

Press release

Paris, 3 December 2020

ART EXPLORA UNVEILS THE THREE WINNERS OF THE FIRST ART EXPLORA – ACADEMIE DES BEAUX-ARTS EUROPEAN AWARD

MUCEM, *Marseille - France*
MUSEO NACIONAL THYSSEN-BORNEMISZA, *Madrid – Spain*
THE NATIONAL GALLERY, *London – UK*

The Art Explora – Académie des beaux-arts award was launched in 2020 under the patronage of the French Culture Ministry with the aim of giving a real boost to projects implemented by public and private cultural institutions in Europe to broaden their audiences, especially those less familiar with cultural institutions. Projects include digital innovations, outdoor actions, inclusion of individuals with disabilities, new mediations, cultural awakening for the young and programs aimed at so-called “prevented” audiences.

This first event was truly a success, with 350 applications from twenty countries and highly diverse institutions.

The €150,000 prize is awarded to three recipients which will receive operational support to carry out the selected projects. The first prize has an award of €80,000; the second an award of €50,000 and the third an award of €20,000.

The three winners selected by the jury are:

- **1st Prize: Mucem – Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations (Marseille, France)**
- **2nd Prize: Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza (Madrid, Spain)**
- **3rd Prize: The National Gallery (London, United Kingdom)**

The jury for this first award comprised twelve personalities, half of whom were appointed by Art Explora and half from Académie des beaux-arts:

- **Agnès Alfandari** (digital director, Institut Français)
- **Laurent Gaveau** (lab director, Google Cultural Institute)
- **Frédéric Jousset** (president, Art Explora)
- **Blanca Li** (choreographer, member of the Académie des beaux-arts)
- **Henri Loyrette** (heritage curator general, member of the Académie des beaux-arts)
- **Muriel Mayette-Holtz** (director of the Nice National Theatre, member of the Académie des beaux-arts)
- **Jean-Michel Othoniel** (sculptor, member of the Académie des beaux-arts)
- **Laurent Petitgirard** (Académie des beaux-arts perpetual secretary)
- **Anna Somers Cocks** (journalist, founder of The Art Newspaper)
- **Sam Stourdzé** (director of Académie de France in Rome - Villa Médicis)
- **Jean-Michel Wilmotte** (architect, member of the Académie des beaux-arts)
- **Marie-Cécile Zinsou** (president, Zinsou Foundation)

The three winners were chosen from an official short-list of twenty-three projects drawn up by the preliminary selection committee consisting in part of Art Explora volunteers. The official short-list was highlighted on the foundation's website to ensure that the projects were visible and to promote the exchange of best practice among cultural institutions.

For more information: <https://artexplora.org/edition-2020-du-prix-europeen-art-explora-academie-des-beaux-arts/>

"I am very pleased with the final selection which shows the fantastic role played by museums. They are far more than pantheons of famous deceased artists. They are living organisms which are vital for imparting values, creating and consolidating communities and shaping generations. In this prize we also wanted to invite them not only to lend works – which they are already used to doing – but also to lend themselves ideas. The prize fully illustrates the mission of Art Explora: to bring art and museum collections closer to all audiences."

Frédéric Jousset, president, Art Explora

PRIZE-WINNERS:

1st PRIZE

MUCEM – Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations

Marseille, France

"Destination Mucem": Free bus every Sunday to promote access to the MUCEM from remote districts

- **Project**



"Destination Mucem" is a new approach for remote audiences. Every Sunday a free bus is made available in remote districts to help new audiences forge a special bond with the museum. Customized, fun mediation is offered during the journey to prepare for the visit with a friendly atmosphere. The public is issued a free ticket on arrival. The bus runs along four different routes. The service is

supported by a broad communication campaign aimed at the local community.

- **Museum**



The Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations (MUCEM) has been designed to serve as a cultural hub in the heart of Marseille. It represents the cultural, social, scientific and political profusion of the Mediterranean world and showcases major artistic, historic and thematic exhibitions along with multiple events aimed at all audiences.

