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o r o

## the language of Mathias Goeritz

Through May 9, 2016  
Free admission

### Opening Reception

Thursday March 10, 2016 6:30 - 9:00 PM

### Curator's coffee and conversation

Saturday March 19 / Saturday April 16, 2016 12:00 - 2:00 PM

An intimate dialogue that will focus on the spiritual approach of Mathias Goeritz through abstraction, and the search for a universal language through emotion.

Curated by Natalia Torija

Mathias Goeritz  
**oro**, 1965

From "konkrete poesie internationale"  
Letterpress print on paper. 480 x 480 mm  
Tate Collection

To the director,

The following is a proposal for the exhibition **Oro: the Language of Mathias Goeritz** at the Americas Society in New York City to open on March 11, 2016 through May 9, 2016.

Until the recent opening of a retrospective exhibition on the Mexican-German artist Mathias Goeritz (Danzig, 1915 – Mexico City, 1990) at the Museo Reina Sofía in Madrid,<sup>1</sup> this artist’s work had mainly been shown internationally amid group shows.<sup>2</sup> Goeritz’s work spans from sculpture, painting and architecture, to poetry and art criticism. His influence on mid-twentieth century Mexican art comes from the experimental ideas of the *vorkurs* method of teaching from the Bauhaus and German Dada, especially the work of Hugo Ball. He ‘resisted’ both the muralist revolutionary movement and functionalism in architecture, and focused on sculptural-spatial experiments that engaged the idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

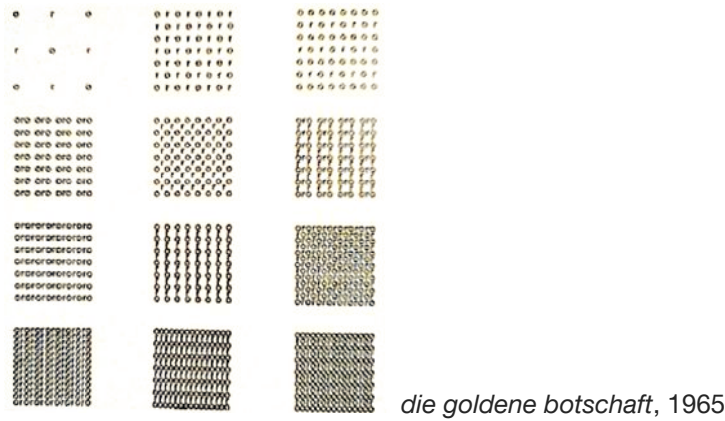
This exhibition will focus on Goeritz’s most *expressionist* works that derive from his understanding of spirituality and the search for the “internal state of man,” based on the aesthetics, ethics and philosophy of German Expressionism.<sup>3</sup> His series of abstract works entitled *Mensajes* which date from 1960-1980’s, represent a metaphysical or otherworldly approach to the divine. Likewise, his ‘concrete poetry’ during this period, relates directly to the concept of an enthralling state with an early experimentation on the plasticity of the word “oro,” an obvious palindrome.<sup>4</sup> For “die goldene botschaft” Goeritz arranged the letters **oro** in grids creating squares. The word eventually loses its

<sup>1</sup> “El retorno de la serpiente. Mathias Goeritz y la invención de la arquitectura emocional” Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía. November 12 - April 13, 2014. Curated by Francisco Reyes Palma. Travelling to: *Palacio de Cultura Banamex*, México D.F.: May 27 - Sept 20 2015. *Museo Amparo*, Puebla: Oct 24 2015 - Feb 15 2016 (México).  
<sup>2</sup> “The Experimental Exercise of Freedom” MOCA Los Angeles, October 1999 - January 2000. Mathias Goeritz with Lygia Clark, Gego, Hélio Oiticica and Mira Schendel. Curated by Rina Carvajal and Alma Ruiz.  
<sup>3</sup> Goeritz, Mathias. *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz: catálogo de la exposición*. Ciudad de México: Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1997: 29  
<sup>4</sup> Oro means gold in Spanish, referring to the material used on his works.

soundness, but the composition produces visual noise and becomes almost like a knitted pattern. The poem is a metaphor for gold as a mirage; a 'gold illusion' as well as an 'artistic illusion', while his golden metal works also reflect on vanity, or the ego of the artist.<sup>5</sup>

I believe it is essential to devote focus of this kind to an artist that shared such cultural diversity. By dedicating an exhibition to this particular theme, we can open the path for new research on Goeritz’s revolutionary way of thinking guided by the rebellious character of Dada. I want to take this opportunity to collaborate in the group of papers that will form part of the exhibition catalogue. While there is much written around Mathias Goeritz’s manifesto on *emotional architecture*, there has been little attention given to his use of gold as an aesthetic language.

Support for this exhibition will be sought from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, *Fomento Cultural Banamex*, and The Mexican Cultural Institute of New York. Material for the exhibition will be gathered from the collections of Ida Rodríguez Prampolini and Daniel Goeritz Rodríguez, the *Instituto Cultural Cabañas*, and other private collections from the United States, Mexico and Europe. Archival work such as photography from the *Fundación Armando Salas Portugal* and CENIDIAP (*Centro Nacional de Documentación e Información de Artes Plásticas-INBA*).



