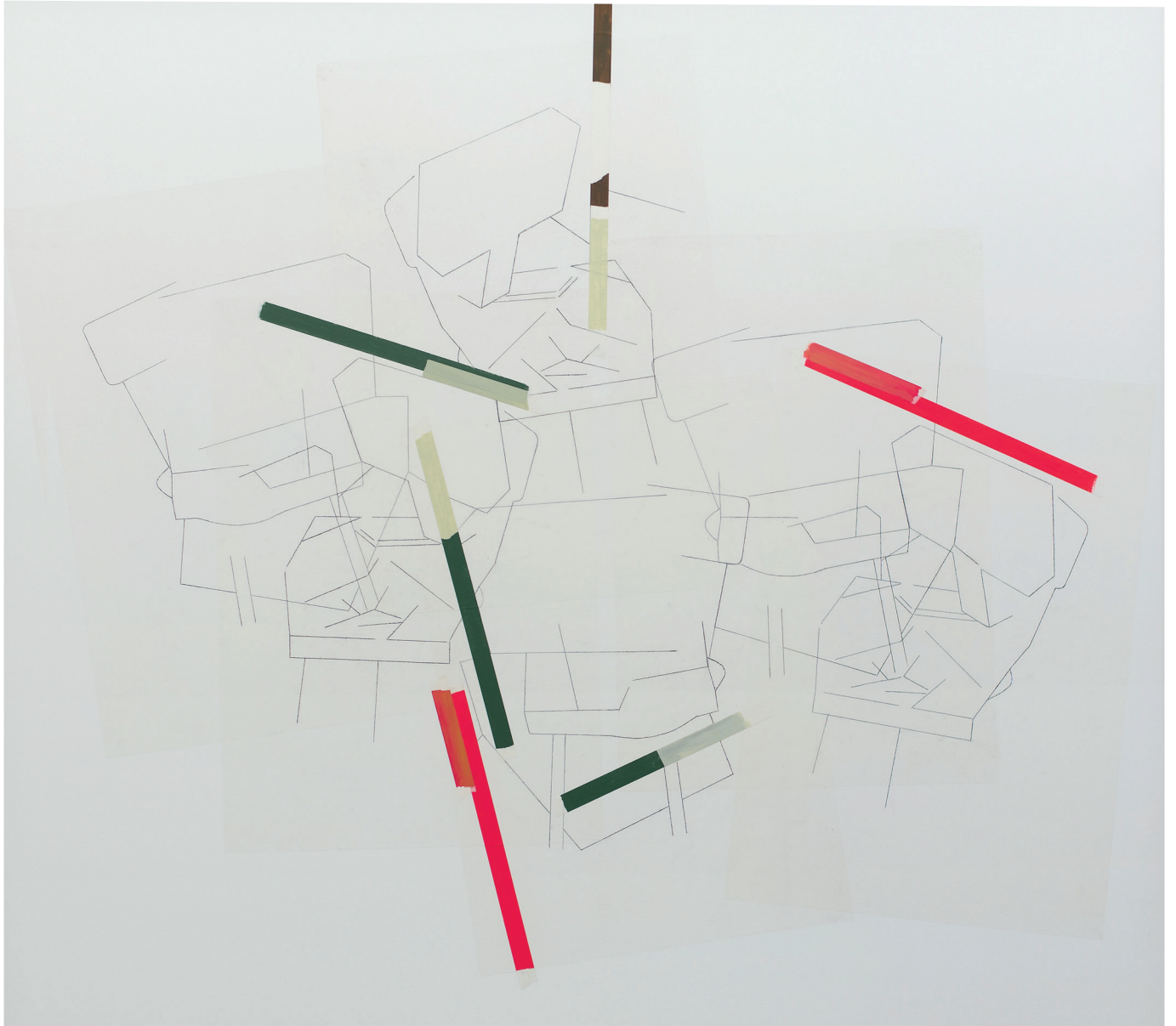


GUGGENHEIM BILBAO **XX** 1997
2017



PELLO IRAZU

Panorama

March 10
– June 25, 2017

Pello Irazu: Panorama

- Dates: March 10–June 25, 2017
 - Curator: Lucía Agirre
-
- Pello Irazu is a key figure in the renewal of contemporary Basque and Spanish sculpture. Over the course of three decades, he has forged a solid career by fusing the broadest possible spectrum of sculpture with photography, drawing, and mural painting.
 - Regardless of the discipline he uses, Irazu's work exhaustively explores the problems that arise in the multiple relations between our bodies, objects, images, and spaces.
 - The installation design hinges on a conceptual and physical device invented by the artist, which incorporates some of the most significant milestones and masterpieces of his career.

