

ART IN SAN SEBASTIAN

SCULPTURE ROUTES



ROMANTIC BELLE ÉPOQUE

The second half of the 19th century was a time for planning and developing the overall vision of the city. After the fire of 1813, a decision was made to commence reconstruction but it soon became clear that the available surface area would be limited in scope and that it would be necessary to demolish the city walls in order to enable Donostia-San Sebastián to grow.

The city that was to be built after the tearing down of the walls was intended to be a city that had been designed and developed for commercial exchange. However, a series of circumstances (the role of the capital, the summer visits of the queen and the fading significance of commerce in the economy of the city, among other factors) led to a decision to concentrate on services linked to summer visits.

Some of the products of this vision included the opening of a boulevard and the construction of a casino, theatres and hotels, in addition to the decision to adorn the city's gardens with sculptures in order to increase their aesthetic appeal. The gardens were also important in the sense that they displayed sculptures that would commemorate people that played an important role in the life of the city.



1 RAIMUNDO SARRIEGUI (1964-2002)

José Lopetegi Goikoetxea
(Donostia-San Sebastián 1896 – unknown)
and **Nino Barriuso** (Palencia 1939).

Raimundo Sarriegui (Donostia-San Sebastián 1838-1913) was a Donostian musician who set up his own charanga (brass ensemble) and composed many of the songs that are played at the different festivals that take place in the city. However, he is first and foremost known for being the composer of the San Sebastián march as well as almost all of the pieces that are played on the drums. The recital of the “Marcha de San Sebastián” marks the beginning of 24 hours of drum rhythms which fill the entire city with their beat. This sculpture is made up of a bust of the musician himself and the figure of a tamborrero (drummer).

The current sculpture was created in 2002 and is a copy of the original concrete design that was completed in 1964.



2 VENUS

Unknown author

This is a perfect example of a sculpture that was placed in a garden for the simple purpose of embellishing it, with a sculpture of Venus, the goddess of love, being chosen for this purpose. Here Venus is represented in a classical style.



3 SECUNDINO ESNAOLA (1954)

Julio Beobide Goiburu
(Zumaia, 1891-1969)

Secundino Esnaola (Gipuzkoa, Zumarraga 1878 – Donostia-San Sebastian 1929) was a well-known composer and choirmaster. After being appointed director of the Orfeón Donostiarra choir, he brought a new perspective to proceedings and allowed women and children to take part in the choir.

As part of the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the death of Secundino Esnaola, the Orfeón Donostiarra choir decided to present a bust of the musician as a gift to the city, enlisting the artist Julio Beobide of Zumaia for this project. Julio Beobide worked closely with imagery and was a good friend of Ignacio Zuloaga.

This bust, which borrows from the style of the latter, is of the realist tradition with a high level of attention devoted to the details of the face.



4 ALMIRANTE OQUENDO ['ADMIRAL OQUENDO'] (1894)

Marcial Aguirre Lazcano

(Bergara, 1841 – Donostia - San Sebastian 1900)

This sculpture pays tribute to Antonio de Oquendo (Donostia-San Sebastian 1575-La Coruña 1640) and is displayed in the square that bears his name. Donostia City Council commissioned the piece in 1878 from the sculptor Marcial Aguirre of Bergara, the latter being the artist behind the figures of illustrious Gipuzkoan people that adorn the facade of the Palacio Foral (Provincial Palace) in Donostia-San Sebastian.

The artist spent three years in conflict with the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, who consistently refused to approve the sculpture due to disagreements about its details: they felt Oquendo de Aguirre looked too young, they questioned the historical accuracy of the armour that he wore and so on. These setbacks were joined by others of a more financial nature, but the statue was finally unveiled on 12 September 1894: the anniversary of a resounding victory by Oquendo against the Dutch. As was inevitably the case due to the battle with the elements, one week before the statue was due to be unveiled its arm was broken during the founding process. The sculpture used in the opening ceremony was crafted from painted plaster and substituted for bronze once the founding process had been completed for a second time.



