



MEG
Musée d'ethnographie de Genève



Press Release
Saturday 6 May 2017

The European Museum of the Year Award 2017 won by the MEG.

On Saturday 6 May, the ceremony for the «European Museum of the Year Award 2017» –EMYA 2017- was held in Zagreb, in Croatia. This is given every year to a European museum in recognition of the exceptional quality of its cultural programme for the public and its significant influence in the museum field on a national and international level. Moreover 2017 is an important year for the European Museum Forum which awards this prize as it is celebrating its 40th year of existence. The MEG is proud to announce that this year it has won this prestigious award

Nominated along with 45 other museums, the MEG has won the EMYA 2017, the highest distinction. On the European level, the Musée des Confluences in Lyon, the Musée national Picasso in Paris, the Messner Corones Mountain Museum in Italy and the National Gallery in Bulgaria were in competition. On the national level, the museums competing for the award were the Burg Museum in Zug, the Rathaus Sempach and the Besuchszentrum Schweizerische Voglwarte also in Sempach.

Boris Wastiau, the director of the MEG, attended the award giving ceremony to receive the EMYA trophy, *The Egg*, a sculpture by the British artist Henry Moore, which the museum has the privilege of keeping for a year.

The EMYA is the most important award for a museum in Europe. It is presented every year by the European Museum Forum, under the auspices of the Council of Europe. Founded in 1977 by the journalist Kenneth Hudson, its aim is to acknowledge excellence in the European museum field and to encourage innovative processes in the contemporary museographical world. This award concerns all types of museums.

As every year, this distinction is awarded to a museum which has endeavoured to attract a wide public and to satisfy its visitors through a unique atmosphere, an innovative presentation of exhibitions, a creative approach to cultural mediation and social responsibility, as well as a commitment to its public and to raising its level of awareness. The museums of the 47 countries members of the Council of Europe can take part in the competition if they have been newly opened or have recently undergone alterations.

Past winners have helped to improve the standards of quality in European museums. The Olympic Museum in Lausanne (1995), the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao (2000), the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (2003) and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (2015) are among the award-winning museums.

Boris Wastiau, the director of the MEG, is delighted with this distinction: «It was with a great deal of emotion and a certain pride that I received in Zagreb a version of «the Egg» by Henry Moore, the trophy of the prestigious international EMYA. It rewards the excellent work of the MEG's many collaborators who in recent years have succeeded in organizing exhibitions and cultural activities whose ambition and diversity are unprecedented in the museum's history. Since its opening, the MEG has striven to be a place of possibilities, a museum which the public can make its own, an outward-looking place for encounters, with the objects, the collections, their history and the cultures which produced them, but also between visitors and the bearers of culture. The MEG's success is that of a museum which, in its desire to be cosmopolitan, relates to everyone, whatever their culture. With this public, we together daily build and develop the shared values of openness, respect and benevolence, as well as the will to learn and know about the diversity of societies, arts and cultures. In this we count on the collaboration of a growing



number of partners, in Geneva and elsewhere, both for exhibitions and for our cultural programmes and activities in the realm of social responsibility. It is also thanks to them that we have been awarded this prize. Since the MEG was opened at the end of October 2014, the number of visitors has been steadily growing. In 2016, the exhibitions attracted more than 200,000 visitors and 38,000 took part in activities outside the exhibitions in the same year. And I wager that we have yet to reach our cruising speed and the limits of our development!».

Founded in 1901, the MEG's aim was provide the public with a place to learn about the arts and cultures of so-called exotic societies. Since then, the collections have been enriched with objects from European peasant societies, making the MEG a real museum of world cultures. Today, almost 70,000 objects, collections of photographs, iconography and sound and music recordings are kept at the MEG.

Since October 2014, the MEG's treasures have been shown to advantage in a new building designed by the Zurich firm Graber Pulver Architekten AG, at 65 Bd Carl-Vogt, a site the institution has occupied since 1941. A new scenography and museography for the enhancement of its permanent exhibition «The Archives of Human Diversity» were developed with the Atelier Brückner, based in Stuttgart. This presents the collections' unique history, while the temporary collections deal with anthropological themes connected with present day or ancient civilizations. The MEG's big new temporary exhibition «The Boomerang Effect. The Aboriginal Arts of Australia» will be presented from 19 May 2017 to 7 January 2018. It will reveal the dynamics of the political commitment of indigenous artists in the 20th and 21st centuries.

