

HEMENDIK

Euskal Herriko 50 objektu ikonikoren istorioak
The story of 50 iconic objects from the Basque Country





HEMENDIK

JATORRIZKO IDEIA, SELEKZIOA ETA IKONOGRAFIA
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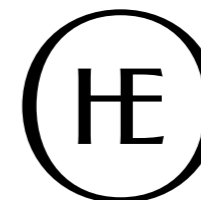
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HITZAURREA

Hainbat ikuspegi izan daitezke herrialde bat ulertzeko: historia, paisaiak, biztanleak, kultura, hizkuntzak, esperientziak... Liburu honetan, objektuen bidez, Euskal Herriko aberastasuna eta aniztasuna jorratu nahi izan ditugu.

Industriako eta eskulangintzako ekoizpena ez da behar bezainbat kontuan hartzen, eta bere balio kulturala gutxietsia da. Objektu baten historiak testuinguru anitz gurutzatzeko aukera ematen du, izan geografikoa, historikoa, politikoa edo soziala. 50 produkturen selekzio honen bidez, hainbat erakundetan banatuta dagoen eta memoria kolektibo eskasa duen herrialde baten alderdi franko azaltzen ditugu. Betidanik, objektu bat diseinatzeko, egin, berregin, begiratu, berritu, hobetu, egokitu, asmatu, arriskatu egin behar izan da. Sormen-prozesuaren bide luze hori da hemen bereziki interesatzen zaiguna.

Objektu baten historian zenbat eta gehiago sakondu, orduan eta gehiago konturatzen gara lotura ikusezinak daudela sorkuntzen artean, eta oso historia luze baten parte direla. Hari horietatik abiatzen dira ekimen berriak. Bizikleta elektrikorik ez hodi metalikorik gabe, hodi metalikorik ez eskopeta kanoirik gabe, eskopetarik ez arma zuririk gabe, armarik ez forjarik gabe, forjarik ez errekarik eta meategirik gabe. Iragana ezagutu behar da etorkizuna asmatzeko. Etortzekoa dena sumatzeko, ezagutu egin behar da.

Ez ditugu kontuan hartu ez kronologia, ezta objektuen tipologia ere. Herrialde honen historiaren antzera, memoria material eta immaterial hau ezin da muntaia zartatu eta librean baino kontatu, egitura irekian, etorkizunari begira.

PREFACE

There are several ways in which to learn about a country: looking at its history, landscapes, inhabitants, culture, languages, experiences... We decided to approach the wealth and diversity of the Basque Country through its things; so we called this book Hemendik - the word in Basque meaning 'from here'.

Little reflection is given to industrial or artisanal production; its heritage and cultural value is only too often underestimated. And yet exploring the story behind an object provides an opportunity to encounter an array of various contexts, whether geographical, historical, political or social. Through this selection of 50 objects we reveal numerous facets of a country that, split in different entities, lacks collective memory.

When devising things, it is, and has always been, necessary to do and redo, make and remake, scrutinize, innovate, rework, improve, adapt, invent, venture. It is this long road of discovery, this creative process that particularly interests us here. By digging deep into an object's story, we can unearth the roots of new initiatives. No electric bikes without metal tubing, no metal tubing without rifle barrels, no rifles without cold weapons, no weapons without forges, and no forges without rivers and iron ore. It is important to know the past before inventing the future. And to anticipate things to come, it is necessary to recognise that thing's potential.

We chose not to take into account the chronology or typology of the objects. Mirroring the history of this country, this tangible and intangible memory can only be recounted in a splintered collection within an open structure, open to its future.

DISEINUA, GAUZATU EGITEN DEN ONDARE MATERIAGABEA: ETENGABE BERRITZEN DEN TRADIZIOAREN AZTERKETA.

Zer da diseinu tradizionala? Tesi bat idazteko adinako gaiak Oraingoan, honela defini liteke: «funtzio zehatz baterako objektu bati ematen zaion forma, eskura dagoen material egokiena erabilita». Definizio sinpleegi horretan ehunka, milaka urteetan handik eta hemendik jaso eta metatu jakinduria biltzen da. Horri esker, arunt gauza desberdinak sortu izan dira material berarekin eta funtzio berbererako, garaiaren edota tokiaren arabera. Horrela ulertzen dugu, bada, diseinu tradizionalako ondarea: gauza bat baino areago, harengan agertzen zaigun «egiten jakitea» delakoa. Hortaz, objektuak berak baino, etnografiak objektuen diseinuak aztertzen ditu.

