

2025

MUSEUM
& SOCIAL
CHANGE

mag

EUROPEAN MUSEUM ACADEMY MAGAZINE



The Art of Belonging

MUSEUMS AS AGENTS
FOR INCLUSION

EMA

European Museum Academy

SYSTEMIC CHANGE
Unbubble!

PARTICIPATION
Sharing with the Audience

EXPANDED AWARENESS
Sensory Spaces



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KARL BORROMÄUS MURR

Chief Editor
MAG. Museum and Social Change
Chairman of the
European Museum Academy

Museums working for Social Change

The **European Museum Academy** consists of an enthusiastic group of European museum experts, practitioners, professors of museum studies and cultural policy makers. Under the guiding motto 'Searching for Excellence', the Academy dedicates all its passion to identifying and sharing with the museum community pioneering museum projects.

To this end, the Academy judges and awards a whole series of museum prizes in partnership with various institutions and foundations - prizes that relate to Europe and beyond. Among these prizes, the **Luigi Micheletti Award**, the **DASA Award** and the **Art Museum Award (AMA)** stand out. The **Luigi Micheletti Award** is presented to museums that can demonstrate forward-looking and convincing storytelling or historical narrative. The **DASA Award** honours outstanding museum education projects and associated learning opportunities. The **Art Museum Award** is dedicated to museum projects which focus on art in an innovative and creative way, addressing current social issues. In cooperation with the Forum of Slavic Cultures the Academy also organises the *Heritage in Motion Award* - and in collaboration with Hands On! International, the *Children in Museums Award*. While the *Heritage in Motion Award* celebrates the unique and groundbreaking audiovisual and multimedia projects which promote, explore, document, or safeguard Europe's cultural heritage, the *Children in Museums Award* is aimed at benchmark museum projects for children.

The Academy is built upon the democratic and human values of participation, inclusion, gender equality, racial justice, community building, sus-

tainability - values that should be the driving force for the 21st century. The overarching principle of all these values mentioned is social justice. Driven by the idea of social equality, the Academy's work is dedicated to bringing about positive social change in our society. Museums as social arenas are extremely important and valuable means of meeting social and cultural challenges today. In a global world driven by the economy, social transformation is a key factor in improving the living conditions of all in terms of equal opportunities. Museums place themselves at the service of free-choice learning and thus contribute to the self-empowerment of a democratic civil society.

In order to share these guiding principles of the Academy even better with the international museum community, this new magazine **MAG. Museum and Social Change** is aimed at all colleagues in the museum world, to present role models, exchange inspiring ideas and create visibility for exciting schemes. It is about fostering a vibrant public sphere for museums. The **MAG** combines practical knowledge with theoretical reflection in an unprecedented way, provides orientation regarding new museum trends and is geared towards active networking. **MAG** is intended as a discursive format that promotes mutual exchange based on concrete museum experience. Against the background of the 'practice turn' in cultural studies, **MAG** places particular emphasis on the reflected practical experience of museum curators, educators and project managers - as cultural meaning making always arises in concrete contexts that are in most cases socially mediated.

Along with museum practitioners, **MAG** is committed to the role of the modern museum as a place of encounter and as a forum for the development of social cohesion, cultural dialogue and creativity. It intends to act as a lively platform for sharing experiences among an interested museum crowd - experts and volunteers alike - aspiring to create a participatory and sustainable society.

Please join in!

THE EDITORIAL TEAM OF THE **MAG** MUSEUM & SOCIAL CHANGE



KARL B. MURR
Chief Editor

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What is the MAG?

Introducing a new European magazine dedicated to museums as agents of social change.

The **European Museum Academy (EMA)** aims to create an innovative platform that examines and promotes the growing importance of museums in the context of social change. The goal is to provide a space for knowledge exchange, the presentation of best practices, and discussions about the role of museums as agents of social transformation. This initiative is grounded in the conviction that museums are more than just places for collecting and preserving, they are institutions that actively contribute to participation in community building, sustainability and addressing global challenges.

Given the richness, diversity, and visionary content found in the applications submitted by various European museums for the different EMA awards, there has been developed a growing desire among stakeholders to make these insights accessible to a broader professional audience. This would foster further discussions, motivations, and also respect and appreciation for those who establish innovative approaches in their daily museum work—often requiring significant effort to gain the lasting support needed to sustain them.

Thus, the **MAG. Museum and Social Change** was established during an interactive workshop at the EMA Annual Conference in the summer of 2024, hosted by the A. G. Leventis Foundation in Nicosia, Cyprus. A passionate editorial team composed of various stakeholders from the European museum landscape within the European Museum Academy was formed. They are united by a deep belief that the museum is a place of social encounter, where visitors are not merely consumers but active participants. Moreover, they hold that socially relevant topics such as sustainability, inclusion, migration, social justice, health

and wellbeing can be made visible and tangible in museums, serving as seismographs as well as catalysts of social transformation processes.

The **MAG. Museum and Social Change** is planned to be published annually in the spring following its initial pilot edition. In addition to a print version, an online version will also be available. Through this magazine, EMA seeks to strengthen its role as a leading voice in museology and contribute to establishing museums as central actors in social change. The aim is to promote the lasting impact and social relevance of museums in a dynamically evolving world.

We welcome your feedback and the opportunity to exchange ideas with you. Feel free to reach out to us at

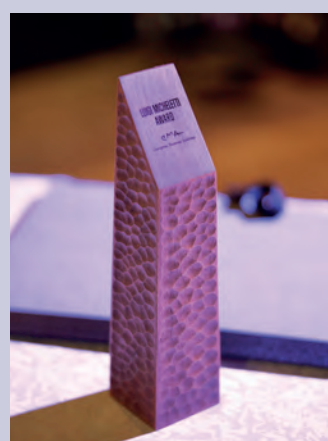
editorial@mag-museum.eu



ABOUT

Searching for Excellence

The European Museum Academy Awards



Annual Meeting 2024 of the European Museum Academy in Nicosia, Cyprus, under the motto "Museums. Challenge of Change"



The **European Museum Academy (EMA)** is a volunteer society of passionate museum experts from different national and cultural backgrounds, united for the advancement of knowledge in museology. All the Academy's activities are guided by the motto "Searching for Excellence". In addition to research projects and numerous educational endeavors in collaboration with various educational institutions, the Academy is dedicated to identifying innovative museum projects as role models for others to follow. To this end, the Academy judges and awards various prestigious European museum awards each year to stimulate and foster the quality of museum work as well as of the museological discourse at an international level. The three main prizes awarded by the Academy are the *Luigi Micheletti Award*, the *DASA Award* and the *Art Museum Award (AMA)*, which are briefly presented below with their respective focuses. The AMA, as the most recent award, receives the most attention to make it even better known.

