

bilbao **museoa**

BBKateak

Vries – Urzay

Arte Ederren Bilboko Museoa
Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao

bbk 

Vries – Urzay

Room 5

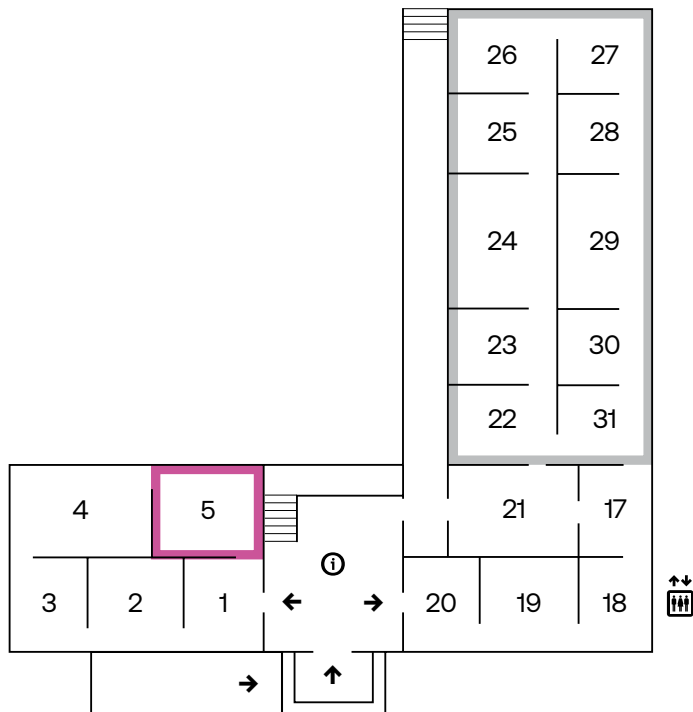
Old building

Ground floor

Mirror play

Like a mirror play, in 1982 Urzay represented the museum's classical architecture in a trompe l'oeil that he repeated in 2021, more streamlined and slower. This time, he finagles the possibility of seeing through the window the light boxes of *The Observer's Belly* and the muse of Francisco Durrio. Meantime, the painter and treatise-writer Vredeman de Vries enlivens his architectural caprice with figures that prance about in a setting that is equal parts.

O Old building Ground floor



Hans Vredeman de Vries

1526-1609

De Vries is one of the best representatives of the 'architectural caprice', a genre of which he was a forerunner. In Antwerp, he was the city architect and engineer of fortifications, and in Prague he designed fountains for Emperor Rudolf II. He mostly designed ephemeral architectures for commemorations, so much of his oeuvre is now lost. He was aware of the treatises written by Vitruvius and Sebastiano Serlio, and was, in turn, the author of important writings on architecture and perspective. His engravings were still influential in architectural painting into the nineteenth century.

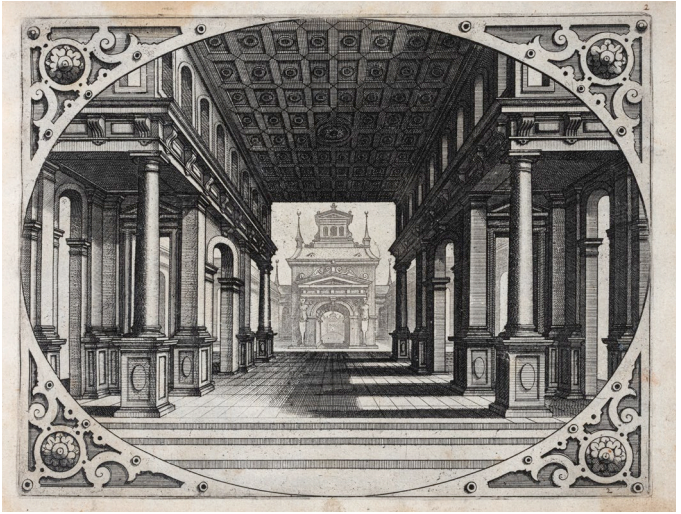


Architectural Caprice with Figures

1568. Oil on oak panel

A perspective with a central vanishing point and a low horizon line contribute to a noticeable sense of depth and to the monumentality of Italianate architecture. The materials are clearly differentiated, most notably with the trompe l'oeil treatment of the columns and the different kind of marble on the ground. The painstakingly organised garden in the background is also a reflection of the author's designs, which were disseminated through prints. All of these features, coupled with the elegant figures conversing and engaged in relaxed leisure—perhaps painted by another artist, as was common—comprise a highly sophisticated courtly atmosphere.

