turn the museum visit to a personal very emotional experience. Creative environments are able to completely captivate children encouraging them to use all their senses and stimulate curiosity and learning. The scenography conveys a message as well as a content. Only the best of designs and architecture should be implemented in children's exhibitions and areas. The importance of creating beautiful aesthetical environments has immensely increased within the last years as applications for the prize have proven. Most of the museums use young artists, also well-known designers, and architects to design the exhibition areas. The quality has therefore much improved compared to former times.

**Bridging the analogue and the digital world** is one of the most important tasks of children's programmes. The concepts are aiming at helping children as digital natives to learn healthy ways to use their devices and to better understand the difference between the real and digital world.

Convincing concepts in children's museums help them to change their role from user and consumer to creator and programmer by for example making trick films, podcasts, films. Digital programmes in museums ought to differ from programmes that can be played by young people from home. Preferably they should include teamwork and bridging analogue and digital creation.

Creative ways to use collections has become an important criteria as more and more classical museums with huge collections are serving children and families. Radical approaches on how to engage a young audience with museum collection have come up in recent years. Whereas traditional museums are providers of information that visitors merely absorb, these museums reversed their roles.

Young audiences are invited to investigate and research collections, find their own stories and interpretations.

**Addressing contemporary issues through daring and demanding themes.** As the youth of the early 21st century is becoming more and more political, exhibition themes should be chosen according to the interest of the young generation: ecology, climate change, pollution, migration, and pandemics.

Such exhibitions should help these audiences to distinguish between facts and fake news, stimulate critical thinking and have a more global view on contemporary issues.

**Enforcing social impact, being meaningful for people's lives.** Best practice museums focus on the question of how to respond to the needs of different communities. Through partnerships with community-based organizations welcoming programmes are developed that keep in mind the special needs of this potential audience.

These museums see themselves as places of encounter where families can spend quality time in a safe environment. They serve as meeting places for old and new citizens enhancing cultural exchange and learning from each other. Adding new narratives that awaken curiosity in different perspectives and enrich children's lives.

**Participation, children as experts.** It is a very radical approach to define the role of children in museums. They cannot simply be seen as small visitors who must be safely guided through galleries. On the contrary, they are identified as competent young people engaging with the institutions through their ideas and creativity. Museums have implemented advisory boards of young people, invited them to write labels, or even co-create exhibitions and try out the role of curator.

These programmes are normally very demanding for the museum staff. They need a museum's management open and ready to take risks and who also trusts the competence of children, as well as being patient and taking the necessary time.

The many exceptional applications from children's museums, as well as from children's areas and programmes in other museums that have been sent in over the past ten years, have met these criteria.

The question arises as to how children's museums can survive in this contested museum landscape when more and more museums focus on families and children.

Their chance of survival is to remember their strengths instead of constantly looking for new paradigms.

In contrast to traditional museums, children's museums have the chance to focus and serve exclusively one specific target group. These institutions know best their communities' needs, by sensing changes in society and the lives of children and then reacting accordingly. Children's and youth museums have a long history of dealing with demanding themes like death, illness, sexuality, queer lives and migration. In their opinion no theme is too difficult for young people, when addressed in the right way. The staff must have the sensitivity to transmit the topics in a child friendly form in a safe and inspiring environment.

Thus, the children's museum of the 21st century must be a space for social interaction and intercultural dialogue, which involves itself in the way social issues, such as exclusion, increasing poverty and life in a migration society shaped by diversity are dealt with. Here, it is not about constructing a children's world, but about taking children and young people seriously, with the goal of helping them become tolerant, respectful citizens.

To defend their unique position they must, however

- offer best quality:
- expand the programmes to different age groups
- try to reach out and involve underserved communities
- strengthen their relationship with the educational system
- seek new pathways to widen the subject matter
- take risks and focus on contemporary issues
- be self-critical
- permanently rethink and change methods
- reflect on their mission and replace it if needed
- and never be satisfied with their work, but constantly try to improve it.

In the future, children's museums will need to realize and to defend their potential in the light of global and economic crises in order to assert themselves and prove their worth as essential cornerstones in the cultural and museum landscape of their respective countries. The question is how. This question can only be answered through the active interchange of the people involved, locally, nationally and internationally.



# The Award

## The selection process

The Award is judged by an independent jury of 10 experts in many disciplines within the museum field who all contribute their time as volunteers. As a rule, they serve for a term of three years, which is renewable once. Occasionally judges have been serving for longer or shorter periods.

Applicants are asked to fill out the application form and send supporting documents such as pictures, films or promotional and communication material.

The jury rates each applicant on the basis of their application and supporting materials against the CMA award criteria. The entries with the highest scores are selected for the annual CMA shortlist.

In a second step all shortlisted candidates are visited and assessed by two judges. In the course of a jury meeting, the judges present the reports of their visits and the jury selects a winner. The winner is announced in the course of a festive ceremony, where all shortlisted candidates are invited and presented.

Due to Covid 19, the 2020 visiting in person could not take place and the award was put on hold. The call was re-opened in 2021 and the shortlisted candidates from 2020 and 2021 were merged into one list. Visits were carried out online to select the 2020-2021 winner.

## The Award criteria

Like the Award name – from Children’s Museum Award to Children in Museums Award – the award criteria have slightly changed over the years.

However, regardless of the wording, the focus of the jury has always been on what is understood as ‘public quality’, that is, the museum’s commitment to improving children’s experiences, growth, learning, well-being, to encourage their curiosity and stimulate their imagination. This should be reflected not only in the museum mission, but also in the museum environment, atmosphere, programming, in how the museum interprets the needs of its target groups and how it adapts to their expectations, also taking into consideration their social and educational background.

The criteria now used by the jury and stated on the award application form are:

### **Innovation**

Showing new pathways to enlarge subject matters, new findings on art/history/science education, on imagination and creativity, developing suitable learning

strategies and working methods, building of new audiences, contributing to contemporary discussions on learning theories.

Showing new ideas for using collections in children's programmes/of making collections accessible and participatory for a young audience; new ways of using technologies to interact with the content, innovative ways of participation as a strategy, new forms of actively engaging young visitors, innovative environment of exhibition, the exhibition space as a special physical and/or emotional form of experience.

#### **Quality of learning and involvement of children**

Addressing issues and ideas that are contemporary, provocative, emotional; taking into account the cognitive, social and emotional development of children; engaging as many senses as possible, using interactivity to encourage understanding; employing effective interpretation techniques; using free-choice and open-ended learning methods; creating an overall environment and atmosphere which are conducive to learning; using a participatory approach, involving children in the conception and design, testing and evaluation of programmes and exhibitions.

#### **Inclusion and social impact**

Evidence of programmes or initiatives that take social responsibility for the challenges of the social and cultural realities of a diverse society today. Focus on inclusion and diversity work within the museum. Interactive exhibits/programmes that create meaningful experiences for *all* visitors, working together, across multiple identities. Outreach activities, active role in the community/neighbourhood, evidence of social impact.

#### **Information and communication**

Informative website for the respective target audiences, accompanying digital and printed materials with age-appropriate design and content, sustainable learning materials and thematic toolkits for schools, teachers, parents and all interested parties.

#### **Staff**

Commitment to children at managerial level, good management and adequate staffing, well-trained, diverse and experienced facilitators with opportunities of continuous professional development throughout their career.