The Art Museum Award (AMA)

The Art Museum Award was created in 2020, in the middle of the COVID pandemic, thanks to the generous support of the Leventis Foundation. It is dedicated to art museums and galleries that demonstrate exceptional achievements in museum projects by focusing on art in an innovative, pioneering and creative way, addressing social issues and following a general sustainable strategy. The award thereby propels and promotes continuous improvement and innovation within the field. It is meant to identify new role models of excellence that could function as inspiring paragons of the social role of art museums.

Applications are welcome which are dealing with democratic and human values that should be the

driving force for new museal ideas in the 21st century. Important topics are participation, inclusion, people with special needs, gender equality, democratic process, migration, immigration, racial justice, decolonization, community building, challenges of globalization, sustainability, climate change, health care, resilience to crises like the Covid-19 pandemic etc. It is about museums functioning as "social arenas", as societally relevant meeting places.

Eligible to apply are not only art museums, but all other museums and galleries that work with art or art interventions.

A panel of volunteer judges from all over Europe, all esteemed experts in the field of museology and cultural heritage, ensure that the awarded museums are chosen based on merit and excellence.

In the first four years of the existence of the Art Museum Award, 37 museums in 23 different countries applied and were visited by 13 different highly professional jury members from seven different European countries.

The previous award winners were:
the **Trapholt Museum of Modern Art**,
Craft and Design in Kolding, Denmark,

the **Lewis Glucksman Gallery**,
University College Cork, Ireland,

the **S.M.A.K. Communal Museum**
for Contemporary Art in Ghent, Belgium

and the **Stedelijk Museum, Museum**
of Modern and Contemporary Art and Design
in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

As many more museums have shown an interest in the award by registering on the website and as national correspondents in more than 30 countries are spreading the word, the award is getting more and more recognized internationally, attracting attention from museum professionals, academics and cultural organizations all over Europe. The awarded museums and those that participate in the scheme tell us that the award enhances their reputation as a place of quality and innovation which gets recognized by scholars and peers.

It further increases their visibility by a greater media attention, thus attracting more visitors and further engaging them as well as attracts more funding and sponsor opportunities.

The proven track record of the Art Museum Award of making a significant difference in the European museum sector will be further enhanced by this magazine, whose mission is to foster international cooperation, to identify role models and scout and spread excellence in museum social impact practices.

The DASA Award

Launched in 2011, the DASA Award follows the philosophy of the DASA Working World Exhibition. With this award, the European Museum Academy promotes educational programmes and learning opportunities in museums. It honours museums that are committed to audience-oriented communication with their visitors in an innovative way. This includes fresh concepts, exceptional exhibition design and scenography as well as special methods for imparting knowledge. It takes learning opportunities in the broad sense of the word and looks for daring approaches, whether there is an active participation of the audience, if and how there is a connection with communities and (local) partners, to what extent the programmes include people with (learning) disabilities, in what way societal issues are addressed, and such. Evaluation methodology and its results will be part of the review too.

The Luigi Micheletti Award

The Luigi Micheletti Award was established in 1995 by the Luigi Micheletti Foundation and is still supported by the foundation today. The Luigi Micheletti Award is all about storytelling which is key for all museums in their attempt to make temporal sense. The emphasis is on the way museums manage to convey a sense of the past to their visitors through their exhibitions by means of a com-

elling narrative. All kinds of museums are invited to apply for this award to show how their storytelling provides the public with a better sense of their own identity and their place in the historical landscape.



*Karl Borromäus Murr,
Danièle Wagener
European Museum Academy
(EMA)*

FACTS ABOUT THE AWARDS

The **Art Museum Award**

for the Best European Museum focussing on Art in an innovative way and addressing social issues

The **DASA Award**

for the Best European Museum in Learning Opportunities

The **Luigi Micheletti Award**

for the Best European Museum in History-Telling

Applications open to all kinds of museums and museums of any age.

Closing dates for the **Luigi Micheletti** and **DASA Awards: 1 March 2025.**

Closing date for the **Art Museum Award: 31 March 2025.**

Your application starts on the EMA website: <https://europeanmuseumacademy.eu/awards/>

There is a participation fee of € 300,- to administer the award applications as well as to visit the candidates and review their work. After registration you have to send a short description of your museum or project together with some high-resolution images. Candidates will be visited by EMA qualified experts and presented at the Annual EMA Meeting in September 2025 in Budapest.

Don't miss the chance to profit from the visibility and networking opportunities by taking part in the **European Museum Academy Awards!**

SYSTEMIC CHANGE



Unbubble!

The European Museum Academy's Art Museum Award 2024 went to the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, one of the most important museums for modern and contemporary art and design in the Netherlands. It was honoured for an extraordinary structural rethink that primarily affects the institution itself and its self-image. We spoke to Emma Harjadi Herman, Manager of Education and Inclusion at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam since 2020, about the fundamental process of relaunching the museum.

The **Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam** has an outstanding collection of Western modern art. In recent years, the presentation of the permanent collection has been rethought and revitalised, moving away from the invitation to 'Meet the Icons of Modern Art' towards a deliberately broader, global perspective. Under the motto 'Unbubble', the museum establishes dialogues with artists outside the European and North American canon.

The new collection presentation is organised chronologically from around 1890 to the present day in order to focus on issues of gender, ethnicity and sustainability within this framework. Vividly

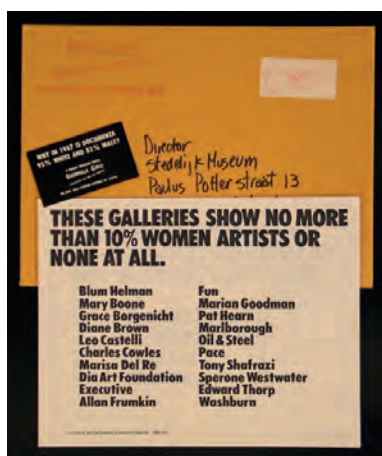
designed and thought-provoking, it combines the familiar with the unfamiliar, the national with the international. The explanatory notes are clearly formulated and avoid art-historical jargon.

However, something else was decisive for the museum to win the Art Museum Award: while many museums rely exclusively on project work to address the pressing social issues of our time, the Stedelijk Museum has decided to make a radical structural change in terms of its organisation, collection and programme. It is about nothing less than a systemic change that has now become irreversibly inscribed in the DNA of the museum's self-image.

“We want to be transparent about the change process we’re going through. What we’re trying and what we’re learning.”

MAG: Since 2019, the museum has been managed by Rein Wolfs, who has been committed to renewing the team, developing new ways of working within the organisation and ensuring transparency from the very beginning. You have undertaken to introduce quotas for your collection and exhibition activities, can you explain them?

