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PRESS RELEASE

9 PROJECTS IN HERITAGE-LED INNOVATION AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SHORTLISTED FOR THE SECOND EDITION OF THE ILUCIDARE SPECIAL PRIZES

Brussels, 10th June 2021

The ILUCIDARE Consortium including Europa Nostra and the European Commission are delighted to present the shortlisted projects for the 2021 edition of the ILUCIDARE Special Prizes, awarded within the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards! These projects are compelling demonstrations of heritage-led innovation and international relations.

The nine shortlisted projects were undertaken by heritage practitioners from eight countries in Europe and beyond. Although the areas and range of their activities are diverse, they all show how heritage has the potential to create meaningful links across countries and communities and to develop exciting new solutions and spur social change.

The 9 shortlisted projects for the ILUCIDARE Special Prizes 2021 are:

Heritage-led innovation

- 3D Reconstruction of Maison du Peuple – Horta Museum, Brussels, Belgium
- Basilica of Santa Croce, Lecce, Italy
- HAP4MARBLE - Marble Conservation by Hydroxyapatite, Italy
- AP Valletta, Malta

Heritage-led international relations

- Northern Lebanon Project, Italy/Lebanon
- Friends of Bryggen and the Bryggen Foundation, Bergen, Norway
- Preservation of the Wine Cellars of Negotinska Krajina, Serbia
- Leather Painting Restoration in the Hall of the Kings of the Alhambra, Spain
- EU-LAC Museums – Museums, Community & Sustainability in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, United Kingdom

“The 9 shortlisted projects for the ILUCIDARE Special Prizes attest the ingenuity, dynamism and sense of purpose of the heritage world. From using state-of-the-art technical solutions for heritage preservation to cultivating relations through cultural heritage between communities and countries, both in Europe and across the world. These outstanding projects show the benefits of working across disciplines and borders to ensure the transmission of our shared heritage to present and future generations. On behalf of the ILUCIDARE Consortium, I wish to congratulate these exemplary achievements for embodying what ILUCIDARE proudly stands for, and I warmly welcome you to the vibrant, international ILUCIDARE community. This pre-selection is already an important milestone and we look forward to supporting you in making the most of it. The ILUCIDARE partners stand ready to give you the visibility and the backing you very much deserve”, stated Koen Van Balen, coordinator of the ILUCIDARE project (KU Leuven, Belgium).

“The shortlisted projects for the ILUCIDARE Special Prizes 2021 showcase the huge potential of our cultural heritage to act as a catalyst

for creativity and innovation, and to foster human solidarity and cross-country cooperation. At a moment when the European Union and its citizens are engaged in shaping a shared vision for the future, each one of the 9 shortlisted projects demonstrate the capability of the heritage world to produce innovative, effective and creative solutions to larger societal issues. I applaud the efforts of the people and communities behind them, and hope many more will be inspired through the power of their example. I also wish to thank them sincerely for their important contribution to a more sustainable and resilient Europe, in spite of the current challenges we face together”, said Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth.

The final recipients of the ILUCIDARE Special Prizes, selected by the ILUCIDARE Jury – one winner for excellence in heritage-led innovation and one for excellence in heritage-led international relations – will be announced in the autumn of 2021 at the European Heritage Awards Ceremony in Venice.

The two winners will have the unique opportunity of joining the ILUCIDARE Champions programme, a tailor-made support scheme to upscale their success and further develop their strategies together with European and international experts as well as the ILUCIDARE Consortium partners.

The ILUCIDARE Special Prizes are supported by the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme, in addition to the European Union’s Creative Europe Programme for culture and the audio-visual sectors, which supports the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards.

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ABOUT THE SHORTLISTED PROJECTS

Heritage-led innovation

[3D Reconstruction of Maison du Peuple – Horta Museum, Brussels, Belgium](#)

From 2015 to 2019, the Horta Museum, located in Victor Horta's UNESCO World Heritage former house and studio in Brussels, nurtured a fruitful educational collaboration with **Laboratoire Alice** (Laboratoire d'Informatique pour la Conception et l'Image en Architecture) at the La Cambre-Horta Faculty of Architecture of the **Université Libre de Bruxelles**, which led to the creation of a partial 3D reconstruction of the Maison du Peuple, one of the most influential Art Nouveau buildings in Belgium and a most notable design of Belgian architect Victor Horta, which was sadly demolished in 1965.

