

# Zóbel-Chillida

12.09 - 09.01.2021

## Crisscrossing Paths

Basque sculptor Eduardo Chillida (1924-2002) and Hispano-Philippine painter Fernando Zóbel (1924-1984), two key Post-War artists in Spain are brought together in an exhibition that reveals the creative links and mutual admiration that existed between these two artists. The exhibition *Zóbel-Chillida: Crisscrossing Paths*, curated by Alfonso de la Torre, presents Zóbel's paintings and Chillida's sculptures at Mayoral's gallery in Paris from 12 September 2020 to 9 January 2021.

Both born in 1924, Fernando Zóbel and Eduardo Chillida met in 1964 thanks to Zóbel's desire to commission Chillida to create a work for his Museo de Arte Abstracto Español in Cuenca, a medieval town located to the east of Madrid, which Zóbel helped turned into an artists' village.

Born in Manila to Spanish parents, Zóbel studied Philosophy and Literature at Harvard University. A self-taught artist and true intellectual, his encounter with Rothko's art in 1955 at an exhibition at the Art of Institute of Chicago was a pivotal moment for the artist, heralding a definitive turning point towards abstraction. In all of his paintings, an essential place is given to gesture, line, and writing through a true search for light. The artist also uses a delicate technique employing a hypodermic needle to distribute solvent and paint. In the late 1950s, he participated in major international exhibitions: *Before Picasso*; *After Miró* at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York in 1960, the Venice Biennale in 1962 and *Modern Spanish Painting* at the Tate in London in the same year.

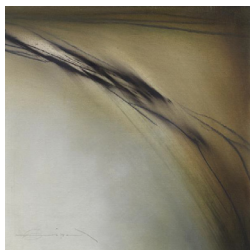
After extensively travelling the world, he settled permanently in Spain in 1960. In 1959, he exhibited for the first time at the Galería Biosca in Madrid, whose director, Juana Mordó, became his gallerist. He also exhibited at Bertha Schaefer (New York, 1965 and 1968) and Galerie Jacob (Paris, 1977). In addition to his work as an artist, he undertook the creation of the first democratic museum in Spain

during the Franco period which opened in 1966 in Cuenca. It is famous for its suspended houses and classified as a historical monument by UNESCO.

*«While tenaciously exercising his extraordinary talent as a painter, he set a single objective for himself: artistic activity. His extremely intense devotion to art was his motto.»*  
- Alfonso de la Torre

By 1960, Chillida was already well-known worldwide, notably in France where he had first moved in 1948. In 1954, he received an award at the 10th Triennale de Milan. In 1956, he presented his iron sculptures at the Galerie Maeght, where he later exhibited several times. He participated in the exhibition *Sculptures and Drawings from Seven Sculptors* (1958) at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York and that same year he received the International Grand Prize for Sculpture at the XXIXe Venice Biennial. In 1959, important exhibitions in the United States, Canada, and at *Documenta II* in Kassel were dedicated to his work. From then on, he started working with wood, concrete, alabaster and mud.

Many retrospective exhibitions of his work have been presented in major international museums, and his sculptures can be found in cities around the world. In 2000, the artist inaugurated the Chillida Leku Museum in Hernani, which reopened to the public in April 2019.



Fernando Zóbel,  
*Orilla 76*, 1982,  
oil on canvas, 40 x 40 cm  
©Galería Mayoral



Fernando Zóbel,  
*Péndulo veneciano*, 1965,  
oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm.  
©Galería Mayoral



Eduardo Chillida,  
*La casa del poeta IV*, 1983,  
chamotte clay, 31.5 x 58 x 40 cm (both)  
©Galería Mayoral



Eduardo Chillida,  
*Óxido 12*, 1978, chamotte clay  
and oxidised copper,  
20 x 25.5 x 3 cm ©Galería Mayoral

In this exhibition *Crisscrossing Paths*, Chillida's monochrome and mineral sculptures with hollowed surfaces, incised with lines, and covered with elements that search for light will respond to Zobel's poetic paintings, whose lines and punctuated plots allow light to invade the canvas. Mayoral will reanimate the intimate dialogue that linked these two great figures of the Spanish Post-War period whose intention undeniably lay in their ability to stimulate our vision, and perhaps even our vision of the world...

