

The 2023 UMAC Award

UMAC (University Museums and Collections) is the International Committee of ICOM (International Council of Museums), the global organisation of museum professions working in higher education. Established in 2001, it is a relatively new group in comparison with many other committees within ICOM. One of the group's initiatives was the establishment of the UMAC Award. The UMAC AWARD was created in 2016. It is an annual competition judged by an international group of experienced museum professionals. The Award Committee is chaired by Akiko Fukuno from the Hachiro Yuasa Memorial Museum, International Christian University, Tokyo. (See <http://umac.icom.museum/umac-award/standing-committee/> for the full list of currently appointed judges).

The Award honours excellence and innovation in university museums and collections work worldwide. It seeks to distinguish and reward recent outstanding contributions through project work to all areas of museum and collections theory and practice, particularly those with interdisciplinary approaches and a potential for wide application.

Projects nominated for the UMAC Award cover all areas of museums and collections theory and practice, including exhibition development, education, conservation, teaching, research, management and business models, design and architecture, ethics, service to the university and the public, strategic planning, and advances in museology.

Projects nominated must demonstrate: innovation/creativity; excellence; transferability of ideas that can be adopted by other university museums and collections regardless of geography, size or location; and impact on the host university, the community or society at large.

UMAC celebrates excellence, creativity, and, more importantly, the impact of university museums and collections on their host universities, their communities and contemporary society through the UMAC AWARD. "The Award is an important reminder that some of the most creative new museum work actually occurs in the higher education sector" says Andrew Simpson, the current Chair of UMAC.

The 2023 UMAC Award was won by the Chau Chak Wing Museum, University of Sydney, for their project, Object-Based Learning Program. It is the first time the UMAC Award has been won by an Australian university.

The Award was accepted by Dr. Paul Donnelly, Deputy Director of the Chau Chak Wing Museum at the UMAC AGM, held on 1 September. The ceremony was attended by the representatives of the three UMAC Award 2023 finalists and the Jury, both online and in-person.

For the three finalists for the 2023 UMAC Award, see our previous media release:

http://umac.icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/UMAC_AWARD_2023_MEDIA-RELEASE_web.pdf

Or see the playlist on our YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLFNQIYJV3ybXxY0MwHBdtsp4PErNMUj>

The judges of the UMAC Award for 2023 were clearly impressed by the transformative impact object-based learning had made across the curriculum at the University of Sydney via the Chau Chak Wing Museum program.

The CCWM was strategically designed with interdisciplinarity at its core. It's centralised position within the university structure and the diversity of its collections allows the OBL program to enrich the academic environment of all students regardless of their area of study, and to act as a hub of productive interdisciplinary connections for staff and students. The OBL program's success is due to the fact that each class is bespoke to meet specific learning outcomes, with carefully curated objects and purposefully designed active and autonomous learning activities to develop key skills.

"It's a great example of the fundamental role collections have in the pedagogy of higher education, particularly the ability to draw cross-disciplinary connections for students and staff" says Andrew Simpson. "Congratulations to the CCWM OBL team. We hope the UMAC Award continues to be a focus for exemplary museum practice in higher education."

The other two finalists for 2023 were the Genia Shrieber University Art Gallery, The David and Yolanda Katz Faculty of the Arts, Tel Aviv University for their project: "In the Mind's Eye," and the Medical Museion, the University of Copenhagen for their project: "The World is in You."

Previous winners of the UMAC Awards (from the website <http://umac.icom.museum/umac-award/past-winners/>)

National University of Singapore - 2016

Sam Noble Museum of Natural History, University of Oklahoma - 2017

The Perm University History Museum, Russia - 2018.

Medical Museion, University of Copenhagen, Denmark – 2019.

University of Tartu Museum, Estonia – 2020.

Aarhus University, Denmark, Science Museums – 2021.

The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China – 2022.

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