Emma Harjadi Herman (E. H. H.): The Stedelijk has an incredibly rich collection, over 100.000 pieces by world renowned artists. However, it is also marked by bias and exclusion. We all know such patterns are hard to break. So, we decided on a quota: we committed to devoting at least 50% of our annual acquisition budget to non-Western artists and/or artists who identify as Black, Indigenous or people of colour. This was one of the most controversial steps we took. Nobody likes quotas. And I get it! But we felt that this drastic measure was necessary to break the pattern we had been in for 125 years. Now that we have been doing this for several years it is becoming standard practice, not something we have to talk about all the time. We decided to keep the annual quota though. The Guerrilla Girls taught us to keep counting! It’s also an important tool in internal and external accountability. We publish these figures in our annual report.



Guerrilla Girls, Letter from a large-scale protest campaign by the feminist activist artists’ group, 1987, Collection of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

MAG: You seem to find a good balance between your commitment to artists on the one hand and the needs and interests of your audience on the other. Could you say something about this focus?

E. H. H.: Some artists believe that the work speaks for itself, but especially for people who are new to art. I think that’s often not the case. People deserve to be actively invited. It’s our job to show that we can provide our visitors with a pathway to connect to the artist’s work without dumbing it down. In the past we’ve had quite some criticism for jargon-heavy wall texts, assuming a lot of knowledge on the part of the visitor. It happens so easily when you want to do justice to the nuance of what an artist wants to say. But we’re becoming more intentional about writing brief and understandable wall texts. If curators and artists want to go deeper, we carve out separate spaces for that, serving specific audiences and purposes.

MAG: The Stedelijk Museum has a long tradition of promoting discourse and being at the centre of cultural debates in The Netherlands. Its pursuit of change is open and transparent, which has met with both public and media approval and vocal criticism. How have you responded to this?

E. H. H.: We want to be transparent about the change process we’re going through - what we’re trying and what we’re learning. One major way in which we achieved this was by giving an independent film maker full access behind the scenes, resulting in the documentary ‘White Balls on Walls’. In this documentary all the awkward conversations needed to address systemic exclusion are brought out in the open. With this open attitude, we contributed to the conversation in and beyond the cultural sector about diversity and inclusion and gave our stakeholders a better look at our inner workings. And you’re right that this attracted compliments as well as criticism. ‘Brave’, was the reaction we got most often I think, which maybe was a polite way of saying ‘rather you than me’. I think it’s important to show our process, even if it’s messy and slow.

*Stedelijk Museum
Amsterdam with the
extension by Benthem
Crowell Architects,
opened in 2012*



*Inviting people to make
their own connection to the art,
activity developed for General
Idea exhibition 2023*





Graphic design 1950–1980 at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam 2024

MAG: Is there an experience you would like to share with other museums?

E. H. H.: Well one of my favourite things to talk about is the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) annex to our annual report. Not boring, I promise! We have formulated Key Performance Indicators regarding our inclusion ambitions, and we quantitatively report on them in our annual report. It includes the acquisitions quota of course, but also indicators regarding our team, our audience and our partners. When we talk about diversity people often think of tours in Sign Language or unconscious bias workshops, and such elements are important, but what we're focusing on at the Stedelijk is *stru<t* happens in meeting rooms and spreadsheets. It is about formulating policy and objectives that have internal support while at the same time stretching the organization a little beyond its comfort zone. In my opinion, a crucial part is making the development you are trying to achieve measurable and being accountable for it to everyone involved, from colleagues to activists and from visitors to funders. I think for many colleagues in the sector who share this commitment to DE&I, figuring how to measure and report on progress year on year could be a great next step.



Emma Hardjadi Herman
Manager Education and Inclusion
Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam,
Amsterdam, NL

RECOMMENDATION

FILM 'WHITE BALLS ON WALLS'
NL 2022 / 91 min, directed by Sarah Vos

The documentary film, which was broadcast on Dutch television but also reached an international audience, is a courageous attempt to look behind the scenes and is surprisingly open about the challenges of change in a museum today.

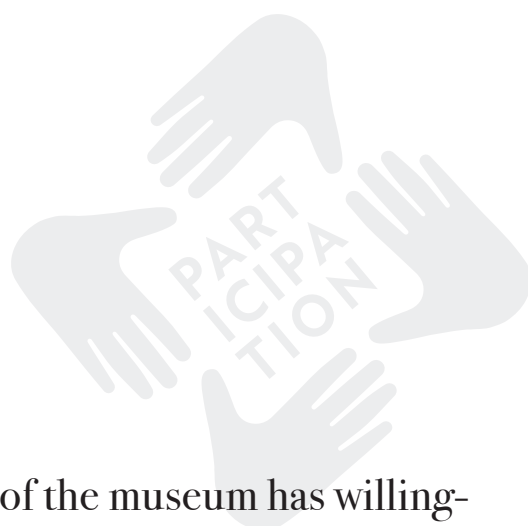
www.amazon.com/White-Balls-Walls-Rein-Wolfs/dp/B0B8SNLKZP

*Leith Custom House,
Edinburgh, Scotland, UK*



PARTICIPATION

Sharing with the Audience



Since the 2010s at the latest, the institution of the museum has willingly embraced the concept of participation, provided it is in the service of transformational action. Participation is linked to the paradigm shift from a collection-centred to a visitor-centred museum. Nevertheless, it remains controversial how far-reaching or fundamental participation should be applied in the museum context. The spectrum of cultural policy demands ranges from the cautious social opening of museums to the radical ‘Occupy Museum’ movement, which has set out “to reclaim space for meaningful culture by and for the 99%”. Sam Gallacher, director of Scottish Historic Buildings Trust in Edinburgh, and Wojciech Śleszyński, director of the Sybir Memorial Museum in Białystok, present recent museum projects that address the topic of participation.



Changeable exhibition at Leith Custom House, curated by a team of digital experts and community groups

Audience participation through curatorial teams collaboratively working with different groups has emerged in recent years as an attractive and powerful approach to provide additional layers of interpretation to collections, allowing new perspectives, stories and meanings to enrich museum experiences. Crucially, participatory curatorial initiatives break down the perceived barriers between museum professionals and the wider public, which has often been characterised as communication in one direction from the authoritative curator to a receptive viewer. The outcome of these collaborations ranges widely. These include fixed-text display boards, interpretative events and festivals, video content available through QR labels, and website and social media activities, amongst others. While successful, these interventions also have their limitations: they are often temporary initiatives with small numbers of participants. Like the interpretative methods they sought to counteract, they too often risk becoming fixed voices, limiting further participation.

