

MUSEUMS AND ART ENTOURAGES IN THE CITIES OF THE BAY OF BISCAY

MUSEOS Y ENTORNOS ARTÍSTICOS EN LAS CIUDADES DEL GOLFO DE VIZCAYA

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5944/etfvii.10.2022.33095>

Abstract⁴

The success of Bilbao Guggenheim, beyond blockbuster exhibitions and indoor events, is closely linked to its massive outward impact not only in economic and urban terms but also concerning the presence of art in the city. The museum's iconic building, an imposing sculpture-like carapace, dominates the skyline. Moreover, a cluster of public artworks, postmodern architecture and other cultural venues have emerged in the surrounding area. Plus its trickle-down effect has nurtured further creative quarters in other city districts. Based on this threefold phenomenon, this paper examines similar instances and their peculiarities throughout the Bay of Biscay. Alternative policies inspired by nearby emulators have also been enthusiastically adopted within Bilbao itself.

Keywords

Museums; art entourages; cultural districts; creative quarters; urban revival; Bay of Biscay

Resumen

Más allá de las exposiciones *blockbuster* y otras actividades puertas adentro, el éxito del Guggenheim Bilbao está asociado a su gran impacto externo, también en términos artísticos. En primer lugar, por su icónico edificio, una envoltura escultórica que domina el *skyline* urbano. Luego, porque se arraciman en el vecindario obras de arte público, arquitecturas posmodernas y otros establecimientos culturales. Y además porque el efecto salpica a otros distritos de la ciudad, catalizando barrios creativos. Un triple marco de análisis proyectado en este artículo a otros ejemplos en el Golfo de Vizcaya, que ofrecen muchas similitudes, pero también algunas diferencias. Los emuladores cercanos han inspirado en ocasiones alternativas fervientemente asumidas también en Bilbao.

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4. This paper is an outcome of the research Project: «Distritos culturales de museos, galerías, establecimientos y paisajes urbanos patrimoniales» financed by MICINN/FEDER (code PGC2018-094351-B-C41).

Palabras clave

Museos; entornos artísticos; distritos culturales; barrios creativos; vitalización urbana; Golfo de Vizcaya

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WHEREAS BILBAO and the Basque hinterland have been the most immediate beneficiaries of the Guggenheim impact, bolstering their regional pride⁵, over the last twenty-five years its effect has also been noticeable on other cities along the northern Spanish coast and on the adjacent French Atlantic coastline. Cities and towns by the Bay of Biscay, which are traditionally close-knit, form a highly-populated crescent embracing the sea. This European Atlantic arc constitutes one of the world's leading case studies of interdisciplinary research on urban revitalization based on culture and the arts⁶.

After massive socio-economic troubles caused in the 1980's by the crisis in the port and the closure of metal industries, when stately properties formerly used as sophisticated summer residences gradually languished due to fierce competition from Mediterranean tourist destinations, Bilbao's extraordinary urban regeneration set a landmark which inevitably served as a model to be emulated or challenged in surrounding cities. Thus, Guggenheim Bilbao's brilliance —not without reservations— was globally acclaimed as a «miracle» and fervently worshipped worldwide, sparking innumerable attempts to replicate it, which more often than not, never reached fruition. As even the Guggenheim Foundation itself failed in its attempt to reproduce the same model elsewhere one might wonder whether the successful experiment could be feasibly exported from its original laboratory and local specificity.

Hence, this comparative analysis examines highly similar cities in the region which contain a mesh of historical commercial and cultural connections and even neighbourly alliances and rivalries. For political reasons, the Basque Government is highly interested in promoting links with the French Basque territory and Aquitaine creating a Euro-region with strong cross-border connections at all levels, particularly between Bilbao and Bordeaux, twinned cities⁷. But human, mercantile and cultural interrelations between Biscay and the Cantabrian coast, especially Cantabria, are also robust⁸. Cantabria increasingly seeks to facilitate connections between Asturias and the Euskadi-Aquitaine corridor⁹. In 2012 Santander signed a protocol with Bilbao City Council to «create networks and strengthen ties between

5. Arrieta Urtizberea, Iñaki; Díaz Balerdi, Iñaki; Viau-Courville, Mathieu: «A l'ombra del Guggenheim-Bilbao: legislació i política museística al País Basc», *Revista d'etnologia de Catalunya* [online], 42 (2017), p. 93. <https://bit.ly/3gbvrVG>. [consulted on 30/01/2022].

6. This was the subject matter of the *II Seminario Internacional Puerto, Ciudad y Patrimonio* and of the ensuing publication, whose first chapter is particularly relevant here: Álvarez Martínez, M.^a Soledad: «Crisis y regeneración de las ciudades portuarias del Cantábrico. Políticas, recursos y equipamientos para la cultura». *Ábaco*, 3:97 (monograph of the same title) (2018), pp. 20-28.

7. Eurorregión Aquitania-Euskadi: «Plan Estratégico Eurorregional 2014-2020. Diagnóstico Eurorregional», [Hendaya], Gobierno Vasco y Région Aquitaine, 2014, pp. 74-75. <http://www.aquitaine-euskadi.eu/es/>. [Consulted on 07/06/2017]. Cfr. Gómez Martínez, Javier: *Museografía comparada*. Gijón, Trea, forthcoming.

8. Gómez Martínez, Javier: «La memoria ornamental del frente marítimo de Santander», in Cabañas Bravo, Miguel; Rincón García, Wifredo (eds.): *XVII Jornadas Internacionales de Historia del Arte. El arte y la recuperación del pasado reciente*, Madrid, CSIC, 2015, p. 63.

9. Díaz López, Javier: *Elementos para un diagnóstico del sistema cultural de la ciudad de Santander*. Santander, Ediciones de la Universidad de Cantabria, 2014, p. 82 (digital preview on <https://bit.ly/3p2ExJu>). [Consulted on: 10/05/2013]).

the cultural and creative sectors», later endorsed by Gijón from 2017 to 2020¹⁰. Afterwards, Santander's *Plan Director de Cultura 2018-2023* renewed its commitment to the «Atlantic Axis»¹¹. Relations exist even between the furthest points of this Atlantic crescent: the engineer Pablo Otaola, general manager of Bilbao Ría 2000 for many years, acted as an advisor to Île de Nantes in a similar venture, whereas Eduardo Leira, the director of Bilbao's Metropolitan Partial Planning Committee, was also in charge of the General Urban Planning Committee in the city of Avilés, Asturias. Numerous art exchanges and mutual influences also exist throughout this macro-region under the umbrella of Bilbao's Guggenheim, whose great repercussion continues to reverberate.

After a period of stagnation caused by severe restructuring processes, ambitious projects of urban regeneration emerged at economic, social, architectural, urban or cultural levels. Bilbao followed the precedent of Liverpool, Marseille and other declining coastal cities whose waterfronts —formerly hardly accessible— would open up to the general public, partially maintaining their historical identity after having been beautified with green areas, modern infrastructures and other facilities to attract cultural tourists¹². To some extent, other cities in the Bay of Biscay struggled to follow suit erecting iconic architectures in the wake of Bilbao's Guggenheim. They also strove to emulate the Abandoibarra cultural district creating cultural clusters that amalgamate art installations, art venues and other elements within the art eco-system. Alternative art quarters also emerged either as a consequence of or as an antithesis to official and gentrified cultural districts, planting the seeds for revitalization through art in other urban territories. The success of an institution whose influence began to expand concentrically, rippled across the Bay of Biscay and continues to enliven art entourages and promote scholarly debate: instead of designating an area with the more institutional qualification of «cultural» district the countermodel of Nantes is proposing or even opposing the term «creative»¹³ quarter.

