

EDUARDO CHILLIDA. GRAVITATION
29.04. – 24.09.2023
Kunsthalle Krems



Eduardo Chillida, Peine del viento XV, 1976/77 © Zabalaga-Leku, Bildrecht, Wien 2023
Courtesy of the Estate of Eduardo Chillida and Hauser & Wirth, Foto: Eneko Santiago Saracho

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„I'm not as interested in the works themselves as I am in what happens between forms. My drawings don't resemble my sculptures at all, and yet the two share a way of being, a behavior, a set of laws.“

Eduardo Chillida

With more than 80 works, the Kunsthalle Krems presents the first monographic museum exhibition by Eduardo Chillida in Austria. The Basque artist is considered a master of the abstract sculpture. Mass and space, fullness and emptiness, light and dark are elementary aspects of his sculptural practice. Chillida translates these opposites into minimalist forms that appear handmade and grounded.

Florian Steininger, artistic director of the Kunsthalle Krems: *„It has always been my desire to exhibit the art of Eduardo Chillida. I first encountered his work in the form of a sticker that I put in my football album. The motif of the sticker was based on a hand drawing that the Basque artist created for the 1982 soccer World Cup in Spain. Years later I got to know his art at Galerie Göttlicher in Krems/Stein not far from the Kunsthalle Krems and fell in love with his graphic and sculptural work. It is full of poetry, concreteness and earthiness. I am delighted that, with the first Eduardo Chillida museum show in Austria, we're initiating the celebrations for the artist's 100th birthday at the Chillida Leku Museum and at the Hauser & Wirth Gallery in Zurich.“*

Minimalist sculptures

Eduardo Chillida (1924–2002, San Sebastián) played as goalkeeper for Real Sociedad San Sebastián in the early 1940s. A leg injury ended his football career early and he changed his profession - from sport to art. He studied architecture and then fine arts in Madrid from 1943 to 1946. After a stay in Paris with a focus on ancient sculpture, Chillida moved to his hometown of San Sebastián in 1951, where he lived and worked until his death.

Chillida is best known for his monumental sculptures in public spaces. The extremely heavy steel sculptures in minimalist forms characterize public squares, landscapes and parks. With these works, Chillida advanced to become one of the most important European sculptors of the 20th century. The exhibition in Krems shows sketches, models and photographic documentation of these prominent sculpture projects, such as "Peine del Viento" or "San Sebastián".

Chillida broke away from the classic sculptural tradition early on and defined his own design language. His abstract sculptures were created in dialogue with the material. When heated, Chillida bent, stretched and twisted the iron until it developed into a moving artistic gesture. He later turned to minimalist geometric sculptures. Blocks and cubes were his favorite shapes. The artist's connection to his homeland, the Basque Country, is also evident in these works. He named the terracottas after the Basque term for earth: lurra. His later series of sculptures "Óxidos", fired terracottas painted with black copper oxide, shows the connection to his works with paper.

Works with paper

Chillida's graphic work acts as an important counterpart to his sculptures. It consists of linear drawings, areal collages, embossed prints or hanging paper works known as "Gravitaciones". The "Gravitaciones" consist of individual paper fragments that are independently attached to threads. The leaves frame each other, stand out from each other, create light and shadow spaces and form reliefs. They are among the Basque artist's most important works on paper.

Chillida also grew in fame due to his hand drawings during the soccer World Cup in Spain in 1982. Artists from all over Spain designed subjects for each of the 14 venues. Antoni Tàpies for Barcelona, Antonio Saura for Seville and Eduardo Chillida for Bilbao. In Chillida's drawing, "Bilbao 82" is written dozens of times in a circle segment. Below is his stylized hand, the fingers of which are clenched into a fist. One of his basic sculptural concepts can already be clearly seen in this early work: the relationship between mass and interior space.

The exhibition at Kunsthalle Krems focuses on the "Gravitaciones" and illuminates the interaction of sculptures and works on and with paper in the entire artistic work of Eduardo Chillida. The exhibition is being realized in cooperation with the Chillida family, the Estate of Eduardo Chillida, the Museo Chillida Leku and with the support of Galerie Hauser & Wirth, which, along with several Spanish museums and collections, are the main lenders of the exhibition.