With an approach designed to include the public and supportive commitment part of all its activities, the MEG is today recognized for the diversity of the cultural programme accompanying its exhibitions. The pluridisciplinary strategy at the heart of its programmes gives priority to most contemporary forms of artistic expression such as dance, performances, mapping, installations, music, films or lectures without forgetting traditional or unconventional visits and participant workshops for all kinds of visitors. This rich programme is only possible thanks to the many partnerships the MEG has managed to create since its opening with the sociocultural actors of the region and elsewhere. Since it reopened the MEG has encountered growing success, with a total for 2016 of nearly 210,000 admissions, that is seven times more than the yearly average of the former museum.





A number of prizes and distinctions have been awarded to the MEG since it reopened in October 2014

Since the opening of the new museum in October 2014, it has received a number of prizes and awards for the architecture of its building as well as for the quality of its exhibitions and value of its scientific and cultural work.

The Building's Architecture

Designed and built by the firm Graber Pulver Architekten AG, the MEG embodies a strong architectural statement in the heart of the City. The visible part of it is remarkable for its concrete roof covered with a mosaic of aluminium diamonds. Its bold architecture evokes the unusual character of constructions and objects from other cultures. The main part of the extension is underground, in particular a large column-free exhibition hall of 2,020 m². The landscaped garden, designed by the firm Hager Partner AG, provides a vegetalized space in a very mineral area.

For its building's architecture, the MEG has received the

Prix de l'Immobilier 2014

Awarded by Bilan magazine, this is given to the eight finest works built anywhere in French-speaking Switzerland.

Distinction SIA Geneva 2016

The purpose of the Distinction SIA is to advance the arts of engineering and architecture from a scientific and aesthetic point of view. The MEG won this award for its excellence in the field of «Technology and Innovation in the Service of Architecture».

International Architecture Award 2016

This award pays tribute to buildings by renowned international architects and honours global excellence in architecture and urbanism.

The Permanent Exhibition's Scenography

The MEG made use of Atelier Brückner's skills for the scenography of the space containing its permanent exhibition. This German firm, based in Stuttgart and specialized in museums and exhibitions, is known for developing surprising ideas and creating unique concepts.

For the scenography of its permanent exhibition the MEG has received

The Red Dot Design Award 2015

This award honours excellence in the realm of design.

The FX Awards 2016 (International Interior Design Awards)

This award honours excellence in international design.

The German Design Award GOLD 2017

Awarded by the Design Council, acknowledged as one of the main centres of competence in the design field.



The Sound Chamber in the permanent exhibition

Ange Leccia is the artist who created the permanent exhibition's Sound Chamber. With the composer Julien Perez, he conceived of an installation specifically devoted to music, inspired by the recordings of the Archives internationales de musique populaire (AIMP) conserved at the MEG, which presents musical and visual compositions that enhance the timbres and colours of certain instrumental sonorities of the world.

For the Sound Chamber in its permanent exhibition, the MEG has received the

Multimedia Art Innovative Silver Award 2015

With this award, the International Committee for Audiovisual and New Technologies of Image and Sound (AVICOM) of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) encourages and valorizes the making and broadcasting of audiovisual documents created by museums as well as by heritage and cultural institutions.

Ethnomusicology

Since 1984, the MEG has co-edited a collection of CDs with the Swiss publishing house VDE-Gallo. More than a hundred discs have already been released under the aegis of the AIMP, the Archives internationales de musique populaire, of the MEG. Each CD was made by a researcher following an ethnographic approach and documents recordings of traditional music gathered during recent fieldwork and possessing recognized archival value. It includes unreleased sound recordings, photographs and a booklet of texts

Since 2014, the MEG has received the «Coup de cœur» award from the Charles Cros Academy for the CDs co-produced with VDE-Gallo : «Kenya. L'obokano, lyre des Gusii» in 2014 ; «Tsar Teh-yun (Chine 1905-2007), Maître du Qin» in 2015 ; «Japon. Gagaku, Ensemble Ono» in 2016 ; «Laos. Musique des Khmou» in 2017.

