



Performing Arts Spain

## Tarragona comes alive with Human Towers competition

# The Tarragona Human Towers Competition kicked off over the weekend, bringing a spectacle to the city. The team, [Castellers de Vilafranca](#), nominated as the winners of the practice which holds UNESCO status.

The UNESCO status holding [Tarragona Human Towers](#) culminated in an iconic biennial competition over the weekend (5th and 6th of October). The ceremony marked the continuation of a centuries-old Catalan tradition, bringing together over 40 teams to defy gravity and build towering human structures. Competitors 'Castellers de Vilafranca' were nominated as the winners by a panel of seven community members, 'judges' who are experts on the human towers.

Excitement ran high as the spectacle of human tower-building returned to Tarragona, Spain as teams from all over the country came to compete in the finale of an event series running from June through to September. Thousands of spectators filled the historic Tarraco Arena Plaça, a former bullring, to witness the city's biennial contest, now in its 29th edition since it first began in 1932 and is a strong traditional practice for Catalunyan.

Anna Navarro Descals, businesswoman and political figure enthusiastically [posted](#), 'No one does teamwork like Catalans! Yesterday, we witnessed the world championship of Castells, our human castles. Always a proud moment to be Catalan!'

Castells are human towers constructed by members of amateur groups, typically featured in annual celebrations across towns and cities in Catalonia. These towers are traditionally built in the town square, often in front of the town hall balcony. On 16 November 2010, UNESCO declared the Castells as among the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

This means that the tradition benefits from a protected status and support with organisation and representation in terms of belonging to European shared cultural heritage.

Over the last months, opportunities to learn more about the practice and introduce public members to the tradition were offered via events across the city. Human tower exhibitions took place weekly where participants of the Castells put on a public display of building the towers. Educational workshops were also held where audiences could participate in some aspects of building a human tower and learn about the tradition's background and techniques to gain a deeper understanding of the UNESCO status-holding practice.

photo credit: © Castellers de Barcelona Archive, 2007