Museum offers Chillida exhibition

By CLINT GOODSON
Thresher Fine Arts Editor

An extensive retrospective exhibition of the sculpture, drawings, and collages of eminent Spanish sculptor Eduardo Chillida opened on Oct. 4 at the Museum of Fine Arts, destined for a seven week showing.

Chillida, a relatively young artist, has come to be recognized as outstanding in his generation and his medium. Since his first important exhibition, at the Galerie Maeght in Paris in 1955, he has received five major awards, including the Carnegie Prize at the 1964 Pittsburgh International Exhibition.

Large Pieces

The museum owns and has exhibited one major sculpture of Chillida’s in the past. This is the “Abesti Gogora” (translation: “magnificent lyric”), a construction from large wooden blocks done in 1960. With this exhibit the museum adds another permanent work: “Abesti Gogora V,” an absolutely staggering construction in pink Spanish granite. It has been installed in the garden behind the museum.

Chillida progressed artistically from architecture to sculpture in clay and plaster and then into work with forged iron. The most intriguing works on exhibit are the two pieces that the museum owns, along with “Abesti Gogora III,” another large construction in wooden blocks in the same series.

Emotional Rumblings

The numerous exhibited sculptures in forged iron document the influence of architecture on the artist and also the emotional rumblings that must have found form in the “Gogora” sculptures.

The drawings and collages in the museum’s collection are unlike those of Pierre Soulages, who was exhibited at the museum this spring. Certainly Chillida seems more versatile than Soulages, and these drawings are just one facet in his art, but Soulages is the more evocative artist in this abstract expressionist vein. Chillida is best in his massive sculptures.

This exhibit once again attests the virtuosity of Museum Director James Johnson Sweeney. Last season’s exhibitions ranged from an impressive cubist collection entitled “The Heroic Years,” to Australian aboriginal art, to a retrospective exhibition of Soulages; if this year’s fare can match that, we should have an exciting season on our hands. The Eduardo Chillida exhibit is an impressive start.