<sup>5</sup> Morais. “Poesía concreta” in Goeritz, Mathias. *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz: catálogo de la exposición*. Ciudad de México: Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1997.

## Exhibition Proposal

### Bibliography

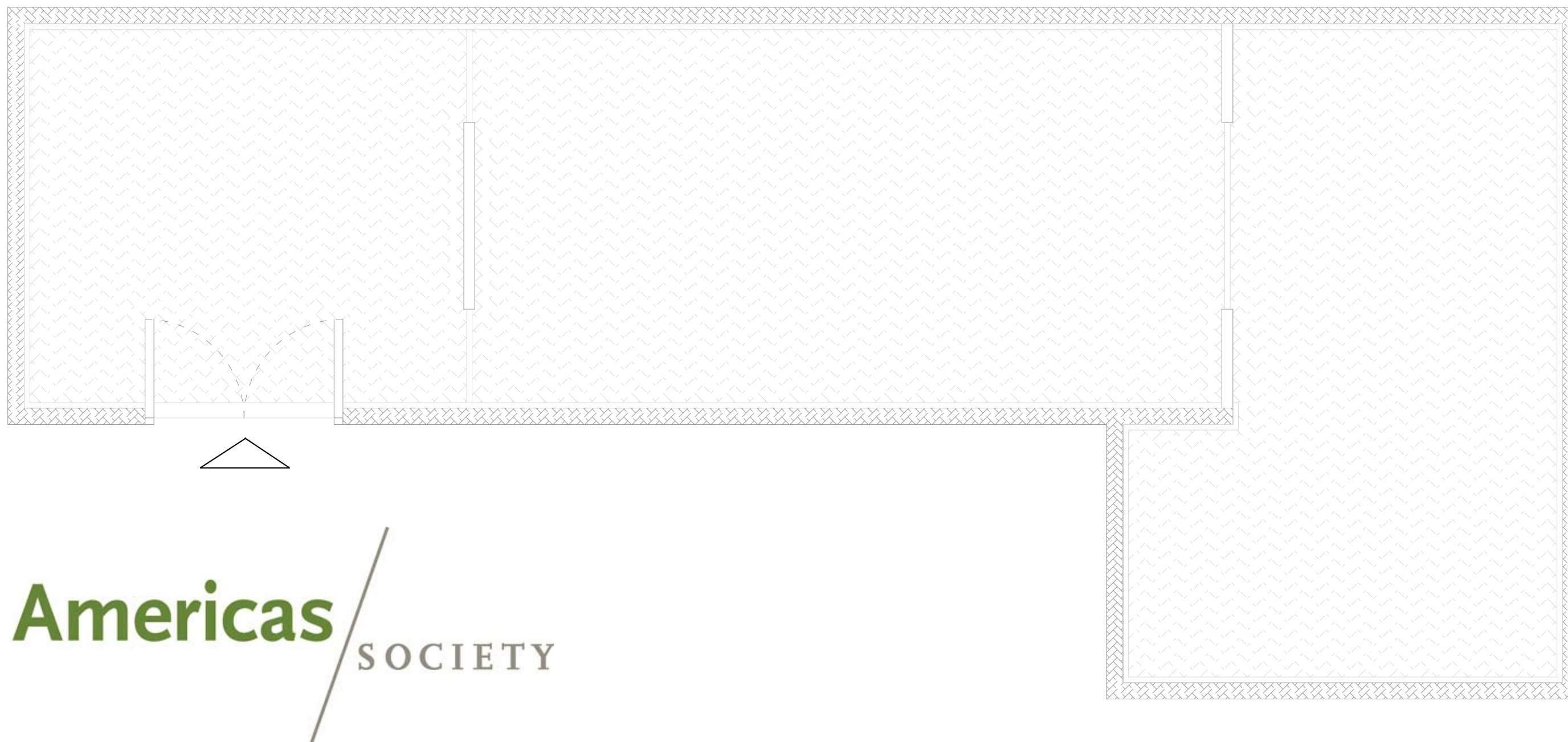
Carvajal, Rina, Alma Ruiz, and Susan Martin. 1999. *The experimental exercise of freedom: Lygia Clark, Gego, Mathias Goeritz, Hélio Oiticica, Mira Schendel*. Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art.

García Leyva, Cinthya. “El concretismo en México: dos ejemplos de Mathias Goeritz” *Poéticas visuales* No. 49, Mayo 2012. URL:  
[http://www.periodicodepoesia.unam.mx/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=2318](http://www.periodicodepoesia.unam.mx/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2318)

Goeritz, Mathias. *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz: catálogo de la exposición*. Ciudad de México: Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1997.  
(Watson Library Stacks)

Goeritz, Mathias and Miguel Castro Leñero. “Mathias Goeritz y Miguel Castro Leñero,” *Promoción de Arte Mexicano*, México: Marzo/Abril 2006.

(Catalogue) *Mathias Goeritz, Architectural Sculpture*, Cat. no. 26, Jerusalem : Israel Museum, 1980.