Experimenting with the concept of curatorial collaboration and community participation, Scottish Historic Buildings Trust is developing a large historic building called **Leith Custom House** in

Edinburgh to host a participatory museum where this concept becomes praxis. Using digital technology - screens, projectors, speakers - installed in nine galleries supported by a team of digital and community curators, the ambition of Leith Custom House is that multiple exhibitions can happen in a single day, changing at the click of a button on the museum's content management system. By creating a cloud-based collection of digitised artefacts - sounds, images, video, photography, etc. - drawing firstly on the city's historic museum collections, but also "acquisitions" from members of the public offering their objects, images and stories to be digitised, different community groups, guest curators, and special projects will work with the museum team to create a vast array of exhibitions, instantly changeable and ever participatory.



*Sam Gallacher
Director
Leith Custom House,
Edinburgh, Scotland, UK*

*Sybir Memorial Museum,
Białystok, Poland*



The **Sybir Memorial Museum** in Białystok, Poland is the only narrative museum that presents the history of Russian and Soviet repressions against Poles and representatives of other nationalities, related to the forced resettlement of entire families to distant areas of the Siberian taiga and Central Asian steppes. There is an emphasis on universal themes, such as repression and crimes of all totalitarian systems or the victims throughout the history of humanity all over the world.

Considering the name of the institution, the exhibition is based on two key words: Siberia and memory. These words are repeated many times in the exhibition in order to emphasize the most important values around which the museum is concentrated.

It is not only the collection of objects and content presented in the exhibition, but also topics beyond the museum. We are convinced that the threads discussed outside the exhibition complements our message. It is closely related to people connected with the institution and organized initiatives.

Since the beginning of this activity, we have been publishing posts about historical events on social media and organizing exhibitions in urban spaces. We also create online campaigns and organize meetings aimed at initiating discussions supporting a critical understanding of history, connecting communities scattered around the world.

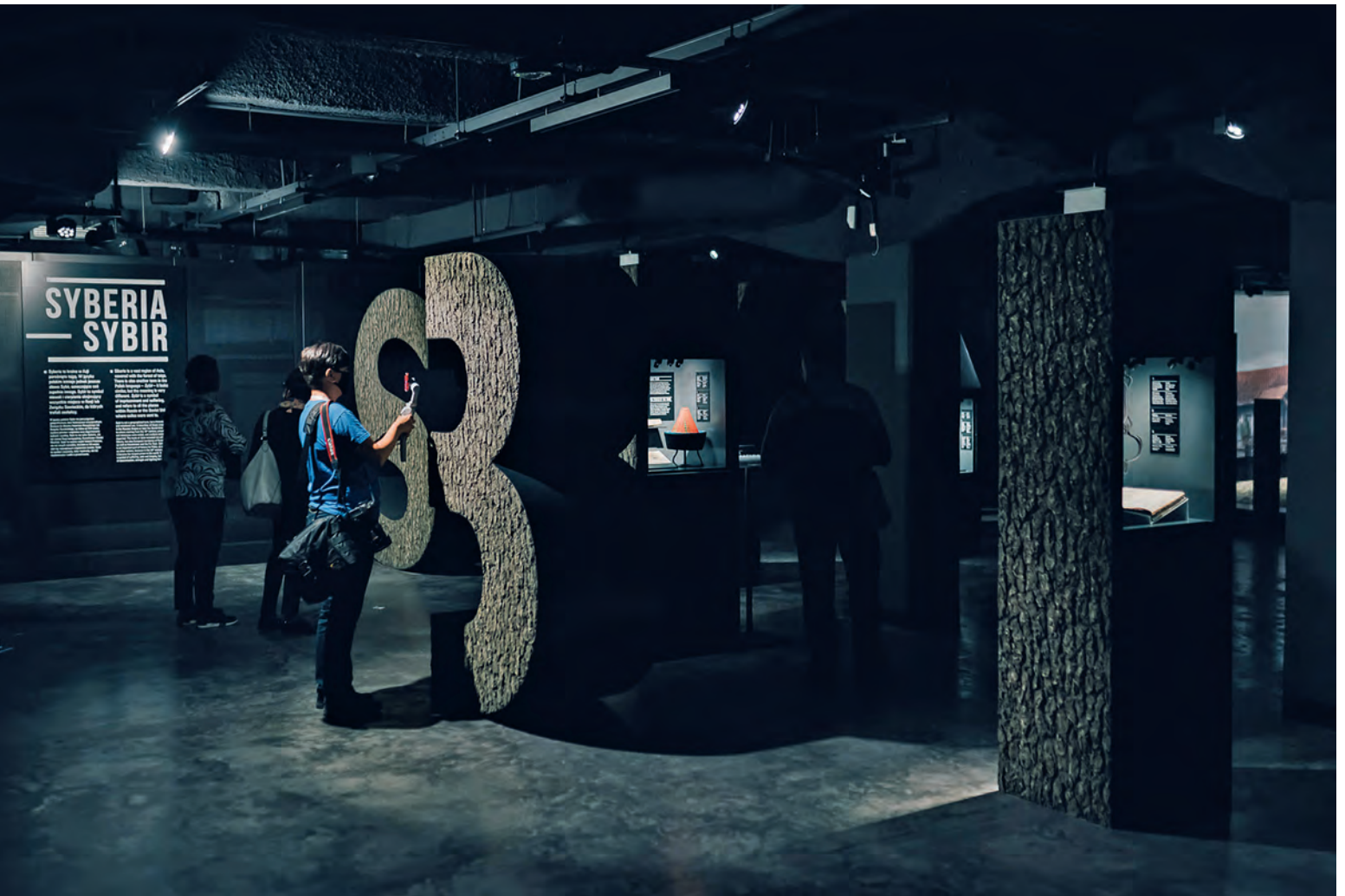
In order to keep the remembrance of heritage we organize meetings bringing the East lands closer, book sessions or Siberian Ambient Salon which concerns music background usually included at the exhibition of our museum. We also hold

events such as The Sybir Memorial Run or Memorial Peloton which has now become an international event. Each year it is organized in our city - Białystok, Poland - but year after year more countries joined this initiative. This year it was held in Lithuania, Latvia and for the first time in Moldova. We are now working on Estonia joining the event and are very glad that it is becoming more widespread. With all these events we commemorate the anniversaries of mass deportations of Polish citizens deep into the Soviet Union and keep the remembrance of them.

Many of our initiatives and organized events are supported by the Sybiraks community. They trust in our work motivates us to further steps. We still work on new projects to commemorate the fate of the deportees. We meet Sybiraks not only in our region but also in their countries. That is why we are more than happy that these people want to share the stories of the hardest times in their life. What is more, we meet descendants of the deportees who continue this sharing. Remembrance is very important for them as much as for us. This common exchange lets us keep the memory of history for future generations.



