

2026 / 2027

**MUSEUM
& SOCIAL
CHANGE**

mag

EUROPEAN MUSEUM ACADEMY MAGAZINE

Courage

**HOW MUSEUMS
DARE TO ACT**



eMA

European Museum Academy
europeanmuseumacademy.eu

**RADICALLY PUBLIC
Creative Catalysts
for Change**

**DILEMMA-BASED
MUSEUMS
Against Stereotypes**

**EMOTIONAL PAST
Immersion into People's
History**



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Cover image: Our cover image symbolises the courage that each and every one of us must summon at countless stages of our lives. It depicts the introductory circuit designed to prepare visitors for the exhibition "Health First: An Exhibition with Side Effects" (2025/26) at the Stapferhaus in Lenzburg, Switzerland. On this personal journey through life, it is important to remain open to new experiences, to face the shadows with confidence, to mindfully feel one's self-efficacy—and thereby develop self-confidence.
© Stapferhaus, Lenzburg / Photo: Anita Affentranger.



KARL BORROMÄUS MURR

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

The Courage to Engage: Museums as Agents of Social Transformation

How can culture respond to the many uncertainties of our current world, marked by immense challenges? From global warming and natural disasters to unbridled turbo-capitalism, terrorist attacks, anti-democratic movements, and persistent social injustice – these phenomena all test the resistance of society and culture. Courage is increasingly gaining significance as a value within the field of culture and museums, precisely because it is needed to respond constructively to today's disruptions, crises, and conflicts. Since antiquity, courage has been described as a virtue that involves an appropriate assessment of risks, which invariably also include risks pertaining to knowledge and ethics.

At the beginning of the Enlightenment, therefore, it was no coincidence that courage stood foremost – namely, the courage, as *Immanuel Kant* formulated it, to make use of one's own understanding. *Michel Foucault* emphasises courage as the commitment to pursue truth, even if this entails taking a clear ethical stance and fighting for social justice. This form of courage does not call for heroism; rather, it springs from a clear inner ethos.

Committed to human rights, the **European Museum Academy** honours and awards museums that, as courageous cultural actors, develop forward-looking perspectives for an equitable society. In promoting democratic principles, the Academy searches for exemplary museums that, in engaging with history and heritage, mobilise utopian energies toward necessary social change. The Academy

firmly believes that museums have the potential to create safe spaces that allow a particular form of courage to be cultivated: civil courage, which links individual action with the broader society. For *Hannah Arendt*, civil courage means the bravery to stand publicly against injustice. Whether dedicated to history, art, or nature, and whether in relation to a transnational entity, a nation, a region, or a municipality, museums are thus well suited to function as spaces of poetic resistance in the service of a just public sphere. In this way, culture functions as a source of resilience. Resilience, in turn, is a distinctive form of empowering courage: it enables us, as human beings, to sustain a clear vision of a society that is at once democratic and vigilant, amidst a world permeated by uncertainty.

We hope you enjoy reading
our new issue of **MAG**!



SPOTLIGHT

Honouring Innovation

The European Museum Academy (EMA)
has set itself the task of recognising
innovative museum concepts that can
serve as models for others.



European Museum Academy

Applications for 2027 will open in November 2026
europeanmuseumacademy.eu/awards

To this end, the Academy awards various prizes each year to promote and enhance the quality of museum work and museological discourse at an international level. In addition to three main EMA Awards – *Art Museum Award*, *DASA Award*, *Luigi Micheletti Award* –, there are a number of associated awards, including the *Heritage in Motion Award* since 2023 managed jointly by the EMA and the International Foundation Forum of Slavic Cultures (see p. 25) and the *Children in Museums Award* established together with Hands On! International Association of Children in Museums.



Art Museum Award
for the Best European Museum focusing on Art in an innovative way and addressing social issues.
The Art Museum Award, established in 2020 thanks to the generous support of the Leventis Foundation, is aimed at museums

that demonstrate exceptional achievement in their projects by engaging with art, democratic and human values in innovative, pioneering and creative ways, addressing social issues and pursuing a general sustainability strategy – and thus serving as driving forces for new museum ideas in the 21st century. It is about museums functioning as “social arenas”, as societally relevant meeting places.



DASA Award
for the Best European Museum in Learning Opportunities.

With the DASA Award launched in 2011 the European Museum Academy puts the spotlight on educational programmes and exhibitions within (or with) museums. It honours a museum that is dedicated to an audience-orientated communication 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.

Luigi Micheletti Award
for the Best European Museum in History-Telling.

Without museums, humankind would hardly understand its past, cope with its present and advance in its future. History-Telling is based upon storytelling which is key for all museums in their attempt to make temporal sense. The emphasis of the Luigi Micheletti Award, established in 1995, has been on the way museums manage to convey a sense of the past to their visitors through their exhibitions by means of a compelling narrative. It is anticipated that many different kinds of museums will compete for this chance to show how their storytelling provides the public with a better sense of their own identity and their place in the historical landscape.



Children in Museums Award
for the Best Museum Experience for Children up to the Age of 14.

The Children in Museums Award was established in 2011 by the European Museum Academy and Hands On! International Association of Children in Museums. The prize, worth €7,500, is intended to recognise institutions and individuals who have demonstrated exceptional commitment and creativity in making museums more accessible and appealing to the youngest visitors. Applications are welcome from children's museums, education, children's and youth departments within museums, science centres, and other cultural institutions that focus on programmes for children.



INFO

europeanmuseumacademy.eu/awards
luigimichelettiaward.eu
hands-on-international.net/award

KEYNOTE

Post-Heroic Courage

Courage is often mistaken for loudness, for heroic gestures, for the spectacular defiance of risk. Yet courage begins elsewhere. It begins in the willingness to want or to do something that cannot rely on applause.

It begins in the capacity to persist in one's own judgment without securing it in advance through the approval of others. Courage, in this sense, is not excess but restraint: the refusal to align one's decisions primarily with anticipated reactions. It is the opposite of opportunism. And whoever acts courageously loosens the grip of expectation that otherwise structures social life.

This is decisive for art and culture because their specific capacity lies in intensifying deviation. Art does not simply mirror reality; it alters the conditions under which reality appears. It does not duplicate the world but re-describes it. It produces another version, another arrangement, another visibility of what is already there. Even in the so-called realistic arts, this is unmistakable. The most meticulous hyper-realist portrait remains a portrait - an interpretation framed by selection, perspective, medium, and decision. And literary narration, however documentary its tone, remains narration: it organises events temporally and semantically; it constructs coherence where life itself does not guarantee it. Art never reproduces reality. It produces a difference in reality.

The matter becomes even clearer where art has long abandoned the classical paradigm of imitatio. Modern and contemporary art do not assume an original that must be faithfully copied. Rather, they operate in a field where the distinction between original and image, between reality and representation, has itself

become unstable. Fictionality is no longer subordinate to an external world; it claims its own ontological weight. It becomes a reality that stands on its own terms - autonomous, yet inevitably entangled in a social world dense with expectations, routines, certainties, and inertia.

To intervene in such a world by showing that what appears self-evident could also be otherwise requires courage. For art draws radical attention to contingency. It reminds us that what "is" might have been different and could still become different. In doing so, it renders the observer visible. The artist cannot disappear behind the work; decisions of form, of emphasis, of omission become legible as decisions. Art exposes its own constructedness and thereby exposes the position from which it is constructed. It demands that the viewer recognise not only the world but also the perspective from which the world is seen.

If courage means freeing oneself, at least partially, from the anticipated expectations of others, then art - at least art that takes itself seriously - categorically requires courage. For art necessarily plays with the expectations of its audience. It presupposes perceptual habits in order to irritate them. It anticipates conventional readings in order to displace them. Good art, therefore, must disappoint expectations - not arbitrarily, but structurally. It must frustrate the desire for confirmation.

"Courage lies not in radical isolation but in the calibrated risk of disturbance."

Indeed, one could argue that art and its reception share a function: they organise productive disappointment. They unsettle established interpretive schemes; they force shifts of perspective; they suspend the comfort of recognition. Art contains an element of irritation. It refuses smooth integration. It insists that the world cannot be reduced to its most familiar descriptions. And this insistence demands the courage not to please.

Yet this courage is not heroic in a classical sense. The artist need not be a martyr. The demand is not for pathos but for persistence. It is a post-heroic courage: the readiness to challenge categories of perception and the management of expectation without recourse to grand gestures. Art that too quickly satisfies the market, political doctrine, moral pedagogy, or religious reassurance risks becoming compliant. Conversely, art that refuses any point of contact forfeits its capacity to intervene at all. Courage lies not in radical isolation but in the calibrated risk of disturbance.

What is often overlooked is that the courage required for art does not end with its production. Reception, too, requires courage. To encounter a work of art means to risk being displaced from one's own certainties. It means allowing oneself to be productively disappointed - to discover that one's habitual ways of seeing are neither natural nor inevitable. Only under this condition can art fulfil its function: to bracket the self-evidence of reality, to make contingency visible, to open the imagination toward alternative arrangements of the world.

Courage, then, is not an optional attribute of certain artistic personalities. It is not a character trait that some possess and others lack. Within the sphere of art, courage is constitutive. It is a condition of possibility. Whenever art becomes stale, formulaic, or merely decorative, it is often because it has surrendered to strong expectations - commercial pres-

ures, political demands, moral orthodoxies, religious certainties. In such situations, another form of courage becomes necessary: not only the aesthetic courage to disappoint, but the personal courage to resist constraint.

