

Warsaw, 30/03/2023

## **Lviv National Art Gallery awarded the 24th Professor Aleksander Gieysztor Award**

**On March 29, 2023, during the ceremonious Gala held in the Royal Castle in Warsaw, Aleksander Gieysztor Award was presented. This prestigious prize was awarded to the Boris Voznytsky Lviv National Art Gallery for consistently building Lviv's identity as an open city with strong ties to its Polish heritage, which is at the same time an intertwining of many other cultures – Ruthenian, Armenian, Jewish and German.**

*The Professor Aleksander Gieysztor Award is an exceptional distinction because, although set in the past, it honors those who are actually creating our future. They build bridges so that we are able to communicate based on our common roots and create something new together,” said Elżbieta Czetwertyńska, President of Citi Handlowy. “The story of our Laureates' work is a tale of Dialogue, Understanding and Encounter. Today we add to this story a tale of Struggle and Survival. The award goes to the Boris Voznytsky Lviv National Art Gallery.”*

In its justification for the award, the jury of the Professor Aleksander Gieysztor Award, chaired by Prof. Andrzej Rottermund, emphasized that the Lviv National Art Gallery is one of the most important Ukrainian cultural institutions that has cooperated with Polish museums for many years. These collaborations primarily involve art research and art conservation. A key topic of research is the history of Polish painting in the 19th and 20th centuries. For part of the collection of the Lviv National Art Gallery is a collection of Polish paintings from the 16th century to 1939. The collection of several hundred works of art includes masterpieces by the most distinguished Polish painters, such as: Jan Matejko, Jacek Malczewski, Juliusz Kossak, Artur Grottger, Henryk Rodakowski, Józef Brandt, Aleksander Gierymski, Olga Boznańska, Stanisław Wyspiański and many, many others. A significant part of the collection was presented in exhibitions and shows in Poland thanks to the Lviv National Art Gallery's exemplary cooperation with Polish museums and galleries.

During the Gala, Taras Voznyak, director of the Boris Voznytsky Lviv National Art Gallery, thanked the Award Committee for noticing and appreciating the Gallery's efforts in preservation and conservation work for the cultural legacy. He also added: This award provides an opportunity to reflect on why we work so persistently. We focus on the preservation of our identity, including historical monuments. We have long ago moved on from the unconstructive logic of “either, or”, meaning either Ukrainian or Polish. For us, the heritage is common – both Ukrainian and Polish. Our country's historical and cultural legacy – whether Jewish, Polish or Ukrainian – is ours, and we want to build on it.

The Professor Aleksander Gieysztor Award, granted annually by the City Handlowy Leopold Kronenberg Foundation since 1999 for outstanding achievements in protecting the Polish cultural heritage and, in particular, for museology and art conservation efforts and achievements in collecting mementos of the Polish culture. This initiative is to promote and support those who undertake actions to protect Polish cultural heritage both in Poland and abroad. The Award is one of many initiatives of Citi Handlowy that aim at continuing the work of its founder, Leopold Kronenberg – a financier, entrepreneur, patron of culture and philanthropist, who supported many areas of social and cultural life through his activities.

The list of previous Award Winners includes, among others, Professor Jerzy Hausner, awarded for all-embracing activities to promote the use and (re)interpretation of cultural heritage, and Vydas Dolinskas, PhD, Director of the National Museum – Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania in Vilnius, awarded for his outstanding efforts to strengthen the commitment of the Lithuanian community to the protection and promotion of cultural heritage of Poland and Lithuania. Professor Jerzy Limon, awarded for establishing the Gdańsk Shakespeare Theater that combines tradition with the new, and promotes theater and contemporary art in an understandable way. Elżbieta and Krzysztof Penderecki, awarded for founding the European Center for Music in Lusławice, a place where young art students can develop their talent. The Award was also granted to Anda Rottenberg for outstanding achievements in research and in exhibition and social activity as well as cultural animation concerning Polish and world art from the late 20th and early 21st century. The Award was also granted to the British historian Norman Davies, who dedicated a big part of his scientific career to investigating and popularizing the history of Poland. Among the winners there were also Krystyna Zachwatowicz and Andrzej Wajda, awarded for the outstanding achievements in the field of film and theater, which promote Polish culture, and for promoting the need to protect the cultural heritage in Poland and for the contribution to its strengthening and popularization. Other winners were also Professor Jacek Purchla – awarded for, among others, many years of work on the issues of cities and urban development, and Leon Tarasewicz – in recognition of the many years of conscious efforts in building bridges between different ethnic, language and religious groups in the borderland of Poland, Belarus and Lithuania. Over the past twenty years, the Award has been presented to authors, animators and also outstanding initiatives. In 2014, the Award was presented to Społeczny Komitet Opieki nad Starą Rossą (Public Maintenance Committee for the Rasos Cemetery), which has taken care of the oldest Polish necropolis in Vilnius since 1990. Over 60 monuments have been renovated to date thanks to the Committee. The Award was also won by bishop Waldemar Pytel, who was rewarded for more than 30 years of efforts to save, revitalize and restore the splendor of the Lutheran block of streets along with the Church of Peace in Świdnica – since 2001 a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

24th edition of the Award is held under the honorary auspices of the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda.