IN 2005, THE GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM BILBAO REACHED CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC MATURITY.

During this past year, our eighth as an institution, we once again faced new challenges: cooperative endeavors with prestigious cultural institutions and museums worldwide on magnificent projects; plans and proposals within the Guggenheim network of museums; and the fulfillment of our operating objectives. All were tackled with renewed energy and hope, within a complex international context that is constantly in flux.

Our artistic program was marked by the quality and diversity of the exhibitions shown, a plurality of trends, artists, and art media that allowed us to traverse from the art career of Yves Klein, precursor of many contemporary trends and practices, to the more than 600 pieces in the extraordinary Aztec Empire exhibition, and from the many aspects of the relationship between architecture and sculpture in ArquiEscultura to the exquisite photographs from the Buhl Collection that feature representations of the human hand. The high quality of the efforts of organization, coordination, and installation that went into these exhibitions was validated by the attendance of more than 965,000 visitors and acclaim from art critics. These presentations were accompanied by three new presentations of the permanent collection, which allowed us to provide our public with a broad perspective on contemporary art in the second half of the 20th century in Europe and the United States.

However, the most significant challenge of this year was undoubtedly the Richard Serra installation commissioned two years ago, which represented an unprecedented milestone in art history. Seven magnificent large-scale sculptures were brought together in June with Snake, commissioned for the museum’s inauguration in 1997, to make up The Matter of Time. In this monumental grouping, the artist reflects on the nature of sculpture and the space in which it is installed. According to the New York Times, Serra’s installation “pushed abstract art to a new level and set a benchmark for the new century.” The Matter of Time aroused worldwide media interest in the museum, with over 500 news articles in just the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. This set of sculptures was added to the museum’s own collection in 2005, confirming the institution’s maturity and its commitment to creating a collection of the first order. Also added to the permanent collection in 2005 were four new pieces by the Basque sculptor Jorge Oteiza.

The year 2005 was also the first of the four-year cycle 2005–08 for which the museum set forth target dates for achievements, consolidated into a new strategic plan. This is another ambitious plan that sets significant long-term goals and renewed leadership standards in the international sphere. In 2004, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao became the first European museum to be awarded the prestigious “Silver Q” award, having incorporated the EFQM model of excellence in management. To continue on this quality path entails continual improvement, a philosophy that permeates all levels of the organization. In 2005 this model translated into results even better than those of the prior year: an increase of over 15 percent in the number of visitors compared to 2004, and about 350,000 participants in our educational programs, a sphere in which, through multidisciplinary content and tools, we articulated our aspiration to be an international benchmark institution. We also have a Friends of the Museum group of more than 14,000 people and a Corporate Members Program totaling 139 companies and institutions that affirm their institutional and corporate support for the museum’s operations; moreover, our self-financing level is close to 80 percent. These were some of the parameters of our management model that obtained excellent results in 2005.

Finally, just as we do every year, the museum measured the financial impact of its activities on its region, which in 2005 came to 1.56 billion euros in GDP. This figure includes direct and indirect effects, as well as externalities; revenues for the Basque treasuries of 50 million euros in corporate tax, value-added tax, and personal income tax; and our contribution to the maintenance of 4,893 employees. These figures, which have reached the cumulative amount of 1.36 billion euros in GDP since the inauguration of the museum, confirm that “the Bilbao effect” is lasting; and that as of today, it is in full force.

Juan Ignacio Vidarte
Director General, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

(Translated, from Spanish, by Eileen Brockbank)
Bill Viola: Temporality and Transcendence  
June 22, 2004–January 9, 2005  
Curated by John G. Hanhardt and Maria-Christina Villaseñor.

Art since 1945: Developments, Diversity, and Dialogue  
November 13, 2004–January 30, 2005  
Curated by Tracey Bashkoff and Petra Joos.

From Impressionism to Abstraction  
November 13, 2004–January 30, 2005  
Curated by Tracey Bashkoff and Petra Joos.

Art Informel and Abstract Expressionism at the Guggenheim Collections  
March 8–November 6, 2005  
Curated by Tracey Bashkoff and Susan Davidson.

The Matter of Time  
June 8–ongoing  
Curated by Carmen Giménez. Catalogue.

Permanent Collection Galleries  
June 8–ongoing  
Curated by Thomas Krens.

Temporary Exhibitions  
Quantum Field XIX  
August 18, 2004–April 3, 2005  
Curated by Hiro Yamagata.

