The exhibition narrates the character creation process from the inside and offers an insight into the visual development of films from this famous animation studio.

CaixaForum Sevilla is filled with the magic of Pixar

- **The *Pixar: Building Characters* exhibition takes an in-depth look at the creation process that lies behind the characters of this cartoon studio's films, the fruit of long and meticulous teamwork.**

- **Through audiovisual contributions the artists themselves reveal the intricacies that go into building the legendary, endearing characters of the studio.**

- **The exhibition displays around 130 original drawings and 48 maquettes of Pixar characters that show the visual development process. The works belong to various Pixar productions, from *Toy Story* to *Soul*, the studio's most recent film, of which a sketch is included, and also *Brave*, *Ratatouille*, *Monsters, Inc.*, *Cars*, *A Bug's Life*, *Coco* and *Up.***

- **The display, which will be open from 25 November to 21 March 2021, is organised by Pixar Animation Studios in collaboration with "la Caixa" Foundation.**

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Pixar: Building Characters. **Dates**: from 25 November 2020 to 21 March 2021. **Organisation and production**: Pixar Animation Studios in collaboration with "la Caixa" Foundation. **Curator**: Maren Jones, curator. Brianne Moseley, assistant curator of the Exhibition Program at Pixar Animation Studios. **Place**: CaixaForum Sevilla (Centro Comercial Torre Sevilla C/ López Pintado, s/n).

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Seville, 25 November 2020. The director of CaixaForum Sevilla, Moisés Roiz, and the assistant curator, Brianne Moseley, via streaming, have today presented in CaixaForum Sevilla the exhibition entitled *Pixar: Building Characters*, a display which explains the creation process behind characters in the Pixar Animation Studios' films.

Through around 130 original drawings, 48 maquettes and several audiovisuals, the exhibition route narrates how Pixar characters are the fruit of intense teamwork. They are the result of collaboration by different kinds of people who come together to reach the right definition of a character, to transmit the storyline as well as possible and to ensure the characters fit in with all other elements of the film. The exhibition is organised by **Pixar Animation Studios** in collaboration with **"la Caixa" Foundation**.

Within its cultural programme, "la Caixa" Foundation focuses particularly on basic artistic manifestations that have played key roles in shaping the contemporary sensibility. Accordingly, film occupies an important place in the Foundation's programming, as fiction or as a document that enables us to explore stories and images that are the foundation of contemporary identity. Thus, the Foundation has organised retrospectives devoted to such great names in cinema history as Charles Chaplin, Federico Fellini and Georges Méliès, and to such subjects as vampires and childhood in film.

This is the second collaboration between "la Caixa" Foundation and Pixar Studios, as in **2015** the exhibition entitled *Pixar: 25 Years of Animation* was also presented in various CaixaForum centres, to great acclaim by the public. On that occasion, the display was on a long international tour of museums, such as Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, and of countries including United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, Mexico, China, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and France. That exhibition was a comprehensive review of the work of this company, pioneer in computer animation, during its twenty-five years of history. It offered another look at some of the feature films produced by Pixar since *Toy Story* (1995), until then the first of its kind to be entirely created using digital animation effects.

Pixar: Building Characters, by contrast, presents a new approach that focuses on the visual development of characters. The exhibition shows that Pixar characters are the result of careful and thorough creative work, following a good

deal of research. It allows viewers to enter behind the creative scenes of a great factory of fiction, which is what Pixar is.

The exhibition analyses the origins of various characters in some of the Studios' most famous films, from start-up of the factory until today. Of course this includes the first four instalments of the pioneering *Toy Story*, but during our journey through the display we will meet up with characters from such films as *Brave, Ratatouille*, *A Bug's Life*, *Monsters, Inc.*, *Finding Nemo, Finding Dory*, *The Incredibles*, *Inside Out*, *Cars*, *Up*, *Coco* and even *Soul*, the latest production from Pixar, which is due to be released in Spain on December 25.

And who better to explain building the design of a Pixar character than the very creators, artists and storytellers who take part in the creation process of a film? Through quotes and audiovisual contributions, the Studios' artists themselves offer an insight from behind the scenes and demonstrate a key idea of the exhibition: the notion of creative industry and the professionalism of the hundreds of people involved for years in each of Pixar's projects.

Finally, the creation and design of everything that will be seen on screen starts from zero, with the story's specific needs in mind at all times. No detail is left to chance, and all is at the service of the story being told by the film. This incredible amount of work leads to an unparalleled degree of precision and power in the visual storytelling, and in the coherence and definition of the characters. And this has become the trademark of products from Pixar Studios.

The aim of every trait of the characters, of every environment, from the landscapes to the soundtrack of the film, is to trigger viewers' emotions, in short, to create the magic of Pixar stories. The production designer, Bob Pauley, explains that there are so many decisions that go into designing a character, but "when you see the movie, all of the work that we do should disappear. You just want people to believe in these characters and feel like they're in the story with them".

Some of the original drawings included in the exhibition have never been shown before outside the studios and are made using different techniques and mediums, since each artist chooses which technique is best suited to their individual stlye. These include pencil, felt-tip, gouache, digital paint programs, acrylic, watercolour and others. In addition, the display presents fragments of storyboards, which

demonstrate how each step in the evolution of a character responds to a literary as well as a graphic screenplay.