Etnografiak «etnia» izaten du aztergai. Gaur egun etniaren kontzeptua ez da batere erabiltzen, zientifikoki hain gutxi; besteak beste, etnien, herrien, kulturen arteko mugak -lurralde-administrazioenak ez bezala- lausoak direlako, eta aldakorrik: euskarak historikoki -eta sozialki- gibelera egin duen eta arestian nola edo hala berreskuratzen ari den Euskal Herri honetan, zer da «euskal diseinua»? Ba al dago Euskal Herri oso-osoan eta Euskal Herrian beste inon ez aurkitzen ez den «euskal objektu» bat? Nekez. Baina mundu globalizatu honetan uka liteke euskal kultura dagoenik? Inondik inora ez.

Kulturetan ez da aurkitzen elementu kimiko pururik, beharrik ere ez. Baina badaude ezaugarri batzuk, eskusiboak izan gabe, kultura bat besteengandik bereizten dituztenak. Adibidez, euskal objektu tradizionaletan formaren eta funtzioaren arteko harremana oso estua izaten da: beren funtzionalen dira ederrak, beren soilean dotoreak. Apaingarri gutxi, irudiak pintatu edo grabatuak, ia batere ez. Horra hor pegarra, ura buru gainean eramateko ontzia; horra hor kaikua, ergonomikoki perfektua esnea jezteko, garraiatzeko eta bere horretan irakiteko, zurezkoa izanagatik ere. Ez dute apaingarririk. Egia da zurezko koilaretan edo adarrezko edalontzietan agertzen direla; baina horrek badu funtzio bat: elkarrengandik ez nahastea, gaur egun «kustomizatzea» deitzen dugun hori.

Bai, hilarriak, argizaiolak, kutxak, hil-maindireak oparo apainduak egon ohi ziren. Baina heriotzari edota ezkontzari lotu elementu sinbolikoak dira: gure begietan nahasi arren, sinboloa eta apaindura ez dira bat. Sinbolismoa galdu ahala, beraz, apaindura murriztu eta horrela iritsi zaizkigu XIX. mendeko gehienak, praktikotasun hutsera mugatuak: zentzu honetan, argizaiolen kasua paradigmaticoa da. Alderantziz ere ondoriozta genezake: zertarako balio dute uztaerietako apaindurek, gerora azkonar- edo ardi-larraz estaltzen badira? Bada, segur aski, gaur egun ezagutzen ez dugun balio sinbolikoa zutelako. Ez ahaztu azkonar-atzaparrak kutun gisa erabili izan direla, eta idi-pareak sorginen begizkoengandik babesteko erritoak XX. mendera arte iritsi zaizkigula.

Mundu tradizional hartatik zer geratzen zaigu euskal diseinuaz gogoeta egin ahal izateko? Esentzialismoan erori gabe, baina -hain zuzen estaturik gabeak direlako- kultura ez estataleki uko egiten dien erlatibismoari men egin gabe, XXI. mendeko euskal etnografiak badu erronkarik: «euskal diseinua» zer den baino gehiago, zertan den aztertzea, zer datorkion iraganetik, zer beste kulturetatik, zer ekarpen egiten dien beste kulturei, eta zer utziko dien datozen euskal belaunaldiei.

Hemen aurkezten zaigun liburua ez da azterlan etnografiko bat. Egileak diseinuaren profesionalak direnez gero, formari, materialari, ergonomiari, funtzioari, ekoizteko eta gerora erabiltzeko behar den energiari, ahaleginari, kostu ekonomikoari erreparatzen diete. Zeren eta, marrik ustez xumeenaren gibelean ere, arunt azterketa sakonak kausitzen baitira, saio aunitzen eta beste hainbeste zuzenketen emaitzak.

Horregatik, hemen aurkezten dituzten objektuak ez dira «euskal» deitura izan lezaketan guztiak, ikerketa baten emaitzaz hautatuak baizik. Badaude zaharrak, badaude berriak, badaude berrituak, badaude eskulangileenak eta industrialak, artistikoak eta praktikoak, badaude ikoniko bilakatuak, badaude jende gehienendako ezezagunak, badaude kanpotik bertakotuak eta -dirudienez- jatorriz bertakoak, badaude klasikotzat hartuak eta badaude etnografiak orain arte inoiz jorratu gabeak... Testuak arintasunez idatziak dira, edozein irakurlek erraz goza ditzan, gaia ezagutu gabe ere. Ez dira, haatik, arinki joratuak, luze-zabal hausnartuak baizik.