A Hidden Picasso  
September 13, 2004–January 16, 2005  
Curated by William Shank.

Oteiza: Myth and Modernism  
October 8, 2004–January 23, 2005  
Michelangelo and His Age
November 16, 2004–February 13, 2005

Yves Klein
February 1–May 2, 2005
Curated by Olivier Berggruen and Ingrid Pfeiffer. Catalogue.

The Aztec Empire
March 19–September 18, 2005
Curated by Felipe Solís. Catalogue.

ArchiEscultura
October 28, 2005–February 19, 2006
Curated by Markus Brüderlin. Catalogue.

Speaking with Hands: Photographs from The Buhl Collection
November 25, 2005–March 22, 2006
Curated by Jennifer Blessing. Catalogue.

Speaking with Hands: Photographs from The Buhl Collection
November 25, 2005–March 22, 2006
Curated by Jennifer Blessing. Catalogue.

El Imperio Azteca

Yves Klein
February 1–May 2, 2005
Curated by Olivier Berggruen and Ingrid Pfeiffer. Catalogue.

Richard Serra: La materia del tiempo

Publications

Hablándo con las Manos: Fotografías de la Colección Buhl

ArchiEscultura

El Imperio Azteca

Yves Klein
Esh. cat. Edited by Olivier Berggruen, Max Hollein, and Ingrid Pfeiffer. With essays by Nuit Bane, Olivier Berggruen, Paolo Bianchi, Max Hollein, Frédéric Mijayrou, Carla Ontho, Elena Palumbo-Moscia, Hans Pailer, Ingrid Pfeiffer, Jean-Michel Ribettes, Nicole Root, and Günther Uecker. 258 pages.

Richard Serra: La materia del tiempo
ACQUISITIONS

Richard Serra
Seven sculptures comprising The Matter of Time:

Between the Torus and the Sphere, 2003–05
Weatherproof steel, four torus and four spherical sections
Overall: 4.27 x 15.24 x 16.44 m
Each section: 4.27 x 15.24 m
Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa

Blind Spot Reversed, 2003–05
Weatherproof steel, three torus and three spherical sections
Overall: 4. x 17.2 x 9.04 m
Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa

Double Torqued Ellipse, 2003–04
Weatherproof steel, five plates
Outer ellipse: 4.27 x 11.41 x 12.19 m
Inner ellipse: 4.27 x 6.2 x 9.75 m
Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa

Torqued Spiral (Closed Open Closed Open Closed), 2003
Weatherproof steel, five plates
Torqued Spiral: 4. x 13.1 x 14.1 m
Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa

Torqued Ellipse, 2003–04
Weatherproof steel, two plates
4.27 x 8.31 x 8.84 m
Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa

Torqued Spiral (Open Left Closed Right), 2003–04
Weatherproof steel, seven plates
Torqued Spiral: 4.27 x 9.76 x 12.68 m
Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa

Torqued Spiral (Right Left), 2003–04
Weatherproof steel, five plates
Torqued spiral: 4.27 x 14.11 x 15.09 m
Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa

All plates: 5 cm thick

Richard Serra, Between the Torus and the Sphere, 2003–05 (detail)

Jorge Oteiza
Empty Box with Large Opening (Caja vacía con gran apertura), 1958
Steel with copper plating
46 x 45 x 59 cm
Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa

Empty Construction with Five Curved Malevich Units (Construcción vacía con cinco unidas Malevich curvas), 1957
Forged steel
34 x 40 x 30 cm
Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa

Hillargia, 1957
Steel
34 x 35 x 40 cm
Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa

Study for the Emptying Sphere (Ensayo de desocupación de la esfera), 1958
Forged steel
50 x 49 x 39 cm
Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa

Jorge Oteiza, Empty Box with Large Opening, 1958

Jorge Oteiza, Hillargia, 1957

Jorge Oteiza, Study for the Emptying Sphere, 1958

Jorge Oteiza, Empty Construction with Five Curved Malevich Units, 1957

Works from the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao were sent to the following institutions:

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía
Kunstmuseum Basel
Museo d’Arte Moderna della Città di Lugano
Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg

Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa

Blind Spot Reversed, 2003–05
Weatherproof steel, three torus and three spherical sections
Overall: 4. x 17.2 x 9.04 m
Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa

Richard Serra, Between the Torus and the Sphere, 2003–05 (detail)