

Carles Vilarrubí: “Barça has always supported culture. The FCBarcelona Photo Awards are a global project for the Club”

The Vice-president of the International and Institutional Relations Area at FC Barcelona discusses the FCBARCELONA PHOTO AWARDS, one of the department’s most ambitious projects.

- Why does Barça set up so many culture-related activities?

Barça has always supported culture. At the moment, FC Barcelona is deliberately and decidedly helping to foster culture. For instance, since 2010 the Club has been running an initiative called “Barça Cultura”, which is designed to offer FC Barcelona as a platform for explaining Catalan culture around the world, something which has been manifested in different agreements signed with the Institut Ramon Llull and other Catalan institutions and at conferences about Barça and Catalonia in different European cities like Glasgow, Paris, Amsterdam, Manchester and Berlin or by participating at the Book Fair in Warsaw earlier this year. The Club also promotes theatre and dance through an agreement with the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya which has enabled sponsorship of such plays as ‘Els nostres tigers beuen llet’, by Albert Espinosa, and the ‘Foot-Ball’ choreography by Cesc Gelabert.

- Why photography awards?

By creating the FCBARCELONA PHOTO AWARDS, the Club wishes to recognise the importance of photography as a global platform and the work of contemporary photographers. The awards are another example of the Club’s commitment to the city, society and culture, by encouraging photographers to present artistic projects about sport as a transmitter of positive values. Everyone knows that the city of Barcelona has a long tradition of photography and is very much alive and at the forefront of interest in the art. And many of the present day’s finest photographers learned their trade in the Barça environment, which is why the Club wants to recognise their worldview in the form of these awards.

- Does the Club have a history of such activities?

The Club’s interest in photographic matters is nothing new. In 1988, FC Barcelona held a photography competition focused on members. Although the focus of the FCBARCELONA PHOTO AWARDS is radically different, it is nothing new for the Club to be recognising that photography is one of the most democratic forms of artistic expression in the modern age.

Thanks to technology, anyone can take pictures using a Smartphone and publish their work worldwide on social networks. The FCBARCELONA PHOTO AWARDS want to honour the art in its most artistic and contemporary expression.

- Do you know of any similar projects at other clubs?

One of the targets of the Board of Directors is to make FC Barcelona more global and to set standards in every field, and not just in sport. Our challenge is not just to win titles but also to generate an institutional standing that can help us to safeguard our model of

a club. Thanks to the FCBARCELONA PHOTO AWARDS and the use of photography as platform for global connection, we want to become the first football club in the world to set up an initiative that associates art and sport of the very finest quality. And no, we are not aware of any similar experience involving any other football club.

- It's a very ambitious initiative...

We know that it's an ambitious project but FC Barcelona is a Club that thrives on big challenges and the FCBARCELONA PHOTO AWARDS are designed to set new standards for photography competitions on a worldwide level. An example of this is the undisputable global prestige of the competition jury for the two categories. We are sure that there will be huge numbers of entrants and that these will include some of the big names on artistic photography and photo-journalism.