



"la Caixa" Foundation's new cultural centre is located in Valencia's City of Arts and Sciences

CaixaForum València opens its doors

- Ximo Puig, president of the Government of Valencia, Joan Ribó, mayor of Valencia, and Isidro Fainé, president of "la Caixa" Foundation, officially open CaixaForum València, a unique cultural centre for the city on the River Turia.
- This is the most striking addition to the network of cultural centres run by "la Caixa" Foundation in Spain. Designed by the architect Enric Ruiz-Geli, a professor at Virginia Tech, CaixaForum València has floor space of nearly 10,000 square metres devoted to knowledge. The facilities include two exhibition halls, an auditorium seating up to 300, a bookshop, a restaurant and a family and educational space.
- The inaugural programme at the new centre will take visitors from the earliest civilisations to the most contemporary artistic creations. Hall One will showcase the Pharaohs in an exhibition of monumental statues and superb reliefs from ancient Egyptian temples loaned by the British Museum, while Hall Two will host a show especially designed for the new centre. Featuring works from "la Caixa" Contemporary Art Collection, this exhibition will explore how the landscape has been used to represent nature over the last few centuries.
- The third inaugural activity is *#TheCLOUD{AI}*, an interactive experience which examines the opportunities and challenges of applying artificial intelligence in education.
- To celebrate the opening of the new centre with the people of the city, CaixaForum València will hold open days from June 22 to 30. Tickets for these events are already fully booked.



Valencia, 21 June 2022. This morning, Ximo Puig, president of the Government of Valencia, Joan Ribó, mayor of the city, and Isidro Fainé, president of "la Caixa" Foundation, officially opened CaixaForum València, a new centre devoted to the popularisation of culture and science.

As it opens its doors, CaixaForum València takes on the mission of becoming a key cultural facility for the city. The new centre is destined to be a **living space at the service of Valencians**, one where culture acts as a tool to promote **cohesion** and **social integration**.

The ultimate goal of CaixaForum València is to enable audiences of all kinds to discover culture. Among other initiatives, the centre will host exhibitions of ancient, modern and contemporary art; shows devoted to science and social themes; concerts and poetry recitals; multimedia art events; debates on major current affairs; social, scientific and environmental conferences; educational and family workshops; and activities aimed at groups of senior citizens.

In pursuit of this goal, the three **major inaugural projects** are devoted to a range of themes. The exhibition ***Pharaoh: King of Egypt***, produced in cooperation with the British Museum, gives visitors a glimpse of one of the most fascinating civilisations in the history of humanity. Next, ***Horizon and Limit. Visions of Landscape***, a show based on works from "la Caixa" Foundation Contemporary Art Collection and designed especially for the new centre, will focus on the idea of landscape as a representation of nature will receive its premiere. In addition to these two exhibitions, the interactive experience ***#TheCLOUD{AI} Educating in the age of artificial intelligence*** will enable visitors to learn about the educational potential of AI and to discover the key issues regarding its implementation.

The large and varied programme of activities over the first few weeks will also include the inaugural edition here of **Summer Nights**. One of the most firmly established and popular events at all CaixaForum centres, these cultural evenings feature music, poetry, film and the performing arts.

From tomorrow, then, visitors are invited to enjoy this programme of activities in the spectacular space created by the architect **Enric Ruiz-Geli**, leader of the team at the Barcelona-based **Cloud 9** studio and professor at Virginia Tech University. Far from being restricted to mere functionality in its design, CaixaForum València is an artistic creation in itself: a landscape, formed by



various capsules and protected by the huge shell of the building's structure, in which **sustainability** is a key concern. The architecture of the original building and the new architectural intervention harmonise to facilitate the cultural use of the site. The new project respects, enhances and coexists with this building, maintaining its essence as a place for reflection and as a large, open, public cultural space, housing intense activity.

To celebrate the opening of the new centre with the people of the city, "la Caixa" Foundation will hold **open days at CaixaForum València from Wednesday, June 22 to Thursday, June 30**. Tickets for all these events are already fully booked.

The new centre reaffirms "**la Caixa**" **Foundation's commitment to the Community of Valencia** and its people, furnishing the city with a state-of-the-art cultural centre that complements the facilities already available at the City of Arts and Sciences. Thanks to this ambitious initiative, Valencia becomes the ninth Spanish city to boast a CaixaForum centre.

Construction work in times of pandemic

Work on the interior of the building began in March 2020, shortly before a state of emergency was declared due to the COVID-19 pandemic. After a halt due to strict lockdown conditions, work began once more, and all deadlines were finally met. "la Caixa" Foundation invested more than **19 million euros** in bringing this ambitious project to fruition, while an annual budget of around 5 million euros for maintenance, activities and operation must also be added to these costs.

