

BASQUE TRADITIONS TRANSFORMED INTO ART

Aratxu Giménezek natura erabiltzen du lehengaitzat egurrezko eta harrizko sortze lanak egiteko. Lan orien bitartez, bere jatorria bilatzen du, artisau olerki batean euskal herriaren kultura, tradizioa eta ohiturak goretsiz.

When asked to describe her art, the sculptor Aratxu Giménez wonders if it is possible to explain because it was born from a forest or a mountain. This Venezuelan of Basque origin interprets culture as a chain, which springs from nature and continues with legends and art. For this reason, she chooses the forest (wood) and mountains (stone) as the raw materials for her creations, which take shape to finally become a narrative and a tribute to her roots. In this manner, she humbly returns to the quarry, the cabinetmaker's workshop, the craftsmanship of the jai-alai basket, to symbols and ancestors and Basque mythological beings, to whom she offers her sculptures in a natural setting, on the earth and under the sky.

One of her works is *Izen Sakratua* (the sacred name), which was already exhibited at the collective exhibition entitled 'Aztarnak' (Footprints), at the Laurak Bat Basque-Navarrese



Center in Valencia. This creation is based on the *Maldan Behera*, by the Basque poet Gabriel Aresti. Its size, 220 centimeters (roughly seven feet) makes it look like a growing tree.

Most of the works by Aratxu Giménez are related to Basque mythology, legends and tradition. Thus, *Bizidun* is composed of two grapevine roots, with the four elements arranged around them, represented by handcrafted objects dancing counter-clockwise like an improvised *lauburu*.

In addition to popular legends, one of which inspired her to create *Biziak* (in alabaster stone), the sculptor now focuses her work on symbols. In this new stage, many of her creations are based on the ancient Basque numerical system. ■

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The women's volleyball team from the Basque Center in Rosario will tour Euskadi

Biscay, Araba, Gipuzkoa eta Euskadiko selekzioekin lehiatuko da ekainean txapelketa batean.

At the initiative of the Euskal Etxea Zazpirak Bat in Rosario, Argentina, the women's volleyball team from this Basque Center will visit Euskadi in June to participate in a four-way tournament with teams representing the provinces of Álava, Biscay and Gipuzkoa. This competition, which will be held June 15th to 17th in each of the three provinces, was organized by the Basque Volleyball Federation, which has also scheduled an exhibition game between a Basque team representing all three provinces and the players from Argentina.

Zazpirak Bat managed to obtain institutional support from the Municipal Government of Rosario in order to make this trip, which will contribute to



uniting the two nations and creating sport and cultural links between Euskadi and Rosario.

The Rosario expedition will arrive in the Basque Country on June 14, and begin competing against the Álava team one day later. On June 16th, it will play against Biscay, and will complete the four-way tournament the next day with its game against the Gipuzkoan team. Later, it will end its visit with a match against a team representing the three provinces of Euskadi. ●

The American town will reinaugurate its jai-alai courts

Mountain Home prepares to celebrate the Basque element of its population in August

After the successful NABO Annual Convention held in Los Banos, California, May 25th, 26th and 27th, which brings together more than thirty Basque entities in the U.S., the Basque community will be meeting this summer in Mountain Home, Idaho. A series of activities and events have been scheduled for August 25th to commemorate the Basque element of the town and of Elmore County, of which it is the county seat.

The events include a meeting of representatives of Basque clubs and entities from all over the country, a festival, and sports and cultural competitions and performances. The local jai-alai courts will also be reinaugurated following restoration. The courts were built in 1911 by Basque immigrants who settled in this county, located one hour east of Boise.

For the members of the local 'Euskal Lagunak-Elmore County Basque Association', this event has special meaning. It acknowledges their hard work since the association was founded five years ago. "We started the club with the idea of caring for, preserving and ensuring the continuity of the Basques' rich historical contribution to the development and identity of this county", explains Jo Anchustegui, native of Mountain Home and

secretary of 'Euskal Lagunak'.

The town does indeed boast a rich history with strong Basque influences, which now belongs to everyone. One of the most intense, and possibly most emotional, moments will be the reinauguration of the jai-alai courts that Pedro Anchustegui built next to the Basque hotel of which he was the proprietor. The courts, now registered as a historical monument, are located one block away from another unique structure, the Bengoechea Building, erected in 1913 by another Basque immigrant, José Bengoechea. ●