Curator: Florian Steininger



Eduardo Chillida, Bilbao – Mundial 1982, 1982 © Zabalaga-Leku, Bildrecht, Wien 2023
Courtesy of the Estate of Eduardo Chillida and Hauser & Wirth

„GRAVITACIONES“ – RELIEFS IN PAPER

by Kosme de Barañano

(Extract from the exhibition catalogue)

The “Gravitaciones,” shown for the first time in the Sala Cellini at the Galería Theo in Madrid in February and March 1988, were a new form of relief rather than a new type of collage, which Chillida had in a sense initiated with his “Litocollages” of 1968. It would be wrong to consider the “Gravitaciones” to be drawings on superimposed sheets of paper instead of sculptural reliefs. They are the sculptor’s chamber music, the piano solo after conducting large orchestras, in his case the forging of steel in the large foundries of Patricio Echeverría in Beasain or Altos Hornos in Reinosá.

In the “Gravitaciones,” the individual pieces of paper are not glued together but remain separate from each other, suspended from threads: the sheets hang like the concrete sculptures in the Paseo de la Castellana in Madrid or in the Museo de Bellas Artes in Bilbao. Chillida explored the limits of gravity, as paper is virtually weightless. When the pieces of paper are suspended, they stick to and frame one another or separate from each other; in other words, they form reliefs.

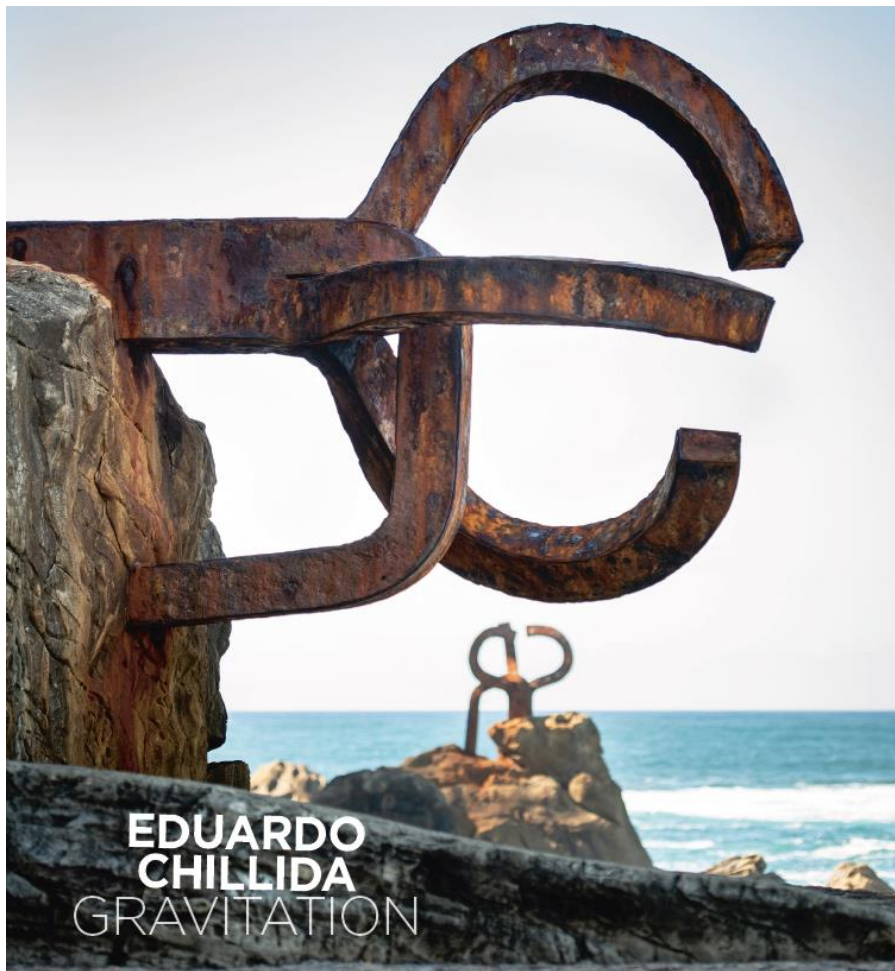
The definition—that is to say, the delimitation of the planes indicated or specified by the pieces of paper or the ink markings on them—vacillates, hangs from the lines that hold them, and levitates. This suspension lends weight to these thick papers (Mexican or Chinese) and to the pieces of felt that are sometimes used, developing a dramatic effect by creating a new tension in this form of superimposing or interleaving sheets or fragments of paper (almost always handmade, textured paper). This happens particularly when new spaces of light and shade are created, since the sheets of paper are not completely joined to each other in the way they are in glued collages but instead gravitate toward each other. The sheets of paper, the cuts – that at times appear to form a line – and the black ink markings gravitate to and fro between each other, even in the simplest examples, such as the “Gravitaciones” of 1989 with their right-angled cuts. This theme of linearity and markings, of the surface as segment and the planes as volumes, with which Constructivism itself was concerned, was treated by Sonia Delaunay in her 1925 gouaches and watercolors with a great delicacy and sobriety that Chillida’s cuts come very close to.