The new cultural centre is located in an iconic site: the City of Arts and Sciences, a complex located between the Assut de l'Or bridge and the Oceanogràfic in Valencia. What was once the bed of the River Turia has been converted into a **knowledge and innovation hub** that is, however, also rich in reminiscences of the area's agricultural past. In this way, the site harmoniously blends tradition and avant-garde. These exceptional characteristics make the City of Arts and Sciences the ideal setting for a centre like CaixaForum.

The new centre will have a total area of nearly 10,000 square metres, with services including a family and educational space known as *La Nube* ("The Cloud"), two exhibition halls, an auditorium seating 300, a bookshop and a restaurant.



A landscape of living cells

The architect Enric Ruiz-Geli's design creates a world of **living cells** inside the building. Ruiz-Geli describes his intervention as a **landscape** formed by of interconnected spaces in a protective ecosystem.

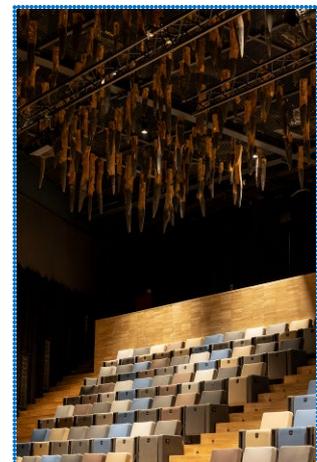


The most distinctive element in CaixaForum València is **La Nube** (“The Cloud”), which will house **family and educational activities**. It is built from very light materials: the floor is made from pure fibreglass, with a slight movement to achieve a subtle sensation of floating, a lack of gravity. The cladding consists of very light, almost transparent polymers. The interior is open-plan and multifunctional.



La Nube is connected to the **five oceans** via real-time data. According to the temperature of the oceans, the light changes from blue to violet. Blue denotes a healthy planet, while violet indicates **climate change**, rising water temperatures and ice melting.

The two **exhibition halls** are high, light-filled open-plan spaces equipped with pioneering air-conditioning systems. The lighting is provided by an arched system, creating a gentle half-light and focusing the attention on the artworks themselves.



At one end of the building is the **auditorium**, equipped with the latest technology so that it can host shows of all kinds. It is designed as a black box, with a cardboard landscape and, on the ceiling, an **installation by Frederic Amat**, Entitled *El bosque escrito* (“The Written Forest”), the work’s message is a call to protect forests. To make this space more attractive to audiences and sweep away any air of



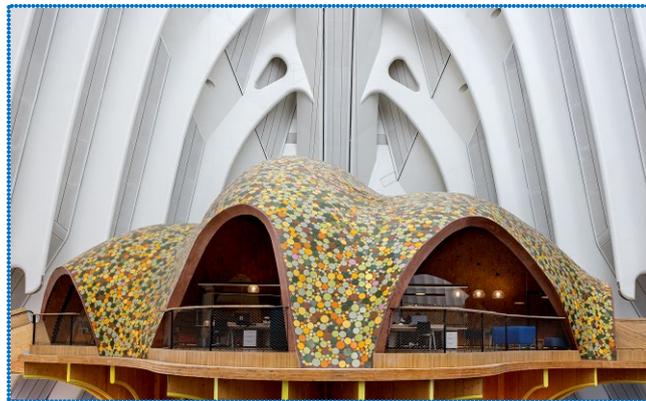
solemnity without detracting from its aesthetics, the seats are upholstered in brown, grey and blue denim fabric.



The **restaurant** occupies a splendid location on another side of the building. Boasting a **roof garden**, it is housed in an enormous high cave made of cork, comfortable and protected from resonance thanks to the sound absorbcency of this material. Large skylights facing the four cardinal points

generate a luminous atmosphere while reducing energy demand.

Another of the characteristic elements of this new member of the CaixaForum network is the space housing the **administrative offices** and the **bookshop**, its roof covered by the ceramist **Toni Cumella** and supported by a wooden structure that tips its cap to the palm groves of Elche.



Collective intelligence project



Enric Ruiz-Geli describes his design as a **collective intelligence project** in which professionals from very different fields took part. These include, particularly: Javier Peña, from Xpiral, the associate architect; Salvador Segura from Ardévol; and Mila Moskalenko, principal architect at Cloud 9. Ten other companies of "makers" also collaborated in the intervention, contributing their knowledge of tradition and innovation, and Simon Taylor, communication and graphic designer with Signes, Nagami and Virginia Tech. These provided know-how in such fields as 3D

printing robotics, integral energy engineering, landscaping, audiovisual technology, lighting, furniture, composites, acoustic ceramics and biodiversity.



Two Valencian women artists also played an important part, creating **permanent works** for the new centre.

Firstly, ***Arc al cel***, by Inma Femenía, is a site-specific worked designed especially for CaixaForum València. The work, which is integrated into the organic natural ecosystem created by Ruiz-Geli, creating a dialogue with it, is a sculpture as immaterial as it is fascinating and memorable. *Arc al cel* is a combination of art, nature, science and architecture, in which the artist seeks to represent the very essence of CaixaForum València.

