

MEDIA RELEASE

Geneva, 17 May 2019

The Extraordinary Voyages Prize celebrates its 20th edition

Yesterday, the Lombard Odier Foundation awarded its 20th Extraordinary Voyages Prize to six school leavers in French-speaking Switzerland. This anniversary edition, held at the Agora Lombard Odier on EPFL's campus, also looks back on the history of a prize that, in the lapse of a generation, has enabled around one hundred French-speaking young people to embark on an extraordinary journey.

“The Extraordinary Voyages Prize has always encouraged the discovery of different cultures, openness, understanding of the world around us and respect for others at a special time for young people as they start their professional lives,” says Patrick Odier, Chairman of the Fondation Lombard Odier. This year, we were again delighted to discover projects that will certainly leave a lasting impression on the winners.”

The 20th Extraordinary Voyages Prize of the Fondation Lombard Odier sponsors the travels of six French-speaking Swiss people. Coming from the cantons of Jura, Fribourg and Geneva, the winners' projects and the meaning behind their travel ambitions impressed the jury. These projects were carefully selected from the 40 applications submitted by 66 different school leavers. The award ceremony took place at the Agora Lombard Odier on the EPFL campus on Thursday 16 May in the presence of the jury members and former winners. Also present was Marco Simeoni, Chairman of the Race for Water Foundation and sponsor of this special edition, whose journey expeditions the world are dedicated to protecting the environment and are a source of inspiration.

The 2019 winning projects include initiatives involving permaculture and community life around the world, a trip to West Asia through its legendary bazaars, and above all, self-discovery. The prize is all about allowing these young people to grow and discover themselves. According to Dorian Pajic, who won the prize in 2011 and travelled through the vineyards of South America; “This experience allowed me to learn about wine production and discover the warm and generous spirit of the locals. This journey enabled me to pursue my oenology studies and fulfil my passion and profession as a winemaker. I often think back to this opportunity I had to explore new cultures and winemaking traditions.”

Created on Lombard Odier's bicentenary in 2000, and geared towards all school leavers in French-speaking Switzerland, the Extraordinary Voyages Prize has enabled 101 young people to make the journey of their dreams in 65 different countries, while sharing their stories with the public on various media channels. To celebrate the 20th edition of the prize, the Fondation Lombard Odier has launched a new website that will make it possible to follow the 2019 winners and revisit past trips.

Follow the winners and read their travel diaries: www.prixdesvoyagesextraordinaires.ch



5th prize: Manon Cuenot, Ecole Cantonale de culture générale de Délémont, Jura

“Discovering permaculture and community life”

Young, motivated and passionate about ecological issues and global warming, Manon Cuenot, from the École de Culture Générale de Delémont, wants to discover and fully immerse herself in three farms to experience community life. She will work for three months in each of these farms – in California, Hawaii and Germany – according to a work trade model, i.e. offering her work in exchange for food and shelter.

4th prize: Lucie Widmer, Collège de Gambach, Fribourg

“Across Europe by bike – 4,500 km on the pilgrims’ route”

A desire sparked by reading “Eloge de l’énergie vagabonde” and the longing to deepen her thinking and self-discovery, Lucie Widmer, from the Collège de Gambach, will make a journey through Europe by bike, from Norway to Spain. The journey itself is more important than the destination – it’s about discovering oneself as well as exploring the outside world. It is a time for reflection, finding and going beyond one’s limits, as well as an opportunity for new encounters, exchanges and discoveries.

3rd prize: Joyce Dworak, Collège Sainte-Croix, Fribourg

“Discovering the country of my childhood as an independent young woman”

Joyce Dworak, from the Collège Sainte-Croix, will return to Ghana, the country her mother had to leave when she was eleven years old. She aims to reconnect with her roots, immersing herself in the life of the country, its people, culture and language by travelling around the area. This two-month trip will focus on language, art, family and writing; having already penned a novel as part of her studies, Joyce wants to continue writing and will keep a journal during the trip.

Joint 1st prize: Maeva Terbois, Collège Sismondi, Geneva

“A journey of self-discovery in the Great North”

Maeva Terbois, from the Collège Sismondi, will begin a self-reflection trip to America’s Great North (Yukon & Alaska). The secondary purpose of this trip will be to deepen her knowledge of English by living and communicating with the locals. She wishes to use this experience to grow personally and share her journey through writing while focusing on two issues close to her heart: ecology and minorities.

Joint 1st prize: Elias Giudici and Michael Gowen, Collège Calvin, Geneva

“Discovering Western Asia through its markets”

Driven by a deep desire for adventure and discovery of Western Asia, these two friends want to explore the region while focusing on the theme of trade, which was the lifeblood of the area’s early civilisations. Elias Giudici and Michael Gowen of the Collège Calvin will begin their approximately ninety-day trip through Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan to finally reach Iran, where one of them has relatives but has never visited.



About the Extraordinary Voyages Prize

The Extraordinary Voyages Prize pays tribute to the spirit of adventure that characterises the works of Jules Verne, especially “From the Earth to the Moon,” which specifically mentions Lombard Odier.

The selection criteria include inquisitiveness and an open mind, a sense of adventure, empathy and respect for others, a willingness to share, and the desire to learn. Each project contains details of the travel destination, the reasons for the choice, the purpose of the trip, the proposed method of travel and the anticipated results. After their journey, the winners will have to submit a report within one month and make an oral presentation about their experience to the new winners at the next prize ceremony.

Five bursaries are awarded every year, ranging from CHF 2,500 to CHF 6,500. Since 2000, 101 young people – including the winners of the 20th Prize – have enjoyed financial support from the Fondation Lombard Odier. They set out to discover the world, returning with personal impressions and powerful memories that are described in their writings. So far, trips have been made to 65 countries on all seven continents. The destinations chosen reflect the very broad range of the winners’ dreams and interests. From exploring the volcanoes of Iceland and Indonesia, to crossing the United States by bike, to studying the orangutans of Borneo, the prize makes young people’s dreams come true, taking them on an Extraordinary Voyage.

www.prixdesvoyagesextraordinaires.ch

About the Fondation Lombard Odier

Founded in 2004, the Fondation Lombard Odier is an institution formed of the Partners and former Partners of the Lombard Odier Group.

The foundation works closely with several key institutions, such as the ICRC in the field of humanitarian action and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL) in the field of education. It also supports social impact investments and the development of innovative approaches in the field of finance.

A staunch believer in the importance of philanthropy for society, our Foundation promotes dialogue between stakeholders and actively participates in exchange platforms such as SwissFoundations, the European Foundation Centre and the European Venture Philanthropy Association.

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