The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao is pleased to present *Pello Irazu: Panorama*, which examines the thirty-year track record of one of the foremost renovators of contemporary Basque and Spanish sculpture. As the title suggests, more than the backward glance which any retrospective entails, this show is a multi-directional vision where time wrinkles and folds in space, offering a kind of panoramic landscape.

The exhibition, featuring over one hundred works, hinges on a conceptual and physical device invented by the artist himself that incorporates some of the most significant milestones and masterpieces of his career. The aim is to create a kind of simultaneous perspective where past and future are reunited and refreshed in a continuous present. In the Museum, the walls of Gallery 105 help create an enveloping atmosphere that draws viewers to experience the work, making them part of it and inviting them to reflect on the language of sculpture.

A key figure on the contemporary art scene, Pello Irazu has forged a consistent body of work since the 1980s, alternating between broad-spectrum sculpture—from small-format three-dimensional creations to massive installations and hybrid objects—and photographs, drawings and mural paintings. In every medium he uses, Irazu's oeuvre exhaustively explores the problems that arise in the multiple relations between our bodies, objects, images, and spaces.

The backbone of this retrospective is a large corridor that cuts diagonally through the center of the space and divides it into different areas which are organized in a circular fashion. This layout proposes a complex spatial experience, where visitors will be free to choose between several more or less linear routes at any point along the way. The central corridor contains a chronological survey of Irazu's most important works on paper as well as a mural painted for the occasion that illustrates the evolution of his drawings, collages, and paintings, while the peripheral areas house his sculptures and photographs.

This artist's oeuvre runs the entire gamut of sizes—from diminutive sketches to large-format works—, and media—from pencil and watercolor to wallpaper, adhesive tape, and all sorts of prints—. The exhibition also allows visitors to discover different forms of artistic expression: figurative, geometric, documentary, gestural, etc.

TOUR THROUGH THE EXHIBITION

1984–89 Early years

The tour begins with photographic records of Irazu's first ephemeral experiences in the mid-1980s that would lead to the creation of his first steel piece, whose physical forcefulness is permanently questioned by the partial use of paint. These years witnessed the rise of what contemporary critics began calling "New Basque Sculpture", in which artists like Pello Irazu, Txomin Badiola, Angel Bados, María Luisa Fernández, and Juan Luis Moraza rejected local sculptural tradition and began to reconsider the work of Jorge Oteiza from more contemporary perspectives like Minimalism, Post-Minimalism and Conceptual Art.

In this early stage, Irazu established some of the parameters that would remain constant throughout his career, such as limiting the size of a work according to his own physical possibilities so that the piece would act as a condenser of a performative act, or dealing with his growing proximity to Minimalism and Oteiza, always from a heterodox position.

During these years, Pello Irazu produced works of an intense material density, like *Gante* (1988), which create a spatial discontinuity wherever they are inserted. Little by little, color began infiltrating his work in thick coats of oil paint, as we see in *The Land that Sleeps* (*La tierra que duerme*, 1986), or more industrial spray paints. In the artist's words, "In both cases and with nuances, a contradiction is created between the optical (the eye) and the haptic or tactile, with their different spatialities."

Around this time, Irazu began working with media like drawing but maintained the characteristics of the sculptural genre. His drawings and paintings, developed alongside works in other media, were not conceived as sketches or designs for sculptures he intended to make but as independent creations. In 1989 Irazu produced his first mural painting, *Corridor* (*Corredor*), at Galería Joan Prats in Barcelona, transferring ideas developed in drawing to situations closer to real space. With his pictorial, sculptural, or photographic wall interventions, the arrangement of his sculptures in space, and the fragmentation of that space, Irazu gradually altered the viewer's perception in the course of the itinerary.