## Winners 2012-2021

- 2012** | **Tropenmuseum Junior**  
Amsterdam NL
- 2013** | **Please Touch Museum**  
Philadelphia USA
- 2014** | **National Gallery of Denmark**  
Copenhagen DK
- 2015** | **Lifetime Achievement Awards were awarded to:**  
**ZOOM Kindermuseum**  
Vienna, Austria  
**Boston Children's Museum**  
Boston, USA
- 2016** | **GeoFort**  
Herwijnen NL
- 2017** | **National Museum of Science & Technology**  
Stockholm SE
- 2018** | **Keppel Centre for Art Education National Gallery**  
Singapore SG
- 2019** | **Ker ImagiNation**  
Dakar, Senegal
- 2020-21** | **Dutch Open Air Museum**  
Arnhem NL

The texts describing the Children in Museums Award have been drawn mainly from the applications submitted by the museums at the time of applying. Therefore, information could not be fully updated and does not reflect the museums as they are today, with the exception of the Boston Children's Museum, ZOOM Kindermuseum, Keppel Centre for Art Education and Dutch Open Air Museum, which have kindly contributed to the publication by answering questions about their work and the impact the Award has had on it.

## Tropenmuseum Junior Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Photos: © Ivar Pel



2012

Tropenmuseum Junior is part of the Tropenmuseum, an ethnographic museum founded in 1864 to show Dutch overseas possessions. In the course of time, the focus of the Tropenmuseum changed from just documenting the cultures of the colonial possessions of The Netherlands, to those of other continents: Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean. Until 2014 the Tropenmuseum was part of the Royal Tropical Institute. Now it is part of the National Museum of World Cultures.

Being part of a museum that focuses on world cultures, the Tropenmuseum Junior (TMJ)'s aim is to contribute to knowledge, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, to make the unfamiliar familiar, so that children discover differences and similarities, reflect upon their own perspectives and grow to be tolerant and respectful individuals and world citizens. Its main target groups are children 6-13 and families.

Every three and a half years, the Tropenmuseum Junior sets up an exhibition which is a truly interactive and immersive experience for children. The museum allows itself two years to research and design a new exhibition and to accumulate the necessary resources. Well in advance, museum staff travel to the country which will be portrayed in the exhibition to meet people, buy artefacts – which will then become hands-on exhibits in the displays and be used to recreate the environment and the atmosphere of the country – collect stories and start a process not only of collaboration, but also of co-creation of content with local people and experts.

Every exhibition has a theme and over the years different countries and cultures have been portrayed through a special focus.

In the 450 m<sup>2</sup> which make up the TMJ space, the culture of a country comes alive through a condensed version of reality, with the recreation of buildings, streets, squares and interiors of different kinds, but most of all through the active participation of children and the involvement of mediators, who have roots in the culture on exhibit, which adds to the authenticity of the experience. This staff are personally involved with the exhibition subjects and they add valuable knowledge and a personal touch to the programme. They play different characters, tell stories, dance, play music, guide and inspire the children to participate actively. They are trained in the use of collections, in combining stories and activities, in entering into a dialogue with children.

Children in turn, take an active part in the exhibition by performing a number of tasks: they interact with the mediators and with each other, dress up, dance, sing, learn how to cook. In one and a half hour they immerse themselves into another culture and learn by doing.



## The judges said

“The Tropenmuseum Junior fulfils all the criteria requirements to be a candidate but exceeds the other candidates because of its high degree of creativity and effectiveness in the design of its programmes. For years the museum’s working method has been a model to be followed by many other museums and museum professionals worldwide who are interested in allowing their museum to meet the visitors and to make them feel part of the exhibition, making their visit an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

The Tropenmuseum Junior’s exhibitions exemplify how research, museum methodology, and design production techniques can be integrated into an interactive experience.

With the objectives of addressing a targeted multicultural audience, the participatory experience it provides is of great pedagogical value that also respects the represented culture in question.

Dealing with the challenges of a diverse society, Tropenmuseum Junior poses the following questions: how do we define culture and cultural identity in a world of diversity and migration, and how can we match a complex and abstract subject such as ‘cultural identity’ to a child’s perception? Working on answering these questions form the main focus in reaching the museum’s main goal: to offer children the experience that culture and identity are by no means static, that transformation is all around us.”

## Please Touch Museum Philadelphia, Pa, USA

Photos: © Please Touch  
Museum



# 2013

Founded by Montessori educator Portia Sperr with the mission of enriching the lives of children by creating learning opportunities through play, the museum is very much a part of the Philadelphia region's arts and culture community. It is able to provide a full range of exhibitions and programmes which provide children of all ages with hands-on introductory learning experiences in the arts, sciences, and humanities.

Even complex subjects, such as financial literacy and healthy living are portrayed in a way that is engaging and comprehensible for a young audience, an approach firmly rooted in the museum's philosophy of learning through play.

Accessibility is one of the Museum's defining attributes. Please Touch tries to mitigate or abolish all barriers that prevent Philadelphia's families from experiencing its playful learning and to make facilities, programmes, and services accessible to all children and families, irrespective of socio-economic background or level of ability.

Programming initiatives benefit families of children with physical, intellectual, and sensory disabilities, reach out to new audiences and form bonds with new partners. The outreach programmes represent a sustained investment in the Parkside community, a commitment to forming strong bonds within the neighborhood and working collaboratively to transform it.

At the time of applying for the CMA, the museum had just opened The Please Touch Playhouse Theatre and started theatre programmes, which provided children with their first experience of the performing arts. The theatre was a key component of the overall Museum experience, providing opportunities for playful learning and imagination and staged daily performances of original and highly interactive theater shows. Audiences were encouraged to participate in the shows, which were specially written and adapted by in-house theatre staff and were inspired by myths, modern and classic children's books and original stories.

In addition to the rotation of main stage theater shows, the Museum developed a number of theater-based gallery programmes that enhanced the Museum experience and the level of visitors' engagement.



## The judges said

“The commitment of the Please Touch Museum to children aged 1-7 is particularly remarkable. All too often the capacity of very young children to absorb information and experiences is overlooked by museums. The early childhood years are the most developmentally important in a person’s lifespan. Please Touch has taken on the challenge as one of the first children’s museums in the USA to cater for children aged seven and younger. It strives to be a resource, locally and nationally, for early childhood education and it advocates the value of playful learning.

The theatre programme is particularly useful in this regard and learning by participation and play means that the memory retains

more information than mere passive observation. Live theatre provides an excellent opportunity for aesthetic, cultural, and behavioural child development.

Please Touch Museum receives the Children’s Museum Award this year for the many efforts and contributions it has made in support of children, for its commitment to designing and implementing highly interactive educational programmes that are open-ended, process-driven and child-directed, and for its outreach programmes which benefit families of children with physical, intellectual, and sensory disabilities.”

## Statens Museum for Kunst (National Gallery of Art) Copenhagen, Denmark

Photos © Statens  
Museum for Kunst



2014

Statens Museum for Kunst (SMK) is Denmark's national gallery, with an impressive collection of European, French and Danish art from the Middle Ages until today.

Since 1998 the museum has had permanent zones for children's exhibitions and workshops, including a drawing room, which is one out of two particularly family-friendly zones.

SMK's overall vision for children and young people is to boost their opportunities in life by means of art and creativity in the belief that encountering a varied selection of art and culture will expand the potential range of their own experience of the world and all it has to offer.