Art exists in tension with the world it inhabits. It must draw upon the very expectations it seeks to unsettle. It must operate within structures while demonstrating their contingency. This tension is irreducible. And it is precisely here that courage finds its place - not as recklessness, not as heroic defiance, but as the steady willingness to expose both the world and oneself to the possibility that things could be otherwise.

THE AUTHOR



Prof. Dr. Armin Nassehi has held the Chair of General Sociology and Theory of Society at LMU since 1998. His main areas of academic work lie in sociological theory formation, political and cultural sociology, as well as medical sociology and the sociology of knowledge. He has led numerous research projects in these fields.

He is a member of numerous high-profile councils, including the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina and the German Ethics Council, and serves as Deputy Chair of the Bavarian Ethics Council. Beyond academia, Nassehi advises companies, political actors, and associations, and is widely recognized as a prominent science communicator in the public sphere.

*Wolfgang Tillmans, paper drop (London) II, 2011
Courtesy Galerie Buchholz, Maureen Paley, London,
David Zwirner, New York*

To Look without Fear: Wolfgang Tillmans

In the work of German artist Wolfgang Tillmans (*1968), visual culture is intertwined with civic responsibility. Beyond his highly influential photographic practice, he is a vocal advocate for an open and democratic Europe, most notably through his self-initiated anti-Brexit campaign in 2016. Tillmans understands culture as a vital space for dialogue, empathy and shared values. His commitment reflects a quiet yet resolute form of courage: the willingness to defend freedoms, challenge indifference and encourage participation in democratic life. In the context of this issue of "MAG Museum & Social Change", Tillmans embodies a model of artistic practice that extends beyond aesthetics – using visibility, language and public presence to foster solidarity, responsibility and a collective European consciousness grounded in openness and care.

Wolfgang Tillmans' images appear in a wide variety of contexts and play with visual formulas and conventions: whether in newspapers, magazines, catalogues, on postcards or in large-scale installations on museum walls. Yet although the artist's medium is photography, his working method cannot be reduced to that of a photographer. Tillmans is fascinated by the materiality of his images as artefacts, particularly by paper – which is more than just a picture carrier – and its forms. Since 2001, it has played a central role in Tillmans' series 'paper drops': Each image in this series depicts a sheet of paper hanging down or arching over a surface, forming drop-shaped indentations, casting or reflecting shadows, and thus conveying astonishing impressions of spatial depth or infinity. Every element of these minimalist yet precise compositions has its own distinctive chromatic and spatial effect.

Wolfgang Tillmans' work has been widely exhibited and honoured over the past few decades. His most recent major exhibitions have been held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art ("To Look Without Fear", 2022/23), the Albertinum in Dresden ("Weltraum", 2025), and the Centre Pompidou in Paris ("Rien ne nous y préparait – Tout nous y préparait", 2025). In 2000, he became the first non-British artist to be awarded the Turner Prize, and in 2018 he received the Goslar Kaiserring. In 2026, he will receive the Roswitha Haftmann Prize in Zurich.



*Wolfgang Tillmans, 2023. Photo by Will Ragozzino.
Courtesy David Zwirner*





Annie Fletcher, Director of the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) in Dublin



RADICALLY PUBLIC

A Creative Catalyst for Change

The **Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA)** in Dublin, Ireland has quietly become one of Europe's most radically different museums, reshaping what a public art institution can be for its city and its citizens. Under the trailblazing leadership of Director Annie Fletcher, IMMA positions itself not as a temple of art but as a “creative catalyst for change”, a public space where contemporary art, social justice and everyday life are deliberately entangled. As Fletcher has observed, museums must “work with and for people in all their complexity”, and IMMA takes this imperative seriously in every aspect of its practice.



Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin, aerial view, 2022

Strategy as radical blueprint

IMMA's strategic 2024-2028 plan, "A Creative Catalyst for Change", provides the institutional backbone for this transformation. It is structured around four interlocking priorities: being a catalyst for change; a radically public space; a centre for research and innovation; and a global connector, each with concrete social, environmental and civic objectives rather than solely artistic ones.

In the strategy, Fletcher describes the museum as "a shared civic resource", "a testing ground for new ways of living together", "a safe place that needs to be radically hospitable", framing contemporary art as a tool that can "help us make sense of our shifting world and imagine different futures". This language moves decisively beyond access rhetoric to a vision of the museum as infrastructure for democracy, care and experiment.

A radically public museum

Free entry to exhibitions has been a priority for Fletcher. Accessibility is crucial to the strategic direction of the museum, not as an add-on but as a structural decision that removes financial and psychological barriers and invites communities who have traditionally felt that museums are "not for them". IMMA explicitly defines itself as "radi-

cally public" in the strategy, committing to co-design with communities, long-term partnerships and a more porous relationship between institution and city.

Housed in the former Royal Hospital Kilmainham, a vast historic complex with 48 acres of grounds, IMMA leverages its architecture and landscape as an open civic forum. The rewilding of the park, biodiversity tours and an annual Climate Festival drawing 16,000 visitors in over just two and a half days embed ecological thinking into the institution's core rather than treating "climate" as a temporary theme. Moreover, the unique location, history and architecture of IMMA form a legacy that needs to be celebrated: "there is an intelligence to the actual location, with a connected set of politics".

Art as agency, not backdrop

Inside, IMMA's Collection display "Art as Agency" encapsulates this radically different ethos. Instead of a linear art-historical narrative, works are hung thematically to stage visual and intellectual confrontations around "hot button" issues, from decolonisation to gender, migration and ecology, turning the Collection into an active tool for thinking rather than a canon to be reverently surveyed.



Earth Rising Festival, 2025

“Museums run on emotional fuel”

Annie Fletcher

Major exhibitions reinforce this socially charged approach: from the quilts of Gee’s Bend, symbols of Black empowerment and cultural pride, to the pioneering intermedia, sci-art and queer diasporic practice of Hamad Butt. IMMA’s willingness to host daring programming and to tackle fraught subjects, including *The Troubles* and technologies of peace, marks it out as a museum that is unafraid of controversy and committed to the civic role of contemporary art.

How to be resonant to what is going on? Fletcher states that “museums are active participants in driving the change, otherwise we are divesting the responsibility”, or as Catherine David says, “the appropriate response is to steer that cultural narrative, to think the cultural moment, whilst still being a safe place”. The challenge resides in combatting the prejudice of elitism (“not be gatekeepers”) whilst never compromising on the programme. The museum offers an area for personal growth, for “art savants” as well as for delicate marginalised communities, and everyone in between.



In the Moment Workshop, IMMA, Dublin

Participation as institutional DNA

What makes IMMA particularly is that participation here is systemic rather than project based. Curatorial and engagement teams collaborate from the inception of exhibitions; visitors are treated as co-producers of meaning, not passive publics to be reached. The Matheson Creativity Hub, opened in 2024, provides a free, flexible space for underserved communities, who can book it without charge and adapt it to their own needs, often spilling out into the courtyard. IMMA’s pioneering Art & Ageing programme, supported by Ireland’s first Art & Ageing Curator,



IMMA Collection: Art as Agency, 2025



Cecilia Vicuña exhibition at IMMA, 2025



Exhibition Sam Gilliam, 2025

offers gallery experiences for people living with dementia and their carers, complemented by research partnerships with hospitals, universities and the Global Brain Institute that position the museum at the forefront of art, health and ageing.

Radical inclusion and regenerative practice

A full-time D&I officer leads outreach to neuro-divergent artists, refugees, teens in detention Centers, Black Irish communities and people facing economic hardship, recognising that structural inequalities, not lack of interest, keep many away from cultural institutions. IMMA's inclusive stance is mirrored in its artist residency programme, with

16 studios and an artist house offering stipends and bursaries that support diverse practices and embed artists within the institutional ecosystem.

The strategic plan commits IMMA to becoming Ireland's first regenerative museum, addressing energy, materials, biodiversity and social sustainability together. From solar panels and low-impact exhibition design to climate-focused programming and bio-diversity tours, the museum treats environmental crisis as both content and operating principle.

Annie Fletcher as trailblazer

Annie Fletcher's directorship is central to this shift. She characterises IMMA as radically different because it "centres the lived experience of audiences, artists and staff equally", and because it refuses to separate artistic excellence from social responsibility. Internally, she is recognised as a brave leader willing to navigate tricky societal issues through art, embracing complexity rather than consensus and ensuring that diversity, inclusion and regeneration are shared responsibilities across the value chain. She sees the Museum as a history-making machine, one that builds, protects and questions the archives, and brings it artists as facilitators.

In a European landscape where many museums still struggle to move beyond representation towards redistribution of power, IMMA under Fletcher offers a compelling model: a best-in-class example of citizen ownership, social engagement and intergenerational dialogue that treats contemporary art as a living interface with democracy itself. It is this combination of strategic clarity and experimental, risk-embracing practice that makes IMMA, in Fletcher's own terms, "a radically different kind of museum for a radically changing world".



Delphine Munro
European Museum Academy (EMA)
Member of the Judging Committee
for the Art Museum Award

INFO

Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA)
Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Military Rd,
Kilmainham, IE-Dublin 8, D08 FW31
imma.ie

Dilemma-Based Museums

Dilemma-based museums have the special task of communicating controversial topics – social issues, ethical or historical conflicts. The aim of these institutions is largely to deepen understanding of complex issues and strengthen democratic skills. Perhaps more than other institutions, they are designed to position the museum as a place of dialogue, reflection and engagement. Examples of this include the inspiring concepts and projects of:

**The Obersalzberg Documentation Center
in Berchtesgaden, Germany**
(Luigi Micheletti Award 2025 / Winner)

The House of Austrian History in Vienna, Austria
(DASA Award 2025 / Nominee)

The State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw, Poland
(Art Museum Award 2025 / Special Commendation)



Obersalzberg Documentation
Center in Berchtesgaden,
Germany



A LOCATION AND ITS STORY

Idyll and Atrocity

Since the 19th century, Obersalzberg in Berchtesgaden has been a popular holiday resort in mountainous southern Bavaria in Germany. When you visit you understand why, with the magnificent views in between mountains and idyllic valleys.

