TEN YEARS OF THE FONDAZIONE PREMIO ATLANTIDE

The Fondazione Premio Atlantide ETS marked its tenth anniversary by returning to Perugia's Palazzo dei Priori, the setting of its fifth awards ceremony in 2021. On Saturday 14 November, five years after that October gathering, the Umbrian city hosted the Foundation's 2026 laureates: Francesco Tiboni, Igor D'India, Lisa Briggs, Marco Anzidei and the SDSS – Society for the Documentation of Submerged Sites. The ceremony was held in the Sala dei Notari, whose late-thirteenth-century frescoes, rooted in the Giottesque tradition, have drawn praise over the centuries from Giorgio Vasari and Luciano Bellosi.



"Joining us this morning are representatives of local government and public institutions, alongside our sponsors, Kimia and Generali," said Vincenzo Valdina, speaking on behalf of the Foundation. "I would like to thank the members of the Scientific and Technical Committee, which devises the Foundation's initiatives and selects the award recipients: Vittorio Bianchini, Gerardo Bosco, Marina Cappabianca, Pippo Cappellano, Alessandro Filippini, Andrea Mucedola, Luigi Cerracchio, Sandro Marroni and Nanni Acquarone. My thanks also go to my colleagues on the Board and the supervisory bodies: its chairman, Roberto Menzaghi, together with Vittorio Bianchini, Luca Silla and Lorenzo Corridoni." A similar sense of gratitude was expressed by Pasquale Parise, president of Fondazione Perugia, who, drawing on a lecture by the historian Alessandro Barbero, stressed the importance of recognising the early signs of change before they become irreversible. A sixty-minute lecture by Gianmaria Sannino, climatologist and head of research at ENEA, the Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development, examined the defining features of today's climate. "As the oceans absorb heat, their pH falls, reducing their capacity to absorb carbon dioxide while also contributing to thermal expansion. This expansion is driving the abnormal rise in sea levels witnessed over recent decades. In Italy, it has been monitored by an ENEA station on the island of Lampedusa, off the Sicilian coast." The example of Lampedusa is part of a wider pattern of alarming feedback mechanisms, from the dramatic loss of biodiversity to

the declining reflectivity of the polar ice caps, which accelerates their melting. Alessandro Filippini, a journalist who chaired the morning session, asked Sannino how the pursuit of profit might be reconciled with the principles of environmental responsibility, which are essential to safeguarding future generations. “Faced with a situation such as the present one, in which households are struggling with energy bills, we should recognise that the Green Deal would have made us more independent and more secure in terms of energy security,” the climatologist argued. Mayor Vittoria Ferdinandi spoke on behalf of the institutions lending their patronage to the event: the City of Perugia, the Umbria Region, MASE (Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security) and RAI 3, Italy’s public broadcasting service. “It is an honour and a pleasure to welcome such an important gathering to our town hall, where researchers and organisations committed to shaping tomorrow are being recognised. Perugia may have no coastline, but beyond the geography of borders, I believe there is also a geography of responsibility, in which every institution must work tirelessly and tangibly to secure a future for generations to come.”



Documentary filmmaker Marina Cappabianca presented the first of the day’s five awards to marine archaeologist Francesco Tiboni, who reflected on the painstaking nature of his work. “We often work on Roman shipwrecks, dismantling their wooden structures for analysis before carefully restoring them. At times, we have spent seven or eight hours a day underwater, sometimes alongside my friend Sebastiano Chiusa, a previous recipient of the Foundation’s award, whose absence is deeply felt today.” The second award went to Igor D’India, a documentary filmmaker and explorer from Palermo, who was introduced by marine engineer and navigator Nanni Acquarone and Giovanni Nicoletti of Generali Perugia. “I began my career in international journalism as a reporter, embarking on my first independent project in 2005,” D’India recalled. “Subsequent exploratory documentaries helped me understand the reach of my camera and the boundaries I would have to overcome. Those experiences ultimately led me to devote my work to communicating scientific research to a wider audience, as in my latest project, The Phantom Catch, produced in collaboration with ISPRA, the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research.” Sandro Marroni, president of DAN Europe, announced that from 2027 the Fondazione Premio Atlantide would introduce a new award “for emerging talent, ready to contribute something original and deserving to the culture of the sea”. Marroni then shared the stage with Stefano Gualtieri, vice-president of the award-winning Society for the Documentation of Submerged Sites (SDSS). Speaking on behalf of the organisation, Gualtieri outlined its work: “We produce photogrammetric surveys of vessels and make them available on our website, offering visitors free access to a virtual museum. More recently, we took part in the exploration of the seabed where the Battle of the Egadi Islands was

fought, recovering rams, helmets, swords and cheek guards. Our surveys have also revealed, sadly, that some wrecks have become ticking ecological time bombs, contaminated by the hydrocarbons deposited within them." The fourth award was presented to Marco Anzidei, a geophysics researcher at INGV, Italy's National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology, by documentary filmmaker Pippo Cappellano and Alessandro Belli, an executive at Kimia. "Perugia is a city I hold dear," said the research director, "because my mother came from this part of Italy and, when I was a boy, used to bring me here for the holidays. The sea has reshaped the coastline, while archaeological sites reveal different forms of ground deformation caused by specific geological phenomena, including earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. When people ask what the future holds for the Mediterranean coastlines, I recall the words of a Sicilian fisherman who once told me: 'U' mari sa manciò' – the sea has swallowed them up."



Finally, Marina Cappabianca returned to the stage to present the award to Lisa Briggs, revealing that the British underwater archaeologist is set to feature in director Martin Scorsese's latest film, due in 2027. Briggs warmly thanked the Foundation's Scientific and Technical Committee. "I arrived in Italy alone at the age of 17, with just one ambition: to become an archaeologist. Twenty-six years later, I could never have imagined receiving such affection and such a warm welcome through this award. The images I have brought with me show two recent collaborations: one with National Geographic on the River Tiber, and another in Sicily, involving young students from Lebanon and Egypt."