The main target group of the children's exhibitions at SMK is the six to twelve-year olds. The exhibitions take their starting point in the museum's own wide collection of artworks, supplemented by a few loans. The children's exhibitions at SMK are innovative due to the subjects chosen, and the children's role in the development process.

When applying for the CMA, SMK had recently opened a new children exhibition called 'Freedom!', also to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard was not necessarily a champion of freedom himself in the political sense, but a thinker able to wonder at the world, to ask questions, make choices clear, and be critical of accepted norms. Instead of unquestioningly celebrating freedom, the exhibition challenged the notion itself. As part of the development process, the museum involved more than a hundred children talking about, writing about and drawing pictures of freedom and its opposite. Some of the children were reached and engaged at their schools, others were invited to the museum. Those who visited the museum were asked to wander around the collections, pointing out works of art that they felt had something to do with freedom or the lack of it. Children were also invited to test how suitable different objects were for prompting discussion about freedom and formulate questions that could accompany the artworks. All this empirical material formed the basis for the exhibition design and the choice of exhibits. For examples, swings with sound became a significant spatial element in the exhibition. They were inspired by the children's drawings and statements.

The museum addresses subjects that might be difficult, strange, wondrous, and challenging for children, working together with the target group. Previous to the exhibition on freedom, the museum staged one on death. Part of the exhibition architecture simulated the cave, a place where one can be alone, relax, and think really deep or really small thoughts. Within its simple, yet carefully orchestrated scenography the zone offered a wealth of audio information, film,

props, words, books, questions, maps, etc. This reflection zone brought together opportunities for physical activity and for quiet contemplation in anticipation of a dialogue focused on the works of art.

To create engaging exhibitions on the children's own terms is not always easy at an art museum, originally not designed for children and full of objects one is not allowed to touch. By working with reflection zones (hands-on!) and by using a philosophical approach to the works of art, the museum has succeeded in finding new ways to create spaces and opportunities to talk about complex issues.

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© Statens Museum for Kunst by Marco Evaristi

## The judges said

**“We are unanimous in praising the in-depth and high-quality presentation, materials and programmes, which are unique for an art museum. Children are taken seriously by curators and director, and ideas from the children’s presentation are adapted in the main museum. Complex subjects, well researched, are made accessible to children and offer a unique, surprising and stimulating environment based on the idea of freedom of thought and an original approach. The combination of workshop spaces, exhibition area and drawing room is a unique idea.”**

## Boston Children's Museum Boston, USA

## ZOOM Kindermuseum Vienna, Austria



# 2015

## Two Special Long-Term Achievements

## Boston Children's Museum, Boston, USA

Founded in 1913 by science educators, Boston Children's Museum (BCM) is the second oldest and among the largest children's museums in the world. In the 1960s, BCM pioneered the powerful combination of hands-on exhibition and programme techniques with a laser focus on the needs of the visitors. This focus on the audience served as a catalyst for addressing community needs, learned about through partnerships with major citywide and community-based agencies serving low-income and immigrant children and families. BCM addresses these needs through highly innovative, welcoming programmes.

### Boston Children's Museum Reflection 2022

**What were the main reasons for your applying for the CMA?** Boston Children's Museum applied for the Children in Museums Award to mark its 100th anniversary and to celebrate its role as the second oldest and one of the largest children's museums in the world. Boston Children's Museum's original mission was to prepare young people to grow into responsible, thoughtful citizens through inquiry-based experiential learning, and by developing the habits of mind needed to learn. Since its inception, Boston Children's Museum has been a community-focused organization, attuned to its audience of children and families.

In the 1960s, BCM pioneered the powerful combination of hands-on exhibition and programme techniques paired with a client-centered focus on the interests of visitors and stakeholders. This combination has served as a catalyst for addressing community needs as articulated through partnerships with major citywide and community-based agencies serving low-income and immigrant children and families. BCM has evolved into an international model for innovative community outreach, exhibitions and programmes. The strategies and approaches BCM pioneered over its history have influenced the entire museum field.

In the 21st century, these principles and strategies have translated into building a globally interconnected museum community with the goal of collaborating to address issues critical to children, families, and societies around the world. As never before, these issues require global solutions.

In the end, Boston Children's Museum applied for the Children in Museums Award to enhance engagement with museums worldwide to focus attention on children and families.



**What was the impact of receiving the award? Did it change your way of doing things or your organization?**

The Children in Museums Award contributed to the broadening of the Museum's vision around global community engagement, resulting in an expanded and more inspired view of the role museums can play in society. The Award inspired Boston Children's Museum to learn from a wider sector of museums in order to understand how they engage with their communities, their goals, strategies, and techniques. Boston Children's Museum has always been a learning organization and, since the Award, that learning includes the international community of museums. International engagement is now a core element in how we think and work. Especially during COVID, knowing how museums responded to the global pandemic has been helpful. Boston Children's Museum looks forward to a world in which direct interactions can resume.

**What are the challenges you are facing now and what is your vision for the future with regard to museum education and children in museums?**

Over its 100+ year history, BCM has redefined both what a museum is and how children of all ages and their parents and caregivers may experience public space together. Boston Children's Museum believes the museum community will be addressing the damage done by COVID for years to come. The long-term impact of the pandemic on social-emotional health, learning, family health, and public interactions has been and will be profound. Like other museums, Boston Children's Museum will take years to recover from the financial harm caused by reduced admission revenues. The need for diversified revenue streams was a major lesson from the pandemic. Creating new platforms for engaging with audiences is an ongoing challenge but one that is necessary to fiscal health.

Technology presents major challenges to museums, as children and adults are increasingly living in a virtual world. The pandemic just accelerated this whole move to the virtual. Will Boston Children's Museum's model of hand-on play and learning, an inherently tactile and social experience, remain appealing? Hopefully, museums can be seen as a refuge, an antidote to the virtual screen-based existence of children. It may be that children and families are starved for opportunities to engage with real things and real people, making museum experiences important. Museums continue to struggle with their role in their communities: how to connect, how to stay relevant.

Climate change has created an existential threat to Boston Children's Museum site and facility. Knowledge shared with other museums facing analogous problems is enlightening and propels forward new understanding of what works.

Boston Children's Museum continues to address diversity, equity, and inclusion through a variety of programmes and exhibits. Being part of a global community means sharing insights and potential solutions that are unique to museums.

Finally, engagement with the global museum community has enhanced our empathy with children, families, and societies facing war, global warming, and social inequities. The fate of children around the world is important and relevant to us all.



## ZOOM Kindermuseum, Vienna, Austria

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ZOOM was founded in 1994 as the first children's museum in Austria. Since then, it has become one of Austria's largest cultural institutions for children and influenced the museum culture in Vienna and in Austria at large.

ZOOM focuses on playful communication of knowledge and tries to bring children closer to the phenomena of everyday life, art and science. The interactive exhibitions address highly contemporary themes such as ecology, climate change, financial literacy or the use and problems of plastic and do not avoid difficult or serious issues such as death, or life as a refugee. The exhibitions stimulate children to think critically and to solve problems.

There are a variety of areas within ZOOM Children's Museum: the play and adventure area ZOOM Ocean for children from eight months to six years; the interactive ZOOM Hands-on Exhibition for children from six to twelve years; the creative workshop ZOOM Studio for children from three to twelve years; and the ZOOM Animation Studio media laboratory for children and young people from eight to fourteen years. Additional events such as the Vienna Children's Lectures as part of ZOOM Science, debating clubs and ZOOM Mobile offers, as well as outreach projects, complete the programme. Online offers open up further possibilities to reach children, young people and families, regardless of their geographical location.