The beautiful landscape around Berchtesgaden creates a very attractive background for a place, which otherwise is dedicated to the stories and experiences from the period 1933-1945 when Nazi Germany exploited the area as a resort for the elite, including Adolf Hitler, for political meetings, and as the southern military command centre. Today most of the houses which relate to Hitler and other leading Nazi figures have since long been demolished - including the villa *Berghof*. *The Eagle's Nest - Kehlsteinhaus* - some hundred metres above Berghof is preserved almost as a monument and is open for visits during the summer months.

The **Obersalzberg Documentation Center** originally opened in 1999 on the initiative in part from an elite contemporary history research institute (Institut für Zeitgeschichte), and the current exhibition building was opened in 2023. Originally, the Center had the task of "providing information about the history of National Socialism and the former

Führer's off-limits area near Berchtesgaden". Today the Center wants to be a "lively place of learning and historical-political education". It still calls itself a documentation Center which both points to the origins of the institution and to the political decision to have documentation as the foundation of education about the Nazi era. But the Center could equally also be called a museum.

The visitor is taken on a tour where two stories are told in parallel. On the one hand you follow how Hitler and Eva Braun entertained friends in the villa Berghof as any other upper-class family would do at the time. They had fun, with good food, music and casual clothing as they enjoyed the wonderful surroundings, taking long walks and experiencing the fresh mountain air and other intriguing smells of nature. This was clearly enjoyable and attracted Hitler so much that it is documented that he spent a quarter of his remaining life there in the house he had since the mid-1930s. On the other hand, you are slowly but surely understanding through



At the Obersalzberg Documentation Center

the permanent exhibition that at the same time the Berghof was also the place where Hitler together with the Nazi leadership made many decisions about war and some of the most horrific atrocities during the war. The grotesqueness is the Center story at the Obersalzberg Documentation Center.

The Center states that “The history of National Socialism and the Second World War is highly relevant for our present. It is this past that has not only shaped the landscape of Europe after 1945 but continues to shape our thinking and our outlook on the present”. That relevance is the starting point for understanding the educational strategy of the Center.

The exhibition’s story telling is exemplary and location based, and the narration is closely linked to the historic site. It connects historic events and biographies to everyday locations that resonate with contemporary audiences. The formats are tailored to diverse audiences, highlighting lifelong learning as a core principle of the educational strategy. The formats are in demand from educational groups such as schools of all types, including integration schools for students with additional needs as well as from club and company outings. The Center offers profession-focused tours and workshops

for members of the armed forces, police, nursing, and medical staff. These encourage participants to reflect on the past and on present ethics of their occupation. The exhibition does not simply overwhelm them with the terror of unfathomable numbers, blame the bigwigs or an anonymous, seemingly almighty perpetrator apparatus, and it does not offer simple dichotomies of black and white. Together with the fates of the victims, it confronts visitors with shades of grey and the transformation of everyday places to places of persecution. This resonates with visitors, who are encouraged to realise mechanisms of exclusion that started in their very own neighbourhoods and led to the killing grounds “in the East”. To this end the Center has undertaken extensive research into the history of Obersalzberg and the region.

The most important criterion for what is chosen to tell and what to show is a connection to the Obersalzberg and/or the surrounding region. Three-dimensional exhibits have been controversial at perpetrator sites like Obersalzberg, for fear of an allegedly particularly problematic aura. The Center is, however, firm in the conviction that such exhibits are not different from



View of the permanent exhibition „Idyll and Atrocity“

any other exhibits – all of them need to be taken seriously and handled critically. This is indeed done very well here. When there are objects in the exhibition they drive the narrative, and they tell their own stories. The matchbox for example, may carry a propaganda slogan. It reveals, however, the tragic story of its Jewish fabricator, forced to stick the slogan on his product during the annexation of Austria, probably knowing what this would mean for himself and his family. The building, exhibition architecture, scenography, graphics and lighting all have been developed in a dialogical process parallel to the narrative, ensuring a sober, restrained and neutral presentation, avoiding all inappropriate staging, and supporting the storytelling with their own respective means.

The general impression of the storytelling in the Obersalzberg Documentation Center is positive. The Center defines the story it wants to tell well, and it is especially valuable that a special point is made in using cases with a local connection when showing the result of decisions made by the Nazi regime at Berghof. They do that very well. That means, for example, that the visitor hears about soldiers from Obersalzberg who fought in Russia, about victims from Obersalzberg in different camps, etc.

The Obersalzberg Documentation Center masters a very difficult storytelling as it focuses on the grotesque story of the Nazi regime leadership enjoying the amazing landscape of Obersalzberg while at the same time deciding the grim destiny for millions of people in Europe. This is done with respect, empathy and curiosity, by using local and regional cases when telling the many different sub-stories. The Center also exploits very professionally the emotional power of the actual place, while at the same time it is very aware of the risks associated with this.



Henrik Zipsane
Director of the European Museum
Academy (EMA)

INFO

Dokumentation Obersalzberg
Obersalzberg Documentation Center
Salzbergstraße 41, DE-83471 Berchtesgaden
obersalzberg.de



*House of Austrian History,
Vienna, Austria*

ENGAGING VISITORS

Lessons from the Past

The **House of Austrian History**, opened in 2018, is the republic's first museum of contemporary history. It is situated within the former imperial palace of the Hofburg on Heldenplatz in Central Vienna and concentrates on the history of the country in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Starting with the founding of the democratic republic in 1918, the museum focuses on social change and political fault lines by examining moments of conflict, rupture, and negotiation that have shaped modern Austria's democracy. Rather than presenting a linear national narrative, it highlights tensions such as empire versus nation-state, democracy versus authoritarianism, and inclusion versus exclusion. It is conceived as a discussion forum for Austria as a whole, opening up new perspectives on the country's past and present – with an eye to the future.

The permanent exhibition *New Ages: Austria since 1918* offers insights into the most important political, social, cultural and economic developments of the last century. Eight themed sections are presented along a timeline in a contemporary and appealing scenography with the help of a wide array of media (objects, works of art, documents, interactive media displays and other visitor engagement mechanisms)

that support a more dynamic encounter with history and invite to a personal interpretation and an active participation in meaning-making.

History is not presented as a fixed, consensual narrative but as a sequence of contested decisions and turning points. By confronting visitors with opposing perspectives of "ordinary" Austrian citizens (perpetrators, followers, bystanders, victims) the museum engages them to think critically about the past and about their own responsibility in the present.

Central themes in the permanent and temporary exhibitions as well as the educational and cultural programmes deal with the development and significance of democracy, including the importance of fundamental and human rights, as well as topics of dictatorship and National Socialism. By explicitly challenging the long-lasting "first victim" thesis, which portrayed Austria primarily as a victim of National Socialism, and emphasising instead



Exhibition "Disposing of Hitler", 2023

the country's enthusiasm for the "Anschluss", participation in Nazi organisations and involvement in persecution, the museum sets up an ethical tension between a comforting national self-image and a more painful acknowledgment of perpetration and complicity.

By raising the question of what "ordinary" citizens saw, knew and have done during the Nazi régime, the museum team encourages visitors to consider how lessons from the past apply to their attitude towards contemporary issues such as racism, anti-semitism, and right-wing extremism.

Educational and public programmes at the House of Austrian History further reinforce a dilemma-based orientation by explicitly connecting historical conflicts to present-day democratic challenges. Guided tours, discussions and thematic events linked to the exhibitions, address issues such as right-wing extremism, antisemitism, and the fragility of democratic institutions, using historical material as a starting point for debating what democratic societies should do when confronted with exclusionary or authoritarian tendencies, again activating dilemma-based reflection rather than simple commemoration.

The *Time Travel Quiz*, for example, is a self-guided offer based on the life stories of 10 people in Austrian history, that is providing information about historical subjects and at the same time asks the opinion of the visitor about present day challenges, among those: injustices, children's rights and racism. Interpretive texts and media frequently move from description to open-ended questions about current democratic values (civil rights, social equality, pluralism...), encouraging visitors to transfer historical conflict lines into present-day dilemmas about how to respond to racism, antisemitism, and



The museum as a forum for discussion

authoritarian tendencies. A wide range of thematic workshops are offered that use different methods and approaches: from independent exploration, through drama-based pedagogical methods and multisensory approaches, to approaches taken from cultural education and enquiry-based learning and are always based on interaction and discussion of both historical and contemporary issues. The museum aims to reach people from different age groups and diverse backgrounds and makes sure that they find content to which they can relate. Programmes are collaboratively developed and tested with focus groups like working youth, individuals who are learning German as a second language ("What is Austria for you?") or people with disabilities (*Disability History Project*), and their questions and their expertise are integrated into the further development of exhibitions and programmes.

To further engage with the public, educational and exhibition activities are regularly offered in public space (*Moving Museum*) and the opportunity is given to contribute to dynamic web-exhibitions, allowing individuals to share their own images, which then become visible both online and in the museum.

The House of Austrian History positions itself not only as an exhibition space but as a forum for dialogue and public discussion about the ongoing relevance of historical dilemmas to contemporary debate. It also exemplifies how contemporary history institutions can function as laboratories of democratic judgment, where ethical dilemmas are not resolved on behalf of the public, but are carefully curated as shared, inescapable questions.



