nerbioi-ibaizabal

x. sáenz de gorbea
1. Jesús Lizaso (1961)
“Ikurra” (Symbol) (2003)

2. Agustín Ibarrola (1930)
“Tribute to the Town of Basauri” (1990)

3. Vicente Larrea (1934)
“Arrigorriaga” (2002)

4. Javier Elorriaga (1959)
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5. Néstor Basterretxea (1924)

“Irekidurak” (Openings) (2003)
7. José Ramón Anda (1949)  

8. Vicente Larrea (1934)  
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9. Anonymous  
“The Cock” (1823)

10. Andrés Nagel (1947)  
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11. Ángel Garraza (1950)  
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12. Mikel Lertxundi (1951)  
Bust of Aita Santi Onaindia (1996)
The area consists of a series of municipalities situated in the catchment area of the two large rivers that run through the region and then join together to flow into the river estuary at Bilbao. On the one hand, there is the Ibaizabal, which bathes Zornotza / Amorebieta Etxano and, on the other hand, the Upper Nervión (Alto Nervión) from its source in Orduña to the meeting of the two rivers in Galdakao, after passing through Arrigorriaga and Basauri.

Together with the oldest sculpture in Bizkaia, the rest of the works that can be seen in this territory prove to be highly interesting from the most strictly contemporary point of view. Some of the most important authors in the Basque School are present, such as Jorge Oteiza
(1908-2003), Néstor Basterretxea (1924), Agustín Ibarrola (1930) and Vicente Larrea (1934). The list from the following generation is also most important, with the presence of Andrés Nagel (1947), José Ramón Anda (1949), Ángel Garraza (1950), Mikel Lertxundi (1951) and Jesús Lizaso (1961), and with a singular contribution by Jabier Elorriaga (1959) standing out. The collection is a very special museum of sculpture in our region. Thematically, there is only one tribute to an illustrious representative of Basque culture, namely Aita Onaindia. The rest are works which have been incorporated in the last two decades, some as symbols ascribed to the territory and others as a result of each author’s research.
The construction includes some clearly industrial components. Since 2003 it has stood beside the old La Baskonia building, on one of the access roundabouts into Basauri from the Bilbao to Galdakao road. Its author is Jesús Lizaso (1961), who won the contest to create a representative sculpture for the municipality. Trained in the world of handicrafts, the commission means a significant quality leap. The work brings together some of the town’s identifying signs. The rural background of two farming implements is connected to a tall chimney and the saw-tooth outline of a factory. The flat, cut-out steel is arranged on a high concrete structure whose structure is suspended on an arch-bridge that allows movement below and gives the sculpture a monumental character and a certain phantasmagorical feeling. While the heaviness of the more lateral points of view can be appreciated, the spans and cut-outs of the piece give an ethereal frontal sensation, in spite of the heavy materials it is constructed with. A compact totem with the double sensation of immobility and movement.
"Ikurra" (Symbol) (2003)
Agustín Ibarrola (1930) is a prophet in his own land. An important promenade laid out with his sculptural contributions, beside the river that passes through it, demonstrates this. It is entitled “Tribute to the Town of Basauri” and is one of his largest public art works. The work is arranged in Katalazarra, a place that has two roads at different heights. It is not unitary, but rather is dispersed along the route. At the beginning and end of the route there are squares that provide ample space to display the most emblematic pieces. Inaugurated in 1990, it is made of Corten steel and recovers the diagrammatic figures that have characterised the author
since the 1970s. It is made up of three fundamental groupings. In tribute to the man in the street, the material is schematically cut out and represents silhouettes ready to walk. The passer-by gradually discovers them while walking along. One group meets and seeks to communicate the feeling of universal fraternity among people. And, finally, a dove is seen, which is intended to tune in with the message of peace for all. The artist is interested not only in creating individual sensations but also in promoting collective interests which are shown with a message of solidarity.

