**2019 balance of the Centro Botín**

THE CENTRO BOTIN CONSOLIDATES ITS LOCAL PRESENCE AND RAISES ITS INTERNATIONAL PROFILE

* 186,606 people visited the Centro Botín in 2019, while the building, its walkways, elevated squares and outdoor spaces received more than a million visits (1,029,670).
* 47% of the visitors to the exhibitions were from Santander and Cantabria, and this significant percentage is a source of great satisfaction to the Fundación Botín, demonstrating that the art centre is fulfilling its social mission of contributing to the development of Cantabria by enhancing the creativity of the region and its people.
* It is also worth noting that 13% of exhibition visitors came from a total of 95 different countries, a clear indication of the interest that the art centre is generating outside Spain.
* The 17% increase in the involvement of the local community in cultural activities organized by the art centre (on average, more than 5 a week), the 139,000 Permanent Passes and the 3,600 Friends of the Centro Botín attest to the warmth with which the city has welcomed the project.
* While these figures reflect the enthusiastic reception of the Centro Botín, the Fundación Botín is quite clear that the number of visitors is not the factor by which it will measure how successfully the art centre fulfills its mission in the medium and long term. The Fundación Botín is working closely with Yale University and the EI Foundation to develop a customized impact measurement system.

*Madrid, 23 January 2020*. During the year 2019, the Centro Botín received 186,606 visitors. **The building and its surroundings received over one million visits – an increase of 3.6%.**

Though visitor numbers in 2019 were 9% lower than those for the previous year, the director general of the Fundación Botín, Iñigo Sáenz de Miera, is more than satisfied with the figures, not only because the 2019 exhibitions were more daring and less mainstream than those in the 2018 programme and the slight decrease in the numbers was smaller than anticipated, but also because **the number of visitors is a good indicator of the evolution of the art centre and its very high level of take-up, but it is far from being the ultimate measure of the Centro Botín’s social impact**.

Sáenz de Miera presented these results this morning at the annual FITUR international tourism trade fair in Madrid, where he made it clear that “the number of visitors is not the indicator that will measure in the medium and long term how well the Centro Botín fulfills its mission. That is something on which we are working with the EI Foundation and Yale University to develop a system for monitoring how the Centro Botín contributes to the economic development and creativity of the region, which is its main objective and the purpose for which it was really created”.

In fact, **for the director of the Fundación Botín, the most outstanding datum of the year is that almost 68,000 citizens of Santander and Cantabria (47% of total visitors) came to see the exhibitions put on by the Centro Botín in 2019**, “an extraordinary percentage rarely encountered in similar projects, which is of very great value to us, not only because it shows that the Centro Botín is absolutely alive and fully integrated in the city but also because it contributes to our mission of developing creativity through the arts in order to generate economic and social wealth in Santander and Cantabria ”.

**More visitors and greater participation**

Of the 186,606 visitors welcomed by the Centro Botín in 2019, 145,256 came for the exhibitions (*Cristina Iglesias*, *Itinerarios XXV*, *Martin Creed*, *Alexander Calder*, *Anri Sala*, *Fundación Botín Collection*, *Portraits: Essence and Expression*, *Millares on Paper* and *Collecting Processes*: 25 years of Itineraries) and 41,350 took part in the centre’s arts-focused training and cultural activities.

In his FITUR speech, Sáenz de Miera also noted the increase in the number of foreign visitors who come to the Centro Botín, which is "slowly but surely consolidating its position as an indispensable point of reference on the international contemporary art circuit". Significantly, in 2019 the Centro Botín received visitors from 95 countries on five continents, led by French, British and Italians, whereas Australians, Malays, Kuwaitis, New Zealanders, Cubans and South Africans also ranked high. **Last year, almost 13% of the visiors to our exhibition rooms came from outside Spain, an even bigger percentage than that recorded in 2018 (12%), clearly reflecting the international interest** of both the iconic building, designed by the Pritzker Prize-winning architect Renzo Piano, and the artistic project developed by the Fundación Botín.

The picture is completed by the ever greater local support of the people of Santander and Cantabria, as well as the continuing influx of visitors from the rest of Spain. As in previous years, **Santander and Cantabrian led the ranking of visits to exhibitions, with almost 47% of the total**, with 40% from other parts of Spain, with Madrid and the Basque Country in first and second place. With regard to the Basque Country, the agreement signed at the end of last year by the Centro Botín, Chillida Leku and the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum is expected to bring in even more visitors from the neighbouring region. The autonomous communities of Castile and León, Catalonia, Asturias and Andalusia also rank high on the list of visitors to the Centro Botín.