*"We discover a dialogue between two of the major figures of the Post-War period, in which the lyrical facet of Fernando Zóbel and the informal sculpture of Eduardo Chillida are combined. It is an encounter between artists who knew how to rise up, as in the battle of hope against the long night of Franco's regime". – Alfonso de la Torre*



Fernando Zóbel painting in his studio Cuenca, circa 1971.  
Photo: Jaume Blassi



Eduardo Chillida in his studio in Villa Paz, San Sebastián, 1961.  
Photo: Abraham Lurie Waintroub-Budd Studio.

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## The artists

### Eduardo Chillida

(San Sebastián, 1924–2002) was an informal sculptor of international repute, who began working principally in plaster and stone, and in 1951—having settled in the Basque town of Hernani—incorporated iron as a sculptural material. In 1954 he was awarded a prize in the *X Triennale di Milano*. In 1956 he showed his iron sculptures at Galerie Maeght, where he was to exhibit on various occasions. He participated in *Sculptures and Drawings from Seven Sculptors* (1958) at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York and that same year won the Grand Prize for Sculpture at the 29th Venice Biennale.

In 1959 he was invited to show in a number of important exhibitions in the United States and Canada, as well as in the *Documenta II* in Kassel. He began working in wood, concrete, alabaster and clay, at the same time as making prints, collages and drawings, on occasion illustrating his own writings. The world's most important museums have devoted monographic shows to him and his public sculptures are on display in cities all over the world. In 2000 he founded the Museo Chillida Leku in Hernani, which reopened to the public in 2019.

### Fernando Zóbel

(Manila, 1924–Rome, 1984) studied Philosophy and Letters at Harvard University. A self-taught artist, painter, printmaker, draughtsman, he received numerous awards for his museum work and for his in-depth knowledge of art. A collector of the abstract generation and the international art of his time, he was the prime mover of the Museo de Arte Abstracto Español in Cuenca, inaugurated in 1966.

At the end of the 1950s he took part in several major international exhibitions: *Before Picasso, After Miró* (Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1960), the Venice Biennale (1962), and *Modern Spanish Painting* (Tate Gallery, London, 1962). Having moved definitively to Spain, in 1959 he exhibited for the first time at the Galería Biosca in Madrid, run by the person who would become his regular dealer, Juana Mordó, in whose gallery he had one-man shows between 1964 and 1974. He also exhibited at Bertha Schaefer (New York, 1965 and 1968) and the Galerie Jacob (Paris, 1977), as well as at renowned Spanish galleries and institutions

## The curator

Alfonso de la Torre is an art historian specializing in Post-War abstract Spanish art. He is the author of the catalogue raisonnés of artists Manolo Millares, Manuel Rivera, Pablo Palazuelo and is now working on that of Fernando Zóbel.

## Mayoral

Art gallery specialized in Post-War art founded in Barcelona in 1989. In November 2019, Mayoral opened a second gallery in Paris. The gallery articulates an exhibition programme focusing on Informalism and Post-War art, both Catalan and Spanish, with artists such as Tàpies, Chillida, Millares, Saura, Guerrero, Zóbel, Canogar, Rivera and Francés. At the same time, the gallery also exhibits the work of such key twentieth-century avant-garde artists as Miró and Picasso.

Mayoral develops projects that are rigorously curated and grow out of an exhaustive process of research and documentation. The gallery relies upon the support of the artists' families, foundations and other institutions whose mission resides in preserving and publicizing the legacy of the artists they represent. Likewise, it enjoys the complicity of many collectors and museums, both public and private, when it comes to accomplishing its mission. The gallery participates in several major art fairs including TEFAF Maastricht, TEFAF New York Spring, Frieze New York, ARCOMadrid and Art Basel Hong Kong.