This ambitious project was developed by a multidisciplinary group, including architects and architecture students, restorers, curators, editors, a photogrammetric survey specialist and a composer-pianist. It was realised with funding from the **Baillet Latour Fund** and **Université Libre de Bruxelles**. The Jury in particular praises the project's innovative approach towards an accessible database: *"The partial 3D reconstruction of the Maison du Peuple portrays an interesting use of technology to understand Horta's vision, contemporary building techniques and architectural values. The project has a rich network and the database is supported by accurate research, which can easily be browsed and understood by a variety of audiences, from specialists to enthusiasts or curious people."*

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[Basilica of Santa Croce, Lecce, Italy](#)

The restoration of the remarkable carved façade of the Basilica of Santa Croce is based on an innovative selection process of treatments and techniques, which was widely disseminated to experts as well as the larger public and visitors through a variety of tailored activities. The restoration project was carried out in collaboration between the **Superintendence of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape of Brindisi and Lecce**, which

undertook the project design and project management, and the **Archdiocese of Lecce**, the owner of the church. The restoration work was carried out by **Nicoli S.p.A., Lequile (LE)**. It was financed by the EU through the Puglia Region via the **Fund for Development and Cohesion 2007-2013** and by the **Italian Ministry of Culture**.

The Jury noted that *“there has been strong involvement of the local community with the process of the restoration being communicated and explained to the community. The solutions adopted in this regard respond to the particular environment of the site and is an inspiring good practice example that is replicable in other locations”*.

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HAP4MARBLE - Marble Conservation by Hydroxyapatite, Italy

The HAP4MARBLE project has developed a new treatment for the conservation of marble artworks. HAP4MARBLE was funded by the European Commission through an individual high-level training-through-research fellowship under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, involving the University of Bologna, Princeton University and the University of Göttingen.

The HAP4MARBLE project set-out to tackle the main weathering processes affecting marble heritage objects and architecture. HAP4MARBLE created a multi-disciplinary environment, which combines materials science, biomaterials, micro-mechanics and petrophysics with cultural heritage conservation to synthesize hydroxyapatite (HAP), the mineral which constitutes human teeth and bones, over the surface and inside of marble artworks to fight these weathering processes.

The innovative treatment which came out of merged competences and cross-country collaboration is a treatment that prevents marble dissolution by developing a surface coating of HAP which is significantly less soluble than marble.

“The technique is replicable and is being tested on a large scale in various locations. There has also been a positive social impact from this project with outreach being undertaken to communities and stakeholders outside of the research community”, the Jury stated.

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AP Valletta, Malta

Founded in 1991, AP Valletta is a research-based architectural and design firm located in Valletta, Malta, which has been providing architectural-engineering, restoration and interior design services for a period of 30 years. The international and interdisciplinary team of AP Valletta, in collaboration with other architects and professionals, keeps a diverse portfolio that includes urban landscapes, cultural buildings, office buildings, residential buildings, retail, hospitality and industrial infrastructure. Their products and interventions are based on thorough research and seek creative solutions for the problems at hand, always with an eye for the appreciation and valorisation of public space, heritage value and contemporary contribution to the wellbeing and the cultural life of local communities.

AP Valletta has convincingly embraced the historical environment of Valletta as an important part of the fabric of the firm's identity. The Jury was especially appreciative of the firm's dynamic perspective on heritage: *"Its work is rooted in the theoretical principle that heritage is not static but rather in constant evolution. The firm has made Valletta into their living lab for testing new heritage ideas."*

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Heritage-led international relations

Northern Lebanon Project, Italy/Lebanon

The Northern Lebanon Project (NoLeP) is an archaeological research project that investigates an area of about 100 km² in Koura, a region located near the modern city of Tripoli. To achieve NoLeP's targets, a joint Italian - Lebanese multidisciplinary team was formed between the University of Udine and the Lebanese University - 3rd Branch, with the participation of the General Directorate of Lebanese Antiquities (DGA) and the Institut français du Proche-Orient (IFPO) in Beirut. Financial support was provided by the

University of Udine, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the NGO COSV.

After three years of fieldwork, 100 archaeological sites have been rediscovered and widely shared, thanks to the full survey of the ancient territory conducted in this first phase of the project. In this way it has been possible to bring back to light an incredibly rich archaeological and cultural landscape, where famous cities flourished since the Bronze Age.

“This is a good example of the positive effects of heritage-led international collaborations in a country facing many challenges, not only related to the heritage itself. The project has engaged local inhabitants, raised awareness of this heritage, and allowed exchanges between local communities and international experts”, the Jury stated.

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[Friends of Bryggen](#) and the [Bryggen Foundation](#), Bergen, Norway

In 1962, the **Friends of Bryggen** and the **Bryggen Foundation** were founded to protect the remaining wooden buildings in a historic harbour district of Bergen. Today, the Friends of Bryggen is an active disseminator of Hanseatic trade history in and outside of Norway, and with the support of EU-funding for cross-border cooperation, contributes to reviving age-old inter-European ties and intercultural relations through heritage.

This marvellous example of a Nordic Medieval town formation continues to be the basis for establishing vital international relations. With the support of EU-funding, a number of international projects have been successfully carried out, such as “Safeguarding historic waterfront sites - Bryggen in Bergen as a case”, with partners from England, Poland and the Netherlands and support from the Culture 2000 programme; and “Specializing in traditional craftsmanship to preserve our European wooden heritage” with partners from Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Germany.