The complete text can be found in the exhibition catalogue.

Kosme de Barañano

Kosme de Barañano is a tenured full professor of art history at the Miguel Hernández University of Elche. He previously taught at the University of the Basque Country, the Heidelberg University, the Università luav di Venezia, and at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. He has worked at museums including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía as deputy director, and the Institut Valencià d’Art Modern as executive director.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE



available at the Kunsthalle Krems store

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|----------------------------|--|
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EDUARDO CHILLIDA BIOGRAPHY

- 1924** Born January 10 in San Sebastián.
- 1943** Retirement from the Real Sociedad soccer team in San Sebastián, where he was a goalkeeper, due to an injury.
- 1947** Entry into the Fine Arts Society after giving up his architectural studies in Madrid.
- 1948** Move to Paris; creation of figurative sculptures in plaster, inspired by Greek sculptures at the Louvre.
- 1949** Presentation of the sculpture "Forma" at the Salon de Mai in Paris.
- 1950** First group exhibition at the Galerie Maeght in Paris. Marriage to Pilar Belzunce.
- 1951** Return to the Basque Country, settling in Hernani, close to San Sebastián. First abstract pieces in iron, produced in the forge of Manuel Illarramendi. Birth of daughter Guiomar (first of eight children).
- 1954** First one-man show in Spain at the Galería Clan in Madrid. Creation of the doors for the basilica in Arantzazu. Diploma of Honor at the 10th Triennale Milano.
- 1955** Commission by the City of San Sebastián for a stone monument in honor of the scientist Sir Alexander Fleming, who had died the same year ("Homenaje a Fleming").
- 1956** Death of his father, Pedro.
- 1957** Move from Hernani to San Sebastián and installation of a forge near his home.
- 1958** Exhibition of twelve sculptures at the Biennale di Venezia, honored with the International Grand Prize for Sculpture and the Graham Foundation Award for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts. First trip to the US. Participation in the Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture at the Pittsburgh Department of Fine Arts, Carnegie Institute. Participation in the Sculptures and Drawings from Seven Sculptors exhibition at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Acquaintance with the architects Mies van der Rohe, Charles Eames, and Frank Lloyd Wright.
- 1959** First works in wood and steel, including the "Abesti gogora" [Rough Chant] series. Participation in the II. documenta in Kassel, with three sculptures.
- 1960** Receipt of the Prix Kandinsky in Paris. Participation in the New Spanish Painting and Sculpture exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Beginning of his friendship with Alberto Giacometti.
- 1961** Georges Braque swaps one of his paintings for Chillida's sculpture "Yunque de sueños II". The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, acquires the monumental wood sculpture "Abesti gogora I". Participation in the group exhibition "I Exposición de arte actual" at the San Telmo Museoa, San Sebastián.
- 1962** Study of the ancient Parthenon frieze at the British Museum, London. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, shows the exhibition "Three Spaniards: Picasso, Miró, Chillida". Exhibition of thirty-two sculptures together with paintings of Mark Rothko at the Kunsthalle Basel. Participation in the Biennale di Venezia. First work in marble.
- 1963** First journey to Greece. Travel to Rome to see Medardo Rosso's sculptural work.
- 1964** Carnegie Sculpture Prize in Pittsburgh. Participation in the documenta III in Kassel and the "Painting & Sculpture of a Decade 54-64" exhibition at the Tate Gallery, London. Encounter with Joan Miró at the opening of the Maeght Foundation in Saint-Paul-de-Vence.
- 1965** First works in alabaster.
- 1966** First retrospective at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Creation of the monumental granite sculpture "Abesti gogora V" for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Receipt of the Wilhelm Lehmbruck Award in Fine Arts of the City of Duisburg.
- 1967** Publication of the first aphoristic essays entitled "Aromas".
- 1968** Participation in the 4. documenta in Kassel and the exhibition "Spansk kunst i dag" at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebæk. First encounter with Martin Heidegger.