### **ZOOM today (from the Mission Statement 2021)**

#### **At ZOOM, all the senses come into play**

"ZOOM Children's Museum is a private association which enables children and young people to engage, playfully and with all their senses, with an array of topics in the fields of art, science and culture. Individual skills and interests are recognised and developed through encounters with art, dialogue with artists and cultural educators, and fun, open ended activities with others..."

**Children and young people in focus.** "At ZOOM Children's Museum, children and young people are recognised and taken seriously as autonomous personalities.

Their experience and their own pace, their skills, rights, perceptions and ideas are valued..."

**Everyone is welcome.** "The central task of ZOOM Children's Museum is to be there for children and young people, as well as for their accompanying adults, regardless of where they come from, which mother tongue they speak or where they live. Ease of access and openness in the offerings are important aspects of the orientation toward visitors..."

**In motion and in dialogue** "Zoom Children's Museum sees itself as a learning, flexible organisation which responds to the changing needs of society and takes account of contemporary concerns. Children and young people bring with them skills that enrich, change and shape ZOOM Children's Museum. Encounters between visitors and museum staff are characterised by reciprocal exchange. Diversity and inclusion are fundamental concerns of the museum, and these should also be optimally reflected in the staff and visitor profile..."

**Variety of programmes and methods.** "The rooms for play, adventure, exhibitions and workshops, and the associated programmes, are designed and developed by artists, architects, designers, educators, scientists and facilitators. This enables visitors in a range of ages and stages of development to enjoy



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aesthetic experiences with all of their senses. The variety of presentation methods makes an integral contribution to children being able to develop their own creativity and acquire knowledge through their own doing, through play and by asking questions.”

**Innovative collection of digital works.** “The ZOOM Children’s Museum Collection is unique: unlike in other museums, the visitors produce the items in the collection themselves. Since 2001, the Children’s Museum has dedicated itself to building up a participatory and purely digital collection of the cartoons and sounds that the children and young people produce in the Animation Studio. The digital exhibits are archived according to museological criteria, and are readable and publicly available in accordance with the applicable copyright laws.”

**ZOOM as a centre of excellence.** “ZOOM Children’s Museum develops its profile on the basis of the diverse skills of its staff and the close cooperation with artists, scientists and educators. The resulting expertise in communication is passed on in the form of consulting and training, and is part of the wider discourse on children’s and youth culture. With the aid of self-evaluation and accompanying research, ZOOM regularly reflects on its own status quo and reviews its own procedures.”



© ZOOM Kindermuseum / eSeL Zoom Exhibition - Alles Holz

## The judges said

“The entries for 2014-2015 were of an extremely high quality and a real testament to the growing maturity of a relatively new field for the museum profession.

Two of the candidates were quite outstanding in their development and inspiration to others, certainly over the four-year history of the Award, but actually, for very much longer. They have, in their different ways, reflected the best developments in museology for children, in education and in communication. They have each made learning a core part of their mission, but they have put children and their needs and interests at the heart of that. They set great store by creativity and are lively and fun to visit. Children are participants and equals in

their programmes. They strive to be relevant and topical and do not shy away from serious and controversial issues, like migration, conflict, war or death, that can sometimes be hard for children to understand, or which can make their lives difficult or puzzling. They are innovative, constantly finding new ways to be places which combine exploration, discovery and learning, with careful and clear display, and fun and enjoyment”.

## Geofort Herwijnen, The Netherlands

Photos @Geofort



2016

GeoFort is located in Fort bij de Nieuwe Steeg, a monumental fortress, part of the Nieuwe Hollandse Waterlinie (New Dutch Waterline), a former military line of defence which operated between 1815 and 1940 to protect the country by flooding the land in case of enemy invasions.

GeoFort refers to itself not as much as a museum, but rather as an 'experience' addressed to families and children from the age of eight, which takes place partly indoors and partly outdoors, with a wide range of social, digital and observational activities.

Visitors follow an independent route through the different exhibition halls in the historical fortress and in the former barracks, where topics are presented using multimedia and interactive installations. Outdoors, one can play various orientation and navigation games and participate in different quests.

GeoFort illustrates the world of maps, navigation, geographic simulations and other innovations in the field of geo-ICT, such as 3D simulations of floods, the impact of big data on our daily lives, with the objective to get visitors acquainted with the power and social relevance of geo-information and innovative geo-techniques.

In the different exhibitions, children must find answers and consult maps, discover the effects of an earthquake with their own constructions and find out where in the world earthquakes are more likely to happen; they learn how remote sensing works through satellite images, follow a geo-design workshop using digital open data and play a serious game trying to come up with a rescue plan for citizens in a water crisis scenario.

In short, they learn about the latest geo-innovations that contribute to important social spatial issues, such as water management, transition to renewable energy and sustainable landscaping and experience the power of spatial thinking. In fact, through the various activities proposed, GeoFort hopes to inspire young people to become 'geospatial thinkers'.



## The judges said

“GeoFort is a genuinely unique and innovative experience. It makes the potentially dry topics of navigation and cartography very hands on, social and fun. It gets people outdoors but there is enough to do inside if the weather is bad. The site has been well adapted from an old fortress into a modern science centre and has a strong ethos of exploring and improving the world without being seen to preach. It is inclusive for children of a variety of ages and those who learn in different ways, with enough variety to engage young people and hold their attention. GeoFort is an active, realistic and enjoyable complex where children learn by doing while having fun.”

## Tekniska Museet – National Museum of Science and Technology Stockholm, Sweden

Photos © Tekniska  
Museet



2017

Located in a former military area, with galleries covering around 10.000 square metres, the National Museum of Science and Technology's aim is to preserve the country's technical and industrial history as part of cultural heritage, to develop and communicate knowledge about it and thereby provide perspective on societal development.

According to its charter, the Museum is to shed light on development within the engineering arts and their basic sciences and within industry. Within these fields, the Museum is to both pursue and promote scientific research and documentation, and to conduct educational and information activities

At the museum, one can experience exhibitions on inventions, energy and the environment along with other areas of topical interest in a fun and inspiring way. The archive and the library are open to all, collections and other materials are available also on the Internet.

After opening in 1936, the museum was renewed in the 1980s as Teknorama Science Center, and the concept was fundamentally revised in 2015 with the exhibition MegaMind. This was seen as the first expression of the start of a new era in Swedish museum practice. Deviating from solely technical exhibitions, the museum started researching and conveying the how and why of society's commitment to technology, how it can be changed by thinking and giving answers to questions with ideas that come up in our brain.

How does one get a good idea? In the exhibition children can experience how this happens and also train their brains to become even more creative.

Among MegaMind's 43 installations, one can paint with the eyes, compose thought-controlled music, operate a satellite, etc., in order to increase and strengthen one's technical confidence and creativity.

MegaMind was created with the involvement of the target group in the making, children over the age of three and focusing on the 8-12 year-old age group. During the creation process 300 proposals for installations were whittled down to 43.

MegaMind is as innovative in terms of developmental processes and physical installation as in its architecture and 100% accessible. At each installation, there is a tablet device placed on a special stand, with headphones attached. Information is provided visually through the display and aurally through the headphones.