1990–98 New Objects — The Domestic

After a brief time in London, in 1989 Irazu moved to New York and entered a phase which, for the artist, was marked by the idea of externality, "for the important thing is not just the distance placed between you and what you leave behind, but the fact that you become something external to yourself". This decade is represented by works made of lighter, more readily available industrial materials like plywood or plastic, with expressive treatments and constant allusions to the domestic space. He created pieces that play with architectural references which disappear as mere constructions yet retain symbols of those references, such as brick or dialogue with household objects.

In this period of his career, he deconstructed objects to reassemble them in a disjointed fashion, creating a sense of defamiliarization with regard to the meaning of everyday objects and materials. In works like *Unknown* (1994) and *After Pris* (1997), Irazu revealed the tension between public and private. That tension is multiplied in photographs like *White St.* (1992) and *Switch* (1997), images of private creative processes destined for a public relation with other works by the artist, treating spaces and walls like *trompe l'oeils* or open windows onto an action performed in a private setting. "The domestic and familiar is rendered uncanny by a process of defamiliarization." He also managed to convey this unsettling sensation in works like *The Good Teacher (On the table being itself a piece of wood)* (1993) and *The Bride (You will be whatever you want)* (1993), where the artist intervened in the pedestals, the flamboyantly patterned fabrics that dress up the works, or the titles themselves.

In his drawings and paintings from this decade, Irazu applied basic colors to found pieces of printed paper or wallpaper which served as a continuous or reactive point of departure for his work. During this phase, he added new layers to his drawings using materials like adhesive tape, as in *The Wound 5* (1998), allowing him not only to design an alternative pattern but also to link diverse materials.

1999–Present

In the year 2000, back in Bilbao, Irazu embarked on a new phase in which his works questioned the signs that surround us, using forms that were suggestive to spectators yet far removed from their habitual points of reference to create mixed feelings of familiarity, ambiguity, and strangeness. Irazu appropriated the space, combining mural painting with three-dimensional materials and sliding along the blurred boundaries of conventional artistic categories. We see this in *Acrobat* (2000), where the mural painting fractures the wall which the sculpture seals.

Another important piece is *Life Forms 304*, in the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao Collection, a work originally created for Gallery 304 and now adapted to this new setting. The pentagram-like mural painting that surrounds the viewer modifies our perception of the space and its architecture as well as our relationship with the constructed object. The work resembles an unstable, impassable shelter in which color is combined with different ordinary materials like adhesive tape and plywood. We get the impression that we are seeing a deconstruction prior to reconstruction, the reused detritus of previously inhabited architectures or spaces. Drawing on this and other similar works from the period, Irazu produced sculptures like *Fold 04 (Pliegue 04, 2005)*, which he calls "drawings in three dimensions", based on the idea of "taking a drawing, cutting it, creasing it, folding it and placing it in space, but in a real way".

In works on paper like *Johntrash (Juanbasura, 2003)*, the forms are quite simple, and through the layering of different transparent volumes and materials we can make out everyday objects such as bags or familiar faces from art history.

The final areas house Irazu's most recent works, which challenge the idea of representation in sculpture through reproductive processes such as plaster, aluminum, bronze, and steel casting or photography. In works like *Noli me tangere (Mistrust) [Noli me tangere (La desconfianza), 2009]*, whose title alludes to the biblical episode, frequently depicted in art history, where Jesus Christ

appears to Mary Magdalene after the resurrection, Irazu created pieces of cast aluminum that visually resemble other materials like cardboard and assembles them with screws, making it difficult to tell the real and represented materials apart. In the artist's words, "The way they are articulated has more to do with the idea of accumulation than with the notion of assemblage." In *Annunciation (Anunciación, 2014)*—another major theme in art history, the depiction of which played a central role in the development of pictorial perspective—serial photographs reproduce the artist's immediate surroundings (the studio and production processes), which are gradually modified by paint rather like a *trompe l'oeil*, thus exploring the relationship between representation, materiality, and ornament.

In a nod to the idea of "eternal recurrence" and the circularity of all artwork, the exhibition ends where it began, with photographs and metal sculptures reminiscent of those with which the show opened.

DIDAKTIKA

If you want to learn more about the exhibition and the artist's work, we invite you to take a brief tour led by museum educators in our Express Tours. You can also discover the behind-the-scenes setup process and other curious facts through the Shared Reflections program, unique tours led by museum professionals and sponsored by Fundación Vizcaína Aguirre.