Danièle Wagener
European Museum Academy (EMA)
Member of the Judging Committee
for the Art Museum Award

INFO

Haus der Geschichte Österreich
The House of Austrian History
Neue Burg, Heldenplatz, A-1010 Wien
hdgoe.at



The House of Austrian History, Vienna: The collection



*State Ethnographic Museum,
Warsaw, Poland*

COLONIALISM AND TRANSFORMATION

Against Stereotypes

The **State Ethnographic Museum** in Warsaw, Poland embodies a complex history and a bold contemporary mission.

Founded in 1888, it was originally situated within a zoo, a symbolic reflection of the exoticism and racial superiority defining its early collections. Since 1973, the museum has occupied a grand 19th-century building in central Warsaw, formally owned by the Land Credit Society, an institution involved in financing landed estates.

The origins of the African and Asian collections at the State Ethnographic Museum date back to the end of the 19th century. The African objects were brought back by Polish explorers, from Cameroon, for example, in the context of what was known as the “first Polish expedition to Africa”. Intended to establish a Polish colony in Central Africa, this expedition did not, however, go according to plan, but nevertheless constitutes one of the Museum’s founding myths. The collections as well as the exhibitions reflected for a long time the stereotypical views of the explorers on the cultural artefacts.

Today the museum critically analyses the provenance of its collections and the history of its activities since its origins in the 19th century, and

engages its visitors to reflect upon this difficult heritage and its implications for the present. In challenging traditional narratives, the museum furthermore helps to understand how prejudices and stereotypes are formed and how they can be counteracted. This is achieved through a special programme called “Contrary to Stereotypes” that infuses all museum activities - from temporary exhibitions to innovative, critical interventions in the permanent display and the educational and cultural programmes. With the help of members of the African diaspora in Warsaw, visitors are encouraged to “read the world critically”, to counter stereotypical representations and to examine their own preconceptions.

In 2024, the museum started to take a new look at the permanent exhibition called “African Expeditions, Asian Ways”, installed in 2020, closely examining the representation of African and Asian cultural heritage that reflected the simplistic way of depicting cultures, traditions and objects based on the colonial clichés of the Polish explorers of the 19th century.



Permanent exhibition "African Expeditions, Asian Ways" at the State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw

Textual, visual and audio interventions, co-created with representatives of the African and Asian cultures represented in the exhibition, as well as contemporary artists, researchers and activists, are added as a critical layer of content that, by the means of QR codes, draws the public's attention to specific issues related to the origin of the objects, the colonial exploitation of natural resources or stereotypical views on cultural artefacts. This process of exploring the difficult and ambiguous stories of the collections, that the director of the museum, Magdalena Wroblewska has coined a "decolonisation practice", will continue in the coming years as a preparation for a new permanent exhibition that will introduce alternative narratives, and diversified perspectives and interpretations.

As a contrast to the ethnographic collections of African artefacts, the recent temporary exhibition "Afrotopias" gave a voice to 18 young contemporary photographers from East and West Africa. Contrary to the photographs taken by outsiders in the colonial context these images testify to vital questions about a possible future for Africa and address such universal issues as the difficulty of shaping gender identity, the paradoxes of contemporary capitalism and the relation to nature in the face of

climate change. Through their lenses, the visitors discovered a contemporary, true image of the continent, which allowed them to become aware of the stereotypes created by press and reportage photography.

Another recent temporary exhibition, called "Bleaching", represented a self-critical look of the museum at its own history, collection and archives of photography and showed how it participated in the creation of stereotypes of Africa and its inhabitants. This exhibition deconstructed the myth of the "Colonial innocence" of Poland which indeed was never a colonial power but imitated and applied the colonial model and practices and tried to confirm their belonging to the so-called "white man's civilization" by defining Black people as different, exotic and their civilizations as less developed. In this exhibition the colonial patterns are revealed, and visitors are encouraged to identify and confront them with the help of the interventions of the Polish contemporary artist Witek Orski.

In general, through its educational and cultural programmes, the museum sparks wide discussions on the history of colonialism, prejudices and stereotypes and promotes a deeper understanding

"So beautiful! Seeing black joy exhibited like this is something I've never experienced before as a black woman - it's incredibly refreshing and moving. Well done. "

Jaden, a visitor

of diversity. Finally, it actively contributes to public discourse. Through panel discussions, lectures, and social media, it engages with current societal debates. Whether it is identity politics, global inequalities, or cultural appropriation, the museum offers a space where these issues can be explored thoughtfully and respectfully. It re-examines the role of ethnography today and uses it as a tool for dialogue, education and reflection on contemporary challenges.

This makes the State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw not only a compelling example of a dilemma-based museum, but also an important case study in the ongoing transformation of ethnographic institutions in the 21st century.

INFO

Państwowe Muzeum Etnograficzne
State Ethnographic Museum
Kredytowa 1, PL-00-056 Warsaw
ethnomuseum.pl



Danièle Wagener
European Museum Academy (EMA)
Member of the Judging Committee
for the Art Museum Award



Collage, created as part of the 'African Expedition' exhibition project



*Ethnological
Museum of Thrace,
Alexandroupolis,
Greece*



*House of the Halubje
Bell Ringers,
Viškovo, Croatia*

*Central Museum
of Textiles,
Łódź, Poland*



EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Immersion into People's History

Among the candidates for the European Museum Academy Awards 2025 are a number of instructive museums that consistently focus on the everyday histories of ordinary people, thereby promoting the democratisation of culture and placing emotional engagement at the centre of their educational approach. These institutions include the **Ethnological Museum of Thrace** in Alexandroupolis, Greece, the **House of the Halubje Bell Ringers** in Viškovo, Croatia, and the **Central Museum of Textiles** in Łódź, Poland.



The living tradition of the Croatian bell ringers in front of the museum in Viškovo

Opened in 2002, the **Ethnological Museum of Thrace** presents the daily life of the regional population - farmers, artisans, and merchants - in Greek Thrace, exploring how their economic activities, interactions with nature, and cultural practices shaped their existence. The museum places particular emphasis on the region's diverse social, ethnic, and cultural groups, thereby highlighting its societal diversity. Unlike narratives focused on elites, major historical events, or central institutions, the museum brings to the foreground the experiences, knowledge, and cultural practices of ordinary people, emphasising their intergenerational transmission.

The **House of the Halubje Bell Ringers**, inaugurated in 2024, is dedicated to an intangible UNESCO World Heritage tradition, namely the local Croatian shepherds of Viškovo, who developed a centuries-old ritual for navigating the unpredictability of nature through the wearing of bells, masks, sheepskins, and clubs. Here, the bell ringers are not merely objects of display but active co-creators, leading tours, developing programmes and workshops, and maintaining their local dialect.

The museum functions not as an authoritative interpreter but as a social platform and resonant space for the living tradition of the bell ringers.

Thirdly, the **Central Museum of Textiles** places Łódź within the urban Polish context. Using the approach of an open-air urban museum, it tells the city's history, not through the lens of textile entrepreneurs or technological development, but from the perspective of its working population. In 2024, the permanent exhibition *The Last Summer* opened, reconstructing a 1930s summer resort within a historic villa and placing the experiences of ordinary holidaymakers at the centre.

What unites these three museums is their commitment to telling history from below, as micro-history. They also prioritise visitor participation in different ways. By enabling the people whose stories are being told to narrate their own experiences, traditions, and ways of life, the narrated subjects become narrating subjects themselves, and self-representation replaces external interpretation. All three museums thus embody the principle of cultural democratisation, an approach



The Central Museum of Textiles in Łódź, permanent exhibition "Last Summer"

that is credible, accessible, and inherently inclusive. In doing so, these museums function as catalysts of pride, belonging, and identity.

All three institutions also employ emotions as a central pedagogical tool for evoking stories. At the House of the Halubje Bell Ringers, emotions provide access to intangible heritage: awe at striking masks, the intensity of wild performances, initial bewilderment at unfamiliar rituals, and auditory fascination with bells and rhythms all enhance the museum experience. Atmosphere replaces detached observation, while emotions simultaneously serve as drivers of learning and memory. At the Central Museum of Textiles, emotions are evoked when visitors assume the role of historical holidaymakers. As Poland's first fully interactive museum exhibition, visitors can not only touch but also use the objects - trying on clothing, playing the piano, or engaging in croquet. Likewise, at the Ethnological Museum of Thrace, emotions are central to facilitating access to the region's history and culture and to intensifying learning and engagement. Here, emotions connect visitors to the stories being told, foster empathy for the people of Thrace, and provide

insight into the lived realities of past generations. Through carefully staged spaces, multimedia installations, and everyday objects, the museum creates atmosphere and immersion in historical lifeworlds, while pedagogically, emotions motivate active participation.

Ultimately, these three museum projects offer impressive examples of vivid cultural ecosystems, linking local communities with visitors through the shared appreciation of history, demonstrating how museums can be both socially engaged and experientially rich.



Immersing in a historical world at the Ethnological Museum of Thrace



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



In front of the House of the Halubje Bell Ringers in Viškovo

INFO

Εθνολογικό Μουσείο Θράκης
Ethnological Museum of Thrace
14is Maiou 63, GR-Alexandroupoli 681 31
emthrace.org

Kuća halubajskega zvončara
House of the Halubje Bell Ringers
Dovičići 1b, HR-51216, Viškovo
khz.hr

Centralne Muzeum Włókiennictwa w Łodzi
Central Museum of Textiles
Piotrkowska 282, PL-93-034 Łódź
cmwl.pl



EXPANDING DIGITAL PRACTICES

Redefining Heritage

In a time when museums are increasingly called to act as agents of social change, the **Heritage in Motion Award** continues to explore how digital technologies can expand access, participation, and critical engagement with cultural heritage. Promoted by the European Museum Academy in partnership with the Forum of Slavic Cultures, the award recognises innovative multimedia projects that reinterpret and communicate heritage through digital media.