ICONIC ARCHITECTURE TO HOUSE BLOCKBUSTERS

Bilbao's Guggenheim has become the greatest icon of postmodern architecture, a building which garnered worldwide fame. Far from being a unique phenomenon, commissioning star architects to create signature structures became widespread. In the Bay of Biscay, the Niemeyer Centre in Avilés constitutes another instance of international repute: it is the only building created by the prestigious Brazilian

10. Balbona, Guillermo: «Gijón sale de «Tan cerca» y Santander y Bilbao firman un nuevo convenio», *El Diario Montañés*, 6 February (2020), p. 51.

11. Ayuntamiento de Santander: «Plan Director de Cultura 2018-2023», Santander, *Ayuntamiento de Santander* [online], 2017, p. 39. <https://bit.ly/3NbwRyg> [Consulted on 19/10/2021].

12. Lorente, Jesús Pedro: «Urban Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration. The Special Case of Declining Port Cities: Liverpool, Marseilles, Bilbao», in Crane, Diana; Kawashima Nobuko and Kawasaki, Ken'ichi (eds.): *Global Culture: Media, Arts, Policy, and Globalization*. New York-London, Routledge, 2002, pp. 93-104.

13. García Carrizo, Jennifer: *City branding: Fundamentos y aplicaciones de marca en espacios culturales y creativos*. Madrid, Editorial Fragua, 2021, pp. 54 and 168.

architect in Spain¹⁴. If Frank Gerhy's building in Bilbao has been compared to a whale, a flower, a ship and other evocative images, the four structures that shape the Niemeyer Centre in Avilés have also been poetically described as: a mountain-museum, a tower-tree, an auditorium-wave or a canopy-river. The ensemble works very well, rendering a particularly attractive image when approached after crossing the river (FIGURE 1). This highly photogenic structure stands like a mirage, an image that has been enthusiastically adopted to feature on institutional publicity campaigns that promote the region as one of Asturias's great tourist attractions. For instance, it co-starred with Oviedo's Cathedral and Gijón's LABoral on bus-stop publicity during the 2021 Christmas campaign.



FIGURE 1. AVILÉS. A GENTLE AND ICONIC VIEW OF THE NIEMEYER CENTRE. Source: Javier Gómez

The allure of this architectural structure is such that many people are attracted to it regardless of what may go on inside. Its inherent monumental nature is well worth a visit, at least once, notwithstanding its contents or the way the institution is run. As a matter of fact, just as the initial scandal caused by opaque dealings and allegations of embezzlement that resulted in the dismissal of Guggenheim Bilbao's finance director—which nobody cares to remember—, claims of mismanagement made against the director of the Niemeyer Centre in the year of its inauguration that resulted in the accused being sentenced to eight years in prison after ten years of litigation, are also being forgotten¹⁵. High expectations were confounded for a while when the cultural signal emitted by the Niemeyer Centre seemed to fade, to the point that the elderly architect felt compelled to write an open letter in defence of the cultural centre¹⁶. All of this is now water under the bridge as the signature building does act as an attraction to tourists, whose numbers have swelled. In 2017, 14% of tourists in Avilés were foreign—mostly British—and even during the pandemic in 2020, 9% of tourists came from abroad¹⁷. Inside, they can find a not

14. Tielve García, Natalia: «La Factoría Cultural y la Marca Niemeyer. Avilés: una ciudad creativa en el Arco Atlántico», *Boletín de Arte* [online], 41 (2020), p. 240. <https://doi.org/10.24310/BoLArte.2020.v41i.7778>.

15. Efe: «Condenan a ocho años de cárcel al ex director general del Centro Niemeyer de Avilés por malversación y falsedad documental», *El Mundo* [online], 30 June (2011). <https://bit.ly/3lVqqox>. [Consulted 04/11/2021].

16. Phillips, Tom: «Centro Niemeyer closes but row over arts complex continues», *The Guardian* [online], 15 December (2011). <https://bit.ly/3mcTJM7>. [Consulted 15/12/2021].

17. Tielve García, Natalia: «El Centro Niemeyer y la promoción de nuevos equipamientos: industrias creativas, innovación y desarrollo», in Álvarez Martínez, María Soledad (coord.): *Focos de creación, impulso e innovación. El Centro Niemeyer*. Gijón, Trea, 2018, p. 169. Centro Niemeyer: «Centro Niemeyer. Memoria de actividades 2020».

too profuse repertoire of temporary exhibitions, theatre plays and other cultural or leisure activities that regularly attract local or regional audiences; but even those who never visit it feel quite proud and attached to this institution as a symbol of identity and a worthy investment.

Alas, the same does not apply to the Cidade da Cultura, in Santiago de Compostela. Following the trend of engaging *startchitects* implemented in Bilbao and other cities, the project by Peter Eisenman became the epitome of a white elephant. It did achieve some international renown when Spain aspired to become a worldwide destination for new museum tourists in a bid for architectural megaprojects.¹⁸ The crisis of 2008 shattered this dream which might have boosted the Camino de Santiago as the final point of an itinerary both medieval and modern for cultural/cultic pilgrims from all over the globe; one of its main routes was to be the Cantabrian axis, studded with large temples erected to the Muses in Avilés, Santander and Bilbao.¹⁹

That halfway position on the tourist route between the monumental cultural structures of Avilés and Bilbao is often recalled in Santander, which boasts the Botín Centre —the first building created by Renzo Piano in Spain. From 2010 to 2017 the construction also underwent tensions, some still unresolved, though the final outcome turned out to be a splendid architectural icon (FIGURE 2). A predilection for signature architecture stands as the most evident element of the paradigm set by the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, a comparison directly brought about by political and social forces though some would have preferred it to have adopted a more local profile²⁰.



FIGURE 2. SANTANDER. SEAFRONT BETWEEN THE HISTORICAL BUILDING OF BANCO SANTANDER, CURRENTLY UNDER RENOVATION BY DAVID CHIPPERFIELD, AND THE CENTRO BOTÍN. Source: Javier Gómez

[Avilés], *Avilés Ayuntamiento; Gobierno del Principáu d'Asturies; Puerto de Avilés* [online], p. 88. <https://bit.ly/3rGPUqL>. [Consulted on 21/01/2022].

18. Linheira, Jorge; Rius-Ulldemolins, Joaquim; Hernández, Gil-Manuel: «Política cultural, modelo de ciudad y grandes infraestructuras culturales: análisis comparativo de la Cidade da Cultura de Santiago de Compostela y la Ciutat de les Arts i les Ciències de Valencia», *RIPS* [online], 17:1 (2018), p. 154. <https://bit.ly/3qoQobH>. [Consulted on 12/12/2021]. Riley, Terence: «Contemporary Architecture in Spain: Shaking off the Dust», in *On-Site: New Architecture in Spain* [cat. exp., com. Terence Riley]. New York, Museum of Modern Art, 2005, p. 15.