Irakurleak jakinen du lan honen balioa preziatzen. Nik, hala ere, zertzelada batzuk proposatu nahi ditut, gogoetagai.

Berrikuntza berritzaileenak ere ez dira inprobisatzen: gaur egungo bizikletak ulertzeko, lehenik ezagutu behar da Eibarren Erdi Aroaz geroztik garatu zen burdingintza, armagintza batik bat.

Era berean, pertsona bakar baten emaitza dirudiena, eta batzuetan hein handi batean hala dena, komunitate baten testuinguruan ulertu behar da; bestela ez baitzatekeen gauzatuko, edo ez baitzukeen arrakastarik izanen. Testuingurua familia, herria, eskualdea, Euskal Herria, mundu osoa izan daiteke. Eibarren bertan umorez beren buruaz diotenari jarraitu: kopiatu bai, hobetu ere bai. Eibarko adibideari berriro helduz: euskal diseinu tradizionala ez da soilik baserrietakoa edo baserrietarako,

urbanoa ere bada. Euskal etnografiak maiz atzendu bide badu ere, Euskal Herria ez da mendetan mendietan isolatu herri beregaina: Mendebal Europako pasabide nagusienetako baten erdigunean gaude, itsasoz eta lehorrez. Gure bereizgarri ez da harreman ezak sortu originaltasuna, etengabeko joan-etorrien eraginpean egotearen ondorioz tokian tokiko eta garaian garaiko beharrezko produktu propioekin erantzun izana baizik.

Hamaika adibide agertzen dira liburuan. Nik elkar loturik dagoen pare bat azpimarratu nahi dut: mekanizazioaren mesedetan, idi-pareak aspaldi handian desagertu dira baserrietatik... bai eta karrika eta portuetatik, zamalan eta garraioetarako gehiago erabiltzen baitziren, nekazal giroan baino. Kopetakoak egiten zituen larrugintzak eboluzionatu eta gaur egun gerriko eta poltsa dotoreak eskaintzen zaizkie bertakoei eta turistei; abereak estaltzeko mantak, aldiz, mahai-mantel. Zergatik ez? Lehengaien eta tekniken jakintza galdu beharrean, errealitate berrietara egokitzeko gaitasunaren adibide apartak dira biak ala biak.

Etnografia garaikideak kontuan hartu beharko lituzkeen irizpideak naturaltasun osoz agertzen zaizkigu liburu honetan: historiaren zentzua -gauzak ez baitira betidanik, ez betiko, eta bai etengabeko bilakabidean denboran zehar-; kaletar/baserri-tar dikotomia maiz faltsuaren gainditzea -bereziki euskaltasuna baserrira mugatu nahi denean-; halaber, mendi berdin artzain edo itsaso berdin arrantza kontzeptu murriztaileen gainditzea; eta, batez ere, tradizioetik modernitateko pasabidean euskaltasuna ezabatu ez baina ingurura eta aldaketetara egokitzeko gaitasun harrigarria. Hau guzti hau begitantzen zait nabarmen liburu honetan, euskal diseinuaren joritasuna agertzearekin batera. «Euskaldun petotzat» jo genitzakeen bi alderdi nabaritu nahi nituzke: ongi eginiko lanaren gorazarrea -gaur «kalitatea» deitzen duguna- eta funtzionaltasunaren estetika gailentzea, apaindura hutsen gainetik.

Bukatzeko, ikerketa honek badu nik bereziki eskertzen dudana ezaugarria: hautatu objektuak askotarikoak dira, Euskal Herrian egin den edo egiten den diseinuaren aberastasunaren adierazgarri, baina denek eta batbederak berezko balioak dituzte. Nortasun handikoak dira, bistan dena. Alabaina, ez dira «identitarioak», ez direlako aldarri -edo oroigarri- gisa «euskal objektuak» izateko sortu. Beste gabe, euskaltasuna darie.

