

2016 EMA AWARDS

2016 DASA AWARD WINNER

This is the sixth year of the DASA Award. For the past five years the Award has concentrated on museums which focus on the world of work from the past, the present and the future. The aim has been to address not only experts in this field, but also, as the principal target group, the broad general public. 2016 is a year of transition for the Award, which is moving towards focusing on excellence in learning opportunities provided by museums and it is in this context that its winner has been chosen.

DASA WORKING WORLD EXHIBITION in Dortmund is the permanent educational facility of the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Care and informs the general public about the world of work, its status for the individual and society, and the importance of tailoring work to Human requirements.

Micropia, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Micropia, which is both a museum and a zoo, is the first museum in the world dedicated to microbes, with the help of state of the art technology and educational vision. It is part of the Institute Natura Artis Magistra and is located in the Ledenlokalen, a recently restored heritage building (1870) where a newly-designed top floor has been added. The journey starts in the elevator to the second floor, where the visitor's eye is zoomed in on and its microscopic life is explored.

After leaving the elevator visitors are able to immerse themselves in the spatial design of the black box they enter, with its special wall and ceiling coverage relating to microbes. Specially developed 3D viewers attached to microscopes give visitors live views of microbes eating, moving and reproducing. The creators take great pride in the fact that many of the organisms on display are alive and the laboratory necessary to grow them is an integral part of the museum.

This new and innovative concept in microbiological museology opens up the most ancient part of nature to the general public. It strikes a balance between information and experience and offers the visitor many different ways to look at the invisible world. A range of specially developed media installations allows visitors to see, explore and experience the world of micro-organisms. They themselves become part of the exhibition. The body scan, through which the visitor gets to know his own micro-organisms, is a successful example.

The judges said that the concept of the museum and its exhibition are a valuable contribution to the development of museological ideas. They added that the structural relationship with scientific experts in the making and in daily life of the exhibition must be underlined. The clear simple story is enhanced by the newest technology and personal engagement of the experts and individuals connected with the exhibition.

Micropia is a model of the 21st century museum and an example of the presentation of the fast-moving changes in modern society and a worthy winner of the 2016 DASA Award.