



ICFO Day 2024

A celebration of talent, creativity and community

January 10, 2025

ICFO Day 2024, **the annual celebration organized by ICFOrians for ICFOrians**, took place on Friday, December 13, 2024. This unique and highly anticipated event featured a variety of activities, bringing together all areas of the institute to celebrate colleagues' achievements and showcase the year's highlights.

The festivities kicked off on the afternoon of December 12 with the posters session, where researchers gathered to discuss posters displayed in the Nest hall throughout the week. Following this, ICFOrians filled every corner of the NEST Hall to watch and applaud their creative and talented colleagues who performed in the third edition of ICFactor (also known as ICFO's Got Talent!). Performances included dancing, singing, poetry recitation, group hypnosis, monologues, and acroyoga, with a record number of participants.

The celebration resumed early on Friday, December 13th with a community breakfast to energize everyone for a full day of activities. The first half of the day took place in ICFO's Castelldefels facilities. The informal morning program focused on networking and community interactions. Around 80 ICFOrians participated in the 'Salvation' escape room,

an activity that fostered collaboration by bringing together colleagues from different areas if the institute to work together to solve an environmental crisis. Later, volunteers opened labs to fellow ICFO'ians, presenting the work and focus of their groups to other researchers and members of administrative units. The second half of the day's events took place at the World Trade Center in central Barcelona. There, the entire ICFO community gathered in an auditorium to celebrate scientific and personal achievements within ICFO and beyond.

Prof. Roel Baets, Emeritus Professor at Ghent University, was invited to offer a **Keynote talk** on 'Silicon Photonics: trends, opportunities and challenges', a highly relevant area of activity to many in our field and a strategic area for international investment by governments around the world. Additionally, Prof. Michael Krieg and Prof. Maciej Lewenstein offered engaging presentations on the science and significance of the 2024 Nobel Prizes in Medicine and Physics, respectively. Dr. Clara Vilches, a longtime advocate for sustainable research practices in research, enthusiastically shared the news of the launch of a new Sustainability Committee at ICFO.

Following a warm address by ICFO's director, Dr. Oriol Romero-Isart, the program highlighted individual achievements with the following recognitions:

Postdoc Mentoring Award:

Offered for the first time this year, this award recognized Postdoctoral Researchers, nominated by their fellow group members, who had shown exceptional support and mentorship.

[Aleksandra Sierant](#), Research Fellow at Atomic Quantum Optics research group.

Aleksandra has an extraordinary ability to provide exactly the right kind of support when it's needed. She notices things others miss, whether they're scientific challenges, personal struggles, or emotional hurdles.

[Christoffer Moller](#), Research Fellow at Quantum NanoElectronics and NanoMechanics research group. Chris is not only quick to help solve problems directly but also guides you in a way that encourages learning and growth, empowering you to tackle challenges independently.

[Clara Vilches](#), Staff Researcher at SLN and Medical Optics research groups. Clara meets with all her mentees regularly, described to them the methods utilized which were outside their areas of education, helping physicists and engineers learn experimental biology methods.

[Daniel Urrego](#), Postdoctoral researcher at Quantum Engineering of Light research group. Daniel's mentorship isn't just about the technical side of research; he genuinely cares about the people he works with. He creates a positive, supportive environment and goes out of his way to help others grow.

[Viktoriia Holovanova](#), Postdoctoral researcher at CO₂ Mitigation research group. i½She has a unique ability to break down complex concepts into manageable steps, empowering her mentees to build confidence in their problem-solving skills.i½

Poster Prizes: Posters that had been on display in the Nest Hall all week were evaluated in two categories

PhD Committee's Poster Prize winners: ?

[Giacomo Franceschetto](#), from the Quantum Information Theory group led by ICREA professor Dr. Antonio Acin, for the poster 'Harnessing quantum back-action for time-series processing'
[Valentina Gacha](#), from the Organic Nanostructured Photovoltaics research group led by Prof. Dr. Jordi Martorell, for the poster 'Advancing photoelectrochemical water splitting and CO₂ reduction: Material's engineering and light management to enhance BiVO₄ photoanode performance'.

ICONS Popular Prize for Best Poster: Sponsored by ICONS, this award was chosen by popular vote:

[Ibtissam Ghailan Tribak](#), from the Medical Optics research group led by ICREA professor Dr. Turgut Durduran, for the poster 'A new multimodal neuro-monitoring approach to study neuronal mechanisms in young infants'.

Graduating Class of 2024: All 2024 PhD graduates were recognized for the important achievements culminating in the presentation of their doctoral theses.

2023 Thesis Prizes:

Outstanding theses from the 2023 cohort were recognized in three fields:

Experimental Field:

[Ipsita Das](#), in the research group led by Prof. Dmitri Efetov: i½Investigation of the Interaction Driven Quantum Phases in Magic-Angle Twisted Bilayer Graphenei½

[Craig Chisholm](#) in the research group led by ICREA Professor at ICFO Dr. Leticia Tarruell: i½Raman Dressed Bose-Einstein Condensates with Tunable Interactions: Topological Gauge Theories and Supersolidsi½.

Theoretical Field

[Valerio Di Giulio](#) in the research group led by ICREA Professor at ICFO Dr. Javier Garcia de Abajo: *½Nanophotonics with charged particles½*

Industrial Field

[Yongjie Wang](#) in the research group led by ICREA Professor at ICFO Dr. Gerasimo Konstantatos: *½Eco-friendly solar cells with cation-engineered AgBiS2 nanocrystals½*

15-year ICFOrians award: Eight ICFOrians were honored for 15 years of contributions to the institute

[David Artigas](#): Staff Scientist, UPC Professor and Head of ICFO Academic Liaisons

[Turgut Durduran](#): ICREA professor at ICFO and leader of the [Medical Optics](#) research group.

[Jose Maria Beato](#): Mechanical Workshop

[Daniel Mitrani](#): Electronics Workshop

[Johann Osmond](#): NanoCharacterization Facility

[Gerasimos Konstantatos](#): ICREA professor at ICFO and leader of the [Functional Optoelectronic Nanomaterials](#)

[Rob Sewell](#): Staff Scientist, Head of Academic Affairs and International Relations

[Frank Koppens](#): ICREA professor at ICFO and leader of the [Quantum Nano-Optoelectronics](#) research group

The evening concluded with everyone's favorite part of the day- the festive cocktail dinner (and dancing!) where we relaxed and celebrated in the company of our friends and colleagues

The organization and celebration of ICFO Day involves many people who work and volunteer their time to make this great celebration happen every year. A heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of this special event!



ICFactor: ICFO's got talent





Lab Tours

15 year Award



Teaming up to solve the Escape Room Challenge



Presentation by Director Oriol Romero-Isart



Festive Dinner... and dancing



PhD Thesis Award: Valerio Di Giulio, YongjieWan
(Ipsita Das and Craig Chisholm not pictured)



2024 PhD graduates