19. Herrero Delavenay, Alicia: «El edificio museístico contemporáneo, un factor esencial en la transformación conceptual y funcional del museo», *RdM. Revista de Museología*, 82 (2021), pp. 38-39.

20. Gómez Martínez, Javier: «Whitney Museum y Centro Botín: distancias razonables de Nueva York a Santander», *AACADigital. Revista de la Asociación Aragonesa de Críticos de Arte* [online], 45, December (2018). <https://bit.ly/2RaPc5G>. [Consulted 20/12/2019]. Gómez Martínez, Javier: «Familias expuestas, tribus opuestas, ciudad peripuesta. Santander, desde el Centro Botín», *Arte y Ciudad* [online], 20, octubre (2021), pp. 59-86. <https://doi.org/10.22530/ayc.2021.20.594>.

The Botín Centre's success in terms of image is indisputable²¹ although it would not be fair to put that down entirely to just the building itself. The Botín Centre stands as Santander's main cultural asset in the ranking produced by the *Observatorio de la Cultura de Fundación Contemporánea* for the years 2019 and 2020²². Not a museum, but a structure to house exhibitions, the Fundación Botín has demonstrated an ability to produce shows as remarkable as those offered by the Guggenheim Foundation. The exhibition *Picasso ibero*, organized in collaboration with the Musée National Picasso-Paris from 1 May to 12 September 2021, demonstrated it possesses sufficient human and institutional resources to keep going. For the same reason, the exhibition illustrated that such an ambitious project demands not only a local audience but broader national and international acclaim—in this instance overwhelmingly French—as restrictions resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic revealed. Local demand is nurtured by a cascade of events mostly programmed on the occasion of temporary shows. These events generally revolve around what has become the Centre's particular hallmark: emotional creativity, the visit to the centre as an experience to be enjoyed.

All in all it could be claimed that the Botín Centre deliberately plays in a different league from that of Guggenheim Bilbao which in 2019 signed an agreement with *Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao* and *Chillida Leku* for a discount in the entrance fee to visitors coming from either of the other two venues²³. A triangle whereby the three institutions «commit to work together for the creation of an art ecosystem in northern Spain»²⁴. Let's hope they eventually welcome into the deal San Sebastian's Kursaal, known mostly as an auditorium and congress hall but where exhibitions are also held. This building, consisting of monumental cubes set by the architect Moneo on the beach of Zurriola, did not escape controversy either though it was soon outshone by the sparkle and glitter of film stars parading along its red carpet on the occasion of the celebrated *Festival de Cine de San Sebastián*. Its proximity to France turns it into a remarkable architectural-cultural landmark on the course of a new *French Camino* whose architecturally postmodern coastal version no longer reaches Galicia's *finis terrae*—at least not until Santiago de Compostela completes its mammoth acropolis/*mouseion*— but whose main source of pilgrims comes from the French side of the Pyrenees.

The Guggenheim Bilbao Museum is well aware of this fact: annual figures for the year 2020—the latest available to date and corresponding to a year of pandemic restrictions— registered that 39% of its visitors were foreign—as opposed to 69% in the previous year— most of them coming from France: 18%, one percentage

21. Bermejo Lorenzo, Carmen: «Nuevas propuestas arquitectónicas en los espacios portuarios: el Centro Botín», *Ábaco*, 3:97, (2018), pp. 95-101.

22. Fundación Contemporánea: «La cultura en España 2020», Madrid, *La Fábrica* [online], 2021, pp. 21-24. <https://bit.ly/3vqvDqj>. [Consulted on 19/10/2021].

23. Centro Botín: «Convenio de colaboración entre el Centro Botín (Santander), Chillida Leku (Hernani, Gipuzkoa) y el Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao», Santander, *Fundación Botín* [online], 2019 [19 December]. <https://bit.ly/3p1NSkX>. [Consulted on 20/12/2019].

24. Fundación Botín: «Memoria 2019», Santander, *Fundación Botín* [online] [2020], p. 12. <https://bit.ly/3egKR8>. [Consulted on 23/12/2021].

point over the previous year²⁵. In the case of the Botín Centre, 6% of visitors were foreign, mostly from France²⁶. Incidentally and revealingly enough, in a corner of the café of the Botín Centre, one can regularly browse the art journal *Parcours des Arts. Sud et Espagne*. It announces the exhibitions scheduled in southern France (Occitania and New Aquitaine) and the northern strip of the Iberian peninsula marked out by Barcelona in the east, Saragossa in the south and Santander in the west, the displayed map serving as an index. The fact that this publication is only in French is highly revealing as to its target audience.



FIGURE 3. BORDEAUX. IN THE BACKGROUND, BUILDING OF LA CITÉ DU VIN DESIGNED BY ANOUK LEGENDRE AND NICOLAS DESMAZIÈRES, FROM XTU ARCHITECTS. IN THE FOREGROUND, INSTALLATION *LE VAISSEAU SPATIAL*, BY SUZANE TREISTER (2018) SEEN FROM THE QUAI LAWTON WHEREFROM THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE BACALAN DISTRICT CAN BE OBSERVED. Source: Natalia Juan

Bordeaux figures as one of the main cultural spots in the aforementioned guide. This French city acts as Bilbao's main competitor and partner on the other side of the Pyrenees to all effects, also in terms of museum offer. Bordeaux had set the pace in 1973 founding the *Centre d'arts plastiques contemporains* which after major remodelling from 1984 to 1990 became the *Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux* to mark the significance of its collection. It only displays permanently some of the site specific interventions created by Christian Boltanski, Keith Haring and Richard Long, on the roof terrace and in special locations throughout the immense building in the Entrepôt Lainé. This nineteenth-century warehouse of the port customs office was a paradigm of reconversion of industrial buildings for cultural

25. Fundación del Museo Guggenheim Bilbao: «Guggenheim Bilbao. Memoria de actividad 2020». Bilbao, FMGB [online], 2020, p. 24. <https://bit.ly/3nLiZj>. [Consulted on 21/01/2022].

26. Fundación Botín: «Memoria 2020», Santander, *Fundación Botín* [online], [2021], p. 12. <https://bit.ly/3qhD4i4>. [Consulted on 23/12/2021].

purposes, a typical option in the postmodern crisis; but the overwhelming success of Gehry's building in Bilbao demanded a counterpart in Bordeaux: the awesome Cité du Vin. Its spectacular design, by Anouk Legendre and Nicolas Desmazières of XTU architects studio, is obviously close to that of Bilbao's Guggenheim and since its opening in 2016 has become the city's main vantage point and tourist attraction (FIGURE 3). Though it did not have the same repercussion in terms of media and scholarly interest, it nowadays stands as the closest French emulation²⁷.

La Ville de Bordeaux is the owner of the new building but such an *emblématique* evocation of the liquid nature of architecture —representing the wine and the river— is run by a public-private foundation that actually sells experiences²⁸. The building's rolling curves created using computer-aided design materialize by means of an amazing glue-laminated carpentry framework. The inspiring reference is inevitable: Legendre's career started at the American Center of Paris, created by Frank Gehry, and Bordeaux City Council had commissioned a facility to be talked about, to attract tourists and entice them to stay in the city at least overnight²⁹. Additionally, the staging was placed in the hands of Dinah Casson and Roger Mann the British experts in spectacular exhibitions³⁰.