The winners of **Heritage in Motion Award 2025** were announced during an Award Ceremony at the Money Museum in Budapest, in the framework of the European Museum Academy Annual Conference. The 2025 edition marked the 11th year of the competition and represented a significant milestone in its international development.

For the first time, Heritage in Motion was open to submissions worldwide, receiving projects from 22 countries across four continents. This global participation confirmed the award's growing role as a unique platform highlighting the transformative impact of digital technologies on the preservation, promotion, and accessibility of cultural heritage. Projects competed across three categories – New Digital Experiences, Audiovisuals, and

Virtual and Augmented Reality – reflecting the diversity of digital approaches currently shaping the museum and heritage sector, from immersive installations and interactive environments to documentary storytelling and technologically enhanced interpretation tools.

From this international pool of finalists emerged the Overall Winner of Heritage in Motion 2025: **"Hands Deep - A Journey into the Demoscene"**, directed by Anne-Mari Musturi, Finland, and awarded for its groundbreaking exploration of born-digital culture. The Overall Prize was presented by Eszter Hergár, Director of the Money Museum. The project was promoted by the Finnish Postal Museum and Tampere Historical Museums – including the Finnish Museum of Games and Mediamuseum Rupriikki – with the support



The Winner of Heritage in Motion 2025: "Hands Deep - A Journey into the Demoscene", Finland

of the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. The selection of "Hands Deep" strongly resonates with this year's magazine theme of courage. The project explores the "Demoscene" – a digital sub-culture rooted in computer coding, artistic experimentation, and underground collaboration. By bringing this born-digital creative movement into the heritage sphere, the project challenges traditional definitions of what museums collect, preserve, and interpret. Its courageous dimension lies in recognising ephemeral digital practices as cultural heritage, legitimising communities that historically developed outside institutional frameworks, and fostering intergenerational dialogue through technology. In this sense, the project contributes to social change by expanding the cultural canon and by positioning museums as spaces capable of embracing emerging, participatory forms of creativity.

The 2026 edition of Heritage in Motion marks an important evolution. For the first time, the award is administered in partnership with Museums in Short, the international festival dedicated to short museum videos and multimedia storytelling. The call for entries for Heritage in Motion 2026 is open until 1 June 2026, inviting museums, cultural institutions, filmmakers, and creative studios worldwide to submit their projects. Finalists are invited to participate in the Heritage in Motion Festival, a two-day professional event taking place in Bled, Slovenia, on 29/30 September 2026. The festival includes project presentations, workshops, networking opportunities, and the official Award Ceremony – offering visibility while fostering exchange and future collaboration.

As museums navigate rapid technological and societal transformation, Heritage in Motion continues to spotlight projects that dare to experiment, question boundaries, and redefine how heritage is experienced. Digital innovation, in this context, becomes more than a tool: it is an act of courage capable of shaping more inclusive, participatory, and socially responsive cultural institutions.



*Laura Diamanti
Multimedia Editor
Master in Museum Communication
IULM University Milan, Italy*

INFO

For further information on all the winners and finalists, please refer to the official Heritage in Motion and Museums in Short websites and social media channels, including Facebook and other online platforms:

europeanmuseumacademy.eu/heritage-in-motion-award-gallery/
fsk.si/projects/heritage-in-motion/museumsinshort.eu
facebook.com/HeritageinMotion/

Applications through the FilmFreeway platform:
filmfreeway.com/HeritageinMotion

Form Follows Function

Two new museum buildings in Budapest – the **Museum of Ethnography** (Néprajzi Múzeum) by the architect Marcel Ferencz and Sou Fujimoto’s **House of Music** (Magyar Zene Háza) – which both opened to the public in 2022, offer us new perspectives.

Charles Saumarez Smith in *The Art Museum in Modern Times* (2021), surmises that the story of museum architecture in the 20th century has been one of adapting to the needs and expectations of audiences. One may expand this theme: just as the pace of change in the visitor’s relationship with museums and their collections has accelerated in the last 30 years, so too has the architectural form of new museums been changing to meet this demand. It therefore follows for museum professionals, in our perennial quest to better understand our visitors, that new museum architecture offers a mirror to our work.

Much has changed since Frank Gehry’s Guggenheim Museum Bilbao was inaugurated almost 30 years ago, often cited as the most striking example of contemporary museum architecture in Europe. Of course, the monumental architec-

tural form this approach exemplifies has not gone away (“the museum building as museum object”) and remains a vital tool of urban regeneration noting Peter Cook’s and Colin Fournier’s Kunst-halle Graz (2003) or Kengo Kuma’s V&A Dundee (2018).

Increasingly, new museum architecture seeks to condition the audience experience, preparing the visitor at a psychological level to best engage with the collection and its display. This too follows ideas from the turn of the 20th century. Daniel Libeskind’s revolutionary work for the Jewish Museum Berlin (2001) and its haunting light and dark reflective of the centuries of Jewish experience in the city, or Bernard Tschumi’s Acropolis Museum (2009) with its monumental staircase preparing visitors for their ascent of the acropolis itself as well as into its layered archaeology.



*Museum of Ethnography,
Budapest, aerial view*



*Museum of Ethnography
in Budapest, Hungary,
by Marcel Ferencz*



Remarkably, both the **Museum of Ethnography** and its sister institution **House of Music** achieve a successful synergy of both traditions, as well as providing fresh ideas. Both projects are part of the €1bn Liget Project, transforming the City Park into a showcase for Hungarian culture, continuing a tradition of exhibitions dating back to 1897 when the park hosted the Millennial Exhibition for the nation's foundation. Much more is planned. Such largescale development in a green space is not without controversy, and political tensions exist between national government and municipal authorities over its future.

Indeed, approaching the **Museum of Ethnography** from the park edge, one is struck by the immense structure of stratified concrete. This belies its true form. The brutalist frontage is almost a façade. Instead, the building falls away into a half cylinder, the nadir matching the park's level, allowing visitors to wander onto a 7,000 m² "garden roof" with public art, trees and shrubs. While not too dissimilar in form from a skateboarder's half pipe ramp, its scale is impressive as you climb either apex (or wing) for a stunning view of the city. You are left feeling inside Christopher Nolan's world-bending film *Inception*, but also asking, where is the museum?

Entering the museum, visitors descend into a basement level which contains the exhibition spaces and permanent galleries. A vast subterranean space without natural light and more stable envi-

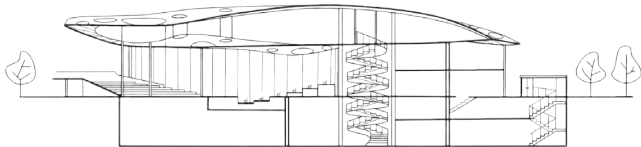


The striking staircase is the architectural centrepiece of the museum and connects the various levels

ronmental conditions for the collection's 250,000 objects. For visitors, the experience prepares them for a new appreciation of ethnography as the root of culture. Shorn of the Corinthian capitals of the old museum's venue in the Hall of Justice, the new museum is a blank canvas which allows each object and the culture to which it relates be valued for itself. The museum's cost, some €120m, is also illustrative of a particularly Hungarian pre-occupation with the ethnic origin of their people, justifying this investment. But there is a risk that uncomfortable histories can be buried.

Designed slightly later, but opened slightly earlier, the **House of Music** is a short walk away. While the Museum of Ethnography cuts into nature, here nature cuts literally into the building, trees

*Sou Fujimoto's
House of Music in
Budapest, Hungary*



growing through the roof canopy of this mushroom-shaped structure. Inside, the space on the ground level is light and airy, slender columns bear up a ceiling of stylised leaves, but again, where is the museum? And again, the answer is that it is underground, accessed by an elegant spiral staircase straight out of Tolkien's Lothlórien. The heavily digital permanent exhibition is a tour de force in storytelling and engagement, a chronological history of music told through the prism of Hungarian culture. At €80m, the return on investment for such a unique building and visitor experience may be justified, but digital innovation must be maintained, which is not cheap.

True return of cultural investment can, however, be measured. Hundreds of thousands of visitors (far exceeding admissions to the old Museum of Ethnography) and positive reviews (4.1 and 4.7 respectively on TripAdvisor) demonstrate tangible success. Rather than connections to the "real world", visitors seem to be engaging positively to museum spaces as "other worlds", physically distinct in terms of architecture, closed off from distraction, perhaps even a much-needed escape from the concerns of today.



*Samuel Gallacher
European Museum Academy (EMA)
Chair of the Judging Committee
for the Art Museum Award*



The museum's lobby is characterised by seamless transitions to the natural surroundings and a sculptural spiral staircase

INFO

Néprajzi Múzeum
Museum of Ethnography
Dózsa György út 35, H-1146 Budapest
neprajz.hu

Magyar Zene Háza
House of Music
Olof Palme stny. 3, H-1146 Budapest
zenehaza.hu



*The Future Museum,
Nürnberg, Germany*

THE COURAGE TO PRESENT THE FUTURE

Societal Responsibility

To exhibit the future demands courage, for it resists unambiguous definition and concerns us directly as a society. The **Future Museum** in Nürnberg, Germany embraces this openness – and understands the museum not as a site of prediction, but as a space of responsibility.