Since 1948, the Charles Cros Academy has been defending musical diversity and ensuring the preservation of sound memory. The Academy presents awards for musical works in the realm of popular or scholarly song and music.

Cultural Mediation

The public occupies a privileged place at the heart of the MEG. The programme, which is both specialized and accessible to all, is designed to arouse questions. The museum's amenities make it possible to programme an abundance of activities: shows, film cycles, lectures, round tables, music, dance, activities and workshops for specific kinds of visitors and thematic activities within the exhibitions. By proposing many different approaches – human sciences, arts, natural science – the MEG looks at the issues of contemporary society from various angles and adopts the position of a profoundly human museum.

For its cultural mediation, the MEG received the

HES-SO (Haute école spécialisée de Suisse occidentale) Award for Innovation

Hind Chammas, a masters student in Media Design at the Haute Ecole de Design of Geneva (HEAD), won this prize. «Do you speak MEG?» is an invitation to discover the Musée d'ethnographie de Genève via a treasure hunt using the collections and making it possible to learn French. Intended for non-native speakers, this project encourages the participation and integration of social minorities and migrants in cultural life. It is organized in collaboration with the Office for the Integration of Foreigners, the HEAD, the Workers' University of Geneva and the Swiss Organization for Workers' Solidarity.



EXTRACTS FROM
ARTICLES

«The fascinating museum is one of the most esteemed in the world on the subject...»
Buckitdream (UK), January 2017

«If the new ethnographic museum of Geneva, which everyone here calls the "MEG", is a great success, this is due first and foremost to the exceptional quality of its collections.»
Dictionnaire amoureux de la Suisse, Metin Ardit, March 2017

«Mit seiner einzigartigen, zeitgenössischen Architektur setzt das Ethnografische Museum seine Werke mit hochmodernen Innovationen in Szene.»
Eco2friendly-Magazin (CH), April 2017

«It is the most spectacular of the city's museums and foundations.»
Lyon-Newsletter.com (F), April 2017

«This brand new building is a 'must to visit' when in the City of Calvin.»
Le Petit Futé, April 2017

«Spektakulär ist der neue Erweiterungsbau, der mit seinem von Rauten durchbrochenen Metaldach Akzente setzt.» Rheinische Post (D), November 2016.

«One of those rare places where it is pleasant to be lost for days on end.» La Libre Belgique (B), September 2016.

«The exhibition is a great success!» Paris Match (CH), August 2016.

«The exhibition is remarkable in more ways than one: from an aesthetic, scientific and museological point of.» Le Quotidien de l'Art (F), June 2016.

«Absolutely exhilarating!» La Liberté (F), June 2016.

«The exhibition is a great success. Well presented. Well lit.» Bilan (CH), May 2016.

«A dazzling exhibition! The objects, sounds and visions are spiritually transforming.» Le Temps (CH), May 2016.

«The exhibition *Amazonia. The Shaman and the Mind of the Forest* has all it needs to sparkle brightly.» 24 Heures (CH), May 2016.

«Luxuriance.» Sortir / Le Temps (CH), May 2016.

«Engaging and intelligent.» Apollo, The International Art Magazine (UK), March 2016.

«A goldmine lies in the bowels of the Musée d'ethnographie.» La Tribune de Genève (CH), December 2015.

«The world within arm's reach.» La Tribune de Genève (CH), October 2015.

«A defining new landmark.» «One of the richest collections of ethnological objects in Europe.» International New York Times (USA), March 2015.

«A perfect synthesis between architectural statement and functionality.» «A resolutely contemporary museum aesthetic.» L'Objet d'Art (F), January 2015.

«Vaster and more beautiful than ever.» Edelweiss (CH), November 2014.

«In Geneva, a vessel for ethnography.» «The exhibition space is punctuated with high parallel showcases like the pages of a book open to the universe.» Le Monde (F), November 2014.



«A dynamic scenography.» Le Quotidien de l'Art (F), November 2014.

«The MEG looks like the Louvre, plus music.» La Tribune de Genève (CH), November 2014.