Comparable architectural spin-offs have not proliferated in other French cities in the Bay of Biscay —at least not to hold art ventures. Nantes allocated abundant funds to upgrade its historical heritage and local culture, but the case of l'Île de Nantes will be dealt with in the next epigraph.

THE ARDUOUS ATTEMPT TO CREATE A LIVELY CULTURAL CLUSTER FROM THE TOP DOWN

The Guggenheim Bilbao not only constituted the peak of a postmodern structure with beautiful views of and from its surroundings; it also set a trend as the «flagship» of the regeneration of Abandoibarra, the area next to the river Nervion where shipyards and factories used to operate. Much to Gehry's disappointment —he would have preferred to keep the rusty industrial remains around the building— attractive new structures have flourished in its surroundings: the Auditorium Euskalduna by

27. French bibliography usually links the «Guggenheim effect» to satellite-museums such as the Louvre in Lens or the Pompidou Centre in Metz, which did not live up to the expectations. Crouzatier-Durand, Florence: «La décentralisation culturelle française: à la recherche de l'effect Bilbao», in Regourd, Martine (dir.): *Musées en mutation. Un espace public à revisiter*. Paris, L'Harmattan, 2012, pp. 111-125. Tobelem, Jean-Michel: «Les musées, symboles du capitalisme triomphant?», in Tobelem, Jean-Michel et al.: *Les bulles de Bilbao. La mutation des musées depuis Gehry*. Paris, Éditions B2, 2014, pp. 78-79. Bernard, Anne-Sophie: «De l'art au développement territorial: quand les musées offrent de nouvelles perspectives», in Baudelle, Guy; Krauss, Gerhard; Polo, Jean-François (dirs.): *Musées d'art et développement territorial*. Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015, pp. 35-44. Regourd, Martine (dir.): *Marques muséales. Un espace public revisité*. Bayonne, Institut Universitaire Varenne, 2018.

28. La Cité du Vin: «Le concept architectural», Bordeaux, *Fondation pour la culture et les civilisations du vin* [online]. <https://bit.ly/3g7RTPe>. [Consulted 24/01/2022].

29. Duthion, Brice; Mandou, Cyrille: *L'innovation dans le tourisme: Culture numérique et nouveaux modes de vie*. Leuven, De Boeck, 2016, pp. 83-84.

30. Oudsten, Frank den: *Space. Time. Narrative. The Exhibition as Post-Spectacular Stage*, Surrey, Ashgate, 2012, p. 152.

Federico Soriano and Dolores Palacios, the Tower Iberdrola by Cesar Pelli and some hotels and businesses designed by top architects in adjacent streets. The architectural frenzy has also reached the nearby Museo de Bellas Artes, about to complete an extremely ambitious extension. This museum of historic art already boasted some works from its collection by its entrance, in line with the picturesque traditional prototype of modern sculpture gardens, but it has now started to commission large conceptual art interventions in the wake of the Guggenheim museum, whose iconic titanium building is often visually associated with Jeff Koons's eye-catching gigantic floral dog, *Puppy*, in front of which not only tourists but also locals pose to take selfies or even their wedding photographs. And almost the same applies to Louise Bourgeois' colossal spider, to Anish Kapoor's balls, to Yoko Ono's tree and to other artworks from the Guggenheim collection set outdoors complemented by the sculptures of a group of celebrated artists displayed along the Paseo de la Memoria inaugurated in March 2003. These monumental landmarks as well as art galleries and other cultural spots were mapped in 2013 under the name «Bilbao Art District» on a webpage created by the City Council with the collaboration of the Diputación Foral de Bizkaia and museums, galleries and other art producers in the city. Although the webpage ceased operations one year ago it will hopefully be resumed because it was an excellent tool to assess the state of Bilbao's art ecosystem.

The regeneration of the area surrounding the Niemeyer Centre —the port and land formerly owned by the public metal industry Ensidesa— did not have such a massive impact. In 2006 the Government of Asturias reached an agreement with the City Council of Avilés, the Sociedad Estatal de Participaciones Industriales and the Port Authority of Avilés to create the joint venture SOGESPA. The General Planning Programme describes this new scheme as a new city in the urban fabric, very much like a *cit  dans la ville*, in French terms³¹. At the heart of this newly created centre stands the «Island of Innovation», led by the Niemeyer Centre. The square outside the entrance to the Centre displays a group of sculptures donated to the institution by their creator, Enrique Carbajal, after a retrospective exhibition dedicated to this Mexican sculptor —whose actual name is Sebastián— was organized in 2013. Other public art instances include a monumental trident of corten-steel cones set at different angles that shape Benjamin Men ndez's sculpture *Avil s*, and other artworks near the river and even in the technology park, especially the sculptures on the Steel Route³². The Government of Asturias has even built an «Administration Building» on the opposite bank which looms over the old terraced houses by the river and the colourful building of the Port Depot. New buildings and infrastructures gradually emerge as old industrial facilities are rehabilitated; sometimes even both options are combined as in the case of the pretentious footbridge, nicknamed

31. Leyra, Eduardo (coord.): «Plan General de Ordenaci n de Avil s», Avil s, *Ayuntamiento de Avil s* [online], 2006, p. 45. <https://bit.ly/3qktSJR>. [Consulted on 14/12/2021].

32. Men ndez Marino, Rebeca: *Las transformaciones urbanas de la ciudad de Avil s (1980-2010)* (online doctoral thesis), Universidad de Oviedo, 2013, pp. 334-335. <http://hdl.handle.net/10651/21888>. [consulted: 05/11/2014].  lvarez Mart nez, M.  Soledad: «Nuevos patrimonios frente al Cant brico: las intervenciones art sticas en los n cleos costeros de Asturias», in  lvarez Mart nez, M.  Soledad (coord.): *Espacios portuarios y villas costeras. Modelos de estrategias urban sticas y patrimoniales de regeneraci n y transformaci n del litoral asturiano*. Oviedo, Eikasia, 2014, pp. 18-22.

Grapa [Staple], which surrounds and splits in two the Old Fish Market nowadays turned into an exhibition hall.

The development of Avilés cultural district by the river remains unfinished, an area with far from easy access on foot: after overcoming several obstacles namely the railway line and the busy road with heavy goods vehicles one may quite possibly get lost trying to find a crossing point from the promenade that runs along the river towards the bus station, a highly complicated and hazardous operation. If approaching the area by car one needs to drive past the Parque Empresarial del Principado de Asturias (PEPA), the modern alternative to the heavy metal industry of yore, and may perhaps spot the dismal fenced up yard across the area near the Centre. This is the plot intended for the future «Island of Innovation» which cannot even be guessed at yet (FIGURE 4). On the positive side it could be claimed that the upcoming island has its own master plan, a very specific roadmap, though realistically speaking it must be recalled that the latest economic crisis dashed the Special Plan drafted in 2010 by Norman Foster³³. A glimmer of hope, however, exists: these operations are usually planned 15 to 20 years ahead of completion, a lapse of time which may even be extended in this case as nothing at the moment suggests a process of transformation around the monument. Perhaps a case of overoptimism may have to be eventually admitted as by the 1950's the city had already viewed itself as the Athens of the North³⁴.