The exhibition also contains a number of audiovisuals. Among them stands out the one that welcomes visitors, the animated short *Luxo Jr.* (1986). One of Pixar's first project, this two-minute film was directed by John Lasseter, the Studios' former chief creative officer and director of *Toy Story*. The short features two anthropomorphic lamps: a larger "parent" lamp, and a smaller "child" lamp. It employed a new self-shadowing algorithm which lends startling realism to the story. Other audiovisuals offer details of the textures created with digital painting tools, the production process of *Brave*, interviews with the artists, and some of the most outstanding moments of Pixar films.

Design of the display underscores the idea of careful, analytical work, with a minimalist almost laboratory-like aesthetic, to help visitors focus their attention on the drawings and maquettes of the film characters.

Once it closes in Seville, the exhibition with begin a tour which will take it to the CaixaForums of Girona, Palma, Tarragona and Lleida.

EXHIBITION AREAS

Exhibit Introduction

From the earliest back-of-envelope notes and sketches to the finishing touches of lighting and effects, Pixar's filmmakers constantly strive to support the characters' emotional journey with all the tools at their disposal. Everything you see on screen is designed and built from scratch with the story's specific needs in mind. Though this is an incredible amount of work, it is also an incredible opportunity, allowing the studio's filmmakers an unparalleled degree of precision and power in their visual storytelling.

This exhibit will give you an inside view of Pixar's visual design process, from the perspective of the artists themselves. Though the pieces in these rooms are no more than the smallest fraction of the art that has been created in the studio, they give a sense of the years of experimentation, deliberation, and iteration that go into every film.

Building characters

The character design process always begins with a period of open-ended brainstorming; the goal is to explore a range of possibilities before committing to a particular direction. As certain approaches emerge as front-runners, the designs become more and more specific, focusing on increasingly refined details of appearance and expression. However, the needs of the story and film remain paramount. The filmmakers will not hesitate to make significant, even radical changes to a character and its design if it will better serve changes to the story or a new direction for the character's role. Throughout the process, artists are free to choose whichever medium they feel will best express their vision, including pencil, pastel, acrylic, and digital paint programs. This area explores the first phase of the storyboard, or illustrated script, on a Pixar film in which the early designs are modified in line with the creative dialogue between artists working on the story. An example of this is **Merida**, the princess and main character in *Brave*, whose wild red hair is a symbol of her free spirit. In the storyboard of the film's

opening scene you can see how the flash of red hair helps your eye follow the character, and immediately communicates her rebellious nature.

Also in this area, you can see that it is not unusual for hundreds of drawings to be made in pursuit of a character's final look. The artists add elements and details to a character as the story evolves. By way of example, early iterations of **Woody** in *Toy Story* imagined the character as a wooden ventriloquist's dummy. But as story development progressed, it quickly became apparent that the design would have to change to a softer, friendlier design for Woody as a cloth-bodied cowboy doll. Similar evolutions can also be seen in such characters as **Buzz** (*Toy Story*) and **Sulley and Boo** (*Monsters, Inc.*).

Building relationships

As the artists do their utmost to realize each character as a fully rounded and dimensional individual; they also keep in mind each character's design in the context of the larger cast. Characters must be visually distinctive, so they can be easily identified within a scene, but they must also have enough in common stylistically for it to feel like they all plausibly inhabit the same world. Extra attention is paid to characters who spend a lot of time with each other in the story, as it is particularly important to make sure their designs work well together.

One way to visually differentiate characters is through variation of shape and scale. Using a shape language technique called *simplexity* (a combination of simplicity and complexity), Pixar artists distill characters into their most basic forms, which allows them to see how the characters look together. For example, the character of **Joy** (*Inside Out*) is distilled down to a star, **Anger**, a flaming red block, and **Sadness**, a blue teardrop. **Carl**, the main character in *Up*, has a blocky style and square shape to represent his stubborn personality. It is also important when creating a character to make sure their design is attractive. A clear case of this can be found in the development of *Ratatouille*, where the challenge for Pixar artists was to create rats that viewers found appealing.

Building worlds

A story world is not just a backdrop for the characters in it; a well-designed world will help tell the story itself. On a contextual level, the design and details of the world visually communicate to the viewer its history, its workings, its customs and priorities. On a dramatic level, the right location for a story moment can communicate a character's desires (or dilemmas) more clearly than pages of

dialogue. Such effects can only be achieved through close collaboration between the film's storytellers and designers.

In this respect, research is an integral part of the creative process at Pixar. Creating a convincing world is crucial to the success of the story, so filmmakers do tremendous amounts of research to help give their worlds richness and specificity: reading books and watching documentaries, speaking to subject experts, and travelling to key locations in order to experience them first-hand. To design the undersea world of *Finding Nemo* and *Finding Dory*, the filmmaking team researched and observed maritime plants for several years. During the creation of *A Bug's Life*, filmmakers built a "Bug Cam" device that allowed artists to see what the natural world looked like from an insect's perspective at ground level.

In addition, the set designers for Pixar's films spend a great deal of time thinking about the history of the world in which the plot unfolds. This is how they arrived at the Land of the Dead in *Coco*, and how the amazing college campus for *Monsters University* came about.

PIXAR: BUILDING CHARACTERS

From 25 November to 21 March 2021

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