

PRESS RELEASE

The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao presents a pioneering environmental sustainability plan in the museum world

- The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao is the first museum in the international sphere to certify its carbon footprint including indirect emissions.
- The Museum has prepared an ambitious plan of innovative actions in different areas, such as energy management, exhibition programming, and public programs, to progressively reduce its carbon footprint and increase awareness within its different audiences.
- Environmental sustainability is one of the main commitments the Museum has made in its 2021–23 Strategic Plan, through the creation of an Environmental Sustainability Strategic Framework in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals.

Coinciding with the celebration of its 25th Anniversary, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao has presented a sustainability plan that is pioneering in the museum world and aims to minimize the environmental impact of its activity through the implementation of energetically sustainable solutions and non-polluting processes, while encouraging ecoefficiency-oriented activities.

In addition to the carbon footprint of its direct emissions, the Museum has calculated the carbon footprint of a significant part of its indirect emissions during 2019, with an overall total of 4,313 tons. The calculation of indirect emissions, known as “Scope 3”, is fundamental to identify opportunities for greater energy efficiency and savings in the Museum’s daily activities. The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao is the first museum in the international sphere to take this step. It has calculated and certified its carbon footprint related to the shipping of works of art and personnel (courier) trips, which account to a third of total emissions. In light of these findings, the Museum has consolidated certain initiatives and will take new actions to reduce the consumption of energy and raw materials used in the organization of exhibitions. These actions include:

- Prioritize hiring of artwork crates over fabrication of new ones
- Sharing transport for works of art with other institutions, thus avoiding exclusive shipments whenever possible, and prioritizing virtual supervision over personnel (courier) trips
- Limiting the construction of new walls by using or adapting elements designed for previous shows.
- Sharing museum display elements, such as pedestals, bases, and display cases, with local institutions such as Bizkaikoa and Bilbaoarte, to increase reuse of said elements.

2022 Strategic Framework and Action Plan

The Environmental Sustainability Strategic Framework realizes one of the main commitments of the Museum's 2021–23 Strategic Plan and is aligned with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals.

As part of the initial deployment of the Strategic Framework, the Museum has recently created Gu-Zero, an interdisciplinary team of individuals working in different Museum departments, whose mission is to inform, increase awareness, and involve the staff in its sustainability goals, identify areas and opportunities for improvement, and catalyze and monitor the actions contained in the annual sustainability program.

The 2022 Action plans includes the following initiatives, among others:

- The Museum's **Art Program** for 2022 includes a line of action that reflects on the environment and promotes ecological awareness. In April, the Museum opened *Motion. Autos, Art, Architecture*, an exhibition that surveys the industrial history of the 20th century and features, as its concluding chapter, the so-called "Gallery of the Future," a space where fifteen world-renowned universities in the fields of design and architecture address the challenges of mobility in the future, with a strong emphasis on innovation in sustainability and energy transition. Furthermore, the programming for the Film & Video gallery features two exhibitions in which artists from different latitudes address issues relating to climate justice in the Postcolonial era: *Monira Al Qadiri: Holy Quarter*, which opened in March, and *The Otolith Goup: O Horizon*, opening in June.
- With regard to **Public Programs**, the Museum is organizing the seminar *Mobility Futures* on June 30 and July 1 in collaboration with the University of the Basque Country – UPV/EHU Summer Courses that, as a parallel activity to the exhibition *Motion. Autos, Art, Architecture*, will bring together the universities featured in the Gallery of the Future to address the future of mobility in the coming decades. In October, the Museum will also host the international symposium "Water Ecologies" which looks to encourage dialogue and collaboration between artists, scientists, and technologists within the global context of climate change and its related challenges. This event, in collaboration with the European Commission's initiative STARTS4Water and the consortium of institutions it integrates, will present some of the most relevant voices today.
- In 2022 the Museum will **measure its carbon footprint** for 2021, including indirect emissions from crates and exhibition display elements. Furthermore, it will tackle for the first time the complete measurement of the footprint of an exhibition (*Motion. Autos, Art, Architecture*), including all indirect emissions involved in the development and realization of the show, such as the shipping of artworks and automobiles, crating, and museum display equipment and elements like new walls, pedestals, bases, display cases, paint, texts, and labels.

- In the area of **energy efficiency**, this year the Museum plans to launch a dynamic illumination project, allowing it to reopen skylights in the exhibition galleries and recuperate the original configuration of the spaces on the third floor of the Museum, through an automated combination of sunlight and LED fixtures. The Museum is also planning to continue reducing its energy consumption with the installation of solar panels to generate solar energy.
- Finally, the Museum will elaborate a **carbon offset plan**, with special attention to the possibility of connecting it with the development of creative and educational initiatives.

A Sustainable Path from its Beginnings

While the strategy of environmental sustainability presented today is a large step forward, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao has been working to reduce its environmental impact from its beginnings, and throughout the years has implemented the following initiatives:

- LED illumination technology in the Museum. Between 2015 and 2021, the Museum replaced all of its light fixtures with LED technology. This change has greatly reduced the Museum's carbon footprint, eliminating the emission into the atmosphere of 335 tons of CO₂ per year, which also implies 25% savings thanks to the reduction in electrical energy consumption.
- Purification treatment. Beginning in 2020, the Museum has applied a special treatment to its outdoor print campaigns that contributes to purifying the city air in a manner comparable to the purifying action of trees. The technology is based on the natural principle of photocatalysis and is applied to the large exhibition banners displayed outside the Museum as well as to the smaller advertising banners that hang from streetlights in Bilbao and to the vinyl wraps on the Bilbao tram.
- Restoration of Jeff Koons's *Puppy*. In November 2021, restoration work on the floral sculpture *Puppy* was completed. The restoration fixed and replaced the components of its internal structure to ensure its perfect conservation into the future. Its watering system was automated, and a digital rain gauge was installed in an effort to optimize the water consumption the piece requires, leading to the responsible use of this natural resource and to savings in the maintenance of the artwork.

Similarly, in these years the Museum has implemented a series of actions in its daily activities and operations that have led to a substantial improvement in environmental development, such as improvements and optimization of facilities; waste control and analysis; efficient water management; storage, transport and treatment of inert waste; reduction in the quantities of materials and packaging; use and collection of recyclable materials; reduction of hazardous waste; or identification of sustainable materials, among other initiatives.

Bilbao, April 29, 2022