FIGURE 4. AVILÉS. BACK OF THE NIEMEYER CENTRE AND ISLA DE LA INNOVACIÓN, CITY IN THE BACKGROUND. Source: Javier Gómez

More advanced is the cultural district on Santander's waterfront as the City Council is taking advantage of the boost provided by the Botín Centre to promote Santander as a city of museums by the sea. There are so many of them, lined up by the shore, that it seems quite easy and tempting to refer to the ensemble as the «Museum Mile», as in New York³⁵. The Council aspires to become the «great city of

33. Menéndez Marino, Rebeca: *Las transformaciones urbanas...*, pp. 280-294. Menéndez Marino, Rebeca: «La ciudad sobre papel. De los proyectos urbanísticos a la realidad en el entorno de la ría de Avilés», *Ábaco*, 3:97 (2018), p. 68.

34. Vega García, Rubén: «Cultura local y comportamientos sindicales de los trabajadores asturianos», in castillo, Santiago; Ortiz de Orruño, José María (coords.): *Estado, protesta y movimientos sociales. Actas del Tercer Congreso de Historia Social de España*. Bilbao, Universidad del País Vasco, 1998, p. 684.

35. Santiago, Violeta; Balbona, Guillermo: «Más de una milla de propuestas culturales», *El Diario Montañés*, 4 de agosto (2019), pp. 10-13.

Culture in Northern Spain» and to such ends looks also at Málaga to the point of having invited a Russian legation which included the director of the collection of the Russian Museum there³⁶. Multiple projects going back to the 1980's are being implemented and burgeon in the twenty-first century on the initiative of local, regional, national governments, the Port Authority and private ventures³⁷. The most talked-about corresponds to the creation of a branch of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía to house the Archivo Lafuente in the building formerly used by Banco de España, a complex public-private venture announced in 2014 still in the slow process of materializing, a few metres away from the Botín Centre. Faster progress was made when the former mayor of Santander, Mr Íñigo de la Serna, became the Minister of Public Works: one part of the Enaire Collection (owned by the now referred as for Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda) was set up in Naves de Gamazo, a former port depot owned by the Port Authority of Santander. The project was approved in 2017 and inaugurated by 2021. Thirdly, in 2018 Banco Santander announced the so-called *Proyecto Pereda*, consisting of remodelling the historical headquarters of the bank to create a museum opposite the Botín Centre and moving the bank offices to another historical building a couple of streets away. The work, given respectively to architects David Chipperfield and Antonio Cruz/Antonio Ortiz, are proceeding at a good pace.

In Bordeaux, meanwhile, the museum cluster in the Chartrons district by the river Garonne has developed to such an extent that the area has already reached a gentrification stage. The entire district was totally transformed after the boost promoted by authorities with the Museum of Contemporary Art in the last quarter of the twentieth century. And in the new millennium, other landmarks such as the Museum of Wine and Business of Bordeaux, inaugurated in 2008, acted as the prelude to a much more ambitious project, the aforementioned *Cité du Vin*. Urban, architectural, economic, social and cultural regeneration is still underway from the Musée Mer et Marine, that leads to the Submarine Base. Built by the Germans during the Second World War³⁸, the Base was abandoned by troops in 1944 and after having served different purposes for local companies, it opened in the summer of 1999 for cultural leisure with a multidisciplinary schedule aimed at artistic creation including photographic exhibitions and musical events, but mostly virtual reality artistic projections. Hence its name, Bassins des Lumières: a universe of light and colour multiplied by the effects of their reflections on water pools (FIGURE 5). Nearby, in the Bacalan district, another city is emerging with fresh architecture and public spaces strewn with street art creations such as those made by Romdroid and Cordraid and art installations ranging from *Le vaisseau spatial*, by Suzane Treister (2018), to the Iboat. The latter consists of an old ferry which ceased

36. Ayuntamiento de Santander: «Igual pone en valor el posicionamiento de Santander como ciudad de referencia internacional», *Ayuntamiento de Santander* [online], Ayuntamiento de Santander, 2020, 22 October. <https://bit.ly/306ej89>. [Consulted on 24/10/2020].

37. Heroically systematized in Sazatornil Ruiz, Luis: «Museos en el *waterfront*. Proyectos culturales y regeneración urbana en el frente marítimo de Santander (1985-2020)», *RdM. Revista de Museología*, 82 (2021), pp. 117-135.

38. Regarding this submarine base see Bassins des Lumières: «Construction de la Base», Bordeaux, *Culturespace* [online]. <https://bit.ly/3gc3Cwh>. [Consulted on 17/01/2022].

operating in 2011 where numerous events are held in collaboration with art centres, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Manufacture CDCN, Museum of Decorative Arts and Design and even the Submarine Base.



FIGURE 5. BORDEAUX. INSIDE *BASSINS DES LUMIÈRES* WITH IMMERSIVE ARTISTIC PROJECTIONS MIRRORED AND MULTIPLIED ON THE OLD SUBMARINE BASE WATER POOLS. Source: Natalia Juan

However, the most remarkable instance can be found in Nantes, a city whose main urban regeneration project emerged in 2006 under the temporary name *Campus des Arts*, until in 2009 the City Council launched the project *Quartier de la Création* that became institutionalized by 2011 when the so-called *Fabrique Urbaine et Creative de l'Île de Nantes*³⁹ started operating. Since then the isle's western side, formerly renowned for its dockyards and quays, has been known as the «district of creation»⁴⁰. Indeed, abiding by its name, this area is nowadays swarming with artists and art venues that mark with plenty of character this part of the city, which chose not to have a large museum. Exhibition spaces abound while monumental public art is not scarce either on this creative isle in Nantes, i.e. Daniel Buren's

39. It consists of a cluster of creative industries in Nantes and its metropolitan area (Nicolas, Amélie; roy, Elise: La «clusterisation» du projet urbain de l'Île de Nantes. Nantes, CRENAU y Centre de Recherche Nantais Architectures Urbanités, 2015), but especially in the *Quartier de la Création* of l'Île de Nantes, where its headquarters are located in the Bâtiment Eureka. Île de Nantes: «Euréka», Nantes, SAMOA [online]. <https://bit.ly/3s1Sism>. [Consulted on 10/09/2021]. <https://www.iledenantes.com/operations/eureka/>.

40. The name contributed to delimiting and differentiating a particular zone in order to define it not only nominally but also in terms of urban signposting. See Île de Nantes: «Le quartier de la création et tous ses projets», Nantes, SAMOA [online]. <https://bit.ly/3gbDvpu>. [Consulted on 10/09/2021].

large *Anneaux* [Rings], but also less magnification of the individual genius can be found in urban artist interventions linked with one another and with the city by a green line. Collaborative art and cultural stimulation attached to associations are a common phenomenon in French Atlantic cities which grants their cultural districts particularly lively social interaction.



