

# Navarran government steps in to save art centre

HUARTE. Since January, the galleries have been empty in the Centro de Arte (Contemporary Art Centre) in Huarte, northern Spain, and they will remain so while a definitive agreement about its funding is finalised between the city and the regional government of Navarra, which is expected in April.

This latest development is an about-face from the announcement in early February that the Navarran government would cut its contribution from €600,000 to €450,000. But, when City Hall proclaimed that it would no longer maintain its €1.2m contribution, an agreement was reached a few days later in which the regional government agreed to take over the financing of the museum.

Since its inauguration in October 2007, the 6,500 sq. m museum has mounted 22 exhibitions. While some say that the Fundación Ordóñez-Falcón, which manages the museum, has accomplished a great deal with very little, it hasn't been without opposition. Since taking office in 2007, the mayor of Huarte has complained that the museum is a "big load" for the city to carry.

Previous administrations had committed to a €1.2m annual contribution on top of the €9m the city had provided for the museum's construction. "But that was two mayors ago," said



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Enrique Ordóñez, director of the Fundación Ordóñez-Falcón.

Mr Ordóñez told *The Art Newspaper*: "The Huarte City Hall, in this moment of crisis, cannot maintain the centre. So they've sought help from the Navarran government, asking them to take over the management. It's certain that Navarra will take it over. We just don't know the formalities yet. I doubt the City Hall will be able to pay anything. I think they'll try not to pay anything, anyway."

Mr Ordóñez predicted that the 2009 programme is likely to be more modest. "I think our programme this year will be more in an educational line, focusing on local and emerging artists," he said. **M.E.**