The Jury highlights the associations’ role in exchanging knowledge and experience, at home and overseas: *“Both the Bryggen Foundation and Friends of Bryggen constantly aim to demonstrate the importance of*

restoration and preservation by showcasing their work to international visitors of Bergen and exchanging knowledge with different European cultural heritage groups during their travels to establish contacts abroad, mainly among the earlier Hansa Bond cities but also beyond. These efforts have resulted in the establishment of numerous partnerships with many other countries. They are a marvellous example for other wooden built areas.”

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[Preservation of the Wine Cellars of Negotinska Krajina, Serbia](#)

This long-term conservation project focuses on the restoration of *pivnice*, the vernacular architecture of wine cellars that are found in the Negotin Frontier area of Serbia. In 2010, the ensembles of *pivnice* were enlisted on the Tentative List of UNESCO World Heritage. Since then, a long-term partnership was established between the **Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia** with **Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB) Sweden**'s office in Tirana, Albania (later **CHwB Albania**) to join forces and start reconstructing the cellars through annual Regional Restoration Camps. These camps have helped bridge the gap in restoration financing and provided a trained workforce in both academic and craft disciplines.

In 2018, the international project Summer Schools of Architecture by **Grupa arhitekata** commenced, bringing experts and participants from all over the world to work at the *pivnice*.

“This project has engaged experts and students from multiple disciplines, from the Balkans and many other countries. These educational camps help in the restoration of the cellars, but have also allowed an important transmission and exchange of crafts skills at both local and international level”, the Jury highlighted.

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[Leather Painting Restoration in the Hall of the Kings of the Alhambra, Spain](#)

The unique collection of leather wall paintings that decorate the vaults of the Hall of the Kings of the Palace of the Alhambra have been carefully restored thanks to the fruitful international collaboration of different organisations and companies from Spain, France, Italy and Belgium. The restoration work was managed by the **Andalusian Historical Heritage Institute (IAPH)** and the **Alhambra and Generalife Council**, who funded the project.

The project included the participation of the **National Center for Scientific Research** in Paris together with **Pablo de Olavide University** and the **University of Seville**. The restoration experts of the Alhambra and Generalife Council and IAPH staff exchanged technical knowledge with European experts from the **Italian Conservation and Research Institute in Rome**, the **Biological Research Laboratory of the Italian Central Research Institute** and the **Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage** in Belgium.

“This remarkable heritage has an international significance due to the context of rich historic intercultural exchanges in which it was created. Its uniqueness and the rare and unusual conservation challenges it faced, allowed building strategic collaborative relations between interdisciplinary and international experts for its preservation”, the Jury emphasised.

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[EU-LAC Museums – Museums, Community & Sustainability in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean](#)

EU-LAC Museums is an international team of 35 museum professionals, researchers and policy makers across the European Union (EU) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). Since 2014, this international collaboration has jointly developed new wisdom about museum community development, youth work, and digital curation, to examine and promote a vision of museums focused on community needs. To date, this project has successfully set-up exchanges and improved relations between 154 countries

with 108,365 people engaging in person or online with the project activities and its web portal.

The impressive scale of the initiative is ensured by funding of the **Horizon 2020 EU Research and Innovation programme**, under Grant Agreement number 693669. Project partners include the **University of St Andrews** in Scotland (Coordinator), **ICOM**, the **Pontifical Catholic University of Peru**, **National Museum of Costa Rica**, **Austral University in Chile**, **University of the West Indies**, **University of Valencia** in Spain, and **National Archaeology Museum** in Lisbon, Portugal.

The Jury praises the value of the intercultural, intercontinental and international relations created and sustained by EU-LAC Museums: *“EU-LAC is a well-established international network that shares cultural values through the management and care for cultural buildings and monuments. Not only do they represent an international collaboration between expert organisations, the network gradually built a community with many smaller organisations in several cultural sectors in different parts of the world, creating a common language through the identification of a common goal.”*

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ABOUT THE ILUCIDARE SPECIAL PRIZES

The ILUCIDARE Special Prizes, awarded within the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards, aim to demonstrate that cultural heritage is a powerful resource for strengthening international exchange and collaboration and driving innovation-led sustainable development.

The European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards are run by Europa Nostra in partnership with the European Commission since 2002 and are widely recognised as Europe's top honour in the field of cultural heritage.

Both the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards and the ILUCIDARE project are actions included in the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage released by the European Commission to sustain and upscale the legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018. The two actions contribute to the vital objectives of increasing heritage participation and access, mobilising knowledge and research, and reinforcing international cooperation and global partnerships through cultural heritage.

Being co-funded by the Creative Europe and the Horizon 2020 programmes, the ILUCIDARE Special Prizes are a concrete example of how synergies can be built among EU programmes to enhance their impact.

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