

Eduardo Chillida

Eduardo Chillida was born in San Sebastian on 10 January 1924. His childhood by the sea in the bay of San Sebastian influenced his relationship with landscape and space. From a very early age, he would go to watch the waves break in the location where, years later, he placed his *Peine del viento* [Comb of the wind] (1976) as a tribute to his hometown.

At the age of 18 he was goalkeeper for Real Sociedad, the fans nicknamed him "the cat" because of his agility in jumping, but a knee injury forced him to give up football. However, he transferred to sculpture the skills that a goalkeeper requires to stop the ball - the ability to control space and time.

In 1943 he prepared for a career in architecture, which he soon abandoned to pursue drawing at the Círculo de Bellas Artes in Madrid in 1947. Nevertheless, the artist always kept the basic principles of architecture in mind, which is why he eventually called himself the "architect of emptiness". Chillida was a builder of spaces.

Thanks to a grant, Eduardo Chillida moved to Paris in 1948 where he made his first figurative sculptures in plaster (1948-1949) influenced by archaic Greece. With them he received early recognition by exhibiting at the Salon de Mai in 1949. A year later, he exhibited for the first time in a group show at the Galerie Maeght dedicated to emerging artists. These were pivotal years of learning and experimentation.

In 1951 he suffered an artistic crisis and left the French capital to return to the Basque Country where he reconnected with his roots and discovered iron. A year earlier he married Pilar Belzunce and in 1951 the first of their eight children were born. The return to his homeland marked a shift towards a unique and personal artistic language. Thus, *Ilarik* was born, his first abstract sculpture in connection with funerary steles. His works find inspiration in nature, music, and the universe, and are based on an essentially philosophical questioning.

Although he lived in the Basque Country, during those years he travelled to Paris frequently and established a close relationship with Aimé Maeght and his gallery. Chillida was one of Maeght's youngest artists alongside Chagall, Miró, Calder and Giacometti.

In 1954 he inaugurated his first public work with the doors for the Basilica of Aránzazu. Since then, more than 40 works for public spaces located in cities all over the world, celebrate the artist's central concerns in relation to space, scale, and architecture, and allude to universal values such as tolerance and freedom.

Eduardo Chillida soon began to receive recognition for his work. In 1958 he was awarded the Graham Foundation Award in Chicago and the Grand International Sculpture Prize at the Venice Biennale. From then on, the awards were constant, from the Kandinsky Prize in 1960 to the Wilhelm Lehmbruck Prize in 1966, from the German Kaisering in 1985 to the Praemium Imperiale in Japan in 1991.

Today his work can be found in public and private collections all over the world and has been the subject of more than 500 solo exhibitions. In 1966 the first retrospective was held at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and in the late 1970s he established himself as one of the most important sculptors of the 20th century. In 1980 he exhibited consecutively at the Guggenheim in New York, the Palacio de Cristal in Madrid and, for the first time in the Basque Country, at the Museo de Bellas Artes in Bilbao.

In the 1990s, major retrospectives of his work were presented at the Gropius Bau in Berlin (1991); The Reina Sofía in Madrid (1998); and the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao (1999). At the start of the new millennium, his work continued to be the subject of major solo exhibitions internationally including Jeu de Paume, Paris (2001); Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (2003); Joan Miró Foundation, Barcelona (2003); Mie Prefectural Art Museum, Tsu City, Japan (2006); Kunstmuseum Pablo Picasso Münster (2012); Museum Wiesbaden (2017); Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (2018) and Hauser & Wirth Somerset, UK (2021).

In September 2000, Chillida Leku was founded by the artist, a place chosen as a symbol of identity, with the aim of showing the world his work in dialogue with nature and whose centerpiece is the Zabalaga farmhouse. Eduardo Chillida died in San Sebastian in August 2002, before seeing his final masterpiece come to fruition, *Tindaya* - a sculptural intervention and monument to tolerance conceived by the artist in the heart of the Tindaya mountain in Fuerteventura.

Theodoros Papagiannis

Theodoros Papayannis was born in Ellinikon of Ioannina in 1942. He studied at the School of Fine Arts as a scholarship student from 1961 to 1966, with Yannis Pappas as his teacher.

In 1967, with a two-year scholarship of the State Foundation of Scholarships (IKY), he pursued the study of Ancient Greek Art in Greece and the wider Mediterranean area, effecting a series of travels in Egypt, Asia Minor, Cyprus, Southern Italy and Sicily.

In 1970 he was appointed Assistant Professor at the School of Fine Arts of Athens, next to his teacher, Yannis Pappas.

In 1974 he co-organized with other 24 colleagues the Center for Visual Arts (KET).

In 1981-1982 he pursued further training in Ecole Nationale Des Arts Appliques et des Metiers d' Art in Paris, in the latest materials and techniques of sculpture.

In 1996-67, while on a six-month sabbatical, he visited the US in order to acquaint himself with the educational programs and the setting-up of sculpture studios at the School of Fine Arts of New York.

In the line of educational exchanges of the Erasmus Program, he has cohosted frequent workshops at the School of Berlin, Brera and Bologna.

For over twenty years he has been leading in the setting up of Sculpture Symposia in different cities of Greece and Cyprus, creating and leaving behind

large scale sculptures in public places. Those sculptures were created on site. He has organized 45 individual exhibitions and has participated in multiple group exhibitions in Greece and abroad.

Monumental sculptures of his are located in private areas, museums and private collections, both in Greece and abroad.

He has sculpted busts and statues of prominent personalities as well as many medals, coins and large sculptural compositions placed in public and private spaces.

He has been awarded with many prizes in different competitions that he participated; his last one was the first prize in the international competition for a sculpture at the Chicago Airport.

Daily press, periodicals and mass media have repeatedly commented on his work, in Greece as well as abroad. Theodoros Papayannis is today Professor Emeritus of Sculpture in the School of Fine Arts. He was proclaimed also Emeritus Professor of the University of Ioannina, in the Department of Plastic Arts. In 2009 he created the Museum of Contemporary Art "Theodoros Papayannis".

In 2015 was honored by the president of the Republic Mr Karolos Papoulias with the grand commander of the order of the phoinix.

In 2017 the 10th Junior High School of Ioannina honored him by giving his name to their school.

In 2019 he has been honored by the Greek Academy with the silver medal

He lives and works in Athens.