Xabier Kerexeta Erro
Etnografoa

DESIGN, INTANGIBLE HERITAGE MADE TANGIBLE: STUDY OF A CONSTANTLY EVOLVING TRADITION.

An entire thesis would barely be enough to precisely define traditional design. Nevertheless, a good start would be this characterisation: “the form given to an object to ensure a specific function by using the most suitable materials available.” A rather simplistic definition that encompasses knowledge gathered here and there, over hundreds and even thousands of years, which has enabled very different objects to be created from the same materials and for the same function, according to the time and place. So this is how we consider the heritage of traditional design; what interests us more than the object itself is the know-how and craftsmanship that the object reveals. That’s why ethnography does not study objects themselves as much as it does their design.

Ethnography, as the name suggests, studies “ethnicity”. Yet this concept is hardly used anymore, especially in the scientific field, as the boundaries between ethnic groups, peoples and cultures are blurred and inconsistent, contrary to those recognised by territorial governments. How can “Basque design” be defined in our Basque Country, whose language experienced a historic (and social) decline and with significant, painstaking efforts now being made to revitalise it? Is there a “Basque object” that can be found everywhere in the Basque Country but nowhere else? That’s highly doubtful. But, on the other hand, the existence of Basque culture in this globalised world cannot be denied.

Cultures are not composed of pure chemical elements and, for that matter, do very well without any periodic table. But certain characteristics, without being exclusive, distinguish one culture from other cultures. In traditional Basque objects, the relationship between form and function is very close: they are beautiful things for their practicality, their simplicity, the scarce ornamentation and the almost total absence of painted or engraved images. Just look at the “pegar”, a pitcher carried on the

head to transport water; or the “kaiku”, ergonomically ideal for milking dairy animals, then transporting and heating milk in the first step of the cheese-making process, despite being made of wood. These objects have no ornamental adjuncts. Of course, decorations can be found on wooden spoons or drinking horns, but these decorations serve the purpose of differentiating each item – yesteryear’s slant on customisation.

It’s true that gravestones, “argizaiol”, shrouds and chests were richly decorated. But these are symbolic things related to death or marriage: although our contemporary gaze tends to confuse symbol and ornament, which are two very different notions. However, as symbolism disappeared, decoration became rare and, from the 19th century, the large majority of objects stayed within the bounds of pure pragmatism. A good example is the “argizaiol”: a thin wax candle would be wound around a carved wooden ‘candle-board’; the board was turned as the candle burned in honour of the dead. But what about the other side of the coin – why decorate oxen yokes if they were then covered with badger or sheep skin? In all likelihood because this object had a symbolic value that we’ve lost sight of today. Remember that badger claws were used as a talisman, and rites to protect cattle from magic spells continued up until the 20th century.

What remains of this traditional world that can give food for thought on the question of Basque design? Without falling headlong into essentialism where the object’s very characteristics make it what it is, while at the same time resisting cultural relativism that rejects non-state cultures (precisely because they are bereft of any state), Basque ethnography of the 21st century is facing an important issue. Rather than defining “Basque design”, it is more a question of analysing its current status: what does it draw from the past, what has it borrowed from other cultures, what does it in turn provide to other cultures, and what will it leave for future generations of Basques?

This book is not intended as an ethnographic study. As its authors are professionals working in the field of design, they have focused on the form, materials, ergonomics, function, energy, effort and economic cost that enables the objects to be produced and used. Indeed, the seemingly simplest line may mask the most extensive research, and may be the result of countless trials and adjustments.

The objects that you will find here do not constitute an exhaustive list of things that might receive the appellation “Basque”; they were selected after long and diligent research. The book recounts old, recent, revamped, artisanal, industrial, artistic and practical things. Some have become iconic, others are little known by the public at large, some have been imported from elsewhere and others are – apparently – local, a few are considered as classic, others have never been approached through the perspective of ethnography. The stories behind the objects are told in a light-hearted way that will appeal to everyone, including those who have never engaged in the observational science of ethnography. Nevertheless, the content is far from

being superficial as the texts provide an in-depth understanding of the objects.

The reader will readily appreciate the value of this book. However, I would like to suggest some modest considerations that may provide food for thought.

Even the most innovative new features are not improvised: today’s high-tech bicycles emerged in the Basque Country from Eibar’s metalworking industry, especially gunsmithing, developed over time since the Middle Ages.