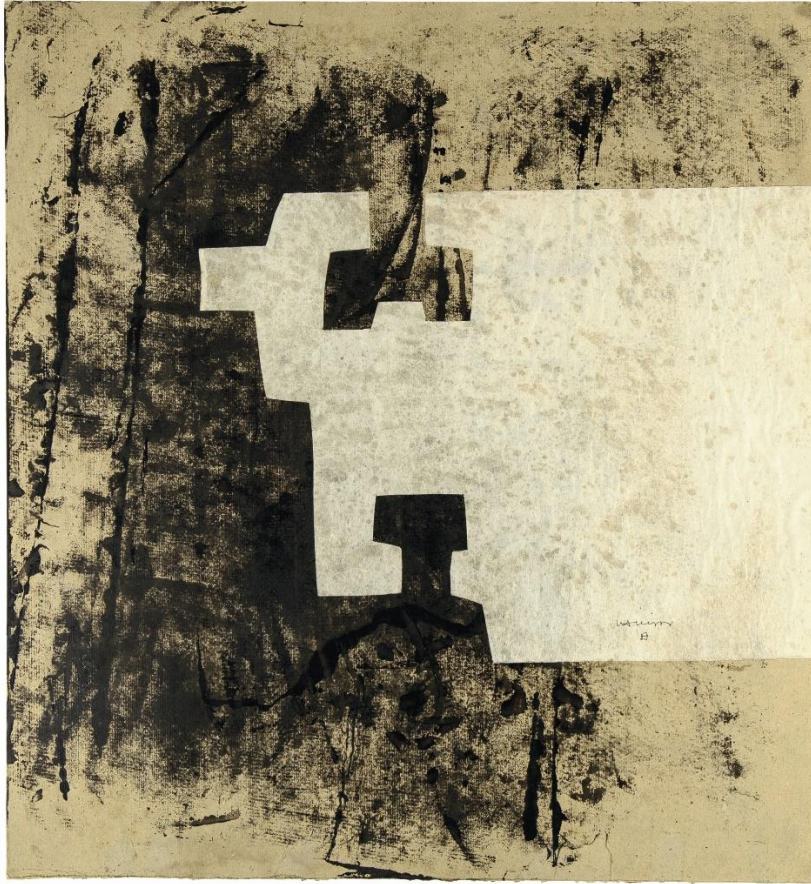
- 1969** Publication of “Die Kunst und der Raum” (Art and space) with the philosopher Martin Heidegger. Participation in the “Artistes Espagnols: Gris, Picasso, Miró, Tàpies, Chillida” exhibition at the Beyeler Gallery, Basel. Installation of the monumental steel sculpture “Peine del viento IV” in front of the new UNESCO building in Paris. Encounter with Alexander Calder at the Maeght Foundation in Saint-Paul-de-Vence.
- 1970** Premio Wellington in Sculpture in Madrid. Participation in the Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Art at the Carnegie Institute.
- 1971** Membership of the Academy of Fine Arts Munich. Visiting professor at Harvard University; encounter with poet Jorge Guillén, who had emigrated to the US from Francoist Spain. Illustration of Guillén’s poem “Más allá”. Installation of the big steel sculpture “Monumento” in front of the Thyssen building in Düsseldorf. International Jury Prize at the Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts.
- 1972** Installation of the monumental granite sculpture “Campo espacio de paz” in Lund.
- 1973** Creation of the concrete sculpture “Lugar de encuentros III”. In 1978 the sculpture is installed hanging under a bridge at the Paseo de la Castellana in Madrid. First terracotta sculptures.
- 1975** First sketches for “Monumento a los Fueros”, a collaboration with the architect Luis Peña Ganchegui.
- 1976** Award at the 10th International Biennial Exhibition of Prints in Tokyo.
- 1977** Installation of “Peine del viento XV” in San Sebastián, architectonic realization of the square by Luis Peña Ganchegui. Participation in the documenta 6 in Kassel.
- 1979** Recipient of the Andrew W. Mellon Prize in Pittsburgh—shared with the Abstract Expressionist Willem de Kooning.
- 1981** Inauguration of “Monumento a los Fueros” in Vitoria-Gasteiz, the monumental transformation of the former marketplace in tribute to the liberty and rights of the Basque people.