**As in 2018, August, July and April were the busiest months for the Centro Botín’s** **exhibition rooms**, with 28,687, 18,216 and 13,515 visitors respectively. It should also be noted that the busiest day of the year was Sunday, 18 August, with the show *Calder Stories* as the main attraction, with 1,739 visitors.

In addition, the Centro Botín building, its walkways, squares and outdoor spaces attracted more than a million visitors (1,029,670), an increase of 3.6% over 2018. According to the director general of the Fundación Botín, “this figure is especially satisfying for us because it is a true reflection of how the Centro Botín is becoming a place of encounter in Santander which allows us to live and enjoy art and culture and to see the city itself with new eyes”. The 2019 figures also show **a 17% increase in pthe articipation of cultural activities organized and presented by the Centro Botín**, “a growing participation which undoubtedly contributes to achieving the social mission of developing the creative capacity of the region and its impact on our personal and socio-economic development”. It is worth noting here that concerts of all genres of music (17,183), film seasons (8,457) and hands-on creative activities (4,400) attracted the greatest number of participants.

Among other significant figures are the 139,136 Permanent Passes that the Centro Botín has issued to date (7,599 in 2019), giving local people unlimited free access to its exhibitions, the 3,607 Friends of the Centro Botín and the network of more than 60 volunteers who support the art centre in Santander.

This snapshot of the Centro Botín’s 2019 data would not be complete without mention of our 34,324 Facebook fans (+ 6%) and 12,104 followers on Twitter (+ 5%), although our fastest growing social network profile is on Instagram, with a 61% increase in the number of followers. At the same time, the Centro Botín website tallied 599,326 visits in 2019, 23% more than in 2018.

Finally, during his presentation at FITUR, the general director of the Fundación Botín also expressed his gratitude to supporting strategic partners (Fundación Ramón Areces, Fundación Mutua Madrileña, Viesgo and Fundación Prosegur), collaborating institutions (Vocento, *El Diario montañés*, JC Decaux , Editorial Unit, *El País*, Cadena Ser, Iberia, Cervezas Alhambra, Alsa, Eurostars Hotels, Orange and Spendin) and associated companies (Bridgestone, Viajes Mesana, Derwent Group, Café Dromedario and Lupa), “without whose support none of this would be possible".

**First floor exhibition programme**

2019 saw the Fundación Botín art centre in Santander further intensify its commitment to contemporary art with three very successful exhibitions devoted to internationally acclaimed artists. The show by **Martin Creed**, who won the Turner Prize in 2001; the exhibition of works by **Alexander Calder**, one of the most influential and transcendental creators of the last century; and the first solo show in Spain by **Anri Sala** were the outstanding events in the 2019 exhibition calendar.

**The 2020 programme will continue this eminently international tendency** with two celebrated artists, who will come to Santander for their first large-scale solo exhibitions in Spain. The American **Ellen Gallagher** and the German **Thomas Demand** are the twin pillars of a programme that also includes a major show by the Albanian **Anri Sala**, which will be open until 3 May. This year also features two Visual Arts Workshops, directed by Anri Sala (20-30 April) and Ellen Gallagher (6-17 July), while Thomas Demand will run his own Workshop in 2021.

Also open to visitors until autumn 2020 are the exhibitions ***Collecting Practices: 25 years of Itinerarios***, a selection of 25 works by artists who received one of the Fundación Botín’s Visual Arts Grants in the past, and the **26th iteration of the exhibition series *Itinerarios***, which provides a public platform for work created by the latest recipients of the grant. Applications for the 2020 Visual Arts Grants will be welcomed in February, as well as those for the 15th annual Exhibition Curating and Museum Management Grants and the 48th University Studies Grants.

The exhibition programme is completed by the permanent rooms ***Portraits: Essence and Expression***, with major works generously bestowed by Jaime Botín, patron of the Fundación Botín, and ***Joan Miró Sculptures***, whose large-scale pieces are on long-term loan from Successió Miró. More information at [www.centrobotin.org](http://www.centrobotin.org)

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**Centro Botín**

*The Centro Botín, designed by the architect Renzo Piano, is a project of the Fundación Botín. One of Spain’s outstanding private art centres and a key element on the international art circuit at the highest level, it contributes by way of the arts to the generation of economic and social wealth in Santander. It is also a world-class pioneer in the development of creativity, in making full use of the potential of the arts in the fostering of our emotional intelligence and our creative capacity. In addition, the Centro Botín is a place of encounter, a privileged enclave in the heart of the city and the new cornerstone of the cultural arc of the Cantabrian coast – an engine of the national and international promotion of the city and the region. www.centrobotin.org.*

For more information:

**Fundación Botín /** María Cagigas  
[mcagigas@fundacionbotin.org](mailto:mcagigas@fundacionbotin.org)

Tel.: 917 814 132