Likewise, what may seem to be the brainchild of a single person (even though that is largely the case) should be considered in the context of a community, as that is what enabled its creation and success. This context could be the family, village, region, the Basque Country, the entire world. As it is so well put by the people of Eibar, who are not lacking in humour: Copy, why not? Improve, hell yes!

While talking about Eibar, it should be noted that traditional Basque design is not confined to rural areas; it is also urban. Although Basque ethnography tends to forget, the Basque Country has not been populated by self-sufficient people isolated for centuries in the mountains: we are right in the middle of one of Western Europe’s main land and sea routes. Our particularity does not lie in any ingenuity born from an absence of interactions, but from the fact of having been able to meet the needs of each place and period with our own products, which resulted from the impact of incessant comings and goings.

This book offers a multitude of examples, of which I would like to highlight two: yoked pairs of oxen have long disappeared not only from our farms, but also from the streets and ports, as they were used more for hauling and transporting than for toiling in the fields. Leatherwork that enabled oxen to be adorned

with ornamental headgear evolved into today’s offering of elegant leather goods to locals and tourists. As for the large linen cloths that used to cover the oxen’s backs, they repositioned into covering tables. Why deprive ourselves? These two items are a perfect illustration of the ability to adapt things to new situations rather than allow the knowledge of materials and techniques to be lost forever.

The criteria that contemporary ethnography should take into consideration appear quite naturally in this book: a sense of history, as nothing has existed for ever, nor ever will – everything constantly evolves; overcoming the often erroneous urban/rural dichotomy, especially when attempting to confine Basque culture to a rural setting; abandoning reductive associations of the mountain and the shepherd, or the sea and the sailor; and especially the Basque identity, that, far from disappearing in the transition from tradition to modernity, has demonstrated an astonishing capacity of adaptation to its environment and change. These paradigms were very clear to me in this book, as was the abundance of Basque design. There are two aspects in particular that I think could be considered as being “typically Basque”: praise for work done well – what we call “quality” today – and the predominance of aesthetics in the function of simple decoration.

Finally, there is a characteristic of this research that I especially appreciated: the objects chosen are varied, representative of the wealth of design in the Basque Country, both past and present, while presenting each of its own specific values. All these objects have a naturally strong personality. Yet they are not “identity-related” as they were not created as “Basque objects” for drumbeating advocacy or as a souvenir. They are Basque by nature, that’s all.

