

Tokyo Toy Museum, winner of the 2023 Children in Museums Award

On Thursday, 26 October, in a ceremony during the Hands On! Conference at Creaviva in Bern, the results of the 2023 Children in Museums Award were announced. 32 museums took part in the competition from 20 countries, with a short-list of 12 museums and three finalists. This is the eleventh year the Award has been presented.



Jörg Ehtreiber (Hands On!), Marja Kerkhof (CEO, Mercis bv), Leigh-Anne Stradeski (Chair of Judges), Annemies Broekgaarden (EMA).

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

Background of the Award

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

Summary from the Judges' Report: The Winner

Tokyo Toy Museum - The judges praised the museum for providing a wide variety of play experiences for children, exploring new pathways to enlarge subjects, developing suitable learning strategies, and working methods for their young audiences, and making their collections accessible and participatory, with a good array of both open-ended and instructional toys. Collaboration with universities, local government and the government's Forestry agency has reinforced the museum's belief in the power of nature and art to stimulate children's imagination and nurture the relationship between people and trees.

Finalists - Australian Museum, Sydney - With The Burra, the museum has set a new standard with its conceptual framework, methods of implementation and operation of the learning space. It is the first time that a children's learning space has been entirely produced and embedded in First Nations knowledge and ways of learning. Great efforts are made to encourage children's curiosity and stimulate their imagination through engaging programmes and measures taken to sustain quality learning experiences for visitors. The quality of the unifying storyline (the eel, representing creation, and the formation of oceans and rivers, migration, and seasonal indicators) is one of resilience, mirroring the struggle of First Nations communities.

Alice – Museum for Children at FEZ-Berlin - 'Susi & Us. To Look or To Look Away' is not only a well-thought-out exhibition on an historic theme, but is outstanding in the way it forms a connection to children's daily life experiences. There are frequent interruptions to the progression of Susi's story and encouragement to apply questions from history to the present. Simple facts about Jews of the time, such as having to change their names, or being forbidden to keep pets, bring the lives of Jews into sharp focus today. This exhibition is not built on ready-made answers: there is no right or wrong, and the way visitors can explore the opinions, fears and prejudices of the various protagonists is highly commended.

2023 short-listed museums

Australian Museum, Sydney, Australia
ZOOM Children's Museum, Vienna, Austria
MAS Museum aan de Stroom, Antwerp, Belgium
Science Museums, University of Aarhus, Denmark
West Zealand Museum, Holbæk, Denmark
Alice – Museum for Children at FEZ-Berlin, Germany
MUBA Children's Museum of Milan, Italy
Tokyo Toy Museum, Tokyo, Japan
National Museum of Natural History of Luxembourg
Institute for Sound and Vision, Hilversum, The Netherlands

Discover Children's Story Centre, London, United Kingdom
Children's Museum Houston, United States

Previous Winners of the Award

- 2012** Tropenmuseum Junior, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- 2013** Please Touch Museum, Philadelphia, USA
- 2014** National Gallery of Denmark (SMK), Copenhagen, Denmark
- 2015** Lifetime Achievement Awards: Boston Children's Museum, USA and ZOOM Children's Museum, Vienna, Austria
- 2016** GeoFort, Herwijnen, The Netherlands
- 2017** National Museum of Science and Technology, Stockholm, Sweden
- 2018** The Keppel Centre for Art Education, National Gallery Singapore
- 2019** Ker ImagiNation, Dakar, Senegal
- 2020-**
- 2021** The Dutch Open Air Museum, Arnhem, The Netherlands
- 2022** Creaviva Children's Museum, Bern, Switzerland and Leeds Museums and Galleries, United Kingdom

The European Museum Academy (EMA)

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

Hands On! International Association of Children in Museums

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

www.hands-on-international.net

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