

Mathias Goeritz: Metachromatic

Opening Reception: Friday February 8, 6-9 pm

Exhibition runs through March 23, 2019

Gallery Hours: Tuesday to Saturday 11-6 pm

Henrique Faria Fine Art is pleased to present *Metachromatic*, the first exhibition of the work of Mathias Goeritz (1915-1990) in the gallery. This exhibition brings together a selection of metal relief panels, sculptures, photographs of architectural works, prints and paintings that demonstrate the artist's career-long occupation with the physicality achieved through the application of light and color onto geometric and organic forms. While Goeritz came of age under and studied the influence of the deliberate rationalism of Modernist thinking in Europe, it was the unmeasurable and immeasurable of that which exists beyond calculated space and experience to which Goeritz dedicated much of his art making. After having lived in Mexico for five years, Goeritz formulated the principle of Emotional Architecture that would guide his work for the rest of his career. By casting aside the primacy of functionalism, logic and utility, Goeritz, through his works of visual art and architectural designs, worked to create environments that would elicit maximum emotion and spiritual connection, collaboration and freedom of creativity, that would be a space of transcendence within the strictures of modernity.

As Daniel Garza-Usabiaga notes in the exhibition text, the titles Goeritz gave to his major works and series, *Mensajes (Messages)* and *Mensajes metacromáticos (Metachromatic Messages)* were because, "they carried a 'meaning' beyond the presence of color. For the artist, these messages were representations of nothingness and the absolute; through the luminosity of the gold leaf [he frequently utilized in his works] he sought to actualize a traditional relation between spirituality and light." The radiance that emanates from the gold leaf-lined works not only makes light palpable to the viewer, but it also softens their physical boundaries, blurring the distinction between light and material, while elevating the forms from the mundane to the transcendent. This is experienced in his *Formas geométricas (Geometric Forms, 1961 and 1969)* in which he transformed the foundational, three-dimensional shapes of the cube, pyramid and cylinder. The metal relief panels, *Mensajes (c. 1958-1962)*, feature perforated sheets of metal adhered to painted wooden supports. The patterns, created by hammering nails through the metal sheets, highlight visual juxtapositions of the simultaneously smooth and jagged surfaces, as well as the reflective and matte materials, when the works are illuminated.

Goeritz's spiritual and humanist beliefs infused his architectural projects, which ranged from public art monuments and sculptural installations for private communities, murals and stained glass for houses of worship, and an industrial complex. The maquette for *El laberinto de Jerusalem (Jerusalem Labyrinth, 1973-1980)* was made as part of a proposal for a children's playground in Jerusalem and is considered a prime example of Emotional Architecture. The main feature of the park included a five-pillared structure made of local white stone that referenced both his previous public work *Torres de Satélite (Satellite Towers, 1957)* along Mexico City's Ruta de la Amistad—a cultural initiative made in preparation for the 1968 Olympic Games in which public works by international artists would line the stretch of highway connecting different Olympic venues—and the skylines he experienced while living in Morocco during World War II. The park would also include sculptures from other artists, including Alexander Calder and Sheila Hicks, maintaining the collaborative spirit essential to Goeritz's public projects. The exhibition will also present photographs taken by Kati Horna of Goeritz's architectural projects in Mexico, including the Automex car factory in Toluca (1964), which featured conical-shaped towers that served as multi-purpose spaces and echoed the shape of the grain silos seen in the northwestern state of Zacatecas and the double-peaked volcano Nevado de Toluca seen in the distance from the factory's open courtyard.

As Garza-Usabiaga concludes his essay, while Goeritz was involved with many projects in both the commercial and public sectors, his aim to appeal to the totality of human emotions with his designs and create conditions for open connection, creativity, illumination and spirituality was ever present.

Mathias Goeritz (Danzig, 1915; Mexico City, 1990) was a German-born Mexican painter and sculptor. Goeritz studied art history and philosophy at Friedrich Wilhelm Universität (now the Humboldt University of Berlin) and earned his doctorate in art history in 1940. While at Friedrich Wilhelm Universität, Goeritz was also training to be an artist at Kunstgewerbe und Handwerkerschule, an applied arts and trade school, where he studied with well-known German artists Hans Orlowski and Max Kaus. Shortly after completing his studies, Goeritz fled World War II and Germany to Morocco in 1941. A year later, he married photographer Marianne Gast and the couple moved to Mexico in 1949. His early works were exhibited under the pseudonym "Ma-Gó" and were first shown in a solo show at Librería-Galería Clan in Madrid. Goeritz was later offered a teaching job at Escuela de Arquitectura in Guadalajara. He accepted and had great success showing his work in Mexico. He is noted to have had a profound influence on younger Mexican artists like Pedro Friedeberg and Helen Escobedo. His work has been shown in galleries and museums all over the world, such as: Museo Experimental El Eco, Mexico City (2017); Haus der Kunst, Munich (2016); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (2015); the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2007); among others. His pieces are also in the collections of institutions, including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; the Jewish Museum, New York; the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh and the Tate Collection, London. The artist passed away on August 4th, 1990 in Mexico City.

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