Xabier Kerexeta Erro
Ethnographer



**Euskal Herriko 50 objektu
ikonikoren istorioak**

The story of 50 iconic objects from
the Basque Country



ELOSEGUI
01 — 022



EL CASCO
02 — 032



PATAUGAS
03 — 040



DOS CAFETERAS
04 — 046



VICINAY
05 — 054



MAKINA TRESNA
26 — 236



ALKI
27 — 246



BILBOKO
BALDOSA
28 — 256



TRAINERUA
29 — 262



FORGE ADOUR
30 — 272



XISTERA
06 — 062



TREKU
07 — 070



FOURNIER
08 — 078



LAFFARGUE
09 — 088



ORBEA
10 — 098



LAIA
31 — 280



LA GULA
DEL NORTE
32 — 288



LOREAK
MENDIAN
33 — 294



MAKILAK
34 — 302



BOJ
35 — 314



J. VELA
11 — 108



NOTOX
12 — 114



IRIZAR
13 — 122



KAIKUA
14 — 132



RODON
15 — 140



WAVEGARDEN
36 — 322



AZKOYEN
37 — 330



OTARREA
38 — 338



ETXEONDO
39 — 346



SOKOA
40 — 354



SILENNIS
16 — 148



TXIKITERO
17 — 156



RETEGUI
18 — 166



URDINA
19 — 176



BELLOTA
20 — 184



HARRIA
41 — 362



VOLTAIRE
DESIGN
42 — 372



PALMADERA
43 — 380



ARMAK
44 — 388



MARRAK
45 — 396



LAS TRES Z.Z.Z
21 — 194



GAMESA
22 — 202



TXOKOLATEA
23 — 212



SANCHESKI
24 — 220



ESPARTINA
25 — 228



FAGOR
46 — 402



POTERIE DE
CIBOURE
47 — 410



SALTO
48 — 418



B.LUX
49 — 426



ZAPI GORRIA
50 — 434

KANTAUARI ITSASOA



01	Elosegui	L6
02	El Casco	I4
03	Pataugas	S5
04	Dos Cafeteras	Ñ8
05	Vicinay	D3
06	Xistera	P3
07	Treku	K3
08	Fournier	H8
09	Laffargue	Ñ2
10	Orbea	H5
11	Vela	L12
12	Notox	O1
13	Irizar	L5
14	Kaikua	P6
15	Rodon	Ñ2
16	Silennis	L3
17	Txikitero	E3
18	Retegui	N2
19	Urdina	I5
20	Bellota	I6
21	Las tres ZZZ	Ñ8
22	Gamesa	F3 / Ñ9
23	Txokolatea	O1
24	Sancheski	N3
25	Espartina	S5
26	Makina tresna	J5
27	Alki	P3
28	Bilboko baldosa	E4
29	Trainerua	J2
30	Forge Adour	O1
31	Laia	P11
32	La gula del norte	L5
33	Loreak Mendián	L3
34	Makilak	Q2 / S7
35	BOJ	I4
36	Wavegarden	K4
37	Azkoien	Ñ13
38	Otarrea	J5
39	Etxeondo	L5
40	Sokoa	N2
41	Harria	M6
42	Voltaire Design	Ñ2
43	Palmadera	Ñ4
44	Armak	I4
45	Marrak	R4
46	Fagor	I6
47	La poterie de Ciboure	Ñ3
48	Salto	M4
49	B.Lux	H3
50	Zapi gorria	Ñ8

— 01 —

Behin bazen feltro-ilezko txapel bat.
Pirinioetako mendizaleen buru gainean sortu zen,
eta mundu zabaleko buruetara zabaldu.

ELOSEGUI

This is the story of felted wool headgear that started life
on the heads of Pyrenean mountain dwellers before
finding itself firmly fastened on heads around the world.





ELOSEGUI TXAPELA

Behin bazen feltro-ilezko txapel bat. Pirinioetako mendizaleen buru gainean sortu zen, eta mundu zabaleko buruetara zabaldu.



Paue ondoko Bellocq herriko Andre Dena Mariaren elizan, txapela buruan Konpostelara doan erromes baten eskultura dago. Obra horrek adierazten du Erdi Aroan, Pirinioetan, buruko mota hori erabiltzen zutela.

Izan ere, mendiko klima aldakorra zela-eta, nekazariak, artzainak eta, oro har, kanpoan lan egiten zutenek, burua estali behar izaten zuten. Bai udako eguzki erregarriaren azpian, bai neguko euri eta haize hotzen pean, menditarrek laster berenganatu zuten artilezko diskoa, burua babesteko. Euskaraz, hiru izen eman dizkiogu: boneta, kapelua eta txapela.

Eskuz egiten zen kapelua mekanizatu zen gero, XIX. mende erditsuan. Talo biribil handi bat trikotatzen zuten, bainu batean murgiltzen, eta moldatzen, zuntzak tinkatzeko. Prozedura hori zenbat eta luzeagoa, orduan eta sendoagoa eta irazgaitzagoa kapelua. Gero, feltro-ilezko burukoia karraskatzen eta pintatzen zuten, eta zurezko pieza baten inguruan lehorrarazten, behin betiko forma eta neurria har zitzan.

Pixkanaka, Pirinioen bi aldeetan, kapelu famatua zelaietara eta hirietara jaitsi zen. Baina erabilera militarrek eman zion nazioarteko fama. Izan ere, kapelua euskal unitate militarren osagai bereizgarri bihurtu zen. Tertzioen armadak (Espainiako infanteriako unitate administratiboak) 1827ko inspezio baten karietara idatzitako zirkularrean, adibidez, hau agertzen da: «Euskal txapela eta oihal zurizko galtza ere emango dizkiegu».

Dozena-erdi bat urte geroago, gerra karlistak piztu ziren, eta Euskal Herrian bereziki latzak izan zirenez, euskal txapela eta bere irudia Europa osora zabaldu ziren. Buruan kapelua zera-maten gerlarien grabatuak nazioarteko prentsan zabaldu ziren, lehen orrietan, gerra horiek Europa osoko gatazka bat islatzen baitzuten; absolutismoaren eta liberalismo konkistatzailearen arteko lehia, hain zuzen.

