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"la Caixa" Foundation Fellowships help to support talented researchers

Five ICFO PhD students receive fellowships in the framework of the doctoral INPhINIT program and three postdoctoral researchers in the Junior Leader Program

March 13, 2024

Eight ICFOians are among the 105 recipients of doctoral and postdoctoral fellowship from the 'la Caixa' Foundation in their most recent calls. The doctoral INPhINIT and postdoctoral Junior Leader fellowships pursue the twofold aim of supporting young talent to carry out their research in Spain or Portugal and attracting international researchers to these countries.

INPhINIT Doctoral Fellowships

The 'la Caixa' Foundation received a total of 1,636 applications and awarded 65 fellowships across all disciplines for the INPhINIT Doctoral Fellowships program. ICFO recipients include

[Mirko Fornasier](#): received his Master in Electronic Engineering from the University of Padua (IT) and is conducting the project titled 'Portable, cot-side neuromonitors for pediatric Applications' in the [Medical Optics](#) research group led by ICREA professor at ICFO Dr. Turgut Durduran

[Giacomo Franceschetto](#): received his Master in Physics of Data from the University of Padua (IT) and will carry out the project titled 'Methods and tools to enhance the current state of quantum computers' in the [Quantum Information Theory](#) group led by ICREA professor at ICFO Dr. Antonio Acín.

[Egle Pagliaro](#): received her Master in Physics of Data from the University of Turin (IT) and will carry out the project titled 'Complex quantum systems for information processing' in the [Quantum Information Theory](#) group led by ICREA professor at ICFO Dr. Antonio Acín.

[Monica Torrecilla Vall-Llossera](#) - received her Master in Neuroengineering and Rehabilitation at Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (ES). She will carry out the project titled 'Estimation of intracranial pressure from non-invasive optical measurements to provide personalized treatment in neuropathologies' in the [Medical Optics](#) research group led by ICREA professor at ICFO Dr. Turgut Durduran

[Bianca Turini](#): received her Master in Materials and Nanotechnology at the University of Pisa

(IT) and will carry out the project titled [Cavity control of quantum materials with vacuum field engineering](#) in the [Quantum Nano-Optoelectronics](#) group led by ICREA professor at ICFO Dr. Frank Koppens.

Junior Leader Postdoctoral Fellowships

In total, 547 applications were received and 40 fellowships were awarded in the fields of health and life sciences, technology, physics, engineering, and mathematics. ICFO recipients of Junior Leader Fellowships (2 INCOMING, 1 RETAINING) include:

[Emanuele Distante](#) defended the doctoral thesis 'A Quantum Light-Matter Interface with Rydberg Polaritons in a Cold Atomic Ensemble' supervised by ICREA professor at ICFO Dr. Hugues de Riedmatten in 2017 after which he carried out his postdoctoral studies at the Max Planck Institute (DE), focusing on quantum optics and quantum information, developing a specialization in recent year in the area of QED cavities. He was awarded an INCOMING Junior Leader fellowship to return to the [Quantum Photonics with Solids and Atoms](#) group where he is carrying out the project [Interacting neutral atoms arrays in optical cavity](#)

[Samuele Grandi](#) carried out his doctoral studies at Imperial College London and has carried out postdoctoral studies in leading research groups in Italy, France, UK, Japan and Spain. He joined ICFO in 2018 as a postdoctoral research fellow in the [Quantum Photonics with Solids and Atoms](#) group led by ICREA professor at ICFO Dr. Hugues de Riedmatten and is currently leading the solid-state quantum network division at ICFO. With his Junior Leader RETAINING fellowship, he is carrying out the project [Quantum storage of single photons from on-demand source](#) where he is working to develop single photon sources for quantum memories.

[Michela Picardi](#) came to ICFO in March 2022 from King's College where she carried out postdoctoral work on theoretical nanophotonics and light-matter interaction. She is currently working on radiative heat transfer for energy applications, within ICFO's [Clean Planet Program](#). She received a Junior Leader INCOMING fellowship to carry out the project titled [Engineering Near-field Emitters for Radiative HEAt Transfer](#) in the [Thermal Photonics](#) research group led by ICFO professor Dr. Georgia Papadakis.

[la Caixa](#) Fellowship calls offer competitive salaries and cross-disciplinary training. In the case of doctoral fellowships, complementary training is provided to strengthen

uch areas as scientific communication, the researcher's emotional wellbeing, leadership, and opportunities for funding. On the other hand, this training in the postdoctoral fellowships promotes the independent scientific degree program as an option for a professional future, and fosters innovation and leadership.

At the 'la Caixa' Foundation, we work every day with the aim of building a better society for everyone, and to achieve this, we need to stay very attentive to the new needs and challenges presented by the present and the future. This is the *raison d'être* of the doctoral and postdoctoral scholarships, which reaffirm our commitment to education and excellence in research to build a better and healthier world based on knowledge," explained the Deputy General Director of the 'la Caixa' Foundation, Elisa Duran, during the award ceremony on March 12th at the CosmoCaixa Science Museum.

The 'la Caixa' Foundation fellowships program is the most important of those promoted by private institutions in Spain and Europe, both in terms of the number of fellowships offered and the variety of disciplines covered. In all, the Foundation will allocate close to 21 million euros to this intake of doctoral and postdoctoral fellows. Both programs have been jointly financed by the European Commission through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie COFUND Action, in the context of the Horizon 2020 Framework Program.