«A mega version of the MEG!» Le Courrier (CH), November 2014.

«A success on both the architectural and museographical level.» Le Journal des Arts (F), October-November 2014.

«A marvel of a Genevan museum.» 24 Heures (CH), October 2014.



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

MEG

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Open from Tuesdays to Sundays, from 11am to 6pm
Closed Mondays, 25 December and 1 January
Public transport access by bus 1, 2, 19 and 35 or tram 12 and 15

Permanent Exhibition: free admission
Temporary Exhibition: 9/6 CHF
Free admission for under 18s as well as on the 1st Sunday of the month
An audio guide is available at the museum's reception desk

Further information:

To receive our newsletter, **InfoMEG**, register on www.meg-geneve.ch
Join us on our **Facebook** page
Follow us on our **YouTube** channel

The **MEG Shop** is open from Tuesdays to Sundays, from 11am to 6pm
T +41 22 320 00 33
E laboutiquemeg@gmail.com

The **MEG Cafe** is open from Tuesdays to Sundays, from 9.30am to 6.15pm
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CONTACTS

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The **MEG (Musée d'ethnographie de Genève)** is a public institution, founded in 1901, whose first director was the Genevan anthropologist Eugène Pittard (1867-1962). The Museum's mission is to conserve objects illustrating the culture of peoples throughout the history of the world. It houses a collection of more than 70,000 objects and its library contains more than 50,000 documents on the cultures of the world. The Museum possesses a unique collection of musical recordings, the Archives internationales de musique populaire (AIMP), containing more than 16,000 hours of music including the collection gathered by Constantin Brăiloiu between 1944 and 1958. With more than 3,000 hours of historic recordings, this constitutes the core of the collection. Admission to the permanent collection, which presents more than a thousand objects from the five continents is free. Along with its permanent collection and temporary collections, the MEG offers a programme of cultural and scientific mediation, concerts, film and lecture cycles as well as shows. Since October 2014, the MEG's treasures have been shown to advantage in a new building designed by the Zurich firm Graber Pulver Architekten AG on the site it has occupied since 1941.



The images are available in high definition on:
www.ville-ge.ch/meg/presse.php



MEG – Musée d'ethnographie de Genève
 Bureau Graber Pulver Architekten AG, Zürich
 Photo: ©Blaise Glauser



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 Bureau Graber Pulver Architekten AG, Zürich
 Photo: © Blaise Glauser



MEG – Musée d'ethnographie de Genève
Permanent Exhibition "The Archives of Human Diversity"
Scenography Atelier Brückner, Stuttgart
 Photo: © Daniel Stauch



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Permanent Exhibition "The Archives of Human Diversity"
Scénographie Atelier Brückner, Stuttgart
 Photo: © Daniel Stauch



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Permanent Exhibition "The Archives of Human Diversity"
 Scenography Atelier Brückner, Stuttgart
 Photo: © Daniel Stauch



MEG – Musée d'ethnographie de Genève
Permanent Exhibition "The Archives of Human Diversity"
Sound Chamber
 Artistic direction Ange Leccia
 Photo: © Daniel Stauch



MEG – Musée d'ethnographie de Genève
The Marie Madeleine Lancoux Library
 Photo: © Blaise Glauser



MEG – Musée d'ethnographie de Genève
The Music Room
 Photo: © MEG / Johnathan Watts



MEG – Musée d'ethnographie de Genève
The MEG Cafe
 Photo: ©MEG / Johnathan Watts



MEG – Musée d'ethnographie de Genève
The MEG Shop
 Photo: ©MEG / Johnathan Watts



MEG – Musée d'ethnographie de Genève
A children's workshop
 Photo: ©MEG / Johnathan Watts



MEG – Musée d'ethnographie de Genève
The Big Bazaar (1st Sunday of the month)
 Photo: ©MEG / Johnathan Watts



MEG – Musée d'ethnographie de Genève
A guided tour
 Photo: ©MEG / Johnathan Watts



The EMYA trophy, *The Egg*, sculpture by Henry Moore
Photo : © MEG / Johnathan Watts



The EMYA trophy, *The Egg*, sculpture by Henry Moore
Photo : © MEG / Johnathan Watts