Karlista bolondresak
Ricardo Balacaren grabatua
Zumalakarregi Museoa,
Ormaiztegi

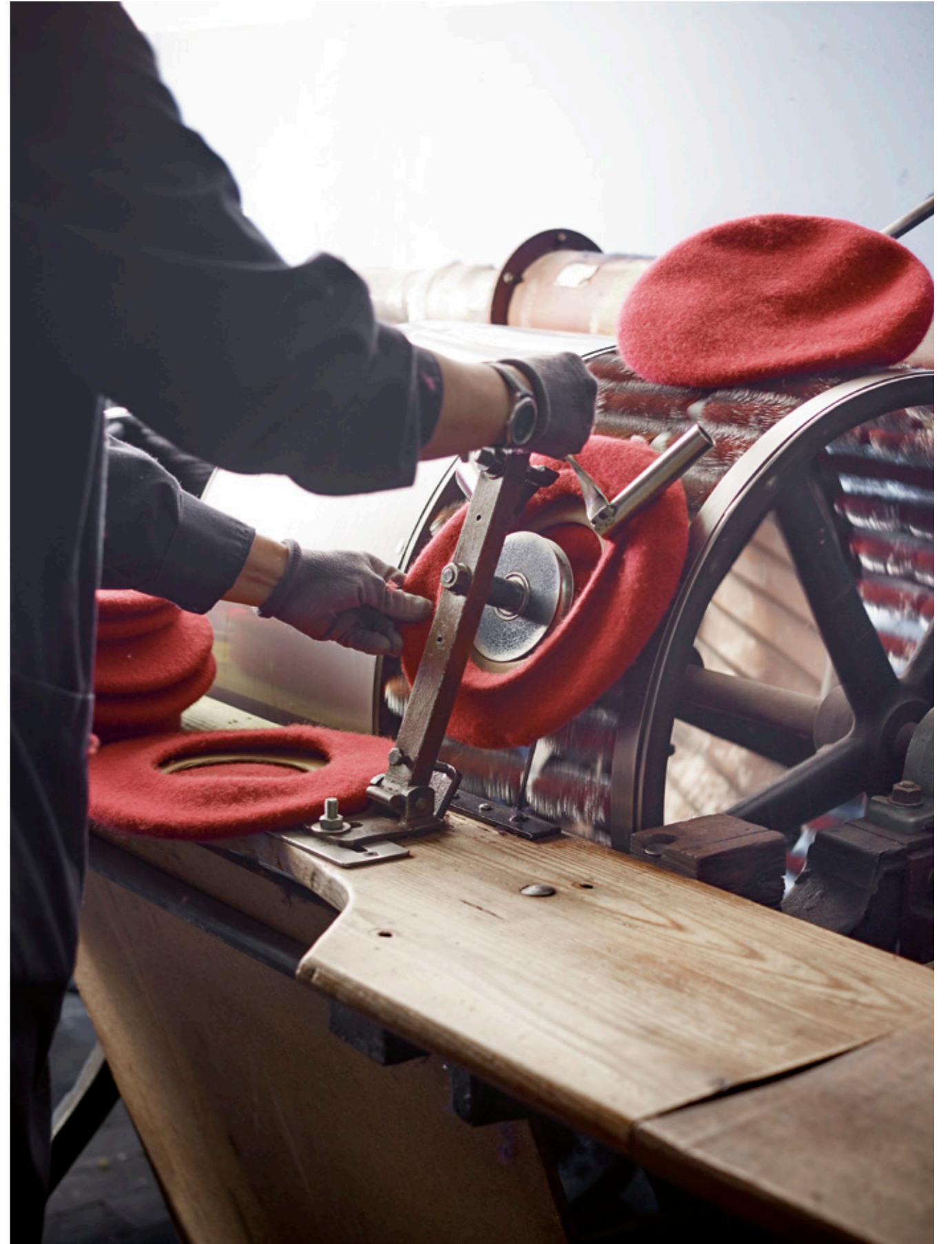
Carlist Volunteers
Engraving by Ricardo Balaca
Museum Zumalakarregi -
Ormaiztegi



1858an, Antonio Elosegui testuinguru politiko eta ekonomiko joriaz baliatu zen Gipuzkoan, Tolosan, Euskal Herriko lehen txapel fabrika sortzeko. Ori ibaiaren ertzean kokatu zuen, ekoizpen mekanizatu prozedura berriak behar zuen energia hidraulikoa erabiltzeko. Hasieran, egunean berrogeita hamar ale ekoizten zituzten. Artilezko burukoaren arrakastari esker, 1888rako, ekoizpena egunean 3000 alera iritsia zen. Garai hartan, enpresak 260 langile zituen.

