

Prize ceremony speech by Minister for Culture and Democracy Ms Alice Bah Kuhnke

Göteborg, 28 september 2017.

Ladies and gentleman, dear award winner, dear guests.

I am greatly honored to be here, participating in the ceremony for a person that has made great contributions to cultural heritage and the development of museums.

Ildikò Lehtinen, you are the 2017 winner of the Prize of Hans Manneby's Memorial Fund. This year, for the first time, the prize is given to a person from a nordic country, convenient as it is from Finland when we are celebrating hundred years of autonomy in Finland. In August we had big celebrations in central Stockholm to mark the occasion of the Finnish centenary. Kungsträdgården was full of Finnish flags, all sorts of cultural expressions and with a lot of people participating. This allowed us to taste a bit of the cultural richness there is in our neighboring country and I'm happy that we here in Gothenburg will get a glimpse of more.

As Minister for Culture and Democracy the governmental policies for both cultural heritage and minority cultures are my responsibility and concern.

The idea of culture and democracy as closely intertwined characterize the cultural policy which the Swedish government wishes to realize.

I strongly believe that history told through our publicly founded institutions should be the history of many. This is, to be honest, not yet always the case.

For example the experiences and testimonies of everyday life of children, woman, various minority groups, immigrants and holders of low status professions, often have been viewed upon as not as much "history" as the history of men, technological innovation and war.

That ones history is accounted for is of fundamental importance if you are to be encouraged to participate and contribute in the democratic processes of society.

To feel unseen creates the misbelief that one doesn't matter.

Many voices from the past are needed if we are to see a broadened picture and understanding. And equal access to our shared cultural heritage should be seen as a democratic right. For this knowledge about and participation of minority culture and history is fundamental.

In times as ours - of rapid change, growing tensions and a sense of insecurity - the museum sector has an essential role to play in building a more cohesive and inclusive society and work as yours, Ildikò Lehtinen, is more important than ever.

During your long service in the museum sector you have acted for the preservation of threatened cultural heritage and for strengthening both cultural identity and multiculturalism amongst minority people. This is a most urgent task, alongside strengthening minority rights and possibilities to practice and share cultural expressions.

I know that Hans Manneby was a remarkable person within the museum world, who set out to investigate new visions for present and future museums; museums in close contact with contemporary society and its needs and wishes. And he did this by inspiring and being inspired by others.

It is now time for me to give you the Prize. And on the behalf of the Swedish government I want to thank you for your important contribution to museum development and engagement in minority culture. I know that your work will inspire a lot of people, in the museum sector and elsewhere.

Sydämelliset onnittelut palkinnosta! (Congratulations to the award!)