5 HOMENAJE A USANDIZAGA ['TRIBUTE TO USANDIZAGA'] (1916)

José Llimona Bruguera
(Barcelona 1864 - 1934)

José María Usandizaga (Donostia-San Sebastian 1887 – 1915) was a renowned musician and composer that left an important musical legacy despite dying at a young age (28 years). The death of José María Usandizaga hit the city of San Sebastian with all the force of an earthquake. José María played an extremely important role in the social life of the city, commonly performing in cafes and casinos. He had a playful character and extensive social connections, all of which made him one of the city's most cherished figures. This sense of love for the musician, combined with the anguish that accompanied his loss, led the Orfeón Donostiarra choir to propose creating a sculpture which would pay tribute to the composer, and for this task José Llimona was chosen: a modernist sculptor who was highly regarded at that time.

From a stylistic point of view, we can see that the style of creating the allegorical figure of Inspiration is a typical feature of the work of Llimona. Here, Inspiration is presented as a woman that is distraught after having lost one of those that meant most to her. The representation of the bust of José María Usandizaga is in keeping with the more academic schools of thought.

6 URDANTEA, ELCANO, OQUENDO, LEZO Y LEGAZPI (1885)

Marcial Aguirre Lazcano
(Bergara, 1841 – Donostia-San Sebastian, 1900)

This is a collection of five busts of prestigious sailors from Gipuzkoa, drawing on the marine exploits and naval battles that crown the central part of the façade of the Provincial Council building in Gipuzkoa.

These five busts, created by Marcial Aguirre, embody the relationship between the province of Gipuzkoa and the sea and capture the importance of illustrious Gipuzkoans at the end of the 19th century.



7 BAILARINAS ['DANCERS'] (1911)

Unknown author

This work is the result of a request that was placed by the City Council to what was then known as the Museo Moderno de Madrid (the current Prado Museum) for sculptures which could embellish the gardens of the city. This particular piece presents a graceful representation of three dancers. The three girls each carry an instrument and dance to the sound of their music. Their appearance is more reminiscent of the Greek periods, with more dynamic forms and a more Baroque representation of the hair.

Two of the girls display their torso as their dresses billow in the dance. The central figure, which marks the composition of the work, creates an axis between the other two, with the movement of the right arm complementing the movement of the skirt towards the right.





8 DUQUE DE MANDAS ['DUKE OF MANDAS'] (1926)

José Joaquín Barriola

(Donostia - San Sebastian, 1895 – Venezuela, Caracas, 1984)

Fermín Lasala y Collado (Donostia-San Sebastian 1832 – Madrid 1918), Duke of Mandas through his marriage to Cristina Brunetti, was a resident of Donostia who served in public roles: he was a deputy, senator, a minister for development and an ambassador in Paris and London, among other roles, and he contributed to the growth of the city at a time of immense change. He also formed part of the commission for demolishing the city walls, in addition to participating in the agreement for the construction of the Madrid-Irun railway line, and on his death he donated his library, the Palace and the Cristina Enea Park to the City Council of Donostia-San Sebastian and the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa. These accomplishments, among many others, inspired the construction of a bust after his death, which was placed opposite his former home.



9 REINA MARÍA CRISTINA ['QUEEN MARIA CRISTINA'] (1918)

Marcial Aguirre Lazcano

(José Díaz Bueno, Madrid 1894 – Donostia - San Sebastian, 1979)

This monument constitutes a continual evocation of symbolic and allegoric elements and represents the Queen standing by her throne.

At her sides, on the two friezes, we see a representation of the People and of the Intellectuals who look towards their Queen to praise her and profess their love for her. At the edges are two figures representing Virtue and Charity: two defining characteristics of the Queen that were to be emphasised.

Inspiration is taken from Classical Antiquity in a bid to evoke the nobility of the Queen's deeds through the semi-circular form that the monument presents. On the lower part of the monument we can observe four allegorical figures representing Gipuzkoa, Bizkaia, Alava and Navarra, the four weaving together and guarding the Queen's throne. At the feet of these figures lies a fountain which symbolises the fountain of wealth that the Queen contributed to Donostia-San Sebastian.