As a branch of the *Deutsches Museum*, located in the heart of Nürnberg's Old Town, the **Future Museum** consciously positions itself as a publicly accessible space for reflection on questions of the future at the intersection of science, technology and society – a place where the future is not only explained, but ethically negotiated. At its core lies a clear conviction: the future is not a distant promise, but a task of the present. The museum thus deliberately moves beyond neutral observation. It understands itself as an actor in social transformation and consistently follows the guiding principle of museum and social change: museums are not mere backdrops to discourse; they are part of it.

Here, courage manifests itself as a curatorial principle. The exhibitions avoid linear narratives of progress and simplistic promises of salvation. Technological developments are not presented in isolation, but examined in their social, ethical and political dimensions.

The permanent exhibition is structured into five thematic fields – from work and everyday life to body and mind, as well as the city as a system, the natural world as a system, and space and time – thus eschewing a linear narrative of the future in favour of multiple, simultaneous perspectives. Artificial intelligence, energy, mobility and bio-design do not appear as ready-made solutions, but as open questions – questions that are returned to visitors. Central to this approach is the deliberate juxtaposition of science and fiction: exhibits from research and development are placed alongside speculative designs, thought experiments and cultural imaginaries of the future. The future thus emerges neither as a purely technological promise nor as mere fantasy, but as a field of social negotiation.

This stance continues in the exhibition design. At the Future Museum, design is not a means of seduction, but an instrument of reflection. Reduced spaces, clear materials and deliberately deployed



The five sections of the permanent exhibition – ranging from “Work and Daily Life” to “Space and Time” – are not prophecies. They rather show scenarios for possible futures, serving as a basis for discussion about our tomorrow



emptiness create distance from mere consumption. The scenography does not dictate; it opens. It offers orientation without prescribing it.

The courage of this design lies precisely in its restraint: in foregoing spectacle, relentless media stimuli and unequivocal interpretations. The scenography was developed in close collaboration with Atelier Brückner. Courage here means developing a new formal response from the substance of each theme and tailoring it precisely to the specific spatial context. The result is a series of walk-in experiences that do not explain content didactically but render it intuitively tangible. That Atelier Brückner has already realised several future museums, each deliberately conceived differently, underscores this approach: the future is not given a fixed form, but reimagined anew each time.

Visitors are addressed not as an audience, but as thinking subjects. They move through spaces that do not reduce complexity but make it palpable.

A digital museum game invites them to select exhibits, take a stance, and weigh the opportunities and risks of emerging technologies through ethical reflection. The perspectives gathered feed into discussions in the museum’s central forum, where they are made publicly visible and collectively reflected upon. Students, specially trained as so-called Future Communicators, accompany this process as a dialogical interface between exhibition and public.

The received EMA Award recognises precisely this quality. It honours a museum that understands content, design and mediation as a coherent stance. The Future Museum articulates a European narrative of the future that does not separate innovation from humanity. Progress is presented not as an end in itself, but as a cultural and societal responsibility.

In this context, courage means not smoothing out the future – not pacifying it, nor delegating it elsewhere. The Future Museum endures uncertainty and makes it productive. It is a place that promises no definitive answers but sharpens the questions. And therein lies its societal relevance.



Marion Grether
Director
Future Museum
Nürnberg, Germany

INFO

Das Zukunftsmuseum
The Future Museum
Augustinerhof 4, D-90403 Nürnberg
deutsches-museum.de/nuernberg



GLOBAL HERITAGE EDUCATION

Museums in Motion

What does it mean to educate through museums in an age of digital immersion, contested histories, and urgent social change?

The International Master of **Education in Museums and Heritage Erasmus Mundus (EDUMaH)** coordinated by the University of Glasgow was designed in response to these questions.

At the heart of the EDUMaH programme lies a simple but ambitious premise: museums and heritage sites are not static repositories of the past, but dynamic spaces where knowledge, identity, and community are actively negotiated. EDUMaH prepares future professionals to work confidently within this complexity. Combining academic excellence with international mobility and interdisciplinary collaboration, the programme equips graduates with both critical insight and practical expertise. Students learn to design inclusive learning experiences, work ethically with communities, and respond creatively to challenges such as decolonisation, accessibility, sustainability, and digital transformation.

In 2023, a consortium led by the University of Glasgow secured European Commission funding for more than 90 EDUMaH student scholarships. The partnership brings together leading institutions across Europe and Latin America – the **University of Glasgow**, **University of Tartu**, **University College Cork**, **Radboud University** in The Netherlands, the **University of Malta**, **Universidad Iberoamericana**

Mexico City – alongside the **European Museum Academy**. This transnational network of partners fosters intercultural dialogue, adaptability, and collaborative leadership, qualities increasingly essential in the global cultural sector.

The programme's pathways invite students to explore museums and heritage from multiple vantage points. At the **University of Glasgow** research-led, participatory approaches to museum learning are emphasised. Students examine how curatorial decisions, interpretation strategies, and public programmes shape visitor experience, while considering ethics, repatriation, inclusion, gender, and sustainability as central commitments rather than optional add-ons.

At the **University of Tartu**, the Intangible Cultural Heritage strand concentrates on living traditions – oral histories, performance, ritual, craftsmanship – as vital educational resources. In collaboration with the University of Tartu's UNESCO Chair on Applied Studies of Intangible Cultural Heritage, students engage with safeguarding frameworks

“The Erasmus Mundus scholarship has opened doors to limitless possibilities.”

Isaac Anim Ntiri, EDUMaH Erasmus Mundus scholar

and participatory methodologies, exploring how education can sustain living heritage while honouring community agency.

At **University College Cork**, the Digital Cultures and Humanities pathway explores immersive storytelling, game design, and digital curation. Here, students experiment with interactive media and emerging technologies as tools for engagement, asking how digital practice can expand access while deepening critical reflection.

Radboud University’s Art and Visual Culture pathway turns a critical lens on art history, tourism, and the creative industries. How does visual culture shape public understanding? How do museums operate within cultural economies? Students examine the responsibilities and possibilities of tourism and art interpretation in a globalised world.

The **University of Malta** emphasises museum education and politics, with particular attention to contested and difficult heritage. Through engagement with decolonisation, identity, and memory, students learn to navigate complex narratives with intellectual rigour and cultural sensitivity. A practicum with Heritage Malta grounds this inquiry in professional practice.

The **European Museum Academy** hosts a Summer School in museums across Europe, where students work alongside professionals to address real institutional challenges.

Universidad Iberoamericana’s Summer School in Mexico City and Oaxaca further broadens the perspective, inviting engagement with Indigenous heritage, layered histories, and contemporary debates on representation and social justice.

EDUMaH has cultivated a vital layer of international academic collaboration beyond the formal curriculum. Tutors and students work as intellectual partners, presenting joint research on major international stages. At the **Women’s Museum Merano** conference “Cartographies of Interruption and Influence: Feminist Educational Strategies in Museums in Response to Gender-Based Violence”, a tutor-student team examined feminist pedagogies in museum education, advancing critical, practice-based inquiry into gender, power, and representation.

At **Universidad Iberoamericana’s “The Difficult Museum”** conference in Mexico City, they addressed contested heritage, gender, decolonisation, community co-creation, and participatory practice.

Consortium partners have also presented research on the cultural impact of Erasmus Mundus participation at the European Educational Research Association’s European Conference for Educational Research. The *Routledge Handbook of Museums and Heritage* (2025), co-edited by EDUMaH leads in Glasgow and EMA in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution and Group for Education in Museums, further underscores this global engagement.

These collaborations define EDUMaH’s ethos: students are not passive recipients but emerging scholars shaping international debate, building networks, and contributing to urgent conversations in museum and heritage studies. Consortium partners are actively engaged in scholarship and research.

EDUMaH is distinctive not simply for its mobility, but for its intellectual ambition. By weaving together intangible heritage, visual culture, digital innovation, political critique, and immersive practice, it cultivates professionals able to move thoughtfully across contexts and cultures. Graduates leave prepared not only to enter museums and heritage institutions, but to question them, reshape them, and reimagine their educational futures.



Margaret McColl
Director
EDUMaH
Glasgow, Scotland

INFO

Erasmus Mundus Joint Master
EDUMaH Consortium
University of Glasgow St Andrew’s Building
GB-Glasgow, G3 6NH
gla.ac.uk/postgraduate/erasmusmundus/edumah



DEVELOPING MUSEUMS

Education and Research

The European Museum Academy offers a master's degree that gives students skills in contemporary museology and museum communication and teaches them how to leverage the intersection between museums and heritage.

Besides the EDUMaH (Education in Museums and Heritage) master's degree full time programme the European Museum Academy has been collaborating for many years with *IULM University* in Milan on the international online master's in Museology, New Media and Museum Communication. The two master's programmes have proved very attractive and provide good opportunities for the Academy to meet and support younger colleagues.

Our educational work goes even further in our collaboration with the *Rome Business School* and the Chinese institute *Global Cultural Adventures*. Every Spring and autumn we welcome about 10 master students in cultural management who we offer three- or four-months online internship. The students work on studying the museum landscape in specific countries and regions and providing valuable reports about the state of the art. It gives us a valuable overview of the situation and developments which is of importance in our research, but as a side effect also provides a good basis when we look for candidates for our awards. Finally, the Academy is in close collaboration with our partner - the *Forum of Slavic Cultures* - at the *International Summer School in Museology* in Koper, Slovenia.