Horrela bihurtu zen jatorriz Pirinioetako txapela euskal nortasunaren ezaugarri. Hainbat esatera ditugu euskaraz horren lekuko. Esaterako, «txapela buruan eta ibili munduan», gure nortasunarekiko atxikimendua eta, aldi berean, atzerrirako joera islatzen dituena.

Bigarren Mundu Gerran, erresistentzia ikur bihurtu zen; askatasunaren aldeko herri mugimenduen sinbolo izan zen (Che Guevararen bitartez); Mozambikeko, Mexikoko edota Belgikako militarren buruetan ere ibili zen. Kapeluak, beraz, aspaldi utzi zuen sorterrria, munduan ibiltzeko. Hala ere, orain ere, zazpiehun txapel ekoizten dituzte egunero, Tolosan, Elosegui Euskal Herriko azken txapel fabrika biziarazten duten hogeitabat langileek.





01

01 Greta Garbo Elosegui txapela buruan
Greta Garbo wearing an Elosegui beret

02 Emakumeak industrian: XX. mende hasieran Tolosako lantegian
Women in industry: here in the Tolosa factory at the beginning of the 20th century



02

THE ELOSEGUI BERET

This is the story of felted wool headgear that started life on the heads of Pyrenean mountain dwellers before finding itself firmly fastened on heads around the world.

In Notre-Dame church, in Bellocq near Pau, a sculpture illustrates a pilgrim wearing a beret, en route for Santiago de Compostela. This artwork bears witness to the use of this headgear in the Pyrenees as early as the Middle Ages.

And for good reason, the capricious mountain climate encourages farmers, shepherds and other inhabitants of the region who work outdoors to keep their heads covered. In the scorching sun of summer and the freezing wind and rain of winter, the heads of mountain dwellers are very quickly covered by this flat-crowned hat made from sheep's wool.

Hand-crafting of the beret was replaced by a more automated process in the middle of the 19th century. A large flat circle is knitted then plunged into hot water for cleaning and fulling, which tightens the stitches and makes the fabric denser. The longer the felting process, the more robust and waterproof the beret will be. This felted wool hat is napped to give the felt its soft, fluffy texture and then dyed before being dried around a piece of wood that gives it its final shape and size.

The famous beret gradually spread to the lowlands and towns on both sides of the Pyrenean mountain range, but it was for its military use that it gained its international reputation. Indeed, the beret quickly became a distinctive element of Basque military units. For example, in an administrative document dating from 1827, from military inspection authorities of the Tercios (administrative and tactical Spanish infantry), we can read "We will also give them a Basque beret and a pair of white cloth trousers."

Just six years later, the Carlist Wars, which were particularly violent in the Basque Country, disseminated the image of the "Basque beret" throughout Europe. Indeed, engravings illustrating Carlist troops wearing berets were on all the front pages of the



international press. These wars made the headlines as they embodied the widespread confrontation between absolutism and new liberalism occurring on the Old Continent at that period.

In 1858, Antonio Elosegui took advantage of this prosperous political and economic context to found the first beret factory in the Basque Country in Tolosa (Gipuzkoa). It was built on the banks of the River Oria to benefit from the hydropower necessary for this newly automated manufacturing process. The factory produced fifty berets a day at the beginning. The success of the woollen felt hat drove production to 3,000 articles a day in 1888: the company employed 260 people at the time.

This is how the beret, originally from the Pyrenees, became the symbol of the Basque identity. Many popular expressions in Euskara pay tribute to it, like the proverb "Txapela buruan eta ibili munduan", (Wear a Basque beret and walk the world), in reference to the strong-willed adventurous spirit of the Basque people who have taken this accessory to the four corners of the world.

Symbol of the Resistance during the Second World War, emblematic of popular liberation movements (Che Guevara helped to promote it), fastened to the heads of soldiers in Mozambique, Mexico and even Belgium, the beret has long since left its homeland. Nevertheless, seven hundred berets are still made every day in Tolosa by around twenty employees who continue to work at Elosegui, the last beret manufacturer in the Basque Country.