

Bilduma, ikusgai

This presentation of the Museum of Contemporary Art of the Basque Country Collection brings together recently acquired works that include sculpture, painting, drawing, photography and video. The works selected explore the discursive lines that define the institution's programmes. They deal with issues such as the status of the image as an "object of thought" as well as the new forms of writing it displays, the capacity of art to engage in contemporary social discussions and its willingness to create new forms of community.

The collection has therefore been expanded to include works by artists who have been part of the museum's programme, with solo exhibitions having been dedicated to them, as well as works from the *Shared Collection* programme. The exhibition also includes long-term loans and donations made to the museum's foundation in recent years.

ROOM 1

The exhibition opens with the painting *A Wider Kind of Love* by **Rosalind Nashashibi**, an artist of Palestinian descent who took part in the museum's 2021 exhibition programme. During her time in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Nashashibi produced three paintings of an autobiographical nature to be displayed in the exhibition. One of them combines the colours of the Palestinian flag with the depiction of a watermelon. The artist explained that the fruit and its colours became a symbol of the Palestinian people after the 1967 Six Day War, when it was considered a crime to display a Palestinian flag in Israeli-controlled Gaza. The image in this context becomes a symbol of protest against the genocide of the Palestinian people.

Sharing the space with Nashashibi is *Despedida en la cárcel* (Prison Farewell) by **María Franciska Dapena** (Palencia, 1924 – Bilbao, 1995), an image of small dimensions that refers to the author's imprisonment during the dictatorship. Dapena's work inextricably links life and art, reflecting the strong political commitment of woman artists and poets of the time to the anti-Franco struggle. Dapena is also included in the permanent exhibition *Bilduma Hau Colección. Elementary Movements (1950-2000)* with a series of paintings from her time in prison.

The overlap between artistic practice and political testimony is made apparent in proposals such as those of **Erlea Maneros Zabala** (Bilbao, 1977), from whom a series of watercolours is on display entitled *The New York Times*, which interpret photographs published in the American newspaper in 2001. The images illustrate armed conflicts in which the absence of casualties, however, is evident in the landscape. As the artist explains, these images are reminiscent of 19th-century landscape painting, suggesting an aestheticization of destruction that invites us to reflect on the images that circulate around today's conflicts.

The sculpture *Night Shift* by **Patricia Dauder** also addresses the absence of the human figure through wax modules and ceramic pieces that suggest the recesses created by a body that is only implied. Echoing Dauder's words, this work alludes to an essential space of intimacy, minimal and precarious, designed to satisfy basic needs such as food, rest and the memory of those who lack one.

The first room in the exhibition route also contains the only work not recently acquired, belonging to the collection of the Alava Provincial Council. It is the painting *Arbalète* (Crossbow), dated 1950, by **Óscar Domínguez** (Santa Cruz de Tenerife, 1906 – Paris, 1957). It is the oldest work in the exhibition and serves as a link to the beginning of our collection, which began in the 1950s.

ROOM 2

The second room is built around two films: the first, *i confess* (2019) by the artist **Moyra Davey** (Toronto, Canada, 1958), and the second, *Paraíso* (Paradise, 2021) by **Maddi Barber** (Lacabe, Navarra, 1988) and **Marina Lameiro** (Pamplona, 1986). *i confess* is a film in which the author examines the sociopolitical reality of contemporary Quebec through figures such as the writer James Baldwin, the revolutionary Pierre Vallières and Dalie Giroux, a theorist of political philosophy at the University of Ottawa. The testimonies and memories of these figures are juxtaposed with others from Davey's own biographical archive, as part of a strategy characteristic of her practice in which memory, biography and politics construct a narrative traversed by a multiplicity of voices belonging to different spheres and times.

Following this form of writing, the film *Paraíso* documents a kind of collective performance that occurs in a natural space that is in the process of being modified. The action unfolds in a territory in transformation, in a community located in the forest of the Arce Valley, which is also linked to the biographies of the authors.

The documentation of the landscape from a subjective or intimate perspective is also the backbone of the series of photographs entitled *Gáv* (2018-2024) by **Kimia Kamvari** (Cologne, Germany, 1986), which the artist associates with her life experience in the Basque Country. A landscape in which the silhouettes of animals merge with the lines of the horizon, as part of an account that once again refers to landscape painting and leads the viewer into a space of alienation.

Another way of understanding the landscape genre is offered by the charcoal drawing by **Raúl Domínguez** (Barakaldo, 1984), which acts as a detailed palimpsest of plant motifs. Domínguez traces a meticulous approach to the object of study, from the fragments of which a new image is generated, one that is constructed by means of fractions.

The contact with detail, on this occasion from the notion of chance, also runs through the series *Friso* (Frieze) by **Xabier Salaberria** (San Sebastian, 1969). The work is a record of the cracks created on the surface of the monument that Jorge Oteiza made in memory of Aita Donostia at the megalithic site of Agiña.

OUTSIDE. LORATEGIA

The exhibition continues on the first floor of the museum with the work *Oil and Water* (2023) by **Oscar Tuazon** (Indianola, USA, 1975), a marble fountain belonging to the project that the artist has been developing since 2016 under the title *Water School*, in which this element – water – is central to the environmental issues that run through the artist's artistic and activist practice.

The sculptural group *Core* (2022) by June Crespo (Pamplona, 1982) can be found in the museum's inner courtyard, in the space known as *Lorategia* (Garden). These are works in which the play between form and recesses generates a variety of structures and rhythms of material, texture and colour.

The exhibition is part of the programme ***Bilduma, ikusgai* (The Collection Made Visible)**, a series of exhibitions and rotations of a selection of representative works from the collection that are displayed in various areas of the museum building, with the aim of showcasing and bringing the public of Artium Museoa closer to the public heritage that it conserves.