

PRESS RELEASE

Kelly Arrontes blends art and science in her “Water is Life” mural

- Created with the sponsorship of Agbar, the mural depicts water’s four states as it runs for 125 metres along the corridor that connects the Cluster I and Cluster II buildings at the Barcelona Science Park (*Parc Científic de Barcelona, PCB*).
- Kelly Arrontes, who is legally blind as she only has 9% of normal vision, is a member of ONCE. Her “Water is Life” project won a PCB-sponsored art competition which was open to the public and anonymously judged.
- The opening ceremony, which was held yesterday at the PCB and hosted by University of Barcelona Rector Joan Elias, was attended by more than 100 people as well as business, academic, scientific and third social sector leaders.

Barcelona, 11 April 2018. Kelly Arrontes has completed her artistic project at the [Barcelona Science Park](#) which she began in January. It is a 125-metre long mural that decorates the walls of the corridor connecting the PCB’s Cluster I and Cluster II buildings where many research laboratories and institutes are located.

The mural was created using acrylic paint combined with texture and relief elements made of tissue paper. “That’s the Arrontes touch,” the artist explains. “It’s made to be touched and invites you to touch it.”

The mural’s central theme is water, one that is consistent with the artist’s abstract expressionist style. “A film of water exists between me and the real world,” says Arrontes. “That’s the reason I chose this element as my mural’s central theme. I express what I am seeing. My visual acuity fluctuates in accordance with my mood. I see better on some days than on others. The four parts of the mural represent the symbiosis between the different physicochemical states of water and my own.”

In the artist’s own words: “The first section, entitled ‘Calm Waters’, is like a holiday, the days when I can see well. The second, ‘Splash’, symbolises a stone falling into water and splashing you in the eye. It represents moments when I cannot see. The third section, called ‘Choppy Seas’, recreates rough sea conditions and represents the days on which everything’s harder because my vision is diminished. And finally, the fourth part, ‘Leap into the Void’, represents frozen water, or days when I can see almost nothing at all.”

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Kelly Arrontes created the mural with the help of painter [Leix Urbano](#), a member of Artistas Diversos which is an organisation that champions the social inclusion and employment of people with disabilities through art.

An open and anonymously judged competition

“Water is Life” was the winning entry in a public art competition announced by the PCB in September. The winner was chosen based on the unanimous decision of a jury made up of various experts in the fields of science, communication and visual arts who were not aware of the creator’s identity.

“When we jurors evaluated the competition’s entries we chose the ‘Water is Life’ project without knowing who its creator was,” points out Barcelona Science Park Director Ignasi Belda. “It was a surprise to learn that it had been submitted by someone with 91% visual impairment. During the three months during which Kelly has worked at the PCB we’ve seen that her piece creates a genuine dialogue between art and science. Many of the 2,700 people at the PCB have told us how much they appreciate the mural and said that its central theme of water is an essential element of life.”

Albert Martínez Lacambra, CEO of Agbar, said that the company’s mission is to promote social and cultural activities in the city as an expression of its commitment to Barcelona, and more specifically to provide people with disabilities with equal access to art and culture. He praised the work of the artist and its connection with water, a core element for AGBAR and for the management of its companies such as Aigües de Barcelona

The opening ceremony, which was held yesterday afternoon at the Barcelona Science Park and attended by more than 100 people, was hosted by University of Barcelona Rector Joan Elias. Also present were PCB Director Ignasi Belda, painter and mural creator Kelly Arrontes, Agbar CEO Albert Martínez Lacambra and other academic, scientific, business and third sector figures.

Art and Science at the PCB

Kelly Arrontes’s piece is the third initiative in which the Barcelona Science Park has fostered interactions between science and art.

2014 saw the opening of ‘[The Park Garden](#)’, a recreational area for the PCB community which included artwork by painter Núria Mora. Her piece plays with the geometry of space and its furniture and combines the simplicity of abstract shapes and flat volumes with a colour palette specially made by the artist herself.

In 2015 Anna Taratiel, one of the leading representatives of the international street art movement, completed her [artwork](#) in the corridor connecting the Cluster I and Cluster II buildings by creating an avant-garde pictorial composition 80 metres in length and featuring shapes offering great visual impact which play with colour saturation to provide highly unusual two- and three-dimensional perspectives.

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■ About Kelly Arrontes

Kelly Arrontes (<https://www.arrontes-arts.com/>) was born in Valladolid (Spain), where from a very young age she began to paint in spite of visual problems resulting from having been born with severe myopia. In 1987 she enrolled in the Valladolid School of Arts and Crafts, where that same year she won first prize in drawing and painting. After graduating in Fine Arts with honours from the University of Sant Jordi in Barcelona in 2000, she received several awards and participated in numerous group and solo exhibitions in Spain and abroad in cities such as London and New York.

Between 2002 and 2014 severe visual problems impeded this Valladolid native's painting career. She joined ONCE and resumed painting, winning first prize in the 2015 National Art Contest sponsored by Grupo Provital. Her first works were "images reflecting the invented images" of her own mental constructs. She also painted hyper-realistic portraits, which she has gradually given up in order to fully devote herself to enjoying pure abstract work.

In 1990 she participated in the Touring Exhibition of Contemporary European Art in the Americas (Chelsea Gallery in New York and San Diego Gallery in Bogota). Particularly noteworthy amongst her exhibitions were those at the Palau de Congressos de Catalunya (Barcelona 2005) and the Molino events hall (Barcelona 2016). She also held a solo exhibition at the Palau Robert in Barcelona (2014). In 2016 Fundación ONCE selected her to exhibit at the Tifológico Museum in Madrid.

She currently lives in Barcelona where she has her studio and promotes her company Arrontes-Arts.

■ About the Barcelona Science Park

The Barcelona Science Park (www.pcb.ub.edu) is a place where university, business and society converge with the mission of promoting ways to enhance research excellence, knowledge transfer and entrepreneurship. Founded by the University of Barcelona in 1997, the PCB was Spain's first science park and is now an international leader in promoting innovation.

The Park is currently home to three research institutes and 150 public and private organisations, most of which focus on life sciences (biomedicine, biotechnology, tecmed, eHealth, etc.) and offer a wide range of scientific and technical services specifically geared towards supporting R&D. Its facilities are home to a community of more than 2,700 researchers, entrepreneurs, businesspeople and professionals.

The Barcelona Science Park's areas of strategic focus include popularisation activities designed to improve the public's scientific awareness and encourage young people to enter science-related fields. The PCB currently organises more than 100 face-to-face activities as part of its Research in Society programme in which some 5,000 people take part every year.

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