

ON THE TOPIC OF PATRONAGES LUCCA COMICS & GAMES: A PLACE FOR DIVERSITY

Lucca, October 28th, 2023

Lucca Comics & Games has always been a safe place for diversity. We have been following the ongoing debate over the patronage we received this past spring from the Cultural Office of the Embassy of Israel in Rome. This patronage – a cultural endorsement, not a grant – was extended, like many patronages we have received over the years, in recognition of the value of our cultural programme. This specific institutional endorsement comes after an almost year-long project that involves Asaf and Tomer Hanuka, two well-known and beloved artists, in Italy and around the world. To them, Lucca has dedicated one exhibition and entrusted the making of the poster of the 2023's edition of the festival. The theme at the core of this edition is represented by the word *Together*, encompassing the values that have always guided us: respect, community, inclusion and participation.

We respect individual choices as well as everyone's opinions. We have always wanted to be a place where it is possible to be together among our differences. We believe in the community of Lucca Comics & Games and in its ability to participate in active citizenship. We work to guarantee this ability, to foster dialogue around a variety of themes, including those concerning current events of dramatic and binding relevance. It's all part of our programme, and as such we will not turn our back to the ongoing humanitarian event. Our work aims to give the fans – those who make a grassroots festival like ours unique - the certainty that we won't forget our roots, nor our mission.

We have considered whether to renounce the patronage but have decided it would be an irresponsible act towards not only institutions and realities that belong to our ecosystem, but towards the people who participate in Lucca Comics & Games. At the centre of our festival are always and exclusively the intellectual and creative work and the people. Our work, our values, our history speak for us. The 2023 theme *Together* follows in the footsteps of *Becoming Human*, in 2019, and of *Hope*, in 2022, and of the stars we got back to look at in 2021, after another dramatic moment we faced and overcame together.

<https://www.luccacomicsandgames.com/en/2023/poster/>