



*Media Release March 2021*

## **The Processions of the Holy Week of Mendrisio**

**From 2020, with the Processions of the Holy Week of Mendrisio, the World Heritage Experience Switzerland association will represent Intangible Cultural Heritage in Switzerland, in addition to UNESCO World Heritage properties and biosphere reserves. The new partnership model is intended to cover the needs of the registered traditions, which are already on the representative list, especially in the communication field, and to give the organisations access to the existing World Heritage network, which has been built up in recent years.**

**The Processions of the Holy Week of Mendrisio, a living tradition that offers a very special 2021 edition.**

The Processions of the Holy Week of Mendrisio became part of the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in December 2019 and the 2020 edition could unfortunately not take place due to COVID-19. The appointment with the processions in 2021 will represent a new moment of communion between history and modernity, between tradition and innovation, between places and people, in full respect of the characteristics that have allowed this event to become part of the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The 2021 edition will have a new format, designed to respect the delicate pandemic situation and to emphasise its strong roots in the territory and the local population. The Committee of the processions has decided to propose an unprecedented edition that will involve volunteers, the local population, businesses, exhibitors and the entire local community in an event that is both traditional and innovative.

From 15 March to 11 April, it will be possible to walk along the classic route of the Processions to admire the "transparent" and the shop windows, which will be transformed into a large stage on which the clothes and ornaments usually worn on the parade will be presented. Walking along the ancient alleys of Mendrisio's old town centre it will also be possible to meet the faces of the many volunteers who, with great enthusiasm, have accepted to be portrayed as protagonists of this edition, which will be supported by special digital effects. The streets of the centre will thus be animated and the tradition will be presented, while the Museo dei Trasparenti and the four churches of San Giovanni, Santa Maria, Santi Cosma e Damiano and Cappuccini, which will be set up as tradition dictates, will also be open to visitors on Easter days.

**Ancient traditions that have been alive for over 400 years.**

The processions take place every year on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday in Mendrisio. An obligatory and unique event, where history becomes a spectacle in the continuation of tradition. Walking through the streets of the town centre, the soft light of the "Trasparenti" shines through, transparent paintings on canvas stretched on "frames" lit from within. Made using a special technique dating back to the 18th century, the 'transparent' are typical of processions and are a central element of the candidacy. The Maundy Thursday procession is dedicated to the Passion and Way of the Cross of Christ and is performed by about 270 artists. The Good Friday procession is more austere and solemn, and has more than 700 artists.

### **Intangible Cultural Heritage**

Intangible Cultural Heritage refers to living traditions and practices handed down through generations that provide a sense of identity and continuity to a community. These include, for example, music, dance, costumes, festivals or traditional crafts. Intangible Cultural Heritage is extremely diverse; unlike tangible cultural heritage (e.g. Monte San Giorgio, UNESCO World Heritage), it is constantly evolving.



The "List of Living Traditions in Switzerland" forms the basis and precondition for nominations of living traditions for the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. To date, five living traditions from Switzerland have been included in the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (March 2021).

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**Images**

[www.whes.ch/gallery-en](http://www.whes.ch/gallery-en)

**Further information**

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