“Destination Mucem is a project that is both simple and innovative. For the public to enter the museum, we have to learn to go out. We are very honoured to win the Art Explora European Award. It recognizes the effort made by MUCEM in Marseille since opening in 2013. It will help us welcome more people, reach out more often into to the city’s more remote districts and thereby enhance the mission we have set ourselves to work for the region. ”

Jean-François Chougnat, president of MUCEM

[Learn more](#)

2nd PRIZE

MUSEO NACIONAL THYSSEN-BORNEMISZA

Madrid, Spain

For the “Versiona Thyssen” project, where 16-35-year-olds are invited to reinterpret the museum’s works in their own way and post their reinterpretation on social media using the hashtag #VersionaThyssen

- **Project**



The museum invites young people to freely reinterpret one or more works from its collections and post the result on social media using the hashtag #VersionaThyssen. A jury of professional artists designates prize-winners. Creations are showcased at fun evening events held at the museum or at digital ceremonies. Over 6,500 reinterpretations have already been submitted. The project has already been held seven times with an eighth event in progress.

- **Museum**



The Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum is home at the Villahermosa palace in Madrid to the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection, which is owned by the Spanish State. The collection boasts nearly 900 works of art from the 13th to the 20th centuries.

“Versiona Thyssen is an initiative launched in 2019 to bring our institution closer to young people, particularly young artists. It is one way of guaranteeing the sustainability of the collection. We are honoured to receive the Art Explora prize, which will help us continue the project and expand it to include other audiences, as well as sharing the initiative with other institutions.”

Avelio Acevedo, executive director of the Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum

[Learn more](#)

3rd PRIZE

THE NATIONAL GALLERY

London, United Kingdom

For the “Jan Van Huysum Visits...” project: exhibition of a National Gallery masterpiece outside the museum in direct contact with the public.

- **Project**



The “Jan Van Huysum Visits...” project is a continuation of the highly successful “Artemisia Visits” project in 2019.

The National Gallery is planning a tour in 2021 of Jan van Huysum's *Flowers in a Terracotta Vase* (1736-1737). This 18th-century painting will appear in six new and unusual venues in the United Kingdom with the aim of promoting well-being, especially among the audiences most affected by COVID-19. The National Gallery is working on this project with various cultural and social partners.

- **Museum**



Established by act of Parliament in 1824, the National Gallery houses one of the largest collections of paintings in the world, taking visitors on a journey through the art of Western Europe over seven centuries from the 13th to the 20th centuries (Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Velázquez, Titian, Rembrandt, Turner, Monet, Van Gogh...).

"Imagine a painting by a grand master at the National Gallery travelling to a school, a surgery and even a prison. This is what the Art Explora Prize will allow us to do. The National Gallery collection belongs to everyone and we want to share it with the widest possible audience in England. Van Huysum Visits is a project that will make it possible for this magnificent Dutch painting to journey across the country so that it can be presented to people who have been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic."

Gabriele Finaldi, director of the National Gallery

[Learn more](#)

ABOUT ART EXPLORA

Aware that culture has the power to initiate dialogue and bring people together, French entrepreneur and patron Frédéric Jousset created Art Explora in November 2019, a philanthropic foundation with an international, roving, non-collection and digital ambition.

Renewing the promise of making culture more accessible, Art Explora aims to bridge the cultural divide, notably by using digital technologies and mobile devices available to all and thereby creating new meetings between works and a broad and diverse audience, all the while supporting creation, cultural actors and their initiatives.

ABOUT THE ACADEMIE DES BEAUX-ARTS

The Académie des beaux-arts is one of the five academies composing the Institut de France. It encourages artistic creation in every means of expression with the organisation of competitions, the awarding of prizes, the financing of artists' residencies and the granting of subsidies, and it watches over the defence of French cultural heritage. To carry out these missions, the Academy des beaux-arts manages its heritage consisting of gifts and legacies, but also important cultural foundations such as the Musée Marmottan Monet (Paris) or Claude Monet House and Garden (Giverny). Today the Academy comprises statutorily 63 members in 9 artistic sections.

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