



# Zehartu I

Eduardo Chillida

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## On display

**Title/Description:** Zehartu I

**Artist/Maker:** Eduardo Chillida

**Born:** 1925

**Object Type:** Graphics

**Materials:** Ink, Paper

**Technique:** Etching

**Measurements:** Unframed: (h. 794 x w. 600 mm) Framed: (h. 815 x w. 635 x d. 36 mm)

**Accession Number:** 1260

**Historic Period:** 20th century

**Production Place:** Spain

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Eduardo Chillida (1924-2002) was born in San Sebastián in the Basque region of Spain. Many of his titles are in the Basque language of Euskera. The meaning of the word 'Zeihartu' translates as 'to turn aside', 'to skew' or 'to tilt'. [1]

Chillida consciously distorts the perfection of geometric ideals in this work and uses a blocky linear composition to explore the human approximation of the "right angle":

"It must be remembered that the Greeks, when they discovered the right angle, - it was a lovely discovery - it was the angle that man made with his shadow. That is the discovery of the right angle; they called it gnomon (indicator). This angle has 90 degrees, or really, was this a later rationalization? We don't know if the angle that they discovered had 90, 89 or 92 degrees. It's what the man made with his shadow. In fact, it is a living angle, it can have all kinds of variants, it will walk around like a plumb line that doesn't stop. I pay more attention to these things than to the absolute definition of the 90-degree right angle. In this way, if I move or if I move the rigour or the coldness of the right angle whether towards one slightly obtuse or slightly more acute, the spatial responses are infinitely richer." [2]

This human angle in Chillida's work gives his compositions an organic geometry that is alive - possessing a vitality that vibrates naturally. [3]

In his youth, Eduardo Chillida was a professional soccer player for the team Real Sociedad. After suffering a serious knee injury, he began training as an architect at the University of Madrid (1943-46). However, Chillida never finished this degree, and instead, took lessons in drawing at Madrid's Circulo de Bellas Artes and joined a sculpture workshop. [4]

He set up his first studio in Paris in 1948 and started making sculptures in plaster. Returning to the Basque region in 1951, he began to work in forged iron, moving away from figurative sculpture and embracing a more abstract approach to the exploration of space and form. In addition to making monumental sculptures, Chillida created numerous drawings, etchings, lithographs and woodcuts over the course of his career.

'Zeihartu I' was printed in an edition of 64 (numbered to 50) by Atelier Maeght, Saint-Paul-de-Vence, and published by Maeght Editeur, Paris. This etching is numbered 43/50. Chillida produced six compositions in the 'Zeihartu' series. In addition to 'Zeihartu I', the Sainsbury Centre also has an edition of 'Zeihartu III' and 'Zeihartu IV' in its collection.

Vanessa Tothill, March 2023

[1] Cat. 73009 in Martin van der Koelen 'Eduardo Chillida: Opus P.II: Catalogue Raisonné of the Original Prints' (Gingko Pr Inc., 1997), p. 36 -7; p. 395-6.

[2] 'Chillida 1948-98' (Sofía: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 1999), p. 50, quoting Eduardo Chillida, 'At the School of Engineers of Bilbao', 1998, p. 18.

[3] 'Chillida 1948-98', p. 54.

[4] 'Chillida 1948-98', p. 286.

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## Further Reading

Eduardo Chillida, 'At the School of Engineers of Bilbao', 1998

Martin van der Koelen 'Eduardo Chillida: Opus P.I: Catalogue Raisonné of the Original Prints' (Gingko Pr Inc., 1999)

Martin van der Koelen 'Eduardo Chillida: Opus P.II: Catalogue Raisonné of the Original Prints' (Gingko Pr Inc., 1997)

Martin van der Koelen 'Eduardo Chillida: Opus P.III: Catalogue Raisonné of the Original Prints' (Gingko Pr Inc., 2000)

'Chillida 1948-98' (Sofía: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 1999)

'Chillida' Hayward Gallery, London 6 September - 4 November 1990 (London: South Bank Centre, 1990)

'Chillida October 26, 1979-January 6, 1980', Pittsburgh International Series, Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute (Paris: Maeght éditeur, 1979)

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