
Press release

THE MONUMENTAL SCULPTURE *MEETING PLACE IV* BY EDUARDO CHILLIDA IS TRAVELLING TO CHILLIDA LEKU
Partners: Tecnalía and Loire Gestamp



Bilbao, 3 March 2023

Meeting Place IV (1973) by Eduardo Chillida (1924–2002), one of the most monumental and iconic sculptures at the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum, is travelling to Chillida Leku (Hernani, Gipuzkoa) on 3 March, where it will be displayed over the forthcoming months until the conclusion of the museum's enlargement designed by Foster and Uriarte. This event also serves as the exceptional prologue to the programme of activities that the museum is planning in 2024 to celebrate the centennial of the birth of this sculptor from San Sebastián, *Eduardo Chillida 100 Years*.



The installation of *Meeting Place IV* is an innovative project which creates synergies between the art world and the industrial and technological sectors in the Basque Country. The project is supported by the department of Culture of the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa.

The project partners are Tecnalía, the largest applied research and technological development centre in Spain, and Loire Gestamp, one of the largest machine tool manufactures in Spain, headquartered in Hernani. Plus, moving the monumental sculpture entailed close coordination among different local companies, including Grúas Gohierri to transfer it, Embalan 3 to wrap it and Transbillasante to transport it.

The sculpture's installation is part of the exhibition entitled *Zero Gravity* at Chillida Leku, where the concepts of levitation and fighting the law of gravity are explored. This idea particularly materialised in the concrete sculptures in the *Meeting Place* series. Suspended by steel cables, *Meeting Place IV* is raised several centimetres off the ground, and this slight elevation 'nullifies' its weight and makes the matter levitate.

After being unveiled at Chillida Leku on 30 March, the piece will be displayed there until the Bilbao museum's enlargement is completed. In 2024, *Meeting Place IV* will travel back to Bilbao to be displayed in the new reception atrium, once again confirming the sculptor's intention to mark a civic meeting point, this time with art.

Meeting Place IV

This work is the fourth in a series comprised of seven pieces generically entitled *Meeting Place* which Chillida made over the course of a decade, from 1964 to 1974, in conjunction with the engineer José Antonio Fernández Ordóñez. On a monumental scale and meant to be displayed in public places, the spirit behind these works is summarised in the sculptor's words: 'meeting places, spaces for dialogue and coexistence'.

One of Chillida's most important avenues of inquiry in these sculptures was the spatial structure of forms and the relationship between the exterior space around them and their interior space. 'There is a common problem', wrote the sculptor, 'in most of my works: the "interior space", the consequence and origin of the positive exterior volumes . . . I aspire to define the empty three-dimensional space by the filled three-dimensional space, while also creating a kind of dialogue between them.'

Another common feature of the pieces—except the first two in the series, made of wood and weathering steel—is the use of reinforced concrete. Chillida praised the expressive qualities of this material. Its steel structure and gravel-based composition are made visible so that the material seems to breathe, yielding a kind of sculpture that creates an architectural yet also organic place.

Meeting Place IV weighs more than 13,5 tonnes and measures 215 x 475 x 408 cm. It was executed between 1973 and 1974 and donated to the museum in 1982 by Chillida himself. At that time, it was installed on the old ground floor of the modern building under the artist's direct supervision. In June 2000, once again with his participation, the piece was installed in the current Chillida Square onto which the modern building opens.

In 2017, the museum's Department of Conservation and Restoration, in conjunction with Javier Chillida, an expert in stone materials and a touchstone in interventions in the sculptor's concrete works, undertook a complete conservation and restoration treatment of the sculpture.