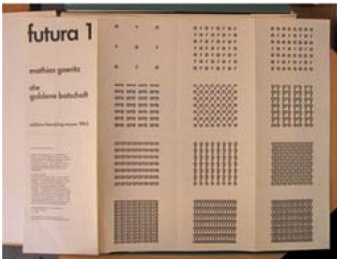
The gallery at the Americas Society hosts both historical and contemporary exhibitions dedicated to promote art from Latin America, the Caribbean and Canada.

Admission to the gallery is free and it is open to the public from Wednesday to Saturday from 12-6PM.



oro  
the language of  
Mathias Goeritz

March 10 - May 09, 2016  
Checklist



1  
Title: oro  
From “konkrete poesie internationale”  
Date: 1965  
Medium: Letterpress print on paper  
Dimensions: 480 x 480 mm  
Collection: Tate  
Acquisition: Presented by Tate Members 2013  
Reference: P80698



2  
Title: Anaconda mockup  
Date: 1978  
Medium: perforated sheet metal on painted wood  
Dimensions: 29.5 X 29.5 (Depth: 2.63) in (74.93 X 74.93 (Depth: 6.68) cm)  
Provenance: A gift from the artist to the present owner in November 1978.  
Certificate of authenticity signed by Dra. Lily Kassner. Sold in auction in NYC on May 13, 2014



3  
Title: Mensaje  
Date: 1979  
Medium: gold painted perforated metal on painted wood  
Dimensions: 93 x 443.2 cm. (36.6 x 174.5 in.)  
Provenance: Atlantic Richfield Collection, Denver Denver Art Museum, Denver (Deaccessioned, 2009)



4  
Title: Mensaje  
Date: 1979  
Medium: gold painted perforated metal on painted wood panel  
Dimensions: 92.7 x 443.2 cm. (36.5 x 174.5 in.)  
Provenance: Atlantic Richfield Collection, Denver Denver Art Museum, Denver (Deaccessioned, 2009)



5  
Title: El animal  
Date: ca. 1950  
Medium: gilt wood  
Dimensions: 33 x 114 x 17 cm. (13 x 44.9 x 6.7 in.)  
Provenance: Sold at Morton Casa de Subastas, México, D.F. 2005

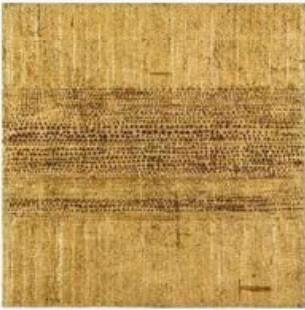
oro  
the language of  
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6  
Title: Mensaje  
Date: 1982  
Medium: perforated tin and gilt on wood  
Dimensions: 51 x 60 cm. (20.1 x 23.6 in.)



7  
Titled: Untitled  
Date: 1960  
Medium: perforated tin sheets mounted on wood  
Dimensions: 27.62 X 27.62 in (70.17 X 70.17 cm)  
Provenance: Acquired from the artist Private Collection, Seattle



8  
Title: Message  
Date: ca. 1960  
Medium: Perforated golden metal over painted wood  
Dimensions: 27.75 X 27.75 (Depth: 2.87) in (70.48 X 70.48 (Depth: 7.29) cm)  
Provenance: The artist. The Estate of Jack L. Wolgin, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Acquired from the above in 1974.



9  
Title: Three golden plates  
Date:  
Medium: perforated metal  
Dimensions: 27 1/10 x 9 in 68.8 x 22.9 cm  
Provenance: Sold Jun 3, 2010 Louis C. Morton, Monte Athos, Mexico, D.F.



10  
Title: Poem mural ‘El eco de oro’ (Golden eco)  
Date: 1966  
Medium: metal and gold leaf

or



Title: Mensaje  
Date: 1983  
Medium: perforated metal on wood  
Dimensions: 60 X 100.25 in (152.4 X 254.64 cm)  
Provenance: Sinagoga Beth Moshe, Mexico City Private Collection, Mexico

