

Stone Festival Report

From 27 – 29 May 2011, 140 participants from 14 countries could be found in the Escholpark in Freiburg transforming their ideas into stone. The highly motivated carvers and masons worked intensively, their progress followed closely by the 14 000 visitors who were totally fascinated by the carvers and enjoyed many lively and interesting exchanges with the participants about their work. The participants themselves also value this unique opportunity to exchange ideas with their colleagues from all over the world. The finished pieces at this year's European Stone Festival were of a remarkably high standard although one or two participants underestimated the challenge of the task they had chosen for the weekend.

Many visitors followed the progress of the carvers and sculptors throughout the weekend, mesmerized to see sculptures or tracery emerging from the blocks of stone.

König, the tool producer from Karlsruhe and a long-standing sponsor of the Stone Festival, together with the English tool company Gibson, had a busy weekend sharpening chisels for all the young artists. Both companies donated generous prizes in the form of tools which were awarded to the winners on Sunday at the prize-giving ceremony prior to the auction. The Gibson company provided each participant with a souvenir chisel displaying the Stone Festival 2011 logo. Strassacker, the bronze-casting company, offered a "living workshop" where the visitors could experience the skilful art of bronze casting first-hand.

Young visitors to the festival had the chance to experiment and work with stone for themselves under the watchful eye of our experts. In the meantime, their parents could take a leisurely stroll through the tree-lined avenues and see the carvers and sculptors at work.

This year, the first prize was awarded to the Indonesian Ongky Wijana, who now lives on the Isle of Man. The thunderous applause from both visitors and participants underlined the unanimous decision of the international jury.

The jury members were: Terje Skeldam from the Cathedral Works Association in Trondheim, Norway, Norbert Stoffel, President of EASMS (European Association of Stonemasons and Sculptors) France, Siegfried Tscholl, HTL Hallein Austria, János Kampfl, Deputy Director of the Hungarian Stone Association, Lothar Metz, owner of the Metz company Daleiden and donator of stone material and Darren Lawrence, Lecturer at Weymouth College of Stonemasonry in England.

The auction on Sunday evening proved to be a popular event with all the pieces of artwork finding a new owner. The proceeds from the auction are used to finance the event itself and the remaining sum will be invested in apprenticeship training projects at the college.

In 2012 Trondheim Cathedral, Norway, will organise the European Stone Carving Festival from 29 June to 1 July.