“Tribute to the People Town of Basauri (1990)
Agustín IBARROLA (1930)
“Tribute to the People Town of Basauri (1990)
The piece is located at the entrance to Arrigorriaga from Bilbao, near the sports centre. Its presence attracts attention due to its great height, rising above the trees, streetlamps and other items in the vicinity. It gives a feeling of domination, a strong presence that emphasises its situation over the place, a call to attention, like a huge tower that stands out in its surroundings. Its author is Vicente Larrea (1934). It provides the tension of stylised prisms nailed very rigidly to the ground, over which the same matter undulates, this time transformed into shapeless, curved elements, that seem to be able to change easily with the action of the wind. It is like a wrinkled flag. The cropping of the supporting structures reinforces the idea of something that has become strongly hooked, trapped, caught. A complete exercise in contrasts between geometrical and organic, vertical and horizontal, hard and soft, static and movement, industrial structure and biomorphic random.
“Arrigorriaga” (2002)
Jabier Elorriaga Oribe (1959) is the author of a metaphoric memorial produced in 2003 with the aim of remembering José Mª Makua, Prime Minister of Bizkaia, who contributed towards overcoming the floods in 1983. As opposed to the totemic nature of sculpture in the Basque school, he opts for an integral work. Rather than standing out, it seeks not to disturb too much. There is no challenging gaze nor posing of a threat to the place, but rather a sensitivity that moulds to the surroundings and is permeable to the internal places of the piece. It is located in José Mª Makua street in Arrigorriaga, close to a group of new buildings, on a wide pavement that forms a corner and is on a slope. In order to connect this passing place, a series of elements have been arranged. A fishtank unit
proposes a glance into its interior, where a frozen architectural landscape is perceived. A kind of memory laboratory that requires the coldness of observation. The stainless steel urn measures 3.5 x 2.2 x 1.3 metres and holds six white marble houses in its interior, reproductions of a model of residential building which is progressively disappearing. At one of its ends it has a fibre optic arabesque that draws a route in blue light. On the outside, two white marble stools invite the spectator to take an active part in the work. Other similar elements are distributed throughout the space, and have a signposting nature, as well as acting as seats. The artist from Galdakao recommends that it is advisable to reflect on the way in which we are occupying the territory.
Jabier ELORRIAGA (1959)
Untitled (c. 2003)
The area around the Lehendakari Ardanza park has become an unrivalled sculptural space where three important authors are represented: the Gipuzkoan Jorge Oteiza (1908-2003), the Biscayan Néstor Basterretxea (1924) and the Navarrese José Ramón Anda (1949). The work of the sculptor from Bermeo has been placed on a green hillside that enables it to be observed at different heights and provides very different perspectives. Basterretxea (1924) is one of the distinguished representatives of post-war Basque art,
after returning from exile in Argentina. He has created volumes linked together and supported them on a concrete platform whose inclination not only raises the Corten steel but also energises it and gives the connotation of the continuous movement of a boat. The work is entitled “Bizkaia” and it is like a prow that emerges and advances impetuously towards the horizon. It comes from a small wood model made in 1962 and measures barely 0.44 x 0.82 x 0.35 cm.
The process of enlarging the processes of his research project meant an unequalled construction dynamics that has taken the sculpture of Jorge Oteiza (1908-2003) to a great many Basque towns, mainly in Gipuzkoa, such as Eibar, Zumarraga, Ordizia, Arrasate, Tolosa, Zarautz, Irún or Donostia. In Bizkaia, works by the artist from Orio are displayed in Bilbao, Leioa and this one, in Galdakao. The original idea of his search is to convert space into an active vacuum. Something which he achieves with the cutting of the plates cast at Alfa Arte in Eibar. The work is entitled “Irekidurak” (Openings) (2003), it is made of reddish Corten steel, measures 4 metres and has a concrete base. It shows the development of a plane which becomes dynamic by means of a torsion that bends it, as well as by means of straight cuts and the opening up of folds that make the space circular and mark the place as a half-open door.
“Irekidurak” (Openings) (2003)
José Ramón Anda (1949) belongs to the second generation of post-war Basque artists. He is continuing not only with the constructive inclination and linguistic research of Oteiza but also with the attention to the dictates of the matter and the procedural processes of Chillida, and produces work in which the rigour of the analysis and the sensuality of the surfaces are evident. Inaugurated on 15 December 2002, the work in Galdakao is situated in Lehendakari Ardanza park. Its title is “Zeharki II (Cortezas)”, it belongs to the
“Pasadizos” ("Alleyways") series and it is possible to walk through it. It weighs three tonnes and is 3.25 metres tall. It emerges from the green lawn and is both forceful and delicate at the same time. It starts from a cylinder and divides its elements into three parts that provide continuous circulation, proposing lightweight surfaces for the weight of the work. The communication and connection points of its elements are subtle. It is a serious, totemic and effective work that is cut off and stands out over the place.