*Wojciech Śleszyński
Director
Sybir Memorial Museum,
Białystok, PL*



View into the exhibition space of the Sybir Memorial Museum

Cycle tour in Białystok to places that are important for the city and its inhabitants, where professional actors tell the life stories of deported Sybiraks



*The Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp
(Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten /
KMSKA), Belgium, reopened in 2022*



INCLUSION

The Art of Belonging

The Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten / KMSKA) houses an internationally recognised collection of art from seven centuries. But the museum is much more than that. It aims to promote connection, inclusion and engagement in an evolving society. The museum is constantly innovating to make art accessible and personally meaningful to a diverse audience.

The **KMSKA**'s efforts represent a holistic approach to inclusivity and engagement. By prioritizing human connection, we transform the museum into a platform for exploration and dialogue. Looking ahead, we aim to expand partnerships, deepen accessibility, and continue exploring new ways to make art resonate universally.

When Bart, a blind staff member, transitioned from reception duties, we initiated **Radio Bart**, an innovative mobile studio inviting visitors to engage in meaningful dialogues about art. By encouraging

participants to articulate their perceptions of artworks—focusing on elements like colour, texture, and narrative—**Radio Bart** fosters a form of 'slow art,' where visitors uncover nuances they might otherwise overlook. Look differently and see more, that's our motto.

With a growing team of four blind hosts, **Radio Bart** embodies the museum's mission to amplify diverse perspectives and enhance accessibility. The hosts guide conversations as equal participants resulting in a collaborative process transforming the traditional museum experience into



The “Radio Bart” hosts at the KMSKA love art and are blind. But that doesn’t stop them in their quest for meaningful conversations. In this way, they help museum visitors look differently and see more

a dynamic exchange of stories and insights. **Radio Bart** illustrates how these conversations can unlock profound understanding, empowering both visitors and hosts to view art—and the world—through new lenses. A visitor described **Radio Bart** as “the gift that keeps on giving”.

To captivate younger audiences, we developed **The 10**, a trail featuring 10 tactile installations inspired by artwork details designed by artist Christophe Coppens. With Bruno Munari and Maria Montessori in mind the KMSKA embraces touch as a way to deepen engagement with art. Tactile exploration fosters a unique connection, leaving visitors with memories of both the object and the act of discovery. The accompanying booklet guides children through open-ended questions, drawing tasks, and integrating sounds and music to animate the paintings. These experiences, though tailored for children, captivate adults as well, evident in their enthusiastic interactions.

Through **The Stairs**, a youth project for individuals in vulnerable circumstances, the museum fosters empowerment via guidance and tailored activities. Participants gain life skills, broaden their horizons, and collaborate with museum staff, while their creative work is showcased. Central to this effort is ensuring the museum remains a true safe space, where art’s transformative power can flourish.

At KMSKA, visitors are invited to step behind the scenes of art conservation. In the dedicated **Studio Rubens** within the Rubens Gallery we combine the restoration of a monumental altarpiece by Peter Paul Rubens with extensive research. Measuring more than five metres tall and nearly four metres wide, the two-year restoration process is conducted in full view since September 2023, offering a rare opportunity to witness the meticulous care involved in preserving such masterpieces.

The **Artists in Residence programme** further amplifies creativity while tackling societal challenges. From inclusive performances by socially engaged theatre groups to LGBTQ activism and mental health advocacy led by artists like Jaouad Alloul and IKRAAAN, the programme creates impactful dialogues through art. Local talents, many with international acclaim, contribute deeply to the museum’s operations and audience engagement. A standout example is author Saskia de Coster, who transformed her month-long secluded residency into a living artwork, blending literary creation with homage to old masters.



Queer concert at the KMSKA



Delphine Munro
 Head of Arts & Culture, European Investment Bank, Luxembourg.
 Jury member for the Art Museum Award in the European Museum Academy

SIDE VIEW

From Museum to Friendship



Kultursalon+ is an educational programme designed for elderly people in Munich, Germany who are affected by loneliness and poverty in old age. It’s a bold example of how museums can work as a place for social change and as a catalyst to alter people’s lives for the better.

highlight how much familiarity and belonging they experience in the programme. They report how much structure and support they receive in their everyday lives as a result.

The programme is free of charge, takes place every week and consists of a multisensory tour through exhibitions and a casual conversation with coffee and cake afterwards. In addition to the cultural offering, **Kultursalon+** is above all a meeting place, a place where you can socialise and make friends. Participants regularly

The programme is funded by Beisheim Stiftung. It takes place in different museums in Munich. <https://kultursalonplus.de/>



Pia Löwenstein
 Education and Learning
 Pinakothek der Moderne,
 Munich, DE



The Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, since 1941 housed in the listed Sint Jacobsgasthuis, a former poorhouse built in 1787

INCLUSION

Addressing Poverty

The Stedelijk Museum Schiedam in the Netherlands, situated in a former hospital for poor and sick elderly people, houses a collection of mainly modern art and objects relevant to the city’s history. It deserves much credit for its deep-rooted and successful commitment to inclusion and in addressing topics relevant to today’s society.

The city of Schiedam in the Netherlands presents itself as a town with an attractive historic centre with canals, windmills and picturesque old streets. However, it is now part of the urban sprawl of nearby Rotterdam and has more of its fair share of contemporary social issues - including poverty, inequality and a high proportion of ‘newcomers’ (some 150 different nationalities in a total population of around 80.00 people).

The exhibition **“Out of Poverty. Art, history and stories”** (2024) is an especially bold example of the museum’s approach to co-creation and collaboration and serves as an example for others in tackling difficult, sometimes uncomfortable subjects. Using the collection as a springboard, the museum worked with a number of ‘experts’ from the city - people living in or experiencing poverty

- to develop an exhibition around a very sensitive social theme, telling stories of contemporary life and weaving these into the longer history of poverty in the area of Schiedam. What are the everyday experiences, humiliations, and obstacles faced by the poor? It was accompanied by discussions and workshops that emphasised the museum’s role as a safe space and place of trust. The aim was not to offer solutions but to raise awareness and promote discussion of a subject which is often hidden from mainstream discourse.



*Bernhart Schwenk
Jury member for the Art Museum Award
European Museum Academy*



View into the entrance hall of the exhibition 'Out of Poverty. Art, history and stories' at the Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 2024



SPECIAL PROJECT

With **"Wenswerken"** (wishworks) by artist Maarten Bel the *Stedelijk Museum Schiedam* presented - parallel to the exhibition **"Out of Poverty. Art, history and stories"** - a striking initiative to allow 'dreams to come true'. Visitors could submit a card describing a wish that they could not afford - for example, a new oven, a new fridge or a weekend break. From a selection of these, the artist created an artwork depicting the 'wish' which was then sold for the price which allows the wish to be realised - a smart and inspiring artistic project.