Braille and sign language are used and texts have different contrasts and font sizes for those with poor vision or symbols for those with cognitive disabilities.

Tekniska Museet in fact aims to be "every little genius' favourite place" and this includes children with special needs.



## The judges said

“The judges were unanimous in their decision to make the National Museum of Science and Technology the winner of the 2017 Children in Museums Award. Its innovative approaches to foster curiosity, creativity for neuroscience and the brain’s extraordinary abilities from a contemporary perspective were highly praised. There is a great focus on availability as an expression of the museum’s comprehensive and consistently implemented strategic renewal to be a place for everyone. MegaMind, with its high-quality design, total accessibility and basis of serious research and development of contents reaches a new level in children’s museums, while acknowledging that there has to be a permanent process of development and change to reflect present-day questions and challenges”.

# Keppel Centre for Art Education Singapore

Photos © Keppel  
Centre for Art Education



# 2018

The National Gallery Singapore, opened in 2015, is a visual arts institution dedicated to collaborative research, education and exhibitions, which oversees the largest public collection of modern art of Singapore and Southeast Asia and highlights the importance of modern art in Southeast Asia in a global context. The Gallery also provides a unique visitor experience through its art presentations and innovative programming, positioning Singapore as a regional and international hub for visual arts. The question “Do we make space for children’s voices in our Gallery?” is key to the development of the educational programmes, resources and environments, which aim to foster open discussions about love and appreciation for art. The Gallery’s dedicated facility, Keppel Centre for Art Education (the Centre) has both artist-created spaces and learning studios which are changed every 18-24 months to present new installations and authentic learning experiences. It hosts programmes co-created with artists to help children develop curiosity through multi-sensorial, tactile learning and play.

## Keppel Centre Reflection 2022

**What were the main reasons for your applying for the CMA?** From its inception in 2015 till now, the Centre has played a vital role in cultivating a museum-going culture amongst children and families and consistently received positive responses from our young audience. In 2016, we engaged with over 300,000 families, students and youths through learning programmes. A range of surveys, ‘think aloud’ discussions and informal interviews, conducted with a critical mass of up to 1,000 families and students in the same year, showed that 86% of young participants would recommend their friends to visit the Gallery and 68% of participants can name two or more Singapore artists at the end of their first visit. We also asked children about their most memorable or favourite experiences or spaces at the Centre and the Gallery to inform our research and preparation for new programmes. An excellent example of a dynamic 21st-century education facility within an art gallery, the Centre actively responds to audience feedback, pays attention to the relevance of its programmes and prioritises accessibility (in part by offering free admission for all).

The Centre:

- Recognises children as curious, active and competent learners
- Provides playful and age-appropriate experiences to enhance children’s imagination, cognitive, physical, social and emotional development
- Empowers children to make meaningful connections in their learning through an integrated approach

· Embraces diversity through the provision of dynamic and experiential learning environments that foster self-discovery, cooperative play and inquiry, catering to different learning needs

· Values children as constructors of knowledge, where they are given the flexibility to explore materials and initiate authentic play.

We firmly believe in the Centre as a key facility that introduces children to art while acknowledging the importance of lifelong learning and thus decided to apply for the award in 2018.

**What was the impact of receiving the award? Did it change your way of doing things or your organization?** Since receiving the award in 2018, the Gallery has continued its efforts to develop and introduce creative and innovative programmes and spaces for our young learners. The question “Do we make space for children’s voices in our Gallery?” remains key for the development of education programmes at our Gallery. Our goal is not only to broaden and deepen their learning experience with the Gallery content, but also to connect visitors with one another through play. By encouraging families and children to play together, they bond, create shared memories and experiences, which in turn contribute to the creation of a social, vibrant and immersive Gallery. Receiving the award has provided us with a fresh perspective on the importance of museum learning for families and children and greatly increased our

visibility. News of the Centre receiving the award was featured in local newspapers, posters, school newsletters, signages as well as activity guides made available at the Keppel Centre.

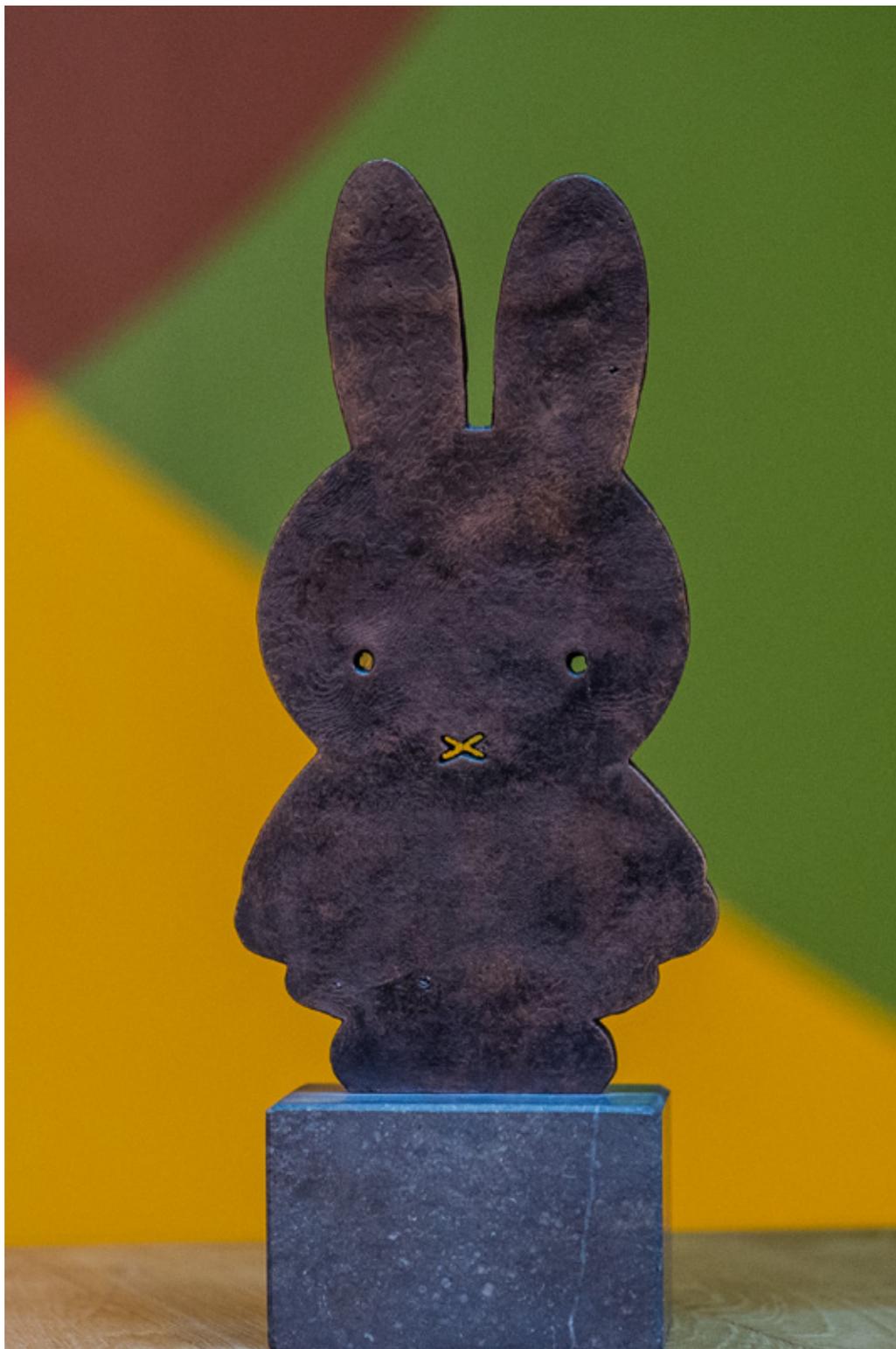
**What are the challenges you are facing now and what is your vision for the future with regard to museum education and children in museums?** During the pandemic, it was important for the Gallery to continue providing opportunities to engage young learners and families from their homes. In response to this, we developed GalleryKids!, a microsite for children, families and schools, where we offer an exciting range of content such as art tutorials, story sessions and more. In 2021, the GalleryKids! microsite was viewed over 107,000 times by users who were interested in exploring and interacting with the online content. In our Stories in Art series on GalleryKids!, storytellers share stories inspired by art and encourage children and families to respond together with singing, counting and simple dance movements. In our DIY with Artists series, artists lead children through simple art activities with step-by-step demonstrations and using recycled materials that can be found at home. These series encourage families to participate in and bond through creative activities together at home. Our vision is therefore to engage families and children via various touchpoints, be they onsite or at home, and forge new opportunities and platforms for art-learning and co-creation.



