In 2020, CNIO held the third annual CNIO Arte, curated for the second year in a row by visual artist Amparo Garrido, who also serves as Coordinator of Institutional Image and Outreach to Society at the Centre. This initiative was once again supported by the Banco Santander Foundation.

The 2020 event featured artist Carmen Calvo, who was awarded Spain’s National Prize for Visual Arts in 2013 and, in 2014, was elected Academic Member of the San Carlos Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Valencia. Her outstanding work can be seen today in many of the world’s leading museums and collections. Calvo was paired off with Juan Luis Arsuaga, professor of Palaeontology at the Complutense University of Madrid, who also serves as Scientific Director of the Museum for Human Evolution and has been named laureate of the Prince of Asturias Award for Technical and Scientific Research, as part of the Atapuerca research team. Following this encounter, the artist created 4 works that were exhibited to the public at CNIO on February 20th and then presented at the Madrid International Contemporary Art Fair, ARCO, hosted at the IFEMA grounds. All sales proceeds were allocated in full to funding cancer research projects via the “CNIO Friends” philanthropic initiative.

In 2020, the first Art and Science Symposium was held to promote CNIO Arte, with the aim of expanding and deepening dialogue between the arts and science. It also brought together renowned

“It’s a rewarding experience for sure, curating works of art for the CNIO. You get to explore deep inside that common ground where Scientist and Artist act and interact, as you acquire greater first-person familiarity with their disciplines. That insight is what seeps through my senses as it reaches inward toward the deepest recesses of the heart.”
experts to inspire collective reflection on the world in which we live. Carrying forward the dialogue established between Carmen Calvo and Juan Luis Arsuaga, the theme of this first Symposium focused on the connections between art and archaeology. The Symposium was led by Carlos Jiménez, Professor Emeritus of Aesthetics, historian, architect, writer, and art critic. Jiménez was joined by Fernando Castro Flórez and Aurora Fernández Polanco, and together these 3 art world experts, accompanied by artist duo Bleda & Rosa, shared their views on the Symposium’s theme in an event that was open to the public.

CNIO Arte received positive media coverage, as was the case in previous years, such as in 2018 when pioneering molecular biologist Margarita Salas was brought together with visual artist Eva Lootz, or the 2019 tandem formed by Chema Madoz, laureate of the Spanish National Photography Award for the year 2000, and Juan Ignacio Cirac, Director of the Max Planck Institute of Quantum Optics.

In 2020, the Institutional Image and Outreach to Society Office directed and produced a series of campaign videos to support our outreach actions for World Cancer Research Day, featuring artists and actors Luz Casal, Christina Rosenvinge, María Hervás, and Enrique Arce. Another accomplishment was our livestream of the European Researchers’ Night, including a set of videos produced to support this otherwise live event. Despite taking place via Zoom, the evening ended up being a great success. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, a new task for this Office was to find post-production solutions to multiple CNIO events that inevitably had to be hosted via Zoom. This ensured that the resulting videos, which were subsequently uploaded to our website, were of good quality and attractive to potential viewers. Furthermore, we also spent a lot of time in 2020 updating the content of our organisation’s website (www.cnio.es), including newly produced images and infographics as well as further information about the Centre and its activities. Our office worked together closely with other CNIO departments to help familiarise them with our new corporate identity handbook.

We were also responsible for designing and printing this Annual Report, as well as other outreach institutional publications.

This area involves the creation and adaptation of research dissemination materials, the production of flyers and merchandise in accordance with our current corporate identity, and launching new outreach initiatives around science, art, and culture. Other outreach events in which we collaborated and continued to support include Science Week and CNIO Open Doors Day. All of the aforementioned work builds on one of CNIO’s key strategic pillars, namely to widen the Centre’s reach and impact on society and, in doing so, to encourage philanthropic financial contributions to the institution.

Lastly, our Office also participated in other cultural and outreach initiatives that aim to increase CNIO’s global visibility, such as the Diverciencia fair with its 14th year of International Online Science Day, where CNIO was present with a virtual stand featuring the Centre and its activities; and the science outreach project CNIO & The City. Due to the exceptional circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, such events took place online. CNIO & The City in 2020 could count on the strong involvement of CNIO researchers sharing their knowledge with more than 300 students and 20 teachers from 14 centres. 

Carmen Calvo and Juan Luis Arsuaga at the excavations in the Valley of the Neanderthals archaeological site (Pinilla del Valle, Madrid) / Photograph by Amparo Garrido.

1st Art and Science Symposium, CNIO Arte 2020. In this image, from left to right: Carlos Jiménez, Amparo Garrido, María Bleda, Aurora Fernández Polanco, José María Rosa, and Fernando Castro Flórez. Photograph by Antonio Tabernero.