The Cock by Vicente Larrea (1934) was installed at the crossroads at Erleches in 1969 to replace a neoclassical signpost that marked the junction. A good part of the work has disappeared and needs restoring. It measures 3.2 x 1.8 x 1.4 metres and is made up of aluminium sheets. Only the scaffolding of the animal indicator form has been left. The artist has eliminated the anatomical volume and mass to be left with its synthetic structuring. By means of a dynamic geometrization, a recollection of the past is offered and new artistic expressions are deposited. The work is situated in a garden with difficult access, where it can only be glimpsed from passing vehicles, and therefore the artist decided to delimit and outline a silhouette that exaggerates natural proportions and makes the piece stand out.
“The Cock” (1969)
Another characteristic monument in Galdakao is El Gallo (The Cock) located at Urgoiti, at the junction of the roads to Donostia and Gasteiz. In the 19th century, passage though this crossroads was controlled, by way of a customs post, called “katea”, and a sculptural column with the figure of a bronze cock at the top was placed here in mid-century. This figure was removed in 1971 to enable motorway construction. When roads works finished, a ferreous, avant-garde sculpture representing a cock was erected at the crossroads. The ancient cock has recently been re-sited in its original place. Like this, one of the most unique highway symbols in Bizkaia has been restituted. Inaugurated in 1823, the cock at Erleches (Galdakao) is the oldest existing free-standing sculpture in Bizkaia. It is neoclassical in style and stands at a road junction. It consists of a prismatic pedestal, over which a tall fluted column without a capital rises. Instead, it finishes in a semi-spherical helmet that acts as a support for a ball on which the figure of the bird stands. As if it were a high weathercock, it is a very simple, schematic figure, with rounded shapes and polished surfaces. The monument was partly destroyed by a lorry in 1925 and then removed when the area was redesigned about 1969, the year when the work by Vicente Larrea was installed. It returned to this place on 26 September 1994, on the occasion of the reopening of the new crossroads between the N-240 and the N-634, which connect Bilbao with Donostia and with Vitoria-Gasteiz. Its purpose is to indicate a crossroads. It emphasises the popular nature of an everyday items and raises it to icon status. It introduces ornamental and symbolic prestige values and replaces the old roadside milestones, giving living proof of the importance of the place.
“The Cock” (1823)
The sculpture by Andrés Nagel (1947) is to be found in the middle of a roundabout where the streets called Sabino Arana, Carmen, San Miguel and San Pedro meet, and is conceived as a tribute to the historic crossroads that is the origin of Zornotza (Amorebieta). It was inaugurated in 2003 and is a new symbol for the municipality. Made of bronze, it is almost 9 metres tall and weighs 2.5 tonnes. It is a large, dark ovoid held up by three legs. It has a long neck, from which a rope of nylon threads is hanging, as if it were a horse’s tail. It is bristling with seven threatening spines and has writing on its huge belly. By walking around the sculpture, the word Amorebieta can be read. Without any doubt it rouses the imagination and seems to take us back to the past when great beings lived. A very disturbing organic work that moves with the wind, whose result is unusual and personal.
Untitled (2003)
Ángel Garraza (1950) produced this sculpture sited in Jauregizahar de Zornotza street that runs through the centre of Amorebieta. The sculpture is ceramic and is located beside the upper vertex of a 5-metre high concrete wall. It is entitled “The Corner for Differences” (2001) and proposes a meeting dialogue between what is the same and what is different. The two elements that form the sculpture are placed at an angle of 90°. They are like elongated tongues, each of which has a regular chromatic skin of black and white circles, respectively. In positive and negative, they seem vigilant and are active to everything they find around them. A finishing touch that adapts to the place and co-exists with the architecture. It is like a British “Speakers’ Corner”.
“The Corner for Differences” (2001)
Mikel Lertxundi (1951) is an author who follows the analytical path of the Basque School movement, but also does not shun representation in tributes to outstanding figures in the field of Basque literature. In Ondárroa there is a bust to Agustín Zubikarai and in the gardens of the Carmelite convent in Zornotza there is a bronze dedicated to Aita Santi Onaindia in 1996. The pedestal is simple, without any kind of ornamentation, only a stone prism with the following inscription: “AITA SANTI ONANDIA / KARMELDARRA / JAIO: 1909-III-24AN AMOROTON / HIL: 1996-II-11´N GASTEIZ´EN / LEKAIDE / ABERTZALE / IDAZLE / OLerkARI / EUSKERAZALEK ETA EUSKERAZAINTZAK 7 1996-X-19´N”. The face is portrayed naturally and the bust is characterised by the tilted beret that gives it a picturesque touch. An expressive and affectionate character, in keeping with the particular sense of humour of the priest, an ardent promoter of the Biscayan variant of the Basque language.
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