

**NAIZ**

**Marcel Pena**

*Current Affairs Editor*

20/11/2025

## **"Not in Our Name": Over 1,000 Basque Artists Against the Guggenheim Urdaibai Project**

More than 1,000 names from the world of culture have signed the manifesto "Not in My Name" initiated by the Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop platform. In the manifesto, they call for the suspension of the project, the protection of natural space, and investment in local culture.



## **'Not in Our Name': Over 1,000 Basque Artists Against the Guggenheim Urdaibai Project**

More than 1,000 names from the cultural world have signed the manifesto 'Not in Our Name' driven by the platform Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop. In it, they demand a halt to the project, the protection of the natural space, and investment in local culture.

Presentation of the 'Not in Our Name' manifesto and short film 'The Sacrifice of Urdaibai!' at Zirika! community center.

*Presentation of the 'Not in Our Name' manifesto and "The Sacrifice of Urdaibai!" at Zirika! community center. (NAIZ)*

The Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop platform has collected over 1,000 signatures from the art world against the museum project in the heart of the Biosphere Reserve. Under the slogan

'Not in Our Name,' the artists demand an end to the Guggenheim Urdaibai project and call for "transparency" from the institutions involved in this operation.

The text begins by criticizing the actions of the Provincial Council of Bizkaia and the Government of Lakua, which they describe as "deeply irresponsible with regard to the cultural sector." They also reject the idea that "in the name of art and culture, nature should be harmed." "An environment that has been declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO must be cared for by everyone," they insist.

Economically, they question Lakua over the project's budget, both for its construction and its maintenance: "Knowing that the current financial support from the Basque Government to the Guggenheim Bilbao is approximately eight million euros annually, we find it hard to believe that the financial investment won't have direct repercussions on the Culture budget."

Finally, they argue that "the project to build a new Guggenheim museum anywhere in the Basque territory does not respond to the needs, wishes, and proposals of the Basque cultural environment," and therefore, they call for an end to the Guggenheim Urdaibai project and for their voices to be heard in favor of a "unique, rich, and vibrant culture for the inhabitants of our territory."

Among the signatories of the manifesto are names such as the musicians Aiora Renteria, Haimar Arejita, Olatz Salvador, Roberto Moso, and Zuriñe Hidalgo; bertsolaris Amets Arzallus, Aner Peritz, and Oihana Bartra; actors and actresses Ane Zabala and Itziar Ituño; writers Andrea Momotio and Fito Rodríguez; groups Brigade Loco and Neomak; comedian Julen Axpe; and filmmaker Sara Fantova, as well as artistic and leisure spaces like La Sinsorga, Katiuska Antzerki Taldea, and Pabellón 6, along with international ones like the Associació Esplai de Circ – Encirca't (Catalonia – Brittany), D'A Festival Cinema (Barcelona), Esucela Popular Färnebo (Sweden), and Maeve Stafford (Ireland).

In an event held this Thursday at Zirika! Herri Gunea in Bilbao, illustrator Asisko Urmeneta presented the demands made by the artists in the 'Not in Our Name' manifesto. Filmmaker Galder Irusta also participated in the event, presenting the short film 'The Sacrifice of Urdaibai.'

Regarding the more than 1,000 filmmakers, writers, painters, musicians, sculptors, actors, dancers, academics, and other artistic profiles who have supported the manifesto, Urmeneta emphasized that this is a "significant number" and, as stated in the statement, criticized the lack of commitment from the Guggenheim towards Basque artists: "Basque artists know the precariousness we live with in the Basque Country, how many doors we have to knock on to get our work done, how many funding avenues we have to open... And then we see a large container like the Guggenheim with barely any Basque artists. We don't feel represented."

### **'The Sacrifice of Urdaibai'**

On the other hand, Galder Irusta presented the work 'The Sacrifice of Urdaibai,' a short film that began as a project at New York University and is now participating in the 'Bertoko begiradak' section of Zinebi. In this short film, the filmmaker presents the dilemma faced by a young consultant who is tasked with obtaining ecological approval to build the Guggenheim Urdaibai.

Joining Irusta were actresses Itziar Manero and Cécile Azuelos, as well as designer Betitxe Saitua, who handled the artistic direction. Itziar Ituño and Kepa Alesso complete the cast.

**'The Sacrifice of Urdaibai'** will be screened next Tuesday, November 25, at the Arriaga Theater as part of Zinebi. It will also be shown on December 7 at the Azoka de Durango, in the Irudienea space.