Sample Budget

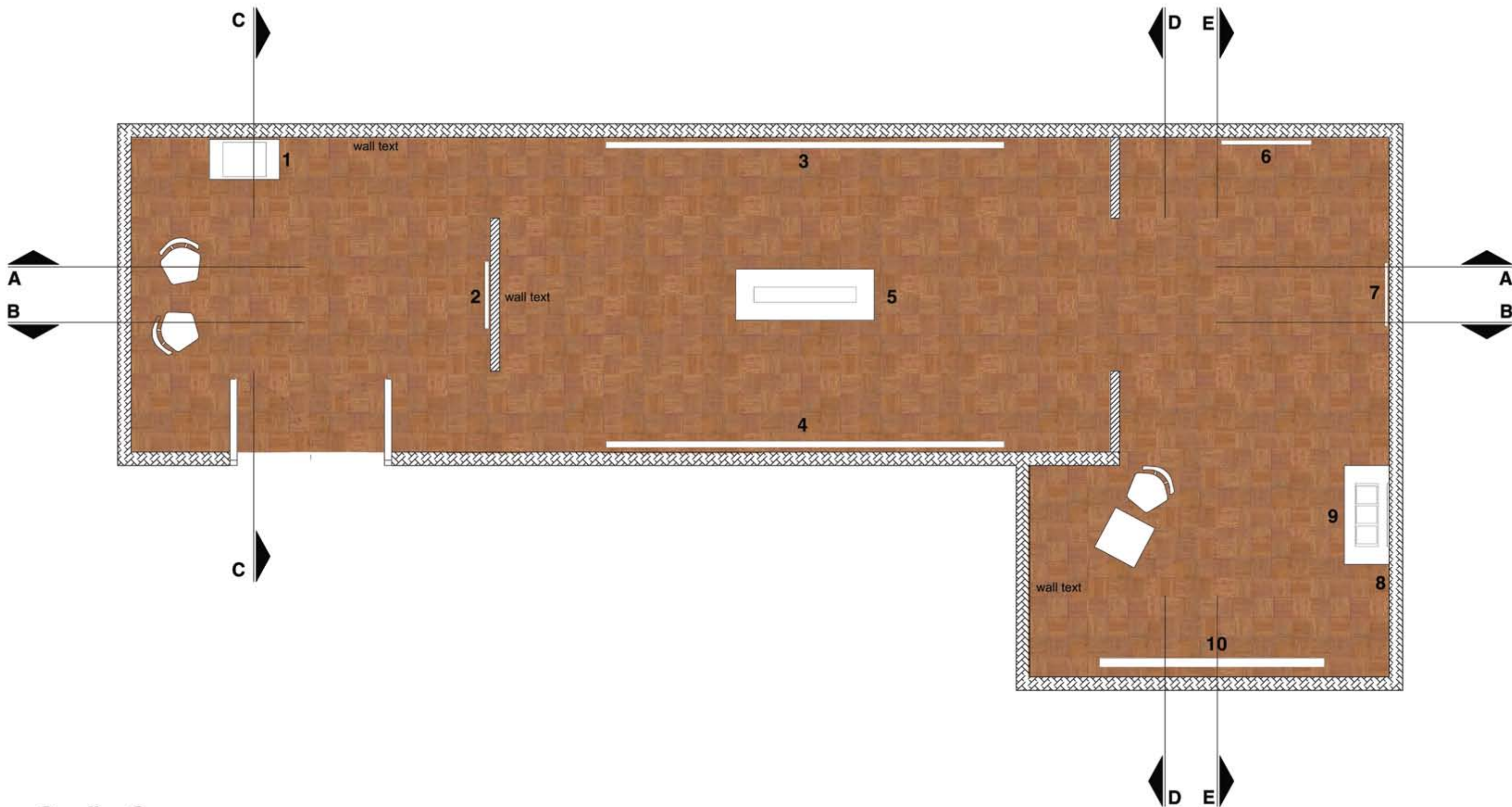
Most of the works required for this exhibition come from private collections and are currently part of a travelling retrospective exhibition now on view at Museo Reina Sofía in Madrid. That exhibition will conclude on February 2016 and during the following month, arrangements will have been made to acquire the required pieces on loan to the Americas Society. In addition, there are two works from the Denver Art Museum and a work on paper from the British Museum. As institutional lenders, these two museums have settled terms that we are required to follow, including special insurance fees. The following is a breakdown of the estimated budget for the exhibition.

Concept	Estimate
Transportation/Shipping: \$400* per L/M work and Certificate of insurance. *After the works have reached NYC.	3,200
Installation: \$250/day. Plus materials: Paint and staff at \$15/hr	575
Insurance per work of art (assuming a two-month fee): 1. 80 2. 125 3. 450 4. 450 5. 50 6. 200 7. 100 8. 100 9. 40 10. 250	1,845
Wall text/Handouts/Posters	200
Printed catalogue	2000

