

The EVENS Media Literacy Prize 2017 - Jury Report

Jury: Sally Reynolds, Mary Berkhout, Matteo Zacchetti, Manuel Pinto

Chair: John Potter

Convenor/Jury Organiser: Joanna Krawczyk

OVERVIEW

We have decided to recommend that the award for the EVENS Media Literacy Prize of 2017 is divided into two parts: the main award (of €20,000) and a “Special Jury Prize” (of €5,000). Our justification for this is the fact that the standards were very high amongst all entrants and in addition to making the award to the winning project, we wished to signal that one of the other projects had huge potential and was worthy of our commendation. We hope it will encourage them to continue their good work.

THE MAIN AWARD

We recommend that the main award of €20,000 goes to Zalab in Rome, Italy for Project Otherness. This decision was made on the basis of the exciting version of media literacy in the practice as something connected to lived experience, participation and production - all based around a hub in the community and addressing key issues of our times. We felt that, with guidance, the project could be replicated in other locations (see below). In summary, we admired:

- The commitment to production in the project, the fact that it is no longer enough to make projects which are concerned with reading the media, we also now need to think about the ways in which writing it can be an educative and iterative experience of huge value;
- The commitment to a participatory version of media education which connected reading media to writing or creating media;
- The way in which the project was community located around a physical hub, whilst still embracing the contemporary digital modes of communication and representation;
- The way the project embraced social action through media representation;
- The way the project can access to a wide distribution network - through collaboration with Apollo Cinema and Zalab TV - and reach a large audience with the PV films;
- The ways in which it should be possible to replicate the project in other cities and locations;

Recommendations

We would recommend that Zalab consider the following in their future plans after the award and in consultation with the Evens Foundation:

- Develop specific content on the website which addresses “Replication” and tells in a narrative way, the story of how the project came to be, why it is important to be in a community film space and how it could work in other places;

- Provide examples of templates for working with communities in different, and often difficult, situations;
- Consider changing the name from “Project Otherness” which is a little difficult to grasp when first encountering the work. In fact, this great project almost works to end “otherness” as such by using media, specifically participatory media, in an emancipatory and connected way to generate empathy and understanding of a range of issues;
- Consider increasing the number of teenagers directly involved in the project both as a way to increase impact and also to provide a broader input to the evaluation

THE SPECIAL JURY PRIZE

In addition to the main prize, we recommend that a special award of €5,000 goes to the Association for Communication And Media Culture in Zagreb, Croatia for their project entitled: Djeca medija (Children of Media). We admired many features of this excellent venture and although it did not win the main award, we would like to encourage the team to keep going and we recognise the following special characteristics of the work:

- The connected nature of the work, involving academics and volunteers;
- The way it approached the media as part of lived experience;
- Its importance in the context of Croatia;
- The impact it has on both participants and volunteers;
- The dedication of the largely voluntary force behind the organisation

FINAL NOTE

The jury would like to place on record our sincere thanks to all participants for their work. It was an extremely difficult decision to make, selecting prize-winners from such a very strong field of entrants. In their own way, each project was successful in making a massive difference to the lives of people in their host countries and beyond by addressing some of the key issues of our times: how to develop and maintain a media-educated citizenship in troubled and changing times, how to make visible the lives and experiences of those who are frequently marginalised and how to connect learning to read media critically with making media.