

KENAN YAVUZ ETHNOGRAPHY MUSEUM IS A FINALIST AT EUROPEAN MUSEUM OF THE YEAR AWARDS

European Museum Forum, organizing the most prestigious awards for the museums, have announced that Kenan Yavuz Ethnography Museum is a finalist at the European Museum of the Year Awards (EMYA) 2021.

EMF was founded in 1977 in order to support, protect and carry museums into the future by recognition through EMYA as well as the Council of Europe Museum Prize. The forum has welcomed KYEM with its strategy on bringing a new approach to ethnography museums, to EMYA's final for 2021.

The museum has been founded by Kenan Yavuz, in Bespinar Village/Bayburt where he was born and raised. The facility consists of 4500 m2 indoors, and 10500 m2 outdoors space totalling to a 15,000 m2. The facility, which operated as a 'Culture House' between 2013 and 2019, has gone through major developments in 2019 and became an official private museum. The museum received 12,000 visitors during summer 2020, even with the challenging environment of covid-19 circumstances.

Kenan Yavuz, the founder of KYEM, expressing great excitement from this announcement said 'It is with such honour and satisfaction to see that our efforts on building a facility, a centre that aims protecting and reviving the beauties of the place I was born in, Bayburt and Anatolia, to be recognized internationally. We have founded the museum to highlight the forgotten values and beauties of the region, transferring it to the future generations and gathering them with local heritage in an experimental environment where visitors can not only see but also live the life of the past. It is such an honour to see that the museum we've founded with a time/environment cohesive theme and a statement of being a unique model in the museum world, has been recognized by such a prestigious institution.

EXPERIENCE BASED TOURISM

Kenan Yavuz says that the museum has been organizing/hosting various events that support their goal of transforming the museum experience into a new concept that centralizes the visitor along with social-cultural life of the region. He adds 'we are planning to open the doors of Loru Han project in June 2021', an accommodation project which is integrated with the museum and the cultural/historical aesthetics of the region. The museum hotel will allow visitors from far distances to stay overnight and experience the culture fully. Kenan Yavuz also said that the museum hotel will be having its own events calendar which will allow its guests as well as the visitors of the museum to access experiences regularly. He highlights the fact that following the global pandemic we are going through, the demand for experiential tourism will be in great increase so the museum will be focusing much of its time on designing creative experiences whilst creating an environment that cherishes every single individual who might feel insignificant in the modern world.

THE PLACE WHERE EACH STONE HAS ITS OWN STORY

Kenan Yavuz says that most ethnographic museums today are built as modern facilities which has exhibition rooms to allow visitors to see collections, which he finds lacking strong engagement. He says that while building KYEM, their core value was to build the environment according to the ethnographic features of the region, allowing visitors to truly experience the past. All the sections of the museum, consisting of 26 sections and small individual buildings, were built by donated ruins of houses and wooden pieces all of which were carefully placed together. Kenan Yavuz adds 'The architecture of our museum also illustrates a positioning on creating awareness to losing our aesthetic values of the region.'

TO VISIT US, IS TO EXPERIENCE US

Kenan Yavuz explains their motto ‘Bize gelen bizi yasar’ (To visit us, is to experience us): Every corner of Anatolia is featured with unique beauties and our museums goal is to serve as a meeting point where visitors can experience the cuisine, literature, folklore, and nature of the region. ‘To visit us, is to experience us’ means going for a morning walk and picking rosehips, it means carrying wheat out of the mill, singing songs with a bonfire at the tandoor. It also means listening to the tales of Dedem Korkut, learning about Şair Zihni, Aşık Hicrani and Ağlar Baba. It means drinking cold water out of the freshwater resources in the valley, and having conversations under the thin light of the oil lamp in the village house. It means allowing visitors to experience our ways of living with every aspect of life.

We would fail as a society, Kenan Yavuz adds, if we can not carry the cultural history into the future. He says it is incredibly important to be open minded and ready for change for a better future, however it is also equally important to protect the unique beauties of history and culture and carry them into the future with us.