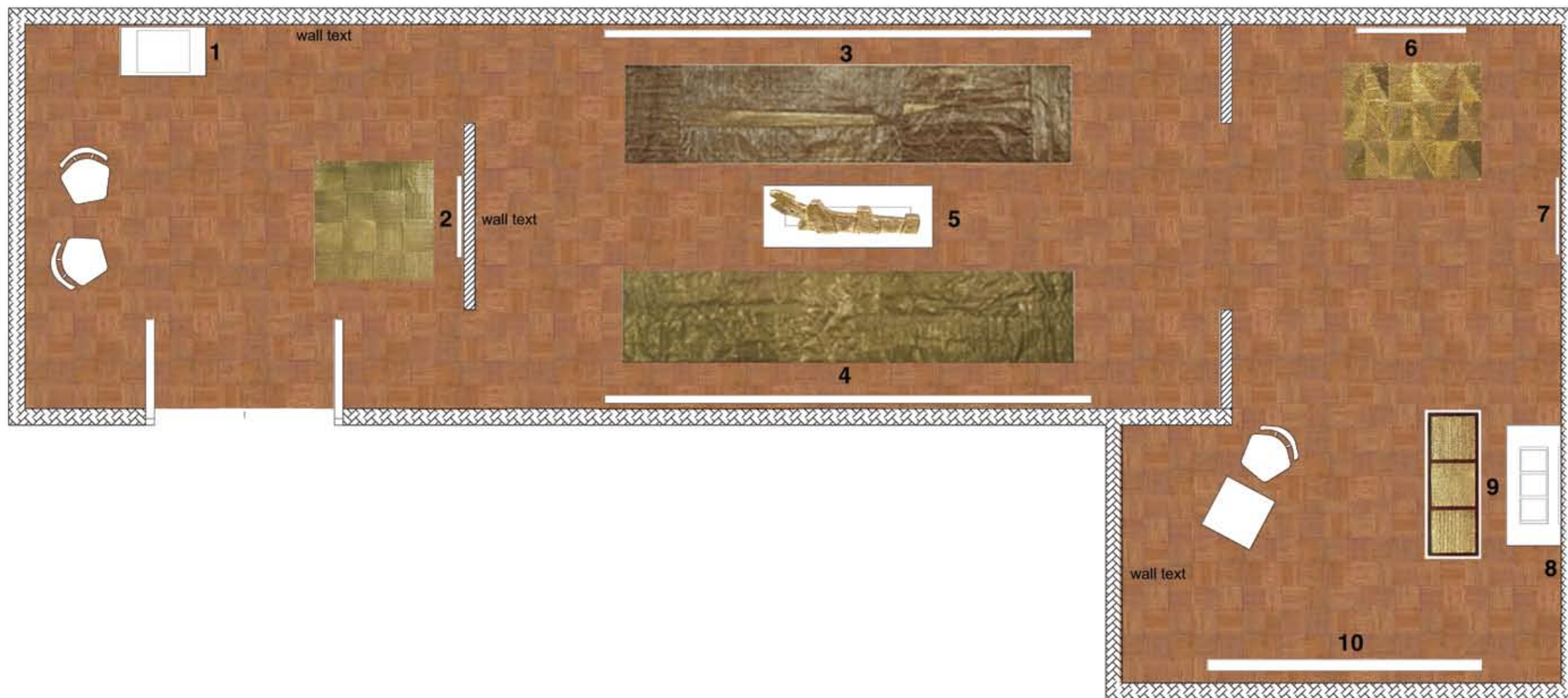
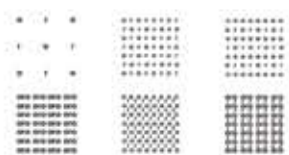
Invitations + postage	700
Opening night Reception and two talks with the curator	260
De-installation/Wall re-painting	250
Total	9,030

Sponsorship

**The Mexican Cultural Institute of New York** works closely with **Independent Curators International**, in addition to providing free publicity for special events on their website and continuous support for Mexican cultural events in New York. **Fomento Cultural Banamex** is a non-profit organization based in Mexico City that provides funds for the development and preservation of Mexican arts and culture. They reserve special funding for art exhibitions in addition to own their own arts institution *Palacio de Cultura Banamex*, where the exhibit “The Return of the Snake” will be exhibited. And last, **The NYC Department of Cultural Affairs** has long been a supporter of the Americas Society’s Visual Arts Program and we hope to work closely with them again.



