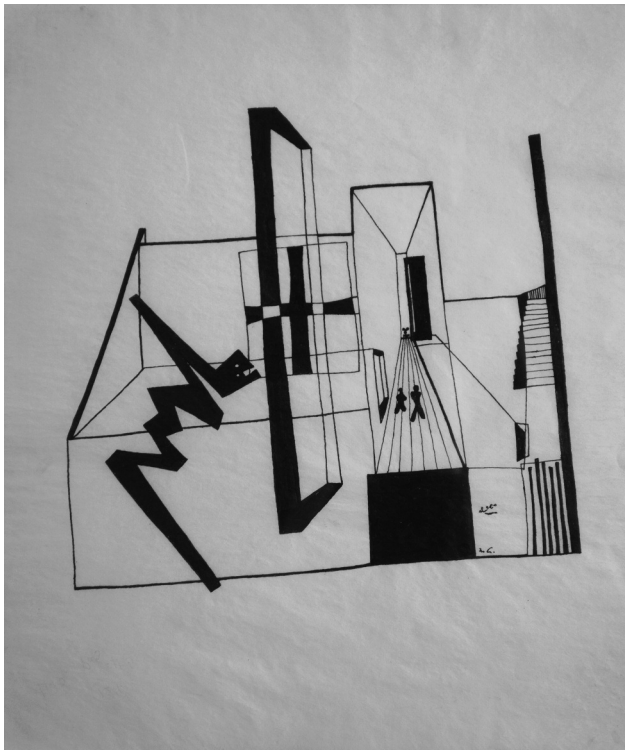


Exhibition 12 November 2014 – 13 April 2015
Sabatini Building. 3rd Floor

The Return of the Snake

Mathias Goeritz and the Invention of Emotional Architecture



Mathias Goeritz. *Ideographic drawing of El Eco Experimental Museum, 1952*
Luis Enrique Noriega Collection

Emotional Architecture: The Work as Strategy

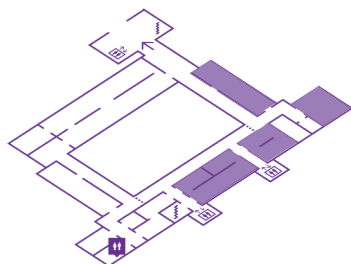
Mathias Goeritz (Danzig, now Gdansk, 1915) was educated in the turbulent Berlin of the inter-war period, in the midst of the rise of National Socialism. During the Second World War and the subsequent Cold War, Goeritz forged himself a multiple personality. He was first a philosopher and historian and afterwards a painter, a development which coincided with his period at the German Consulate in the Spanish protectorate of Morocco. From 1945 to 1948, Goeritz was feverishly active in Spain as a cultural promoter, and in 1949 he moved to Mexico, where he intensified his dual activity as an artist and agitator. It was there that he condensed his aesthetic principles under the notion of *emotional architecture*, which he was to apply not only to the construction of buildings but also to painting, sculpture, graphics and visual poetry. At a moment when figurative art and propaganda dominated the art scene in Mexico, *emotional architecture* became a device for confrontation, yet was well received by the politically more conservative architectural profession. The increased number of construction projects at that time meant that the potential for commissions was very great.

The work manifesto of emotional architecture is the *El Eco* Experimental Museum which defines his later production. Here Goeritz gathers various media (painting, sculpture, furniture design and architecture) and works by artists like Germán Cueto, Henry Moore and Carlos Mérida, his own contributions being a monumental visual poem and the formidable transposable sculpture of a twisted geometric snake, transforming the open courtyard into a performance environment.

In *Torres de Ciudad Satélite* (Towers of Satellite City), the artist tests the limits of scale, artwork-viewer proximity, and even modes of viewing. Five reinforced cement prisms of colossal size foster the affective mobilization of the viewer and the aestheticization of the effect, turning the work into a national emblem of modernity. From then on, the use of a monumental scale and the synthetic language of geometries, associated with the idea of progress, identified Goeritz's work as strategist and agitator. A constructor of spatialities where new relations and senses could be established, his art of mediations shakes the institutions that validate art, such as the museum and criticism (*El Eco*), artistic groups and the gallery (the group of *Los Hartos*), and history and belief systems (the snake and the pyramid or the cross and the star of David). Approaching his oeuvre obliges us to engage with a work implicated with cultural agency. The interest aroused today by the aspects of circulation and reception in relational, contextual and participative art contrasts with the development of that creative modality of artistic mediation, that aesthetic of commotion with which Goeritz experimented until his death in 1990.

Sabatini Building

3rd Floor,
Room 301 and 306-307



Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

Sabatini Building

Santa Isabel, 52

Nouvel Building

Ronda de Atocha

(with plaza del
Emperador Carlos V)

28012 Madrid

Tel. (34) 91 774 10 00

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