FIGURE 6. NANTES. INDUSTRIAL PREMISES HALLES ALSTOM IN HALLE 6 OUEST OF THE CREATIVE FACTORY WHERE THE ÉCOLE SUPÉRIEURE DE BEAUX ARTS DE NANTES-SAINT NAZAIRE IS LOCATED, AND ARTWORKS SET IN PUBLIC SPACE SUCH AS NATHALIE TALEC'S *IN A SILENT WAY* (2020). Source: Natalia Juan

The Isle of Nantes has been viewed as the antithesis of the model of urban renewal implemented in Abandoibarra, Bilbao.⁴¹ The initiative in Nantes was also originally political, led by the public company SAMOA —acronym for *Société d'aménagement de la métropole ouest atlantique*— created in 2003, which also commissions artists and grants funds for the arts based on social criteria, favouring projects that contribute to promoting active social participation and citizen access to local art. In order to nourish such fertile cultural ground SAMOA has been implementing a system to support artists and other agents of industries directly involved with art at every stage of the creative process, providing economic support and professional advice for the planning and execution of art ventures. Its flagship on l'Île de Nantes is *La*

41. Lorente Lorente, Jesús Pedro; Juan García, Natalia: «El Quartier de la Création de l'Île de Nantes ¿Antítesis del modelo Guggenheim Bilbao?», *Arte y ciudad* [online], 19, abril (2021), pp. 27-56. <https://doi.org/10.22530/ayc.2021.19.585>.

Fabrique: laboratoire(s) artistique(s), a municipal body created in 2009 whose iconic double building in the epicentre of the *Quartier de la Création* was inaugurated on 30 September 2011 as headquarters of the Trempolino association and other art groups⁴². One of its main lines of action consists of organizing and managing cultural and/or educational projects giving particular relevance to collaborative approaches. This is also the main purpose of the isle's star project at the moment: the *Creative Factory*, due to start operating in 2023 in the Alstom warehouses, former industrial premises surrounded by art installations in public spaces (FIGURE 6) reshaped as workshops for artists, computer experts and other educational and cultural services by architect Franklin Azzi⁴³.

Following in its wake, the echo of Bilbao's counter-model of urban regeneration reverberates also in the city of Brest. The publicity stunt pulled off to broadcast the popular cultural district of *Les Capucines* consists of what is claimed to be Europe's largest covered public square, with a surface area of 10,000m², highly convenient in this rainy coastal city. Located on a hill separated from Brest's historical centre by the river Penfeld⁴⁴, the district has always had a distinctive character that somehow lives on in this neighbourhood of 600 dwellings well connected to the city centre by tram or by a popular cable car—obviously also used for publicity and merchandising. In the year 2005 the public company *Brest Métropole* was formed with the participation of the State, the Navy, the Region, the Department of Finistère and the bank *Caisse des Dépôts*, to carry out the total overhaul of the former industrial warehouses for leisure and cultural purposes. (Figure 7). The process terminated in 2017 with the inauguration of *Les Ateliers des Capucins*, which house the huge multimedia library François Mitterand, a digital innovation factory with the label French Tech, the bookshop Les Curiosités de Dialogues, a skate park and even a climbing wall. Moreover, the tourist visit culminates with a triple heritage attraction: fans of the historical past may contemplate the sumptuous imperial barge used by Napoleon III to reach Brest in 1858; art exhibition lovers may linger in *Passerelle*, a National Interest Contemporary Art Centre; and the more unconventional may enjoy *Le Forneau*, one of France's National Centres of Street and Public Space Art⁴⁵.

42. Five associations from Nantes participated in the project from the onset: Ap033, Mire, Microfauna, Trempolino and Songo. Other associations joined after 2009 with the opening of the factory Dervallières, including the collective project La Luna —plastic arts—, Frascos —a coalition of composer instrumentalists—, Yolk —jazz—, Le Dernier spectateur —writing—, Fragil —cultural webzine— Charla producciones —transdisciplinary creation—, V.I.A.: Virus de Interés Artístico —artist development—, Sputnik Théâtre Production —alternative and politically committed theatre production— and Compagnie Chute Libre —hip hop culture management. Gravelaine, Frédérique de: «Les Machines, la Fabrique», *Le temps du projet*, Les chroniques de l'Île 3, deuxième trimestre (2010), pp. 57-59. Gravelaine, Frédérique de: «Fabrique: un projet de territoire plus qu'un équipement», *La création prend ses quartiers*, Les chroniques de l'Île 5, quatrième trimestre (2011), pp. 29-32.

43. It will become the heart of the Quartier Créatif, surrounded by the École des Beaux-Arts, the Pôle Universitaire Interdisciplinaire des Cultures Numériques, Nantes Tech, and the Food Hall, as claims the Pôle Économique dédié aux industries créatives et culturelles: «La Creative Factory devient un lieu», Nantes, SAMOA [online]. <https://www.creativefactory.info/>. [Consulted on 10/09/2021].

44. This quarter and its name originate in a convent that stood there from 1695 to 1790, later used as military barracks from 1801 to 1840, eventually becoming naval warehouses for shipbuilding and repair from 1840 to 2004.

45. Concerning Brest's cultural district, see la Fabrique des Capucins: «La Fabrique des Capucins», Brest, *Le Forneau et Passerelle* [online]. <https://www.lafabriquedescapucins.com/>. [Consulted on 28/01/2022].



FIGURA 7. BREST. OUTSIDE OF LES ATELIERS DES CAPUCINS REACHED BY THE ICONIC CABLE CAR LINKING THIS CULTURAL CITY TO THE CITY CENTRE. Source: Natalia Juan

THE IMPACT OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES ON ALTERNATIVE QUARTERS

The *bohème* may not be a French invention but no other country has taken more advantage of the allure of this kind of rebellious artistic life. The Belle Époque of Montmartre and Montparnasse is long passed but they continue to attract thousands of tourists, some of whom also show an interest in the latest art quarters in Paris. And in other French cities too. Brest and Nantes have made a strong commitment to promoting creative districts. Bordeaux boasts all manner of art enterprises, as urban renewal revolving around culture does not limit itself to the Chartrons and Bastide but has lately expanded throughout the city. High culture is the profile defining the district Euroatlantiques, next to Saint Jean station, a hub created around the *Maison de l'Économie Créative et de la Culture en Aquitaine* (MECA) which in 2019 inaugurated a building by the Danish architect Bjarke Ingels. Three regional agencies of visual and performance arts, literature and cinema have moved there, as well as FRAC Nouvelle-Aquitaine, the Artistic Office of the Region of New Aquitaine (OARA) and the Book Cinema Audio-visual Agency (ALCA) of New Aquitaine. Life in the southern suburbs on the other side of the Garonne river, around the *Espace Darwin* and the *Fabrique Pola*, is much more bohemian; though this area has also received economic support from the Council of Bordeaux after decades when it seemed doomed to a process of endless degradation.

The reconversion of *Fabrique Pola* was undertaken by and for artist groups following the precedent of other creative *friches* in France and elsewhere in Europe. Since 2009 this cooperative venture has received the work of 24 organizations, operating independently on their own projects, who contribute to promote the visual arts. Similarly, renovating the old Darwin barracks —not used for military purposes since 2005— was the initiative of a joint venture between entrepreneurs and private companies led by architect Philippe Barre, who purchased some warehouses from the Council of Bordeaux in the year 2009 (FIGURE 8). The transformation culminated in 2013 when two huge buildings in the area became spaces for co-working, artist and designer workshops, studios for creative agencies, technology start-ups and other ventures such as a *Magasin General* of organic products and the Géolibri bookshop. Pierre Schneider and François Wunschel created the sculpture installation that welcomes visitors into the complex. Titled *Vortex*, it consists of a group of boards on a metal structure girded with electric veins through which light runs. And of course, the surroundings are decorated with abundant graffiti murals, some by pioneering artists from the 1970's.