Maarten Bel (<https://maartenbel.nl>)



EXPANDED AWARENESS

Sensory Spaces

Museums often take unusual approaches to give their audiences access to their collections. MAG - Museum and Social Change introduces you to three very different museums in which the mediation of cultural and artistic content goes hand in hand with immersive strategies.



Sensory experiences at the Carl Nielsen Museum in Odense, Denmark: immersive light installation accompanied by soundscapes from the composer's numerous works



Hundreds of light bulbs representing the creativity and musical genius of Carl Nielsen follow the visitors through the exhibition

Feel the Music

The **Carl Nielsen Museum** in Odense, Denmark, winner of the 2024 Luigi Micheletti Award, is a musical and sensory space: playful, tactile, and inspiring. Moving away from the traditional linear narratives, visitors are invited to piece together the biography of composer Carl Nielsen by listening and interacting with the exhibits, experiencing music as a living force. Visitors leave with a new understanding of what Nielsen's music can do and, more importantly, what they can do with and through music. "As children we were all poets, artists. Adulthood is what calls the child from its beautiful world of art. Few great poets, thinkers, artists, and scientists are the exception that confirms the rule." These are among the first sentences in Carl Nielsen's autobiography, and like the minds of children, the composer Carl Nielsen was indeed playful, spontaneous, and multifaceted in both his life and his music. The duality in his compositions reveals a composer with an understanding of both the complex and the simple, and with contrasts between the calm and the wild, the playful and the methodical, the traditional and the modern. This is central to the recently reopened Carl Nielsen Museum and the reason why he is more relevant than ever.

The new exhibition reflects that as a composer as well as an individual, Carl Nielsen always challenged existing borders. Carl Nielsen *the composer* refused to be labelled. He wrote music in every conceivable genre: symphonies, operas, music for plays, chamber music, choral works, and songs.

Carl Nielsen *the individual* rose from being a poor country kid to a world-famous composer of classical music, more popular than ever almost 100 years after his passing. His music is the main object in the museum and the portal into the musician's life and creative universe. Snippets of sound introduce visitors to key moments, weaving together his personal story, the story of his era, and the story of his music. A few select objects complete the storytelling, anchoring the music to items significant to the composer, and revealing aspects of his character, lifestyle, and achievements. His violin and bugle, sheet music, the knitting needles and a towel he made, and his various medals and awards are the highlighted material artefacts that help ground and focus the narrative. All stories on display, however, are introduced, illustrated and supported by music. The physical objects highlight and ground the narrative, adding authenticity and intimacy while portraying Nielsen as an individual with distinct preferences, hobbies, interests, and talents.

With the collections being both immaterial and physical, the exhibition would not be able to fulfil its purpose unless it existed in-between the two worlds. 650 lightbulbs representing the creativity and musical genius of Carl Nielsen follow the visitor through the exhibition supported by a scenography mirroring the different phases the composer goes through during his lifetime - from the rough unpolished wood to the smooth lacquered finish of the skilled, self-secure and highly individual



The journey of money in online transactions, interactive exhibition display at the Hungarian Money Museum in Budapest

composer. This layer of mediation holds content, wayfinding, magic, and binds together the tangible exhibits into a meaningful narrative and an immersive museum experience. At the end of the exhibition, the immersive, holistic experience culminates as light, sound, and mood blend around visitors, accompanied by immersive soundscapes from the artist's many works.

Enjoy the Money

The **Hungarian Money Museum** and Visitor Center in Budapest, winner of the 2023 DASA Award, is one of Hungary's most modern museums, bringing the world of money closer to visitors through an innovative approach. The aim of the institution is to make financial education not just a learning experience, but an experience of discovery. To this end, it combines traditional exhibition solutions with modern scenography, alongside immersive multimedia elements to encourage active participation rather than passive contemplation through interactive solutions.

The permanent interactive exhibition, entitled *'The Path of Money'*, explores the basic functions of money through five main thematic nodes and approaches the role of money from different per-

spectives: as a measure of value - visitors can experience for themselves the problems that would arise if money did not exist in everyday life; as a means of circulation function - in this node, visitors will explore the evolution and practical significance of forms of money, showing how form influences use; as a means of payment - visitors can learn about the workings of financial intermediary systems through simulations and experience what a world without banks would be like; as world currencies - this section analyses the functioning and importance of the world currencies in the global economy and the development of the different currencies; as a means of treasure creation - here the exhibition highlights not only the importance of material treasures, but also the importance of spiritual values, to make visitors think.

Immersion - which is the full involvement of visitors in the exhibition space - is key to the Money Museum. The aim in designing the institution was to make visitors part of the exhibition, not just spectators. Interactive games, simulations and touchscreen interfaces encourage visitors to actively engage in the learning process. The concept of the museum breaks away from the traditional one-way transfer of information and builds on the active participation of visitors: The museum has incorporated a number of playful elements to

help visitors understand the basics of finance in a fun way. Interactive tools allow visitors to shape their own experience of the exhibition, for example by exploring their own financial decisions in a simulated environment.

Hug a Sculpture

The **Sainsbury Centre**, located on the campus of the University of East Anglia in Norwich, England, is a world-class art museum with a unique perspective on how art can foster cultural dialogue and exchange. It is the first museum in the world to formally recognise the living life force of art, enabling people to build relationships with art in unique ways. Essentially, the Sainsbury Centre is exploring what it is to be a museum in the 21st century. By activating the emotional power of its collections in new ways, it helps visitors reframe and address the biggest questions they have in their lives today. Recent exhibitions at the Sainsbury Centre include 'What is Truth?', 'Can the Seas Survive Us?', 'Why do People Take Drugs?', 'Can We Stop Killing Each Other?' It is not just a museum to discover art, but a place where collections are animate, and visitors are invited to form their own personal relationships with artworks and explore the great questions in the world through an alternative lens.

The museum has always been radical. Gifted by Sir Robert and Lady Lisa Sainsbury to the University of East Anglia in 1973, the exceptional collection transcends traditional barriers between art, architec-



Henry Moore's "Mother and Child", 1952, at the Sainsbury Centre in Norwich/UK. The sculptor wanted people to touch his work

ture, archaeology and anthropology. It is displayed equally and collectively, with powerful masks from the Côte d'Ivoire and delicate gaming pieces from the Arctic alongside works by Francis Bacon and sculpture by Edgar Degas - there is no hierarchy.

The museum is housed in one of Sir Norman Foster's earliest revolutionary public buildings, echoing the radical ambition of the collection, and actively shaping relationships between people, objects and landscape. Within this space, artworks are placed in an open yet intimate 'living area' where people can experience them in their own way.