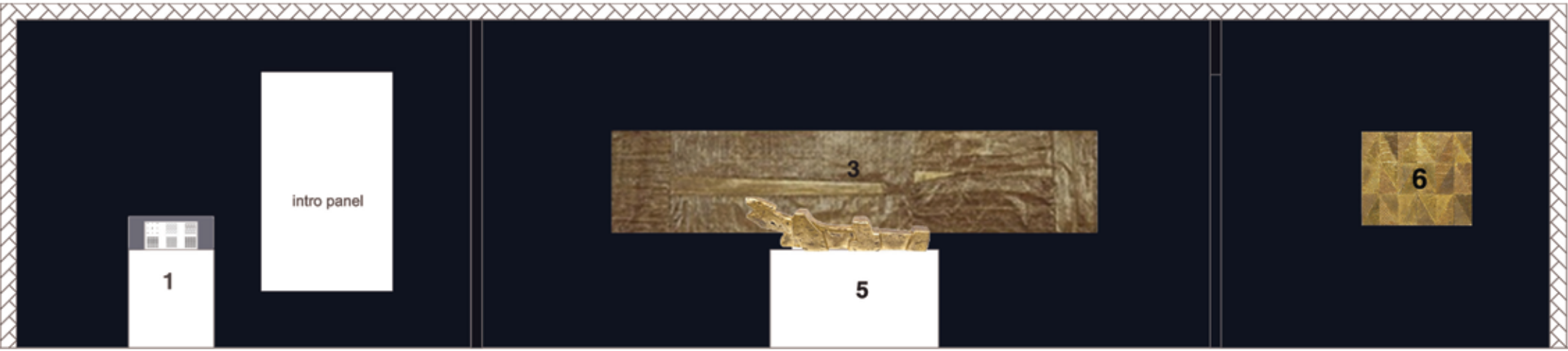




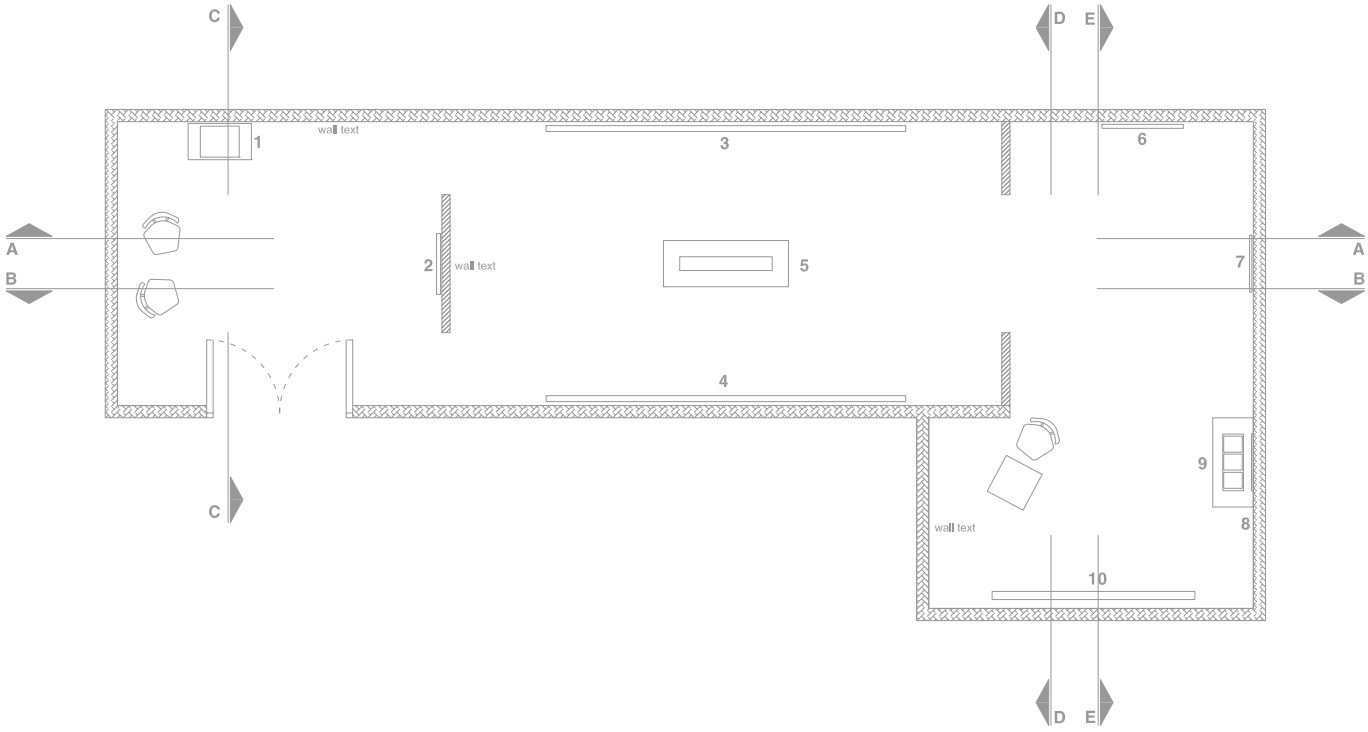
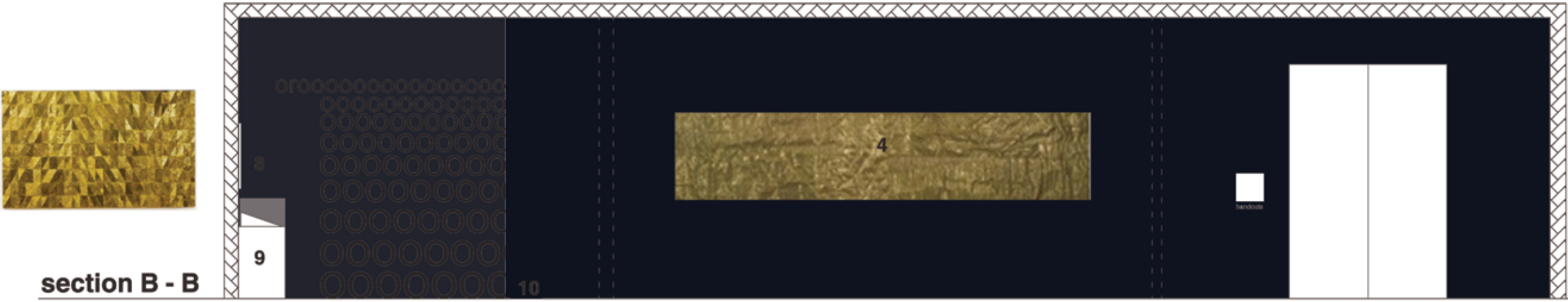
o r o  
the language of  
**Mathias Goeritz**



