



KULTURRÅDET
Arts Council
Norway



PRESS RELEASE

European heritage and arts celebrated at Oslo City Hall on 11 June under the EU Creative Europe programme

Oslo, 4 June 2015 - Oslo City Hall will stage a major event celebrating Europe's heritage and the arts on 11 June. The award-giving ceremony for the 2015 EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards, considered Europe's highest honour in the field, will feature artistic interventions by the French collective G. Bistaki and musical performances by young and renowned musicians from Norway. The Awards scheme run by Europa Nostra and the artistic acts presented by IN SITU member Scenekunst Østfold are supported by the European Union's Creative Europe programme, which is coordinated at the national level by Arts Council Norway. For the first time, these two remarkable examples of European cooperation in the cultural field will be shown together in Norway. The entire ceremony will be live streamed on the [Europa Nostra YouTube channel](#).

The European Heritage Awards Ceremony will be co-hosted by **Plácido Domingo**, the renowned opera singer and President of Europa Nostra, and **Tibor Navracsics**, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, and will be honoured by the presence of **HRH Crown Prince Haakon of Norway**. The Mayor of Oslo **Fabian Stang** and the Norwegian Minister of Climate and Environment **Tine Sundtoft** will welcome an audience of 600 heritage professionals, volunteers and supporters from all over Europe.

The EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards will be presented to [28 winners](#) from 15 countries taking part in the EU Creative Europe programme. Amongst this year's most outstanding achievements are two projects from Norway: the Manor House in Eidsvoll, in the Conservation category, and the Outbuilding Project in Røros, in the Education, Training and Awareness-Raising category. During the ceremony, the seven Grand Prix laureates, selected by independent juries and entitled to receive €10,000 each, and the Public Choice Award winner, chosen in an online poll conducted by Europa Nostra, will be announced.

A rich artistic and musical programme will enhance the European Heritage Awards Ceremony. The French collective G. Bistaki will greet and surprise guests with creative performances, combining dance, different sound sources and physical elements. G. Bistaki is a charismatic ensemble which explores the choreographic possibilities in the relationship between body, object and space. Excerpts from their performance *Cooperatzia* include the unusual manipulation of classic French roof tiles and women's handbags. Their temporary occupation of Borggården – the courtyard of Oslo City Hall – will certainly leave a lasting impression, as will their intervention in the ceremonial hall.

Norwegian musicians and ensembles – the soprano Frøy Hovland Holtbakk, the violinist Sonoko Miriam Shimano Welde, the pianist Joachim Kwetzinzky, the Barratt Due's UT Brass-ensemble and the Trombonet quartet – will enchant the audience with their diverse interpretations based on Norway's rich musical legacy.

The European Heritage Awards Ceremony is part of Europa Nostra's [European Heritage Congress 2015](#) which will take place in Oslo from 10-14 June. As a core activity of Europa Nostra's network project 'Mainstreaming Heritage', the Congress has the support of the EU Creative Europe programme. Among the main partners of the Congress at the national level are the City of Oslo, Riksantikvaren - the Directorate for Cultural Heritage, and Arts Council Norway as the coordinating body of Creative Europe at the national level.

Media professionals can **register** by **8 June** by following this [link](#)

[PHOTOS](#)

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Background

The [EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards](#) is Europe's highest honour in the heritage field. It celebrates and promotes best practices in conservation, research and digitisation, dedicated service, and education, training and awareness-raising. In this way, it brings cultural heritage closer to European citizens and contributes to a stronger public recognition of cultural heritage as a strategic resource for Europe's society and economy. The Awards scheme was launched by the European Commission in 2002 and has been run by Europa Nostra ever since. A total of 415 outstanding heritage accomplishments have been recognised in the past 13 years. The EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards received the support of the EU Culture programme and is now supported by the EU Creative Europe programme.

[Europa Nostra](#) is the European federation of heritage NGO's. Covering 40 countries in Europe, the organisation is the voice of civil society committed to safeguarding and promoting Europe's cultural and natural heritage. Europa Nostra campaigns to save Europe's endangered monuments, sites and landscapes, in particular through 'The 7 Most Endangered' programme, run in partnership with the European Investment Bank Institute. It celebrates excellence through the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards. It also seeks to contribute to European strategies and policies related to heritage. Founded in 1963, Europa Nostra is today recognised as the most representative heritage network in Europe. In 2014, the organisation received an EU grant from the Creative Europe programme to support its network project 'Mainstreaming Heritage' in Europe.

The French collective [G. Bistaki](#) is a choreographic and investigative circus whose work adapts itself uniquely to the physical and social features of the space it occupies. Based in Toulouse, France, G. Bistaki emerged by chance rather than design, growing from a need to experiment with alternative methods for creative development and expression. Their initial gatherings were intended as playful relief and free experimentation in between other projects. Yet from this emerged a distinctive style of work combining the plastic and the performative in a charismatic manner of presentation. G. Bistaki's *Cooperatzia* was the first artistic intervention presented by Scenekunst Østfold as a member of IN SITU - European Network for Artistic Creation in Public Space. Since its inception, *Cooperatzia* has been staged more than a hundred times in 15 countries.

[Scenekunst Østfold](#), the Norwegian member of IN SITU, is a regional performing arts institution from the southeast of Norway. Under the artistic direction of Kjell Moberg, it produces, co-produces and presents a broad spectrum of artistic expression, from text-based theatre to contemporary dance, circus, jazz and classical music, with an increasing focus on art in the public realm. Based in the town of Fredrikstad, its residency and activities are spread throughout the entire region.

Established in 2003 and supported since then by the former EU Culture programme, [IN SITU](#) - European Network for Artistic Creation in Public Space was selected as one of the first European Platforms to receive the support of the EU Creative Europe programme in 2014. The network, which is coordinated by Lieux Publics in Marseille, France, has 21 members in 14 countries. The membership represents a diverse cross-section of practices and intentions, operating in widely divergent contexts from large cities to small towns, and from industrial environments to natural landscapes.

[Creative Europe](#) is the new EU programme to support the cultural and creative sectors, enabling them to increase their contribution to jobs and growth. With a budget of €1.46 billion for 2014-2020, it supports organisations in the fields of heritage, performing arts, fine arts, interdisciplinary arts, publishing, film, TV, music, and video games as well as tens of thousands of artists, cultural and audiovisual professionals. The funding will allow them to operate across Europe, to reach new audiences and to develop the skills required in the digital age. Culture plays a major role in the EU economy. Studies show that the cultural and creative sectors account for up to 4.5% of EU GDP and nearly 4% of employment (8.5 million jobs and many more if their impact on other sectors is included). Europe is the world leader in exports of creative industry products. To retain this position, it needs to invest in the sectors' capacity to operate across borders. Creative Europe responds to this and targets investment where the impact will be greatest.

[Arts Council Norway](#) is the main governmental operator for the implementation of Norwegian cultural policy. It works as an advisory body to the central government and public sector on cultural affairs and is fully financed by the Ministry of Culture. Among its many activities, Arts Council Norway serves as the coordinating body of Creative Europe at the national level.

The cultural heritage field in Norway is shared between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Climate and Environment. [Riksantikvaren](#) - the Directorate for Cultural Heritage is an advisory body to the Ministry of Climate and Environment. Sound cultural heritage protection is also sound climate and environmental politics. Riksantikvaren cooperates with Europa Nostra on organising the European Heritage Congress 2015 in Oslo.