EMA Summer School in Landskrona Museum, Sweden

Currently the European Museum Academy is represented in 39 countries in Europe. This is a good coverage, and our trusted representatives are doing a great job as they follow museum developments closely in their respective countries. Every year the representatives submit a report about the situation for museums and based on



At the Museum of Archaeology of Catalonia (MAC) in Barcelona, Spain

that we publish our Annual Report on the European museum situation. We have done this since 2018, and it is now clear that in addition to making it possible for us to give substantial knowledge-based information to the political environment, the report series also provides an indispensable tracking of museum developments and the challenges as they are recognised by the museum community. Together with the archive of material from management of the awards these reports form a valuable empirical research material for years to come.

The overall impression from developments in the European museum community is that there is an immense focus on the impact of museums on visitors and society. This is documented in the individual annual reports, and we see the same overarching trend in the themes of the European Union funded research projects in which the Academy is a partner. A recent project, SoPHIA, was directly dedicated to defining methods by which to measure impact from cultural heritage on society. The ongoing project META MUSEUM is taking the impact focus a step further and study what happens to people when they visit a museum and can any impact be enhanced or directed in a specific direction. The recently started project HERITALISE

is researching how we can produce digital twins in cultural heritage while keeping the highest possible level of trustworthiness and thereby the authenticity which is recognised as fundamental for the impact of cultural heritage encounters.



*Henrik Zipsane
Director of the European Museum
Academy (EMA)*

INFO

gla.ac.uk/postgraduate/erasmusmundus/edumah
gotomaster.iulm.com/masters_eng/museology-new-media-and-museum-communication
sophiaplatform.eu
meta-museum-project.eu
heritalise-eccch.eu

ENGAGING WITH AUDIENCE

Visitors: Experts of our Time

For museums whose focus is less on preserving visual and material objects and more on a specific medium or topic – such as law, music or health – mediation and outreach become a particularly challenging task. Three institutions with very different histories and missions caught the attention of “MAG. Museum & Social Change” with their unique approaches to engaging their audiences. All three were nominated for the DASA Award, **Salon Stolz** in Graz won it in 2025.

Although the **National Museum of Justice** in Trondheim, Norway, is primarily responsible for preserving museum documents of the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety, it sees its true aim as educational work in the fields of policing, justice, and correction. The basic idea behind the museum’s educational activities is to convey the positive function of law in society and to show that loyalty to the rule of law is linked to loyalty to the community and the individual members of that community – in the hope that this will have a preventive effect.

To live up to this self-imposed standard, four of the 11 museum’s employees are exclusively responsible for education, but all team members contribute to the museum’s educational mission by conducting historical research, developing outreach programmes, managing the budget and communications, and welcoming visitors.

The museum sees itself as a catalyst for democratic engagement and therefore offers innovative educational programmes for a diverse audience, developed in close collaboration with external academics

and legal experts. Initiatives include ‘Fairytale Trial’, a role-playing programme that uses well-known fairytale characters to teach children about legal and judicial concepts and help them feel confident about possible future encounters with the legal system.



Stepping into different roles: ‘In Court’ at the National Museum of Justice in Trondheim



Dance theatre project 'Melodia' at Salon Stolz in Graz

The museum's digital initiatives include 'Young Lawbreakers' an interactive programme for 10- to 14-year-olds that teaches peaceful conflict resolution through improvised role-playing games inspired by the Norwegian Council for Civil Mediation. In addition, the museum is developing joint content for the museum under the title 'Experts in Teams' in collaboration with students from various departments at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

In the 'Propaganda' workshop programme, participants analyse the mechanisms of ideologies in order to understand them. An online version of the 'Propaganda' programme is also being developed, specifically designed for use in the classroom.

At **Salon Stolz** in Graz, Austria (winner of the DASA Award 2025), the music of Graz composer and conductor Robert Stolz (Graz, 1880 – Berlin, 1975) is brought to life in a contemporary way. Here, the audience can not only listen to his melodies, but also encounter them in different ways. An interactive exhibition allows visitors to explore the life of this passionate and successful musician. At so-called music tables, visitors can try out musical experiments, play a melody memory game and create sound stories.

Salon Stolz is located in the newly built entrance area of a senior citizens' residential home in the city of Graz. Due to its special location, it sees itself as an inclusive and intergenerational meeting place for all interested parties, with lifelong learning being a core aspect in pursuing this vision. Therefore, many needs were taken into account during implementation, from structural accessibility to an inclusive exhibition experience. The collaboration with the retirement home also includes regular workshops and free admission for all residents of the home, as well as discounted annual passes for their relatives. Salon Stolz encourages its visitors not only to learn more about Robert Stolz and his music in innova-

tive ways, but also to learn more about each other through shared experiences of music and dance. This is supported and promoted by a carefully designed, inclusive exhibition and a wide range of programmes for Robert Stolz connoisseurs as well as for visitors without prior knowledge and music lovers, encouraging exchange between generations and social cohorts. Regardless of their age the visitors are actively involved, they experience themselves as artists, musicians or dancers.

A centerpiece is the dance theatre project 'Melodia', in which two dancers lead visitors during the one-hour interactive performance through the life and music of Robert Stolz. The non-verbal communication and connection between dancers and audience are essential factors in this innovative dance experience.

The **Stapferhaus** in Lenzburg, Switzerland, is both a cultural and educational institution. It designs scenographic exhibitions in which communication is taken into account from the outset. Involving visitors is in the Stapferhaus's DNA. Visitors are invited to participate on three levels: in the run-up to the exhibition (e.g. in selecting the theme), during its development (e.g. by contributing their own stories and thoughts) and in the exhibition itself (e.g. on the topic of the Swiss healthcare system). The Stapferhaus sees itself as an extracurricular learning centre that is open to everyone. The aim is to use the content to strengthen democracy and dialogue in times of polarisation and to promote competence in dealing with ambivalence and self-efficacy among a broad audience.

Every two years, an interactive, sensory exhibition on a new theme is opened, accompanied by a series of diverse communication formats and events that invite the audience to engage critically with the present in an entertaining way.

The education team, which guides up to 12 groups through the exhibition every day, works on an internship basis for four to six months. The interns are closely supervised and trained by communication experts and receive training in presentation and performance skills during their time at the Stapferhaus. Working with interns makes it possible to involve team members with a personal or professional connection to the topic. For the exhibition 'Health First', for example, the team included med-



Interactive area in the 'Health First' exhibition at the Stapferhaus in Lenzburg

ical professionals, a bodybuilder and a person with ADHD. The museum also works closely with a thematic advisory board - in the case of 'Health First' with medical historians and health specialists who were able to reflect on their work at a meta-level.

The visitors of 'Health first' (until June 2026) could take part in a survey on how the Swiss healthcare system should be treated, as rising costs and shortages of medicines and nursing staff are major concerns for Swiss society and a frequent topic in national politics. The survey was scenographically embedded in an emergency room situation, with the healthcare system as the patient on the operating table and visitors as the surgeons who decide together and with the help of experts what measures need to be taken.

As said, the Stapferhaus' focus is on encounters - and on visitors who are themselves experts on contemporary reality. When selecting topics and conducting research, the Stapferhaus takes into account the diverse perspectives that exist in society. These are integrated and find their way into the exhibition. For example, the museum regularly asks its community for advice or input via surveys on social media, in its newsletter or on site: this is how the Stapferhaus finds topics for its exhibitions and gains test groups for a wide variety of educational offerings. Interactive stations designed specifically for groups facilitate joint discussions and encourage personal conversations. In addition, 'quiet times' are provided

during which highly sensitive people can visit the exhibition with minimal sensory input. The museum's education team is always on hand in the exhibition. This ensures that every single visitor is encouraged to engage in conversation in an appropriate manner.



Bernhart Schwenk
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for the Art Museum Award

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Justismuseet
The Museum of Justice
Kongens gate 95, NO-7012 Trondheim, Norway
justismuseet.no

Salon Stolz
Theodor-Körner-Straße 67
AT-8010 Graz, Austria
salonstolz.at

Stapferhaus
Bahnhofstrasse 49
CH-5600 Lenzburg, Switzerland
stapferhaus.ch



A new look at old masters: ERCO LED spotlights in the Dresden State Art Collection

Sustainable Lighting in Museums

Lighting in museums can make a significant contribution to the responsible use of energy. This is because around 90% of the energy consumed over a luminaire's lifecycle stems from its operation, not its manufacture. However, simply using energy-efficient luminaires is not enough to reduce energy consumption. Only the effectiveness of lighting, measured in lux per watt, and a consistent focus on human perception lead to an improvement in the ecological footprint. The German luminaire manufacturer ERCO, a leading specialist in architectural lighting using LED technology, is at the forefront of understanding sustainable lighting and provides practical expertise in lighting design.

Sustainable lighting means using light only where it is needed, i.e. where human perception requires it. ERCO refers to the planning philosophy behind this approach as Human Centric Lighting (HCL). One example is wall washing, which is based on the realisation that the visual perception of a room is primarily determined by orientation towards vertical surfaces. In this context, a uniformly lit wall creates a brighter impression of the room than a floor illuminated with the same illuminance. If 100 lx is directed onto the wall rather than the floor, the room appears three to five times brighter, simply because a different surface is being illuminated. Effective glare control also enhances visual comfort and thus visual performance

at comparatively low illuminance levels. Another design approach that combines well with wall washing is zoned lighting, which, unlike generalised lighting, can reduce energy consumption by around 50%.