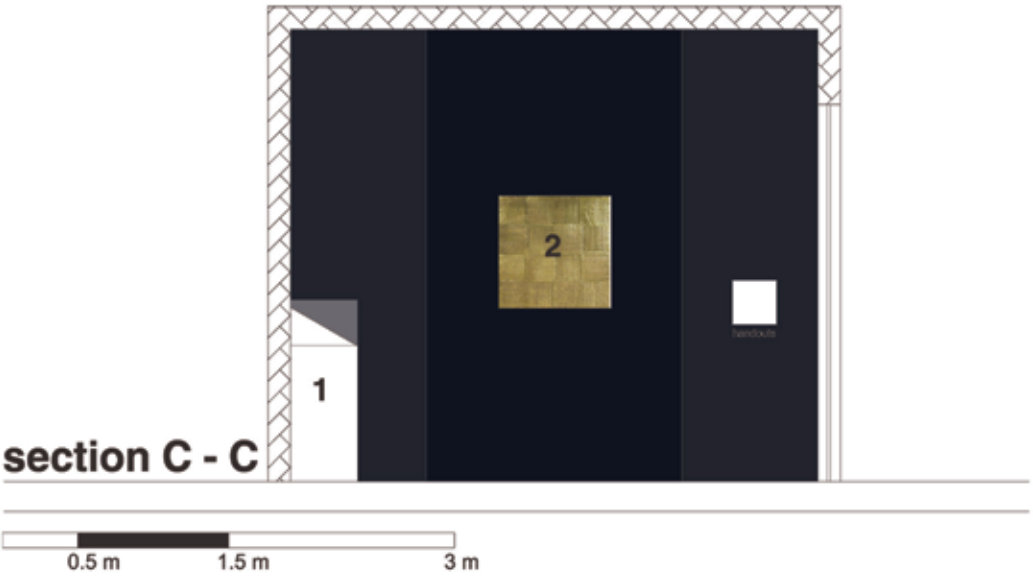
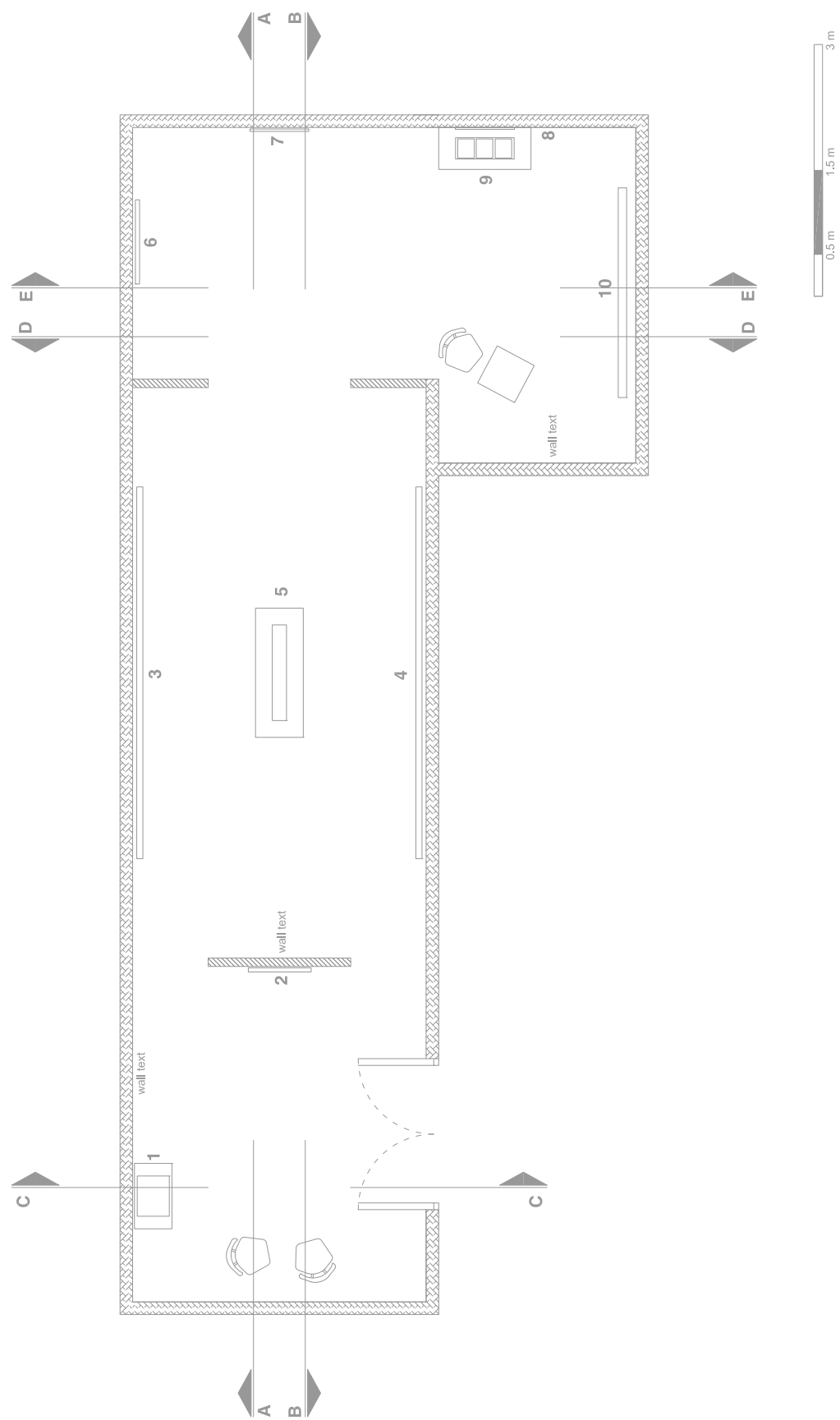
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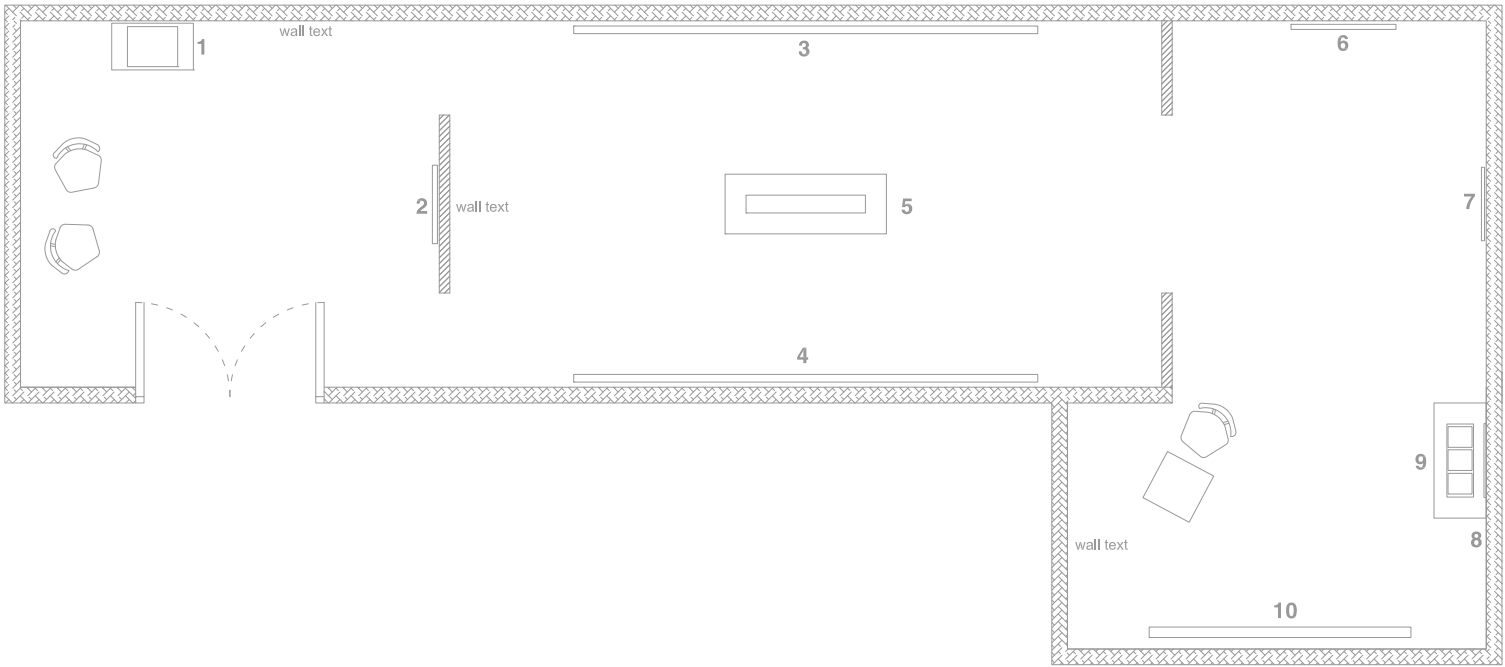