- 1982** Participation in the “Correspondencias” group exhibition with Richard Serra, Joel Shapiro, Charles Simonds, and Mario Merz at the Palacio de las Alhajas in Madrid. Move to Monte Igueldo in San Sebastián. Purchase of an old Basque farmhouse in Zabalaga near Hernani.
- 1983** Honorary membership of the London Royal Academy of Arts. Receipt of the Prix Européen des Beaux Arts in Strasbourg.
- 1984** Wolf Arts Foundation Prize. Establishment of the Chillida Foundation in Zabalaga by Chillida’s wife, Pilar, and their eight children.
- 1985** First “Gravitaciones”. Receipt of the Kaiserring of the City of Goslar. Commission of the City of Frankfurt for a monumental sculpture as a homage to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.
- 1986** Commission by the Basque City of Guernica for a monument to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the destruction of the city during the Spanish Civil War (completed 1988). Inauguration of “La casa de Goethe” in Frankfurt am Main. Installation of the iron sculpture “Topos V” at the Plaça del Rei in Barcelona.
- 1987** Prince of Asturias Award for the Arts. Lorenzo il Magnifico Prize in Florence. Participation in the “Skulptur Projekte 1987” exhibition in Münster.
- 1988** Order Pour le mérite for Sciences and Arts.
- 1989** Inauguration of the steel sculpture “De musica” in Dallas.
- 1990** Chillida is chosen for the special exhibition “Omaggio a Eduardo Chillida” in the Ca’ Pesaro at the 44th Biennale di Venezia. Installation of “Elogio del horizonte” in Gijón.
- 1991** Praemium Imperiale of Japan.
- 1992** First major retrospective in San Sebastián. Inauguration of the concrete sculpture “Monumento a la tolerancia” in Seville.
- 1993** Membership of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Cambridge, MA, and of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Inauguration of the sculpture “Diálogo – Tolerancia” in Münster.