Following a relaunch in 2023 with its 'Living Art Sharing Stories' vision, the radical foundations of the Sainsbury Centre have been revitalised, with visitors able to choose digital, experiential, or analogue pathways to explore Living Art across the museum landscape. They can step into a large glass exhibition case surrounded by works ex-case and 'Become An Artwork', mimicking how works in the museum feel when they are on display. They are invited to reverse roles, share secrets, break traditional boundaries, and challenge perceptions.

Visitors can get up close to Henry Moore's 'Mother and Child' and feel the sculpture, embracing the stone figure like another human being. They are encouraged to explore the face of the mother, reach out to her and close their eyes, and try to connect with their own earliest memories of being held and protected. Alberto Giacometti's 'Diego Seated' suspends horizontally from the ceiling above a reclining chair, where visitors are invited to lie back and share a personal secret with the painting, perhaps one they may not tell another human being, as they can trust the painting to hold their innermost thoughts securely.

The Sainsbury Centre continues to foster that rule-breaking intent, building on its radical origins to present an alternative model of what a museum is and how visitors can meet art today.

The preceding article is based on texts by:

Feel the music - Carl Nielsen Museum, Odense/DK: Karsten Kjer Michaelsen, Curator, Ida-Marie Vorre, Curator, and Mette Kronborg Vedel Kiilerich, Head of children and learning

Enjoy the money - The Hungarian Money Museum, Budapest/HU: Lilla Bakonyi, Head librarian (author) and Sándor Balogh, Director of international relations (co-author)

Hug a sculpture - Sainsbury Centre, Norwich/UK: Jago Cooper, Director



The Museum of Solutions in Mumbai, India, wins the 2024 Children in Museums Award, established in 2011 by the European Museum Academy and Hands On! The International Association of Children in Museums



NEXT GENERATION

Art Education as a Museum's Key Role

European Museums have been addressing children and young people as a target group for about five decades (in the USA from the beginning of the 20th century onwards), and an increasing number of children's museums have been founded since, which specifically tailor their programmes accordingly. Looking back, how can this history be assessed, what developmental steps can be observed and where do museums stand today? Who better to answer these questions than Annemies Broekgaarden, who started her career as head of a children's museum before being invited to develop the educational department for The Rijksmuseum, the National Museum of Art and History in Amsterdam, where she now heads the Public & Education department.



Children on a discovery tour in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

MAG: What role does art education play in museums today?

Annemies Broekgaarden (AB): Art education should play a key role in museums in my opinion. Aren't museum buildings in the first place meant to connect people to the works of art and history? As an institution a museum has more roles of course - research, conservation and science, collecting. All very important as this is needed to be able to make connections with people.

MAG: Ideally, where should it be located within the management team?

AB: The head of an education team should be placed in the management team of the museum, directly reporting to the general director, as it was from the beginning of my career in the Rijksmuseum.

MAG: What potential is still to be realised there?

AB: Still in many museums the education department is part of the communication department. To really make a difference for audiences the educational policy should directly follow the museum

policy, and it is necessary that the museum director fully embraces the importance of education.

MAG: What role could external partners take on?

AB: For the execution of this policy cooperation with internal and external partners might help to increase the impact. The Rijksmuseum cooperates with many partners that make our educational programmes and products not only possible but are also very important for the visibility and impact on our visitors.

MAG: What examples can you give of successful work with children and young people in museums?

AB: The Rijksmuseum has over a period of ten years not only increased the school visits of children from 30.000 to 160.000, but 90.000 of these children are also offered a guided programme. These programmes are co-created with teachers and children. This way they fit within the school curriculum and are fun for children. Our goal is to make each school visit impactful. Visitor research teaches us whether we achieve our goals or what we should adapt. In 2023 we presented an exhi-

bition for families and children after five years of hard work. 'Mission Masterpiece' challenged families to do object-based research and in the meantime let children and their parents think of important questions such as, is this object genuine? Is this piece of furniture really from the 17th century? Is this print an art piece? If this object is made from materials that are not valuable, could it still be a museum piece and why? This exhibition was co-created with Science Centre NEMO and programmed in our main exhibition wing. It received the highest visitor reward ever and won the 2024 Museum & Heritage Award in the category best international exhibition. Over the years the attendance of families and children grew in the Rijksmuseum. Nowadays it makes up 25% of our audiences.

MAG: Which institutions or programmes come to mind spontaneously?

AB: For me there are some examples that have always inspired me in my work for children. First, Tropenmuseum Junior, the children's museum of the Tropenmuseum (now Wereldmuseum) in Amsterdam but also the Ruth Youth Wing in Jerusalem and the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. The children's museums in Boston and New York are also great examples, as well as ZOOM children's museum in Vienna.

MAG: And why?

AB: All these museums have in common that they know their target groups very well and develop with the needs of their audiences as starting point. They operate research based and co-create their programmes and products with the children. They are aware of the different learning styles of children and the importance of learning by doing and the use of creativity. They experiment and are (or were) innovative forces.

MAG: Are there countries in Europe where the focus on children and young people in museums is particularly well developed?

AB: I think that in England many museums are aware of the importance of children as one of the main audiences and you see that there is a lot of knowledge and experience in this field. Also, the universities in Leeds and Glasgow offer master courses in the field of museum education.

MAG: You are not only one of EMA's Board members but also - from the very beginning in 2012 - co-founder and now director of the Children in Museums Award (CMA), with interests in accessibility, the role of museums in society, audiences, learning programmes. Can you tell us more about the award winners so far?



Children's project "Missie Meesterwerk" (Mission Masterpiece) at the Rijksmuseum: Put on lab coats and feel like real museum researchers in the museum!



'Mission Masterpiece' challenged families to do object based research

AB: The Award winners of the CMA are very diverse. From small institutions to parts of large institutions. And from different parts of the world. From The Netherlands and Sweden to the US, Singapore, Senegal to its latest winner in Mumbai. Clear criteria are the guideline for 10 judges (five with a children's museum background and five with an adult museum background).

MAG: According to which criteria were the awards given?

AB: Judges form their opinion always based on the set of criteria. These criteria are:

Innovation: Showing new pathways to enlarge subject matters, new ideas for using collections in children's programmes, new ways of using technologies to interact with the content, new forms of actively engaging young visitors, etc.

Quality of learning: Creating an overall environment and atmosphere which are conducive to learning, using interactivity to favour understanding, involving children in the conception and design, testing and evaluation of programmes and exhibitions, etc.

Inclusion and social impact: Showing evidence of programmes or initiatives that have a social impact and focus on inclusion and diversity, outreach activities, etc.

Information and communication: Having an informative website, learning printed and/or digital materials for schools, teachers, parents, etc.

Staff: Showing good management and well-trained and experienced staff.

Bottom line - the winner should show best practice, be innovative and an example and source of inspiration for other museums.

MAG: Thank you very much!



