

CHILLIDA: 1948-1998
TO OPEN ON APRIL 20 AT
THE GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM BILBAO

Chillida: 1948-1998, which opens at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao on April 20 and closes on August 29, provides a retrospective overview of the Basque artist's creative career, which has now lasted for more than 50 years.

The retrospective has been specially designed to coincide with the artist's 75th birthday. Born in San Sebastian in 1924, Chillida is today one of Spain's leading living artists and is arguably the best known and highest rated in international art circles.

Most of the works by Eduardo Chillida on display abroad are to be found in museums in Germany (Mannheim, Berlin, Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, Münster and so on), Switzerland (Basle, Zurich, Geneva and Winterthur, among others) and the United States (New York, Houston, Dallas, Washington, Chicago, Pittsburgh, etc.)

A number of the artist's works are located at open-air sites where they interact with the landscape. Such works include *Wind Combs* in San Sebastian, *Goethe's House (La casa de Goethe)* in Frankfurt, *Praise of the Horizon (Elogio del horizonte)* in Gijón and the project of Tindaya planned for the island of Fuerteventura.

His work has been discussed and analyzed by art historians, museum directors, a number of poets, including Octavio Paz, Gabriel Celaya, José Ángel Valente, Jacques Dupin, Claude Esteban, Edmond Jabes and Yves Bonnefoi, and philosophers such as Gaston Bachelard, Martin Heidegger and Rene Thon.

Chillida: 1948-1998, organized by the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid and co-produced by the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, was organized and selected by Professor Dr. Kosme de Barañano who, for the Bilbao exhibition, has added a major selection of 100 works on paper, plus a number of heavier sculptures that were not able to be displayed at the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía.

Originally presented at the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, and soon to open at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, this is the first-ever Chillida retrospective to be staged by a museum in Spain.

According to exhibition curator Barañano "the idea was to present the core of the artist's production over more than 50 years in the genres he has worked on: sculpture (in different materials and at very different scales) and drawing." This is not Barañano's first experience of a Chillida retrospective, as he was also responsible for a similar, smaller-scale exhibition at the Palacio de Miramar in San Sebastian, the artist's home town, back in 1992.

The selection of 200 works created by Chillida between 1946 and 1996 included in the exhibition to be staged at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao will cover all the materials used by the artist and all the phases of his career. The retrospective will be divided into four sections:

- One featuring heavier sculptures of up to 11 tons, which is the weight limit tolerated by the gallery spaces available at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao for the exhibition. This has enabled the organizers to add a number of sculptures from Zabalaga not included in the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía stage, where the weight limit for individual works is 5 tons.
- Another showing Chillida's experiments in materials like alabaster and chamotte earth, which the artist calls *lurras*.
- A third section featuring his work with or on paper, the reliefs (or *gravitations*, to use the artist's own term).
- And finally a section given over to his drawings, with nearly 100 works in pencil, pen and ink or brush.

Altogether the exhibition includes around 75 sculptures in steel or granite, 20 or so *lurras* or works in fired chamotte earth, some 20 gravitations and 120-odd drawings. The works have been specially selected to cover and explain Chillida's entire creative career.

According to Professor Barañano, "Chillida's work does not pose problems of modelling or representation or expression, but looks rather at *meta-physical* issues, i.e., issues that have more to do with the formulation (through the material) of concepts such as limit, vacuum, space and scale. All of these are inter-related and subject not only to the material (earth, steel, granite, etc.) in which they are expressed, but also to the observer (his position, *pathos* or sensibility, and his tact)."

Although a number of criteria were followed in the process of observation and selection of the works for this exhibition, in general the aim was to try to identify or at least chance on the characteristic features of his *oeuvre* by presenting a whole range of aspects and views that would, once linked, provide a global image of Chillida's modes of visual perception and thought.

Professor Barañano explains all this in detail in his essay written for the catalogue accompanying the exhibition. Fully illustrated in color, the catalogue also includes essays on Chillida by Tomás Llorens, director of the Museo Thyssen in Madrid, Dr. Ina Busch, director

of the Museum of Darmstadt, art historian Dr. Matthias Bärmann and a number of poets including Gabriel Celaya, Jorge Guillén, Joan Brossa (translated by Bernardo Atxaga), José Ángel Valente and Jon Juaristi.

Exhibition curator Kosme de Barañano has also prepared a separate catalogue for the drawings.

For further information:

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