Curatorial vision: March 22. With Lucía Agirre, Curator

Key concepts: March 29. With Marta Arzak, Education Deputy Director

Additionally, you will find more information about the artist and his working process on the exhibition minisite, specifically in the educational section *Did You Know...?*

Cover image:

Noli me tangere III, 2012

Graphite, paper, adhesive tape, and paint on paper

152 x 165 cm

Collection of the artist

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017

For more information:

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All information about the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao is available at www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus
(press room).

BIOGRAPHY

1963

Born on 26 October in Andoain, Gipuzkoa (Basque Country)

1981

Enrolls at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of the Basque Country/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea, where he graduates with a minor in sculpture in 1986.

1982

Receives a visual arts grant from the Spanish Ministry of Culture.

1983

Wins Third Prize in Sculpture at the 1983 Gure Artea competition.

Exhibits at the Sala de Cultura, an exhibition hall managed by the Caja de Ahorros Municipal in Bilbao.

1984

Takes First Prize in Sculpture at the 6th Visual Arts Biennial of Vitoria-Gasteiz.

1985

Wins an artistic production grant from the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa.

Takes Third Prize in Sculpture at the 1985 Gure Artea competition.

Exhibits at Galería Windsor Kulturgintza, Bilbao.

1986

First solo show outside the Basque Country at Galería Fúcares, Almagro.

His work is included in the *Muestra de arte joven* at the Madrid Circle of Fine Arts.

1987

Wins First Prize in the sculpture category at Bizkaiko Artea.

Participates in the exhibition *Dynamiques et interrogations* at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.

Also appears in *Una obra para el espacio* at Canal de Isabel II in Madrid.

1988

Two one-man shows at Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, and Galería Soledad Lorenzo, Madrid.

Participates in the 4th International Drawing Triennale at the Kunsthalle Nurnberg in Nuremberg, Germany, where he wins an award. That same year he wins the ICARO prize for most outstanding young Spanish artist.

Three Spanish Sculptors exhibition at the Donald Young Gallery, Chicago.

1989

Exhibits at Galería Joan Prats, Barcelona.

Lives in London and exhibits with Txomin Badiola at Riverside Studios, London.

Chosen to participate in the 9th Salon of the XVI at the exhibition hall of La Fundació Caixa de Pensions, Barcelona.

1990

Chosen to participate in the *Aperto* section of the 44th Venice Biennale. Thanks to a Fulbright scholarship from the Joint Spanish-American Committee, he moves to New York and remains there for the next eight years.

His work is included in *Spanische Eisenskulptur*, a show that tours to museums in the German cities of Mannheim, Bochum, and Berlin.

1991

First solo show in New York at the John Weber Gallery.

1992

The Museo de Artes Visuales Alejandro Otero, Caracas, holds an exhibition of his work.

Exhibits at Galería Soledad Lorenzo, Madrid.

Participates in the exhibition *Pasajes* in the Spanish Pavilion at Expo'92 Seville, and in *Tropismes* at Tecla Sala, L'Hospitalet, Barcelona.

1993

New exhibition at the John Weber Gallery, New York.

Participates in the exhibition *Future Perfect*, curated by Dan Cameron, at the Heiligenkreuzerhof, Vienna.

1994

Exhibits at the Palacete del Embarcadero, Santander, at Galería Joan Prats, Barcelona, at the Costas Grimaldis Gallery, Baltimore, and, under the title *Real World*, at Galería Soledad Lorenzo, Madrid.

1995

His show *Habitat* opens at the John Weber Gallery.

Exhibitions at Galería Fernando Latorre, Zaragoza, and Galería Manuel Ojeda, Las Palmas.

Leads an art workshop at the Madrid Circle of Fine Arts.

1996

His work is included in the show *Abstract-Real* at the MUMOK, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna.

1997

New exhibition at Galería Soledad Lorenzo, Madrid.

Also exhibits at Galería Lekune, Pamplona, and Espacio Caja de Burgos hosts an exhibition of his work.

1998

Returns from New York and settles in Bilbao. His work appears in the shows *El punto ciego. Spanische Kunst der 90er* at the Kunstraum Innsbruck, Austria, and *Dibujos germinales* at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.

Leads a workshop at the Arteleku contemporary art center in Donostia-San Sebastián.

Produces the sculpture that is selected to be the image of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Awards.

1999

Exhibits at the art gallery of the Málaga Architects' Association and in the show *Daylight* at Galería Soledad Lorenzo, Madrid.