Artist Zainudin Sumsuri invited children to be their own captain on deck and let imagination take flight at the *Project Gallery*.



Artist Tang Ling Nah introduced elements of scale, light and shadow through charcoal drawings at the *Art Playscape*.



Statue of Miffy by Marc Bruna

## The judges said

“The judges noted the strong connection between the Centre and the Gallery, with the explanation of what art conservation is and how it is carried out by curators displayed at the Centre’s entrance. The involvement of local artists who are inspired by the museum collections, in collaboration with the dedicated education team, has led to the production of excellent, well-designed exhibitions for younger visitors. With its free admission and mantra ‘Children first, parents second!’ the Keppel Centre is an excellent example of a dynamic 21st century education centre within an art gallery, introducing children to art at an early age while acknowledging the importance of lifelong learning”.

## Ker ImagiNation Dakar, Sénégal

Photos © Ker  
ImagiNation



2019

The Ker ImagiNation Center is situated in Yoff, part of the city of Dakar. Once a distinct fishing settlement, it still has an intimate atmosphere and a strong community feeling – in contrast to the more cosmopolitan Dakar downtown. Ker ImagiNation is the only museum space in Dakar that focuses exclusively on children 1-14 years of age. The Center should be considered as a museum in the community, with its outside walls acting as bearers of both information and decoration. The school system in the country is rather formal and in general does not encourage creativity. Through its exhibitions, programmes and play spaces, Ker ImagiNation promotes a culture of critical thinking and impacts how children perceive themselves and their abilities to contribute to the economic and social well-being of their culture and context. The organization's core values of thinking globally and acting locally have allowed it, in conjunction with local partners, to create and maintain spaces that spark imagination through activities and hands-on learning for more than 8,000 children.

The exhibition 'Imaginer Dakar: la Ville par ses enfants citoyens' – with which Ker ImagiNation competed for the CMA – was made by and for children in Dakar. Launched during the seventh edition of the Partcours Festival, one of Dakar's major cultural events, the multimedia exhibition offered a diversity of visitors – adults and children – the opportunity to experience Dakar from the perspective of its youngest citizens – children from a traditional fishing community. For two months, 30 children benefitted from 15 project-based workshops on the topics of multimedia, city planning and architecture, leading critical conversations and reflections about their city, neighbourhood and the efficiency of public services. They were encouraged to observe their surroundings, to explore and research, interview people and imagine a better future.

Among the issues children raised and explored were: the absence of public (play) spaces, trash and waste problems and safety in their neighbourhood. These issues were then documented by the children through photography, video, and interviews with family members and neighbours.

The exhibition included two interactive spaces; the first – a mini city where children and adults were invited to immerse themselves in an exciting experience of reconstructing their city – and the second – photos and videos taken by the children as a critical reflection about their city.

The accent of the activity was to increase children's creative confidence and leadership skills, the goal being to develop young people who will be influential in the future.



## The judges said

“Ker Imagination Centre is a ‘democratizing, polyphonic and inclusive space’ which promotes and nurtures a culture based on critical thinking, where children are encouraged to observe, explore and research their surroundings and the outside world with the objective to improve it and contribute to a better future for all.

With very limited tools this institution achieves impressive results, enabling children to unleash their creative potential and to meet children from different communities. This broadens their understanding of the world, so important for new generations in a country with many challenges, economically, socially and culturally. Children from underprivileged

families can experience being curators themselves, collaborate with artists, designers and architects. They understand that their voice can be heard through a museum and activity centre, highlighting the importance of museums in the wider context.

Ker ImagiNation has lessons for all in the way it operates both within and beyond the walls of the institution to show how children’s opinions and creativity can be central to forward thinking for a better future in the outside world. It should be praised for its vision and its ambition – in the words of the director: “to create a new generation of African leaders who think outside the box about what is possible for Africa and the world”.

## The Dutch Open Air Museum Arnhem, The Netherlands

Photos © The Dutch  
Open Air Museum by  
Wim de Kneegt



Trying to find a job

# 2020-21

**Restart, a game about migration.** The museum portrays the history of everyday life of the past 400 years in The Netherlands. An interactive exhibition presents the Canon of Dutch history, and outdoors a 44-hectare park contains 100 original buildings. Dutch society is constantly changing, and the museum includes displays about former immigrants. The *Restart* programme for schoolchildren aged 11-15 concerns 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, 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. At the end of the game a short evaluation with the children has proved they are excited and pleased they have passed the test. Teachers receive the full test results of each group and can talk about the whole experience back at school.

### The Dutch Open Air Museum Reflection 2022

**What were the main reasons for your applying for the CMA?** The Dutch Open Air Museum aims to be an inclusive museum which is open to topical issues and social challenges which are relevant to today's society. The museum wants to be a place where young and old can experience history, culture and heritage emotionally, theoretically and hands-on and where people can exchange ideas and feelings and discover different perspectives. The *Restart* programme fully embodies this and puts it into practice, and this was the reason for submitting it for the CMA.

*Restart* has been running for a few years but is more relevant than ever. Many students are not aware of the fact that the society they live in has been shaped by migration. They also encounter migration in their daily lives. The media, their

friends, relatives and school present them with stories of immigrants who have come here to make a life for themselves. The Restart programme confronts students with the obstacles and challenges which are a daily reality for migrants. The students have to find employment, learn a new language and taste 'foreign' food. While doing so, they learn about people's personal motives for migrating and about the drastic impact of leaving one's homeland behind.

We hope that this programme may inspire other museums aimed at both children and adults, and that it can be an example of how learning through experience and exploration can be used to address the topic of migration or other difficult topics in a serious yet entertaining manner.

**What was the impact of receiving the award? Did it change your way of doing things or your organization?** The impact is quite diverse. It has clearly reminded other museums, schools and the media of our existence. We have received congratulations, requests for interviews, invitations from schools and requests for taking part in the programme. Since the Miffy award was given pride of place in the entrance area of the Dutch Open Air Museum, everyone has been able to see it and this has led to many enthusiastic reactions. Of course, that is very nice and we are honoured.