*Annemies Broekgaarden
Head of the Public & Education department
The Rijksmuseum, the National Museum
of Art and History in Amsterdam, NL*

SUSTAINABILITY

The Green Museum Academy: Preparing for the Future

Museums are uniquely positioned to play a pivotal role in society's sustainable transition. Their credibility and ability to connect past, present, and future perspectives allow them to unite with their visitors and weave together elements of culture, history, art, science, and nature to foster sustainable development for both the museum sector and society at large.





Installation by Alfredo Barsuglia 2022 in the participatory 'Denkraum Deutschland' under the title 'Love & Peace. Art, Conflict and Peace' at the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich

The **Green Museum Academy**, an initiative under the Association of Danish Museums, is supported by a private foundation and aims to lead the sustainable transformation of Danish museums. By equipping museums with knowledge and tools, the Academy empowers them to adopt sustainable practices and strive toward a carbon-neutral future for the entire museum industry in Denmark.

Through initiatives focused on capacity building, structural change, and financial sustainability, the Academy seeks to create a unified effort among Danish museums to reduce their environmental impact while amplifying their positive influence. Central to the Academy's efforts is the Green Transition Charter, which commits museums to action in four key areas: organization, communication, CO₂ accounts, and staff training. By signing the charter, museums pledge to take concrete steps toward sustainability. The Academy supports these commitments through networks, training programmes, and digital tools designed to empower museum staff to integrate sustainability into their daily operations.

Collaboration is another cornerstone of the Academy's approach. Experience has shown that systemic barriers often hinder sustainability efforts more than individual institutional challenges.

By engaging stakeholders across all levels of the cultural sector, the Academy facilitates the development of solutions that address structural challenges and drive systemic change.

One of the major challenges for museums in adopting sustainable practices is the cost. To address this, starting in August 2025, the Academy will assist Danish museums in accessing European and Nordic funding opportunities to support their sustainability initiatives. Additionally, the Academy aims to guide museums in establishing their own renewable energy solutions, helping to secure long-term financial and environmental sustainability.

The Green Museum Academy is committed to embedding sustainability into the very foundation of museum work, ensuring that cultural heritage is preserved for future generations while contributing to the protection of our planet.



*Birgitte Kehler Holst
The Green Museum Academy, DK
www.dkmuseer.dk/museernes-groenne-akademi/kontakt/*

REVIEW

*Impressions of the award ceremony
at the 2024 annual conference of
the European Museum Academy
in Nicosia, Cyprus*



EMA

European Museum Academy

Welcome to Budapest 2025

The Annual Conference 2025
of the European Museum
Academy (EMA) will be held
in Hungary, hosted by

*The Hungarian Money
Museum & Visitor Center
in Budapest.*

Hope to see you there!

Challenge of Change

European Museum Academy Annual Conference
and Award Ceremony in Nicosia, Cyprus.

The Annual Conference of the **European Museum Academy (EMA)** is a cornerstone of its activities, serving as a platform for the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and best practices in the European museum sector. It highlights the role of museums as innovative and socially relevant institutions. With its rich programme and annually changing venues, the conference is a dynamic and significant event for the museum community.

In October 2024 the Annual Conference, hosted by the Anastasios G. Leventis Foundation through its two museums—the A. G. Leventis Gallery and the Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia—took place in Cyprus. This Mediterranean island, a historic crossroad of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, is renowned for its cultural diversity and its rich historical traditions. Nicosia, the island's capital, blends historic heritage with contemporary life.

Under the theme “Museums. Challenge of Change”, the conference showcased innovative museums and modern museological approaches. The host museums prepared, in collaboration with EMA, a rich programme of activities, including guided tours of both institutions and walking tours through Nicosia's old city. The event concluded with an optional day trip to the Troodos Mountains and the Atsas Training Centre, located near the historic Skouriotissa Copper Mine.

The conference was met with great enthusiasm, attracting nearly 100 participants from 35 museums worldwide. Nominated museums presented their work and objectives, fostering dialogue and exchange of ideas among museum professionals. A series of workshops complemented the programme, enabling discussions on museology, culture, and the evolving role of museums in society. Each year the EMA presents awards to museums excelling in various fields. This year's awards cer-

emony took place during a reception hosted at the residence of Mrs Fotini Papadopoulou, Trustee of the A. G. Leventis Foundation. The awards honoured museums for their achievements in the following categories:

DASA Award: Best Museum with an Educational Orientation, awarded to the Provincial Archaeological Museum of Alicante, Spain, presented by DASA President Gregor Isenbort.

Luigi Micheletti Award: Best Museum with a Museological Approach, recognising innovation and excellence, awarded to the Carl Nielsen Museum in Odense, Denmark, by René Capovin, President of the Luigi Micheletti Foundation.

Children in Museums Award: A collaboration between EMA and “Hands On! International”, awarded to the Museum of Solutions, Mumbai, India, during a celebration at the Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia.

Art Museum Award: Sponsored by the A. G. Leventis Foundation, this award was presented to the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Netherlands, by art historian Danièle Wagener, Chair of the award's judging committee.

The 2024 ceremony introduced a new honour, the Audience Award, dedicated to the memory of EMA founder Wim van der Weiden. This inaugural award, presented by Mrs Fotini Papadopoulou, went to the Museum of Solutions in Mumbai, India, recognised for its inclusive approach to learning and play for children from all backgrounds.

The conference was supported by the Deputy Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Cyprus, the Municipality of Nicosia, and the Friends Association of the Leventis Municipal Museum & A. G. Leventis Gallery, underscoring the collaborative effort in making this event a resounding success.

STATEMENT

Participating in the **European Museum Academy** Annual Conference and Award Ceremony in Nicosia, Cyprus was a thrilling and engaging experience. My highlights were the inspiring presentations by the museums nominated for various awards. I am always overwhelmed by the ambitious and innovative powers of the European museums. Nicosia was a beautiful and culturally rich setting for the days with museums, music, dance and amazing dinners peeking with the awards ceremony at the residence of Mrs. Fotini Papadopoulou sitting around the beautiful pool together with wonderful colleagues.



Karen Grøn
Director
Trapholt - Museum of Modern Art,
Craft and Design, Kolding, DK



Kick Off Workshop for the new magazine MAG. Museum and Social Change during the EMA Annual Conference in Nicosia/CY, October 2024

IMPRINT

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Along with museum practitioners, the new magazine **MAG. Museum & Social Change** is committed to the role of the modern museum as a place of encounter and as a forum for the development of social cohesion, cultural dialogue and creativity. It intends to act as a lively platform for sharing experiences among an interested museum crowd - experts and volunteers alike - aspiring to create a participatory and sustainable society. Please join in!

Karl Borromäus Murr
Chairman of the
European Museum Academy