2001

Presents the exhibition *Life Forms 1ME9D* at Galería Moisés Pérez de Albéniz, Pamplona.

Participates in the show *Gaur, hemen, orain* at the Museo de Bellas Artes, Bilbao.

His work is featured in *Deux millénaires d'histoire de l'Espagne. An 1000-An 2000*. Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels.

2002

New exhibition of drawings, *Mimendi 308*, at Galería Soledad Lorenzo, Madrid.

Participates in the exhibition *Conceptes de l'espai* at Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona.

2003

Artium Centro-Museo Vasco de Arte Contemporáneo, Vitoria-Gasteiz, hosts an exhibition of his recent work under the title *Fragmentos y durmientes*.

2004

Exhibition at Galería Soledad Lorenzo, Madrid, entitled *Pliegues*.

His work is included in the show *Dispersions*, held at the Bass Museum of Art, Miami.

2006

Holds the exhibitions *Let It Bleed* at Galería Moisés Pérez de Albéniz, Pamplona, and *Todas las cosas—Pasión elemental—frutos extraños* at Galería Carreras Múgica, Bilbao.

His work is included in the show *Enlaces+Dos* at the Museo Patio Herreriano de Arte Contemporáneo Español, Valladolid.

2007

His work is featured in the exhibition *Incógnitas. Cartografías del arte contemporáneo en Euskadi*, curated by Juan Luis Moraza, at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao.

Participates in the 48th Oktobarski Salon in Belgrade.

2008

His exhibition *Home* opens at the Yancey Richardson Gallery, New York, and Galería Soledad Lorenzo presents the show *Pello Irazu: Universo de suturas*.

His work appears in the exhibition *Micro-narratives: tentation des petites réalités* at the Musée d'art moderne de Saint-Étienne Métropole, Saint-Étienne, France.

2009

His work is exhibited in the show *PhotoDimensional* at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago.

Opens the exhibition *Hondatu gabe bizi / Vivir sin destruir* at Koldo Mitxelena Kulturunea, Donostia-San Sebastián.

2010

Galería Carreras Múgica, Bilbao, hosts a one-man show featuring the artist.

Participates in *El retorno de lo imaginario. Realismos entre XIX y XXI* at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.

2011

Galería Moisés Pérez de Albéniz, Pamplona, opens the exhibition *(1x1) x1*.

Gallery Kit in St. Louis, Missouri, hosts a show entitled *Pello Irazu: Isolation Room*.

His work is included in the group exhibition *Olor Color. Química, Arte y Pedagogía* at Arts Santa Mònica, Barcelona, and the show *Sin realidad no hay utopia* at the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, Seville.

2012

Exhibits at the CAB – Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos under the title *Una oportunidad cada día*.

The installation *Life Forms 304*, a site-specific work created for the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, is exhibited at the institution as part of the show *Arquitectura habitada*.

2013

Exhibits at Galería Moisés Pérez de Albéniz, Madrid.

Participates in the exhibition *Mínima resistencia. Entre el tardomodernismo y la globalización: prácticas artísticas durante las décadas de los 80 y 90* at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.

2014

Presents his latest work at the Yancey Richardson Gallery, New York, in a show entitled *Studio*. His solo exhibition *SiluetasMasasSombras PerfilesBultosEspectros LeyendasDesechosEspantos* opens at Galería Carreras Múgica, Bilbao.

Participates in the show *Haber hecho un lugar donde los artistas tengan derecho a equivocarse. Historias del Espai 10 y el Espai 13 de la Fundació Joan Miró* at Fundació Joan Miró.

2015

Sala Alcalá 31, a gallery run by the Regional Government of Madrid, presents *El muro incierto*, featuring various installations made by the artist over more than two decades.

His work appears in the group show *Suturak // Cerca a lo próximo*, held at the Museo San Telmo in Donostia-San Sebastián in collaboration with Artium Centro-Museo Vasco de Arte Contemporáneo.

His creations appear in the group exhibitions *Made in Spain. Periplo por el arte español de hoy*, at the CAC – Centro de Arte Contemporáneo, Málaga, and *ExpoColección. El arte de los ochenta* at the Museo Patio Herreriano de Arte Contemporáneo Español, Valladolid.

