

New exhibit at the Basque Library

The Basque Library now has a new window exhibit!

The Basque Culture has been for a long time characterized as an oral culture, where orality has had a strong role in cultural transmission. The best known oral cultural activity is *bertsolaritza* or Basque improvised poetry.

Bertsolaritza is a form of sung improvised poetry, an important cultural expression for the Basque people. Improvisers (*bertsolari* in Basque) are well known by the population and it is normal to have them performing at all kind of festivities. *Bertsolaritza* is the Basque contribution to improvised poeties around the world. Basques have been able to preserve, modernize and publicize *bertsolaritza* in the world.

The exhibit includes explanatory texts, a short documentary on *bertsolaritza* by the well-known Basque director Asier Altuna, and photographs of *bertsolariak* in the Basque Country and the US, and a selection of our books about *bertsolaritza*.



As you may know, the Basque Library at the University of Nevada, Reno is now part of Kulturartea, a network of academic organizations working together in the field of improvised poetry, including Basque *bertsolaritza*, and other similar activities around the world. This exhibit is our first visible effort to increase the awareness about *bertsolaritza* in Nevada and beyond.

We are very grateful to the Center for Basque Studies which is kindly giving all our visitors complimentary copies of the work [*Voicing the Moment: Improvised Oral Poetry and Basque Tradition*](#). This volume collects contributions of leading scholars to the field of orally improvised poetry. It includes, on one hand, essays on improvised poetry and, on the other, essays in which leading practitioners of *bertsolaritza* study their own poetic art and its techniques.

The exhibit has been designed by Iñaki Arrieta Baro and Shannon Sisco, and put in place by Shannon and our student workers Vivian Lewis and Annabel Gordon. It will be in our window until April 2017.