How much light actually reaches the surfaces relevant to human perception? When planning, it is the effectiveness – the illuminance achieved in lux/watt – that must be taken into account, rather than the efficiency of a luminaire, expressed in lumens/watt. ERCO takes both metrics into account during product development: efficiency through the use of high-quality LEDs and proprietary driver electronics, and effectiveness through high-precision, in-house developed lighting systems. As ERCO luminaires are developed based on the principle of light projection via lenses, they are more effective than conventional luminaires with reflector technology and achieve up to 20% higher illuminance at the same power consumption.

ERCO sees lighting as a means of improving society and architecture whilst preserving the environment. With its ERCO Greenology® strategy, the luminaire manufacturer emphasises a holistic approach to sustainability, which also encompasses the responsible sourcing of raw materials and the disposal and recyclability of its luminaires.

Further information on the ERCO Greenology® strategy as a guide to make architecture better through sustainable lighting and inspiration on integrating Human Centric Lighting concepts: erco.com/greenology

Exhibition "We Are in It Now" at
the Climate House in the Natural
History Museum in Oslo



DEDICATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

Climate Dialogue

In the midst of an ongoing environmental and climate crisis, the work of a natural history museum is more important than ever. The way science is treated must constantly evolve in order to remain relevant and effective. “**MAG Museum & Social Change**” presents two exemplary museums for their dedicated communication of environmental issues.

At the **Natural History Museum (NHM)** in Oslo, Norway, exhibitions and educational programmes are developed that are based on active participation and ensure that visitors are not just passive observers, but engage sensorially, emotionally and cognitively. The Climate House, the NHM’s newest exhibition building, is dedicated exclusively to climate change and environmental challenges. Through exhibitions, events and school

programmes, it presents scientifically sound content in an accessible and engaging way. The permanent exhibition was designed specifically for young people aged 13 to 18 and combines the traditional museum experience with digital technology to make complex topics more accessible. To achieve this goal, young people in particular were involved in the design of the rooms and exhibitions from the outset. External research teams involving young

Exhibition "Greenland. Everything changes" at ALPS in Bern

people contributed to their development and led to new exhibition features such as an immersive 3D film room and interactive installations designed to encourage dialogue. To ensure that the exhibitions remain relevant, parts of the exhibition are regularly updated and participatory elements are added. Visitors are encouraged to express their opinions on what they believe will be crucial for solving the climate crisis in the future. These suggestions have been and continue to be forwarded to stakeholders, creating a direct link between public engagement and scientific research. Even though young people are very interested in climate change, their engagement is declining and public debates are becoming increasingly polarised. For this reason, the 'Climate Dialogue' teaching programme was created, which focuses more on exchanging facts, but also contradictions and emotions. Once again, the museum sees itself not only as a place for collective knowledge production and transfer, but also as a constructive and safe space for individual reflection and problem solving.

Founded in 1905, the **ALPS Swiss Alpine Museum** in Bern, Switzerland, is dedicated to the mountains and their inhabitants. For more than 100 years, the museum's sole aim was to open up the Alps to mountaineers and to explore them, in line with the objectives of the Swiss Alpine Club. Since 2012, however, it has focused on topics that drive social change. There is no longer a permanent exhibition; instead, it offers special exhibitions, events, and educational programmes that address topics such as climate change, the energy transition, overtourism, and identity in relation to mountain region - whether in Switzerland or elsewhere in the world - in a more discursive manner. Discursive topics require participatory approaches. ALPS aims to give a voice to those who are otherwise unheard or have no opportunity to express themselves and is interested in the diversity of perspectives. This was exemplified by the exhibition entitled "Greenland. Everything changes." Greenland is in the midst of a major transformation. Climate change is happening four times faster here than anywhere else in the world. The indigenous majority population is negotiating its own Inuit identity. The wealth of resources, especially rare earths, is arousing the interest of the USA, China and Russia. Greenland is under pressure and risks becoming a pawn in the hands of the world powers. How do Greenlanders see their country and their future?

And what does this have to do with the people in mainland Europe? The exhibition shows large projections of locations (including the fishing village of



Kullorsuaq, the capital Nuuk, the tourist hotspot Ilulissat) and over 30 interviews with different people who live in these places. The diversity of people also reflects a diversity of positions; the Australian investor, the indigenous Greenland minister for mining and the indigenous environmental activist each have different positions on the subject of mining. As a visitor, you sit opposite the interviewees individually, in a personal conversation. It is almost a dialogue from which a panorama of opinions gradually emerges, to which the visitor must actively take a stand: Who do I agree with? Who do I disagree with? But also: what does this position remind me of in my own life? What does Greenland say about the state of the world we live in? Here, too, viewers become participants, with the museum acting as a catalyst for an educational process that transforms itself from a neutral, institutional offering into a highly personal life experience for the audience.



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for the Art Museum Award*

INFO

Naturhistorisk museum
The Natural History Museum
Sars' gate 1, NO-0562 Oslo, Norway
nhm.uio.no

ALPS Alpines Museum der Schweiz
ALPS Swiss Alpine Museum
Helvetiaplatz 4, CH-3005 Bern, Switzerland
alps.museum



The Hungarian Money Museum and Visitor Centre (Pénzmúzeum) in Budapest, Hungary



REVIEW BUDAPEST 2025

Innovative Courage

The European Museum Academy Annual Conference and Award Ceremony 2025 in Budapest, Hungary

The European Museum Academy 2025 conference and awards gala, which took place from 25 to 27 September 2025, was organised by the Hungarian Money Museum and Visitor Centre (Pénzmúzeum) in Budapest, winner of the DASA Award 2023. The three-day programme focused on issues related to the future of museums, changing visitor needs, and new community and digital museum models.

On the first day, after the opening ceremony, conference guests had the opportunity to admire the Money Museum. On the second day, participants were introduced to 36 exciting, innovative museum projects from 32 European countries. The presentations clearly showed that in recent years, museums have taken on several new roles in addition to their traditional functions of collecting, cataloguing, and exhibiting.

The **Heritage in Motion Award** was given to a documentary film produced in collaboration between the Finnish Postal Museum and the Tampere Historical Museums (see page 25) on Friday night at the awards ceremony held in the Central Bank of Hungary's headquarters in Buda. The **State Library Victoria's Mouthful of Dust** project and the **Historycity** app also received recognition in this category.

On the third day, four parallel workshops addressed the future of museums, changing visitor habits, and issues related to digitisation—communicated through EMA's new magazine 'MAG. Museum & Social Change'.

At the award ceremony in the Aranybástya restaurant, Eszter Hergár, managing director of the Money Museum, presented the **DASA Award** to the Salon Stolz in Graz. The Ethnological Museum of Thrace in Alexandroupoli received a special award in this category. The **Luigi Micheletti Award** was presented to the Obersalzberg Documentation Center by Máté Vincze, Deputy State Secretary of the Hungarian Government. The Ethnographic Museum in Budapest was among the finalists in this category, and the Gallery of Matica Srpska in Serbia received a special recognition award. Among the nominees for the **Art Museum Award**, the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin was the winner. The State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw and the Museum & Art Gallery in Birmingham received special recognition. Based on the audience's votes, the award for the best debut performance on the second day went to the Hungarian House of Music.

Dalma Bódai, Tamás Nánási-Kézdý and Sándor Balogh



EMA Annual Meeting 2026 in Alicante, Spain

In 2026, the MARQ (Museo Arqueológico Provincial de Alicante/Alicante Provincial Archaeological Museum) in Alicante, Spain will host the annual meeting of the European Museum Academy and the presentation of the awards given by the Academy. The MARQ, which opened in its current form in 2000, is dedicated to Iberian culture since the 6th century BC through its permanent collection and special exhibitions and aims to be a museum for everyone. In 2004, MARQ was named European Museum of the Year, making it the second Spanish museum to receive this award after the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, and in 2024 it was awarded the DASA Prize for its educational work.

"For us, it is a great responsibility to take up the baton from Budapest 2025. At the same time, it is a great joy to welcome you to our land to share with you a few days of professional exchange and shared experiences, united by the common purpose of highlighting your invaluable dedication and vocational commitment to culture through our museums, for the benefit of society and our fellow citizens, thus contributing to the building of a better, more equal, just and democratic world. I therefore warmly encourage you to join us from 24th to 26th September, as we open to you the doors of MARQ."

See you in Alicante!"

Antonio Pérez Pérez
President of the MARQ Foundation and
of the Provincial Council of Alicante

A NOTE FROM THE OPERATING EDITOR

The Next Move

Two chess motifs frame this issue of MAG. Not because chess is a game of winners and losers, but because every game is shaped by decisions whose significance often becomes clear only in retrospect. Every move changes the board, opening new possibilities while closing others. Few images capture the situation of museums today more aptly.

The contributions to this issue show how courage takes many forms: institutional responsibility, civic engagement, new approaches to learning and participation, and the willingness to question established certainties. Together, they affirm that museums remain relevant not by relying on past achievements, but by continuing to evolve. Museums are places of preservation. Yet they fulfil their public mission only if they also remain places of enquiry, dialogue and shared learning. Scientific integrity and openness to society are not opposing principles; the future of our institutions depends on bringing them together.

From my work with museums and participatory learning programmes, I have learned that lasting change rarely begins with grand gestures. It begins by listening, valuing different perspectives, and allowing knowledge to grow through dialogue.

Courage, then, is not only about taking a stand. It is also about the willingness to reassess one's own position. Perhaps this is the form of courage museums need most today: to redefine their public role continuously in dialogue with society—and, as in chess, to make the next move in the knowledge that every decision creates new possibilities.



Miro Craemer
MAG Museum &
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This year's Roswitha Haftmann Prize 2026
goes to the artist

Wolfgang Tillmans

in recognition of his lifetime achievement.

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