

RIJKSMUSEUM BOERHAAVE WINS EUROPEAN MUSEUM OF THE YEAR AWARD 2019

Rijksmuseum Boerhaave was elected European Museum of the Year on Saturday evening. Founded in 1977, this is the oldest and most prestigious museum award in Europe. The international jury praised the completely renewed science and medicine museum in Leiden:

“The exceptional public quality of this museum results from its artful approach to communicating science. Important and beautiful objects are interpreted using the latest technologies and the personal stories of those driven by a passion for the pursuit of knowledge. The result is science with a human face, inspiring curiosity and amazement as well as engaging a wide public in debates on important scientific and ethical questions issues of our time.”

Director Amito Haarhuis received the award during the 2019 EMYA awards ceremony in Sarajevo. ‘This is a tremendous compliment. Every day we are told by visitors how greatly they appreciate our renewed museum, something we are incredibly proud of. We also welcome many representatives of the museums who come to us for inspiration to introduce innovations in their own museum. This award is really the cherry on the cake.’

The award was conferred by the European Museum Forum, which falls under the Council of Europe. Every year the judging panel is looking for enterprise and innovation that enhances the public quality of the museum. The judges seek to identify new developments which are likely to have a significant influence in the national and international museum field. This year 40 museums were nominated.

Award winning makeover

Rijksmuseum Boerhaave is the national museum on the history of science and medicine in the Netherlands. The national museum took a much-needed renovation as an opportunity to rearrange the building: the permanent display is now on the upper floor, temporary presentations are on the ground floor, plus there is a new museum shop, a museum café and spaces for lectures, events and banqueting.

The collection presentation has undergone a complete makeover. While it is still as beautiful as it was before, it is now geared towards a wider audience than just the informed visitor. The previous chronological presentation has given way to a transparent division into five themes, each with its own atmosphere: Golden Age, Illness & Health, Powerful Collections (Enlightenment), Water, Electricity & Data (technology) and Big Questions (modern science).

To accentuate the rich and diverse stories the museum has to offer, the numerous highlights are accompanied by extras to make them come alive: digital magazines, portraits, stories of patients, films, animations, replicas which the visitor is allowed to handle, and educational games, all of which links history to the present and the future.

‘Just like scientists we are passionately committed to our work. We have a unique collection, and by telling the stories behind the objects and the scientists, we can connect them to the daily lives of our visitors’, according to Amito Haarhuis.

Editorial note:

Visual material can be downloaded [here](#). For more information or appointments for interviews please contact Anita Almaši on +31 6 51 22 78 98 / anitaalmasi@rijksmuseumboerhaave.nl