2016

The exhibition *Itzalak* opens at the Centro Cultural Contemporáneo Pelaires, Palma de Mallorca. Participates in *alt-architecture* at CaixaForum, Barcelona.

2017

Participates in the show *(Ex)posiciones críticas. Discursos críticos en el arte español 1975–1995*, organized by the CGAC in Santiago de Compostela.

Press Images for
Pello Irazu. Panorama
Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

Online Photo Service for Press Images

At the press area (prensa.guggenheim-bilbao.es/en) you can register and download high resolution images and videos featuring the exhibitions and the building. Sign in to get access. If you are already a user, log in here (you need your username and password).

For further information, please contact the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao Press Department: tel. +34 944 359 008 and email: media@guggenheim-bilbao.eus

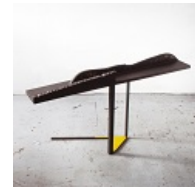
1 ***The Land that Sleeps (La tierra que duerme)***, 1986

Steel and oil paint

66 x 120 x 39 cm

Soledad Lorenzo Collection. Temporary loan to the MNCARS

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017



2 ***Happy (Feliz)***, 1988

Steel structure and oil paint

22 x 22 x 14 cm

Private collection, Barcelona

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017



3 ***L-1***, 1989

Oil on paper

240 x 165 cm

Carreras Múgica

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017



4 ***Dream Box (Caraqueño)***, 1993

Plywood and vinyl paint

62 x 86.5 x 68.5 cm

Collection of the artist

Installation view at the John Weber Gallery, New York, 1993

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017



5 ***The Good Teacher (On the table being itself a piece of wood)***, 1993

Plywood, silkscreen, and vinyl paint

174 x 80.5 x 80.5 cm

Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017



The Bride (You will be whatever you want), 1993

Plywood, silkscreen, and vinyl paint

173 x 76 x 80.5 cm

Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017

6 ***Room Under***, 1995

Plywood, vinyl paint, adhesive tape, and silkscreen on mirror

113 x 142.5 x 94 cm

Collection of the artist

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017



7 ***Acrobat***, 2000

Mural painting, wood, adhesive tape, and paint

190 x 164 x 28 cm

"la Caixa" Arte Contemporáneo Collection

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017



8 ***Switch***, 1997

Photographic print

190 x 127 cm

Private collection, Bilbao



X, 2000

84 x 70 x 50 cm

Chair, wood, plaster, and paint

Private collection, Madrid

Installation view at Galería Soledad Lorenzo, Madrid. 2000

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017

9 ***Shadow (Sombra)***, 2002

Chair, wood, adhesive tape, and paint

93 x 50 x 90 cm

Collection of the artist

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017



10 ***Life Forms 304***, 2003–12

Iron, plywood, wood, adhesive tape, and mural painting

Dimensions of the structure: 360 x 315 x 340 cm

Total site-specific dimensions

Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa

Photo © FMGB Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa, Bilbao, 2017, photo by Erika Barahona Ede.

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11 ***Summer Rain***, 2006

Paint on printed paper

132.5 x 132.5 cm each

Collection of the artist

View of the installation at KM Kulturunea, Donostia-San Sebastián, 2009

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017



12 ***Summer Rain III***, 2006

Paint on printed paper

132.5 x 132.5 cm

Collection of the artist

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017



13 ***The Factory (Belgrade) 10*** [*La fábrica (Belgrado) 10*], 2007

Paint on photographic base

30.5 x 23 cm

Private collection

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017



14 ***The Factory (Belgrade) 13*** [*La fábrica (Belgrado) 13*], 2007

Paint on photographic base

30.5 x 23 cm

Private collection

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017



15 ***Noli me tangere (mistrust)*** [*Noli me tangere (la desconfianza)*], 2009

Cast and welded aluminum pieces and screws

70 x 500 x 300 cm

Collection of the artist

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017



16 *Noli me tangere III*, 2012

Graphite, paper, adhesive tape, and paint on paper

152 x 165 cm

Collection of the artist

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017



17 *Visitor (Gabriel) [Visitante (Gabriel)]*, 2013

Structure made of cardboard, wood, polyurethane, fiberglass, and paint

188 x 139 x 146 cm

Collection of the artist

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017



18 *Blow up – Bandera*, 2013

Acrylic paint on photographic base

85 x 125 cm

Collection of the artist

© VEGAP, Bilbao, 2017

