

PELLO IRAZU

Zuretzat

29 May – 30 July 2025

CarrerasMugica is pleased to present *Zuretzat*, from 29 May to 30 July, the artist's fifth solo show at the gallery following ones in 2006, 2009, 2014 and 2019.

ZURETZAT. (A RADIANT GLOW)

In *The Perfect Crime*, Baudrillard argued that "the image can no longer imagine the real, because it is the real. It can no longer dream it, since it is its virtual reality. It is as though things had swallowed their own mirrors and had become transparent to themselves, entirely present to themselves in a ruthless transcription, full in the light and in real time."

Does an image have mass? Or size? Does it occupy space? Can you touch it? With the sculptures in this exhibition, Pello Irazu would appear to answer in the affirmative. Before the attentive eye of the beholder, his objects dematerialize to the point of becoming images. Yet, transmuted into mere virtuality, they still retain some of their original features. Maybe the reason for the existence of these objects is none other than to expose a contemporary symptom.

Materiality draws us closer to the object. Even from a distance, we are able to perceive its closeness, feel the texture of its surface, its temperature, its weight... Matter appeals to the skin and tends towards contact. It wants to shrink space and to narrow distance. Matter wants to envelop us with its loving embrace, with delicacy, though at times the gesture becomes violent and wishes to crush us, to displace us, to deny us access to the place it occupies.

There are situations in which matter engages with the realm of speculation, with the fatality of images. Polished surfaces, glass and sheets of water reflect and remind us that the image is an inaccessible state of matter. Narcissus put that undeniable truth to the test. On a quest for the body of the image, his breath was drowned out by liquid matter until it killed him.

On the other hand, the trompe l'oeil—which is what some of these objects are—alludes to a material reality dressed up as something else, aided and abetted by the image. And, furthermore, if it is a readymade—a manufactured product which replaces another one, a polyurethane beam imitating an oak one—it also speaks to us of a social taste for simulation, for the inauthentic, telling us of a preference for the visual over other properties.

When the image completely takes over the body, when the objectivity of its physical presence is displaced towards a type of presence beyond physicality, we would be, to fall back on Benjamin, in the realm of the aura; in the realm of ambiguous or changing distances, proximities are experienced as distances, while the familiar is perceived as strange. A sense of estrangement that is manifested in the sculptures in this exhibition, the result of alchemy that transforms materials—highly material, to the point of coming from waste itself, from non-metabolized remains of social consumption, from garbage—into a radiant glow that warns of the instability, the abandonment and the dissatisfaction of a culture that has forsaken its own foundation in order to set out on the uncertain journey of elusive realities, of ambivalence and relativity.

CarrerasMugica

Pello Irazu (Andoain, 1963) lives and works in Bilbao. After graduating from UPV-EHU with a BA in Fine Arts, he was awarded the ICARO prize to the most outstanding young artist in 1988 and a Fulbright scholarship to develop his artistic work in New York in 1990, the year when he was also selected to take part in the *Aperto* section at the Venice Biennale. He lived in New York until 1998. His work can be found in collections including MACBA, Fundación La Caixa, Mumok (Vienna), Museo Reina Sofía, Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao, Museo Patio Herreriano, CA2M, The Museum of Contemporary Photography (Chicago) and Marugame Hirai Museum (Japan) among others. In 2017 the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum held a retrospective of his work and in 2020 he received the Gure Artea prize in recognition of his artistic achievements.