FIGURE 8. BORDEAUX. VIEW OF THE OLD WAREHOUSES OF DARWIN BARRACKS, THE EPICENTRE OF THE RENOVATION OF THIS ZONE OF THE CITY LOCATED JUST OPPOSITE THE CHARTRONS DISTRICT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIVER GARONNE. Source: Natalia Juan

Bayonne is also developing a similar, though more modest project on the right bank of the river Adour, in the Saint Esprit quarter, which gathers alternative creators with the largest number of instances of street art. A photography exhibition centre operates there located in an art deco building in the Lesseps quay, formerly the headquarters of the Direction des Affaires Maritimes, DIDAM; L'Atalante cinema

stands a few meters away and next to it the art centre Spacejunk, managed by an association of urban artists who, in collaboration with the Council of Bayonne have been organizing the art festival *Points de vue* of art in the street, whose fifth edition was held in 2021. During this international event, which lasts four to five weeks, the town becomes a large outdoor exhibition hall of street art murals and smaller artworks fully integrated within the urban landscape⁴⁶. From both banks of the river artworks attest to previous editions which facilitated encounters between artists through the programme *Un autre point de vue*, enabling them to make short stays in the territory of the so-called Communauté d'Agglomération Pays Basque et la Ville de Bayonne⁴⁷.

Even the elegant town of Biarritz prides itself on promoting not only institutionalized art but the most alternative creativity of street artists, the main protagonists of the festival *Colorama*, created out of the joint determination of the association *Biarritz Street Art* and the Mykka Agency in collaboration with the Council of Biarritz and the Region of New Aquitaine. It has had a permanent site since December 2018: Le MUR, acronym for *Modulable-Urbain-Réact*. It consists of a long wall in rue des Halles with four 8m²-panels where, thanks to the initiative of the Association UPDATERS and the support of artists METRO and TOONE86, artworks are displayed monthly created by renowned and upcoming, local and international artists using different techniques from acrylic to spray paint, ink and collage⁴⁸.

Unsurprisingly, the city of San Sebastian has also joined this comprehensive spirit of collaboration in support of upcoming artists with the collaboration of several public institutions and private entities such as Kutxa Kultur, of the Foundation Kutxabank. The chosen location is a former tobacco factory by the river Urumea, in the working-class quarter of Egia, a massive 1913 building which became an international centre of contemporary culture in 2015. It offers a variety of facilities for audio-visual creation (promoted by the Institute Etxepare, Zineuskadi and Filmoteca Vasca), photography, music, scenic arts and new technology, and schedules a vast array of exhibitions, workshops and events in its well-resourced library. A genuine laboratory of culture, following the precedent of Arteleku.

In Santander, a similar venture is the *Depósito de Elaborados de Tabacalera* set to host the so-called *Fábrica de Creación*, emerged in 2016 in the framework of meetings held between the Council and the city's cultural agents⁴⁹. Meanwhile, the closest venture may be the rosary of creative activities that are being developed in Sol street

46. Map of Bayonne showing all the mural art creations made during the festival *Points de vue*. Google my maps: «Points de Vue Festival 2017-2019», 13 October (2020). <https://www.pointsdevue.eus/un-autre-point-de-vue/>. [Consulted on 17/01/2022].

47. Regarding short artist stays in the area see Points de vue: «Un autre point de vue. Résidences de territoire», Bayonne: *Communauté Pays Basque* [online], 2021 <https://bit.ly/3s1Yctx>. [Consulted on 18/01/2022].

48. Concerning artistic actions on Le Mur de Biarritz, see Le MUR Biarritz: «Le MUR Biarritz», Biarritz, *Le MUR* [online], 2019. <https://bit.ly/3o73mml>. [Consulted on 28/01/2022] and updaters: «Le MUR Biarritz», Biarritz, *Updaters Association* [online]. <https://bit.ly/3odjQdc>. [Consulted on 28/01/2022], besides extensive coverage on social networks, Le MUR Biarritz: «Y. Huamán», *Instagram* [online], 19 January (2022). <https://bit.ly/34pOIQI>. [Consulted 28/01/2022] and Le M.U.R. Biarritz: «Yefferson Huamán», *Facebook* [online], 22 January (2022). <https://bit.ly/3Gfc6gW>. [Consulted 28/01/2022].

49. Balbona, Guillermo: «La «Fábrica de creación», que se asomará en 2017, se postula como nuevo objetivo cultural», *El Diario Montañés*, 23 September (2016), p. 43.

by a cultural association formed in 2010 by artists, gallery owners, theatre promoters and hoteliers and twinned in 2015 with the association which does the same on Palacio Valdés street and the surrounding area in Avilés. In that Asturian town life beyond the Niemeyer Centre also exists. Particularly noteworthy, with strong local and international network, is the Factoría Cultural (FIGURE 9), created in 2010. Set in an old factory, it co-operates with Barcelona's municipal programme *Fábricas de Creación*, and nurtures European contacts i.e. the network Trans Europe Halles whereby participants in the latter's artist residence programme may extend their actions on to other cities, preferably on the Atlantic waterfront⁵⁰. In local terms, Avilés Cultural Factory hosts the *Escuela Municipal de Cerámica* and the *Universidad Popular* and its activities also engage the *Centro Municipal de Arte y Exposiciones* creating synergies through a wide range of packages aimed at creative and culture industries such as the *Escuela de Artes y Oficios de Avilés* and the *Escuela Superior de Arte del Principado de Asturias*.



FIGURE 9. AVILÉS. FACTORÍA CULTURAL WHERE INTENSE CULTURAL ACTIVITY TAKES PLACE. Source: Jesús Pedro Lorente

Likewise, creative hubs besides Abandoibarra abound in Bilbao. Admittedly, the art sector is fostering an alternative revitalization model in the district known as Bilbao la Vieja, while further down the river Nervión another project of urban revitalization through culture is being implemented combining official planning and the bottom-up «artivism» of associations and socially-engaged groups⁵¹. The