The internal impact is mainly that the museum's expertise in terms of museum education which has been accrued over the years has now been recognized. Education in an open-air museum is fundamentally different from education in a museum building: it is, by definition, a sensory experience. This sensory aspect is the 'Unique Selling Proposition' of the programmes in the Dutch Open Air Museum.

And the award confirms that we, the Education team and the museum, are on the right track. The award is encouragement to be and remain relevant, and to not shy away from difficult topics.

We will use the money to update the Restart programme. We opened a new location in our museum last year: IJssalon Venezia. This is an ice cream parlour which was started by first-generation immigrants from Italy (the Dolomites) in the Dutch town of Utrecht in the 1970s. Venezia will be incorporated in the programme. Since Restart runs on tablet computers, such an adaptation is costly, so the money is most welcome. In addition, we will re-train all the staff involved who have roles in the programme.

**What are the challenges you are facing now and what is your vision for the future with regard to museum education and children in museums?** The Dutch Open Air Museum is convinced that history can connect people. And that learning from, with and about each other gives us a better understanding of



Making new friends.

ourselves and each other. This also pinpoints the challenge ahead of us. Because how can this be achieved in a museum setting which visitors visit only for a few hours? Visitors mainly go to museums like the Dutch Open Air Museum to have a fun day out together. Programmes like Restart offer the opportunity to make museums places which give people food for thought about topical issues, in an informal setting. And by having them experience things themselves, the impact will be much greater than it would be in a formal setting, such as a school. This is also what will make museums relevant in the future. And topics are not difficult to find: climate change, inequality of opportunity, the LGBTQI+ community, the rise of fake news... there is a plethora of possibilities.

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Miffy and her travel case

## The judges said

“What made the Dutch Open Air Museum with *Restart* a winner was the fact that they transformed the whole open air space into an imaginary country where children as young migrants had to find their way, faced by challenges which created frustrations and disappointments, as well as opportunities.

The ingenuity of solutions and in particular the choice not to avoid negative emotions, but to build on them to possibly understand a little what it means being an immigrant in another country, always maintaining the balance of realistic examples of rejection and frustration in the programme, is what convinced the judges that this should be the winner.

With this choice, the jury would like to send out a message to all museums, to encourage them to experiment further, be imaginative and even daring”.

## Shortlisted Museums 2012-2021

### 2012

#### Austria

FRida & freD – The Graz Children's Museum

#### Estonia

Museum Miia-Milla-Manda  
Tallinn

#### Germany

Labyrinth Children's Museum  
Berlin  
Junges Schloss: The Children's Museum  
Stuttgart

#### Italy

START – Laboratorio di Culture Creative  
Bologna

#### The Netherlands

Jewish Historical Museum  
Amsterdam  
Tropen-museum Junior  
Amsterdam  
Children's Books Museum  
Den Haag  
Villa Zebra  
Rotterdam

#### The Philippines

Pambata Museum  
Manila

#### Sweden

Jamtli  
Östersund

#### Turkey

Toy Museum  
Istanbul

#### United Kingdom

Discover Children's Story Centre  
London

### 2013

#### Austria

Spielzeug Museum  
Salzburg

#### Canada

Manitoba Children's Museum  
Winnipeg

#### Germany

MACHmit! Museum für Kinder  
Berlin  
Mathematikum Giessen e.K.  
Giessen  
KINDEROLYMP at Altonaer Museum  
Hamburg

#### Jordan

Children's Museum Jordan  
Amman

#### The Netherlands

Archeon, Roman Villa Rijswijk  
Alphen aan den Rijn  
Drents Archief- Operatie Sigismund  
Assen  
Beeld en Geluid Experience  
Hilversum  
Maritiem Museum Rotterdam  
Rotterdam  
Dick Bruna Huis, Centraal Museum  
Utrecht

#### Serbia

Gallery of Matica Srpska  
Novi Sad

#### Sweden

Lill-Skansén  
Stockholm

#### Switzerland

Naturmuseum Thurgau  
Frauenfeld

#### USA

Please Touch Museum  
Philadelphia

### 2014

#### Czech Republic

National Technical Museum  
Prague

#### Germany

Haus der Berge  
Berchtesgaden

#### Luxembourg

The Family of Man  
Clervaux

#### The Netherlands

Kaap Skil, Museum van Jutters & Zeelui  
Oudeschild

#### Norway

Norwegian Petroleum Museum,  
Stavanger

### 2015

#### Austria

ZOOM Kindermuseum  
Vienna

#### Belgium

Le Pass – Parc d'Aventures Scientifiques  
Frameries

#### The Netherlands

Science Center NEMO  
Amsterdam  
Gemeentemuseum – Wonderkamers,  
Den Haag  
Museum Rotterdam '40-'45 NU,  
Rotterdam

#### Singapore

Singapore Philatelic Museum

#### Spain

Museu de Ciències Naturals de  
Barcelona

#### USA

Boston Children's Museum  
Boston

### 2016

#### Bulgaria

MUZEIKO – America for Bulgaria  
Children's Museum  
Sofia

#### Germany

Mathematikum Giessen e.V.  
Giessen

**The Netherlands****Dutch Resistance Museum,**

Amsterdam

**NEMO Science Museum**

Amsterdam

**GeoFort**

Herwijnen

**Poland****National Museum in Warsaw**

Poland

**Sweden****Museum of World Culture**

Gothenburg

**National Museum of Science and****Technology**

Stockholm

**United Kingdom****Seven Stories, National Centre for****Children's Books**

Newcastle-upon-Tyne

**2017****Australia****Pauline Gandel Children's Gallery,****Melbourne Museum**

Melbourne

**Germany****Alice – Children's Museum**

Berlin

**Ireland****EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum,**

Dublin

**Jordan****The Children's Museum Jordan,**

Amman

**The Netherlands****Netherlands Institute for Sound and****Vision**

Hilversum

**Naturalis Biodiversity Center**

Leiden

**Maritime Museum Rotterdam**

Rotterdam

**Brabant Natural History Museum,**

Tilburg

**Centraal Museum – Miffy Museum,**

Utrecht

**Sweden****National Museum of Science and****Technology**

Stockholm

**2018****Australia****Museum of Australian Democracy at****Old Parliament House, Manuka (ACT)****Museums Victoria – Scienceworks**

Melbourne

**Denmark****LEGO House**

Billund

**Germany****Young Museum**

Frankfurt am Main

**Italy****MUSE, Science Museum of Trento****The Netherlands****EYE Film Museum**

Amsterdam

**Children's Book Museum**

Den Haag

**Railway Museum**

Utrecht

**Singapore****Keppel Centre for Art Education,**

National Gallery Singapore

**Slovenia****Museum of Puppetry**

Ljubljana

**Switzerland****Museum of Communication**

Bern

**United Kingdom****Winnie-the-Pooh Exhibition and****Family Learning programme,****Victoria & Albert Museum**

London

**2019****Canada****Royal Alberta Museum**

Edmonton

**Denmark****Den Gamle By**

Aarhus

**Italy****M-Children**

Venezia Mestre

**Mexico****University Museum of Contemporary****Art**

Mexico City

**The Netherlands****The National Archives of The****Netherlands**

Den Haag

**Poland****POLIN Museum of History of Polish****Jews**

Warsaw

**Senegal****Ker ImagiNation**

Dakar

**2020-21****Finland****Museum of Technology, Helsinki****Ireland****EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum,**