Acquired in 1989



Variae Architecturae Formae

1601. Etching on paper

This book, published in 1601 by Theodor Galle, contains 50 of de Vries' prints, the first 21 of which had previously been published by Hieronymus Cock in 1560-1562. The first group, with scenes framed by a shell or an oval shape with decorations on the corners, is comprised of models for intarsia or inlay work, an artisan decoration technique used in both marquetry and marble or stone pieces. The second contains frontal perspectives enlivened with figures, in which different lines jostle for the horizon line. The prints were widely disseminated and inspired numerous artists specialised in depicting architecture in the seventeenth century.

Acquired in 2020

Darío Urzay

1958

Trained in the Fine Arts Faculty of Bilbao, he is one of the most solid Basque artists. His initial work was associated with British pop and a particular hyperrealism, in which he depicted interiors with a still atmosphere and detailed descriptions of matter. His sojourns in London and New York between 1988 and 1994 brought about a radical transformation in his painting. From then on, his photographs seek a symbiosis between digital and painting by means of abstract images with organic echoes captured on perfectly finished acrylic surfaces with three-dimensional optics, in which transparency and light become extremely important.

© Darío Urzay, VEGAP, Bilbao, 2022



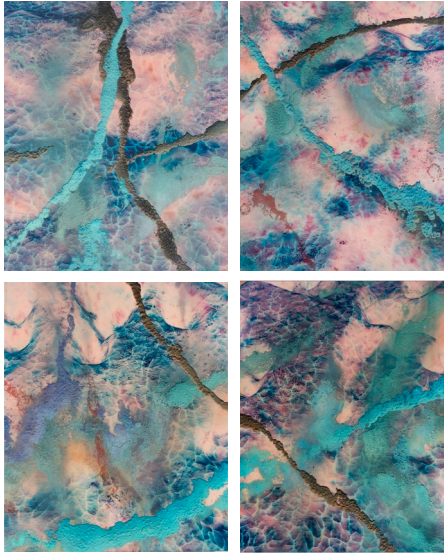
Project of a fourteenth-century artist. 'Project for the Imaginary Museum' Series

1982. Acrylic on canvas stuck to okoumé board

The focal point is the interior architecture of the former Bilbao Fine Arts Museum building, with its previous finishes, frames and dark wood baseboards, and its heavily veined black marble floor. In this phase in his career, Urzay drew from his mastery in drawing in an artistic exercise which nonetheless does more than just depict the surface of reality. Thanks to his treatment of the light that invades this almost empty space, the mirror-like effect of the floor and the frontal perspective, the painter manages to render an evocative, almost magical space.

Artist's collection

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The Belly of the Observer (The Threshold of Attention)

2001. Oil, resin and photographic paper on wood

This complex work materialises the dichotomy between digital and matter, traditional media and more recent techniques, the microscopic and the monumental, light transmitted and light reflected. It is comprised of several light boxes whose developed images give rise to other smaller pieces in acrylic resin. The filamentary shapes and simulated three-dimensionality evoke the inside of a living organism which has turned expressionist. The piece was a commission to the artist by the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum in 2001 on the occasion of the exhibition *Gaur, Hemen, Orain* and was originally installed in the modern building.

Acquired in 2002

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Imaginary museum 82/21 – III

2021. Acrylic tempera, pastel, conté crayon and graphite on cardboard

This drawing is part of a series of three in which the painter tested himself by going back to the style he used in his first realistic period. To do so, he revisited the theme of the 'imaginary museum', which is actually the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum, and he portrayed its interior as he did in his early years, but with 'today's head'. This is an example of his technical prowess, his exquisite use of materials and his ability to capture space and light which still remain in the artist who Urzay has become today.

Acquired thanks to a donation from Adakar Corporation SL in 2021

BBKateak

BBKateak is an exhibition proposal which seeks to offer the collection new stories while construction on the enlargement is underway. Via a dynamic programme of presentations which are periodically updated, each of the galleries in the old building shows an unexpected face-to-face interaction between two artists in the collection and their works; their names may be distant in time and/or in their cultural and geographic provenance, but they suggest a look at art transformed and under construction. The museum's metamorphosis is thus reflected in a constantly changing collection.

This opens the *Thirteen to Centaurus* programme, a sculptural project by the artist Sergio Prego inspired by the emptying of the galleries.