section B - B



o r o  
the language of  
**Mathias Goeritz**

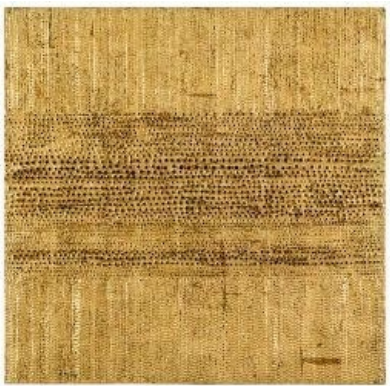




In lieu of printed wall labels, handouts with a floor plan and tombstone information will be available to pick up and walk around the gallery.

Additional information is given on certain pieces, like this one - #8 Messsage - and two to three wall texts will be placed to explain details on Mathias Goeritz’s bio and the history and influence of his work.

Furniture is hoped to be lent from *Archivo Diseño y Arquitectura*, who reproduced the chair originally designed or *El Eco* museum, in exchange of spetial mention in the catalogue.



Title: Message

Date: ca. 1960

Medium: Perforated golden metal over painted wood

Dimensions: 27.75 X 27.75 (Depth: 2.87) in (70.48 X 70.48 (Depth: 7.29) cm)

Provenance: The artist. The Estate of Jack L. Wolgin, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Acquired from the above in 1974.

As opposed to his work on concrete poetry, Goeritz abstained from the written word throughout his series of *Mensajes*. Instead, he used perforations on golden metal plates which repetition evokes an ethereal and undecipherable spiritual language. His interest in the poetics of space led him to create works that bring depth and emotion into the space without the use of objective meaning or representation. Highly influenced by the early roots of German expressionist art and cinema - based not solely on art, but on aesthetics, ethics and philosophy - Goeritz worked to illustrate the forgotten “internal state of man.”<sup>1</sup> These reflective works captivate the viewer into a state of awe and enthrallment.

Goeritz sought to create the ‘total work of art’ through the emotion conveyed in his work. Ultimately, through livable sculptures or *emotional architecture*, he proposed the architectural space as container of the generational *Gesamtkunstwerk*; one that transcends and resists both popular culture and extreme rationalism. His style is primitive, minimal, monastic; yet his asceticism contrasts with the continuous presence of gold, most likely used to evoke the splendor of the divine.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Los Ecos de Mathias Goeritz*: 29

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*: 38