- 1994** Honorary Membership of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid. Inauguration of the sculpture *Porta da música* in Santiago de Compostela.
- 1996** Presentation of the *Tindaya Project* in Fuerteventura. Recipient of an honorary doctorate from Alicante University.
- 1997** Recipient of an honorary doctorate from the University of the Basque Country.
- 1998** Retrospective at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid and later the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao.
- 2000** Installation of the sculpture “Berlin” in front of the German Federal Chancellery. Opening of the Chillida Leku Museum. Recipient of an honorary doctorate from Complutense University in Madrid.
- 2002** Dies August 19 in San Sebastián.

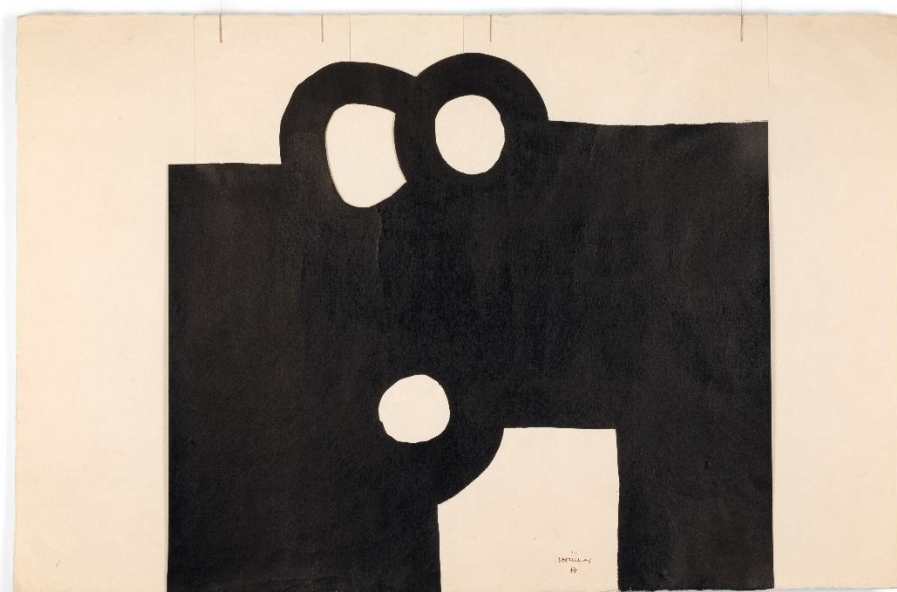


Eduardo Chillida, *En Intz Enea con Homenaje a Goethe*, 1984 © Zabalaga-Leku, Bildrecht, Wien 2023
Courtesy of the Estate of Eduardo Chillida and Hauser & Wirth, Foto: Heinz Hebeisen

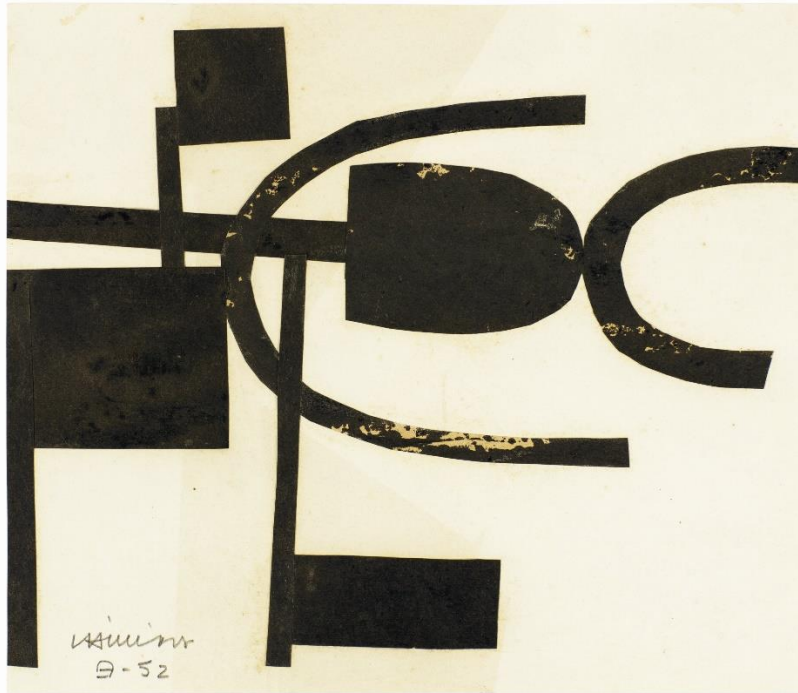
WORKS OF THE EXHIBITION (SELECTION)



Eduardo Chillida, Untitled, 1972 © Zabalaga-Leku, Bildrecht, Wien 2023
Courtesy of the Estate of Eduardo Chillida and Hauser & Wirth, Foto: Mikel Chillida



Eduardo Chillida, Untitled, 1985 © Zabalaga-Leku, Bildrecht, Wien 2023
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Eduardo Chillida, Untitled, 1952 © Zabalaga-Leku, Bildrecht, Wien 2023
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Eduardo Chillida, Untitled, 1992 © Zabalaga-Leku, Bildrecht, Wien 2023
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Eduardo Chillida, Lurra G-156, 1989 © Zabalaga-Leku, Bildrecht, Wien 2023
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Eduardo Chillida, Óxido G-208, 1991 © Zabalaga-Leku, Bildrecht, Wien 2023
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Eduardo Chillida, Untitled, 1967 © Zabalaga-Leku, Bildrecht, Wien 2023
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EXHIBITION DETAILS

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PRESS IMAGES

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OPENING HOURS

Tue–Sun

10 am – 6 pm (March–October)

10 am – 5 pm (November–February)

Mon closed (except on public holidays)

Closed on 24.12., 31.12., 01.01.

ADMISSION

Adults € 12

Reduced € 10

Family ticket € 20



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