

Opening ceremony of ISEA2022

Ajuntament de Barcelona

Mayor,
ministers,
friends,

After ten years away from Europe, Barcelona is now hosting the 27th International Symposium on Electronic Arts, ISEA2022.

None of us here today will fail to see the importance, the recognition and the responsibility this carries. On one hand, **it's a tribute to the reputation of both Barcelona and its creative, artistic, scientific, technological and institutional nexus**. It's an ecosystem whose fertility comes from its variety, fullness, multidisciplinary and compatibility; an ecosystem that has accumulated experiences and successes and has now reached a state of maturity.

«The question is not being an emerging power, but being a driving force for the economy, industry and the arts»

Behind this Barcelona-based ISEA there are professionals, organizations and networks keenly committed to creativity and innovation. Their unique and distinctive character and their talent, diversity and strength can be seen in their respective histories and projects.

And on the other hand, there is a determined ambition to join and play an active role in our future world – designed here and now in Barcelona. This is why, as pointed out by Cristina de Middel, winner of Spain's National Photography Prize in 2017 and guest speaker for the UOC's inaugural lecture the following year, "it's extremely important now to encourage people to pose questions, rather than to offer answers"¹.

¹ Cristina de Middel, "[The image as a form of knowledge. Inaugural lecture for the 2018/2019 academic year](#)", *Universitat Oberta de Catalunya*, 19 September 2018.

«We know the future isn't a programmed destination, but it's a place that we all have to co-create.»

In this sense, the dozens of activities, exhibitions and talks populating the ISEA2022 programme offer us a map of this future that we are already starting to build today. With our hybrid, all-encompassing format, we have sought to decentralize our locations in and outside the city, and above all aiming to involve every area of knowledge, to encourage contact between artists, scientists, engineers and theoreticians, and to discuss, present and share prototypes, devices, art and ideas.

This is why, for the UOC, it is an honour and a privilege to play a boosting and binding role for this event. First: because we want to **remain at the cutting edge of research in the knowledge society and in digital transformation**; this means interconnecting academia with public and private entities, enhancing teaching, research and innovation. Because, if we want our university to be useful to citizens, if we want to make impacts relevant to society, if we want to count and to be counted...

«We have to be part of the change, we have to deliver digital literacy for our citizens, we have to commit ourselves to open and shared knowledge, in short, we must contribute to the designing of our future»

Second: because – like ISEA – we treasure our legacy: an academic community made up of a critical mass of teaching staff and researchers who work at the intersections of the arts, science and technology; an interdisciplinarity that in order to be useful both internally and externally, to the university and to society, needs to be steered to support teaching, to strengthen research and innovation, to encourage knowledge transfer and to increase its social impact.

And third: because our involvement here gives continuity to greater works. Everything we will learn, discuss and discover over the coming days can only make sense as part of a continuum. Without the intense preparations, there would be no symposium. Without having anything to show for it afterwards, our work would be in vain. In short, **ISEA is and must be a link in the chain holding together our strategic and transformative outlook**. Each time this international symposium has been held anew, it has enriched us with networks, knowledge, infrastructure and policies. It will also do so this time. We do also want this happen.

This is why we have initiatives such as Hac Te, the art, science and technology hub created by numerous actors here among us, which aims to provide a strong root for this ecosystem, to bring about its coalescence, structure and stability. This holding of ISEA is a materialization of the work of Hac Te and demonstrates its potential. It will do so over the coming days, offering many different activities within the frame of this symposium. And it will do so in the aftermath of ISEA, taking over to let the conversation continue. We do this and will continue to do this maintaining the bearing that Carme Pinós, recent winner of Spain's National Architecture Award, summed up in four points: "Respect each other. Encourage debate and participate. Listen and ask questions. Believe that we have responsibilities and that we can contribute"²

«Right now, technology and innovation are inseparable from our culture and creative industries»

And ISEA2022 presents us with a spur, a window of opportunity for exchanges, collaborations and learning.

Let's make the most of it!
Thank you very much

² Carme Pinós "[Most architects are not the elite or complicit in property speculation](#)", interview at *Barcelona Metropolis*