50. Tielve García, Natalia: «La Factoría Cultural...», pp. 245-247.

51. See Zorrotzaurre: «Isla creativa», Bilbao, *Comisión Gestora de Zorrotzaurre* [online]. <https://bit.ly/3ALLxyU>. [Consulted 26/07/2021]. Its more alternative approach can be spotted on the greater attention paid to scenic arts (Pabellón 6 and Zirkozaurre) and the traces of the *abertzale* left-wing movement. Gómez Martínez, Javier: *Museografía...*

project Zorrotzaurre⁵²—from the term Zorrotza aurre, «opposite the Zorrotza quarter»— constitutes the latest major urban regeneration plan in Bilbao with the final goal of turning this location, a former peninsula, into a «creative island», the new label adopted since 2015 by the Zorrotzaurre Management Committee⁵³. A degraded industrial area created when the Deusto channel was excavated is revived⁵⁴ and reconverted as a new district to be intertwined with the rest of the city through bridges⁵⁵. Affordable dwelling, industrial areas, social and cultural facilities as well as public leisure venues will be provided in this impoverished zone using the plan designed by architect Zaha Hadid in 2004 as a guideline. This plan was later revised and expanded at the request of various associations and groups with the ultimate purpose of creating an island for living, working and enjoyment.⁵⁶ So far, Terminal FICC—acronym for Fábrica de Industria Cultural y Creativa— has been set up there as well as the *Centro Patrimonial de la Cultura del Trabajo Industrial*, where the *Departamento de Cultura y Política Lingüística del Gobierno Vasco*, in collaboration with *Asociación Vasca de Patrimonio Industrial y Obra Pública*, stores industrial heritage and the remains from old dismantled factories in Zorrotzaurre⁵⁷. The *Escuela de Creación Cinematográfica de Bilbao* (ECCBI) also operates there. Furthermore, since 2009 *Espacio Open*, in the old Artiach biscuit factory, has catalysed social and creative projects such as the international fair Maker Faire, the digital production laboratory Fab Lab Bilbao and the Sunday market Open Your Ganbara. This entourage was chosen for the IED Kunsthal, Bilbao's Superior School of Design, since 2019 set in the industrial building known as Edificio Papelera del Nervión, which promotes collaborative art initiatives in the city. The Kunsthal School of Design is located in one of the 17 industrial buildings classed in Zorrotzaurre's Special Urban Plan, in this particular case because of

Gómez Martínez, Javier: «Puertos creativos. Marco atlántico», in Sazatornil Ruiz, Luis (ed.): *Paisajes portuarios. La construcción de la imagen de las ciudades atlánticas (siglos XVI-XXI)*. Barcelona, Universitat de Barcelona (forthcoming).

52. Mayoral López, Ruth: «Zorrotzaurre: redescrición de un proceso de transformación urbana desde la iniciativa cultural», *Revista vasca de sociología y ciencia política*, Extra 53-54 (2012-2013), pp. 534-543. Sarrigante Gómez, Íñigo: «Del proyecto Guggenheim a la revitalización de Zorrotzaurre: regeneración del tejido urbano y cultural del Gran Bilbao», *Ábaco*, 80-81 (2014), pp. 48-52.

53. Meantime, the Zorrotzaurre Management Committee publicizes the actions carried out in this part of the city in order to inform citizens of the ongoing transformation process. Mayoral López, Ruth: «Zorrotzaurre Art Work in Progress y la importancia del 'mientras tanto'», *Trama & texturas*, 32 (2017), pp. 94-97. See Zorrotzaurre: «Inicio», Bilbao, *Comisión Gestora de Zorrotzaurre* [online]. <https://www.zorrotzaurre.com>. [Consulted 11/01/2022].

54. Vivas Ziarrusta, Isusko: «Zorrotzaurre y Ribera de Deusto: de península a ínsula. Transformación de un frente de agua portuario-metropolitano en Bilbao», in Nadal i Ferreras, Joaquim: *La ciudad y el mar. La patrimonialización de las ciudades portuarias*. Gerona, ICRPC, Institut Català de Recerca en Patrimoni Cultural, 2017, pp. 143-171. Vivas Ziarrusta, Isusko; Lekerikabeaskoa Gaztañaga, Amaia: «Zorrotzaurre: de península portuaria e industrial, a isla de «ensueño» para el nuevo Bilbao terciario-residencial. Horizonte de transformación social, urbana y espacial», *Kobie. Antropología Cultural*, 20 (2016-2017), pp. 53-70. Lekerikabeaskoa Gaztañaga, Amaia; Vivas Ziarrusta, Isusko: «Reflejos de espacios 'ausentes' y lugares 'disidentes' en la maritimidad de Bilbao y su Ría. Creación actual de paisaje fluvial y lámina de agua en Zorrotzaurre», *Zainak. Cuadernos de Antropología-Etnografía*, 37 (2019), pp. 55-74.

55. Martin Jacobs, Miren Estensoro: *Smart City Development in Zorrotzaurre, Bilbao: a case analysis*. Bilbao, Instituto Vasco de Competitividad, 2020.

56. Otaola Ubieta, Pablo: «Zorrotzaurre: una isla para vivir, trabajar y disfrutar», *Revista de Obras Públicas*, 3588 (2017), pp. 106-113.

57. Apraiz Sahagún, Amaia; Martínez Matia, Aina: «Estudio histórico patrimonial de la arquitectura industrial de Zorrotzaurre (Bilbao)», in Álvarez Areces, Miguel Ángel (coord.): *Patrimonio industrial y paisaje. V Congreso sobre Patrimonio Industrial y la Obra Pública en España*, Gijón, CICEES, 2010, pp. 53-58.

its vaulted structure, unique in the area and one of the few existing instances in Biscay. A creative district for mixed uses is thus being created combining official and private initiatives both in reconverted buildings and in newly created ones. A project that has been greeted as a model because political forces are taking more notice of citizen participation in decision-making processes⁵⁸. It seems highly likely that after twenty-five years of the «Guggenheim Effect» we may be witnessing a ricochet effect, a fresh shockwave that reverberates elsewhere and may eventually be referred to as the «Zorrotzaurre Effect», provided that this new cultural district becomes an international paradigm.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum set the trend in cultural policies at the turn of the century. Just as every main city in Europe longed for a museum like the Louvre by the year 1800, everyone wished for their own Guggenheim by 2000. Yet the commonest idea was to build a large signature sculpture-architecture container of exhibitions hoping for economic and tourist returns without caring to promote the surrounding urban and artistic ground. The cities of the Bay of Biscay assumed that cultural clusters would grow in the shade of these icons, by virtue of a symbiotic rhizome interrelation, though their development is highly different in each particular case. Other districts more engaged in creative industries and cross-collaboration between institutions and citizens have proliferated; yet one of the most remarkable instances of this counter-model is taking shape precisely in Bilbao, not far from the Guggenheim. Is the shockwave about to bounce back?

58. Garrido Díez, Almudena: «Al participar se hace ciudad en el entretanto. Urbanismo emergente en Bilbao», *Cuadernos de Vivienda y Urbanismo* [online], 11:22 (2018). <https://bit.ly/3G8Jdmj>. [Consulted 28/01/2022]. Garrido Díez, Almudena: *La participación ciudadana en la sostenibilidad urbana. Acciones sociales que transforman barrios y ciudades* (PhD thesis available online), Universidad de Deusto, 2018. <https://bit.ly/3IM3Oj5>. [Consulted on 28/01/2022]. Mireles Puga, Addí V.; Benavides Rincón, Guillermina; Garrido Díez, Almudena: «El movimiento social urbano como agente crítico para la planificación de ciudad: hacia un desarrollo sostenible de la Ribera de Deusto y Zorrotzaurre al 2030», *OBETS*, 15:2 (2020), pp. 589-624. Zubero Beaskoetxea, Imanol: «'Primero tomaremos Manhattan': regeneración urbana, insurgencias ciudadanas y emergencias culturales en Zorrotzaurre (Bilbao)», *Urban*, 3 (monograph Los conflictos de la ciudad contemporánea) (2012), pp. 65-80.

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