Secondly, in the exterior, is an installation entitled ***Palafit*** by Anna Talens. In it, the Valencian artist presents a sculpture inspired by the agricultural architecture typical of the aquatic ecosystems found in the Community of Valencia. This golden stilt house with triangular section evokes memories of how farmers used to live in the Albufera lagoon area, their architecture dating back to prehistoric times.

Environmental awareness

In consonance with the mood and needs of our times, sustainability is one of the distinctive features of CaixaForum València. The new centre meets the highest standards of **energy efficiency**, and its entire construction process was environmentally-friendly, as was the selection of materials.

Enric Ruiz-Geli describes his architectural project as "**radically sustainable**". This is demonstrated by the choice of materials, the pioneering air-conditioning system in the exhibition halls and the garden roof beside the restaurant, to name but a few examples.

Environmental awareness also infuses the permanent works at the new centre. *Arc al cel* invites us to reflect on ecology, while *Palafit* reminds us of the value of water and aquatic ecosystems.





CaixaForum: a unique cultural concept in our country

CaixaForum València now joins the network of "la Caixa" Foundation centres distributed all over the country. It will be the **ninth of its type**, joining the eight already open in the cities of Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, Saragossa, Palma, Girona, Tarragona and Lleida.

At all these cultural centres, "la Caixa" Foundation promotes the **dissemination of knowledge** in the conviction that knowledge contributes to personal development as well as driving social transformation. The organisation pursues the mission of eradicating the barriers that, even today, distance some people from art, music and the humanities, by enabling all audiences to discover culture.

This model, which has no equal in our country, is also characterised by partnerships and synergies with institutions of all kinds. In fact, thanks to the policy of alliances promoted by the "la Caixa" Foundation in recent years, **CaixaForum València will act as an ambassador** for several major international institutions, including the **British Museum**, the **Centre Pompidou**, **Cinémathèque Française** and the **Prado Museum**, among others.

The new CaixaForum centre will also seek to **foster initiatives** and promote cultural life throughout the Community of Valencia. Its doors will always be open to establishing partnerships with different institutions in the city.

The centre will host **all kinds of cultural events**, with exhibitions focusing on a range of themes, from the masters of painting to the latest trends in contemporary art, based on the Foundation's own collection. Photography and multimedia art will also be showcased, and exhibitions devoted to scientific themes will be organised in line with another of the "la Caixa" Foundation's priority areas of action.

But CaixaForum València will be **much more than an exhibition space**. It will also act as a platform to disseminate the arts and humanities, promoting debate on ideas, trends and research in today's society, and fostering dialogue and reflection on major social transformations. Debates will take place on the most varied disciplines and subjects – economics, science, classical and contemporary thought, literature and poetry, film, the fine arts, etc. – with the



aim of encouraging discussing social issues and exploring the origins of our cultural roots in depth.

"la Caixa" Foundation reaffirms its commitment to Valencia and its citizens

The construction of CaixaForum València reaffirms **"la Caixa" Foundation's firm commitment to the city** as it furnishes the Community of Valencia with a cultural centre with an ambitious programme of activities.

The initiative further consolidates "la Caixa" Foundation's already profound links with the people of Valencia, as is reflected by the new centre's budget of **33 million euros** for social, educational, cultural and scientific action in 2022.

The Foundation's commitment to helping to resolve societal needs and assuring the welfare of people has been one of its most defining features since it was founded in 1904.

Responding to the **most pressing social challenges** and providing services for people in vulnerable situations will continue to be key priorities. The Foundation's main strategic lines of action continue to include the creation of job opportunities, the fight against exclusion, the provision of palliative care, active and healthy ageing, and training for excellence.

Last year, the Foundation, which has an annual budget of more than 500 million euros, provided care for more than 3,000 minors through the CaixaProinfancia programme, enabled 2,751 vulnerable people to find jobs, and delivered palliative care to 1,155 patients as they approached the end of their lives. A total of 2,643 people also took part in activities aimed at encouraging active and healthy ageing.

Enric Ruiz-Geli

Enric Ruiz-Geli trained at Barcelona School of Architecture (ETSAB). He was associate set designer to Bob Wilson (1995-2000) and co-director of Metápolis (2000-2003). He is now a lecturer at the Architectural Association School in London, director of the IAAC Self Sufficient Building Studio (2010) and adjunct lecturer at RMIT in Melbourne.



He has lectured at MIT and at the universities of Princeton, Bartlett, UCLA and Columbia, and collaborates with a network of creativity labs, including the Art Center College of Design. He has headed the Cloud 9 studio since 1997, analysing pilot projects in global warming scenarios along with experts like Jeremy Rifkin. He has created several patented masterpieces of digital fabrication, such as Villa Nurbs. In 2011, his Media-TIC building was voted the Best Building in the World at the World Architecture Festival. He recently won the competition to remodel the New York Aquarium and is currently the architect at elBulliFoundation, whose director is Ferran Adrià.

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