Dublin

**National Gallery of Ireland**

Dublin

**The Netherlands****NEMO Science Museum**

Amsterdam

**Tropenmuseum**

Amsterdam

**Dutch Open Air Museum**

Arnhem

**Museon**

Den Haag

**Naturalis Biodiversity Center, Leiden****Wereldmuseum Rotterdam****Sweden****National Museum**

Stockholm

**Nordic Museum**

Stockholm

**United Kingdom****People's History Museum**

Manchester

# The Children in Museums Award Jurors\* 2012-2021

**Lars Amréus**

Director-General, Swedish National Heritage, Board, Stockholm, Sweden  
2012

**Andrew Durham**

Director, ArtLab Australia, Adelaide, Australia  
2017

**Susanne Gesser**

Director, Frankfurt Children's Museum, Frankfurt, Germany  
2020-current

**Camila González Gou**

Curator, Museu Frederic Marès, Barcelona, Spain  
2012-2017

**Claudia Haas**

Board member, ZOOM Kindermuseum, Vienna, Austria  
2012-2018

**Arno van Berge Henegouwen**

Curator, Museon, The Hague, Netherlands  
2013-2019

**Dirk Houtgraaf**

Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, Amersfoort, Netherlands  
2019-current

**Gregor Isenbort**

Director, DASA Working World Exhibition, Dortmund, Germany  
2015-current

**Petra Katzenstein**

Children's Museum, Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
2016-current

**Jack Lohman**

Chief Executive, Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria, Canada  
2019

**Gail Lord**

Co-President, Lord Cultural Resources, Planning and Management, New York, USA  
2012-2015

**Elisabeth Menasse-Wiesbauer**

Director, ZOOM Kindermuseum, Vienna, Austria  
2012-2013

**François-Xavier Nève de Mévergnies**

Department of Linguistics, Phonetics, Phonology, University of Liège, Belgium  
2012

**Lidija Nikočević**

Director, Ethnographic Museum of Istria, Pazin, Croatia  
2018-current

**Gordan Nikolov**

Curator Advisor, Museum of the Republic of North Macedonia  
2020-current

**Toby Parkin**

Lead Curator, New Interactive Gallery, Science Museum, London, UK  
2016

**Andreja Rihter**

Chair, Sub-Committee on Cultural Heritage, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Slovenia  
2012-2017

**Margherita Sani**

Istituto Beni Culturali, Regione Emilia-Romagna, Bologna, Italy  
2013-2021

**Hermann Schäfer**

Founding President, Haus der Geschichte, Germany  
2012-2014

**Veronica Sekules**

Deputy Director, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK  
2014-2021

**Nurit Shilo-Cohen**

Chief Curator & Director, Ruth Youth Wing, Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel  
2012-2015

**Leigh-Anne Stradeski**

Chief Executive, Eureka! National Children's Museum, Halifax, UK  
2018-current

**Shufang Ye**

Director, Keppel Centre for Art Education, National Gallery Singapore  
2020-2021

**Petra Zwaka**

Director, Schöneberg Museum, Berlin, Germany  
2012-2019

\*Job titles refer to the period in which they were on the jury

## About the authors

### **Annemies Broekgaarden**

Trained as both a management and marketing and communication professional, she started her career at Elsevier Science Publishers. The next move was to the NOS, the Dutch Broadcasting Corporation. During this period Annemies decided to study Cultural Anthropology. Her initiative to start a Children's Museum in Utrecht, based on the work of Dick Bruna, marked a shift of career. She became head of Tropenmuseum Junior, became President of Hands On! International and initiated with Wim van der Weiden and many others, the Children in Museums Award. In 2008 Annemies was asked to set up the Education Department of the Rijksmuseum, the National Museum for Art and History in The Netherlands that reopened in 2013 after a 10-year renovation. Annemies is also co-founder and judge of the European Art Museum Award.

### **Claudia Haas**

In the beginning of the 1990s Claudia Haas founded the first interactive Children's Museum 'ZOOM' in Vienna's cultural district 'The Museumsquarter' which hosts yearly more than 120.000 young visitors and their caretakers. In 1998 she was co-founder of Hands On Europe which later changed its name to Hands On international. In 2003, following her directorship at ZOOM, she became a consultant for museums and cultural institutions specializing in how to make museums more visitor friendly.

### **Marja Kerkhof**

For the last 25 years Marja Kerkhof has been managing director of Mercis bv, the Amsterdam-based company which publishes Dick Bruna's books and manages the international rights to his work. She is also responsible for the company's Japanese subsidiary, Dick Bruna Japan.

Dick Bruna's best-known character, Miffy, originally made her debut in a series of children's books, the first of which was published in 1955. Written and illustrated by the Dutch author and artist over six decades.

### **Gail Lord**

Gail Lord is President of Lord Cultural Resources, one of the world's foremost museum planners, a public presenter, and co-author of six museum planning manuals and several books, including 'Cities, Museums and Soft Power'. Gail co-founded Lord Cultural Resources with her husband Barry Lord in 1981 to provide specialised planning services to museums, the arts, cultural districts, and the creative economy with the goal of making the world a better place through culture. Based in Toronto and New York, Lord has offices in Mumbai, Dubai, Los Angeles, and Beijing. It has completed over 2,600 projects in 57 countries and 450 cities. Gail has been honoured as a Member of the Order of Canada, Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres de France, and Doctor of Letters from McMaster University.

### **Margherita Sani (editor in chief)**

Margherita Sani is adjunct professor at the University of Bologna, project coordinator of the Working Group on museum education at NEMO – Network of European Museum Organisations, board member of the Europeana Education Network and member of the Pool of Experts of EMA – European Museum Academy. From 1985 to 2021 she worked at the Institute for Cultural Heritage of the Region Emilia Romagna.

### **Wim van der Weiden**

Trained as an historian, he became director of Museon and Omniversum, both in The Hague. He was a member of the board of the Dutch Museum Association, chairman of ICOM Netherlands, member of the Executive Council of ICOM, chairman of the European Museum Forum and of the European Museum Academy. Under his directorship Naturalis, the Dutch National Natural History Museum, was built. He is a judge for the European Museum Academy Awards and one of the two directors of the Children in Museums Award.

### **Petra Zwaka**

Petra Zwaka is a historian and museologist who, over the past 30 years has designed numerous exhibitions and projects on Berlin history. As an advocate for the benefits of exploring history with children and young people through interactive learning strategies, she brought the Jugend Museum, Berlin to life (1994) and developed it to a local, nationally and internationally well-known institution in the field of children's museums. From 2012 to 2019 she was member of the jury for the Children in Museums Award.

The publication was edited by Margherita Sani, who sat on the jury of the Children in Museums Award from 2013 until 2021 and chaired it from 2018 to 2021.

English editing: Ann Nicholls

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 @levievandermeer

The challenges we face nowadays, living in this fast-changing world, demand flexible people with curious, creative minds that are open to explore and take initiatives. Museums can be important places to develop these skills, even from an early age.

With this publication, Hands On! International and the European Museum Academy celebrate 10 years of the Children in Museums Award, which is given to a museum that has proved its excellence in offering exhibitions and/or programmes that contribute to the development of children into world citizens.

This booklet gives an insight into the development of this important category of museums during the last decade, and the part played by the Children in Museums Award.

