

SPACE OF PLAY, **RONNY QUEVEDO**  
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Ronny Quevedo (b.1981, Guayaquil, Ecuador) works in a variety of mediums including sculpture and drawing. Quevedo's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally at The Whitney Museum of American Art; Perez Art Museum Miami; Elizabeth Dee Gallery; The Drawing Center; the Queens Museum; The Bronx Museum of the Arts; and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, amongst others. He is a recipient of the 2017 Blade of Grass Fellowship for Socially Engaged Art and the 2016 Queens Museum/Jerome Foundation Fellowship for Emerging Artists. He has participated in residencies at the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Kala Art Institute, the Core Program at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Project Row Houses, Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, and Lower East Side Printshop. He has been published in Hyperallergic and Art Forum. Quevedo received his MFA from the Yale School of Art in 2013 and BFA from The Cooper Union in 2003.



*medio tiempo (synthesis quotient)*  
2019  
field paint on grass

## Introduction

**Paul M. Nicholson**

Director Martin Art Gallery

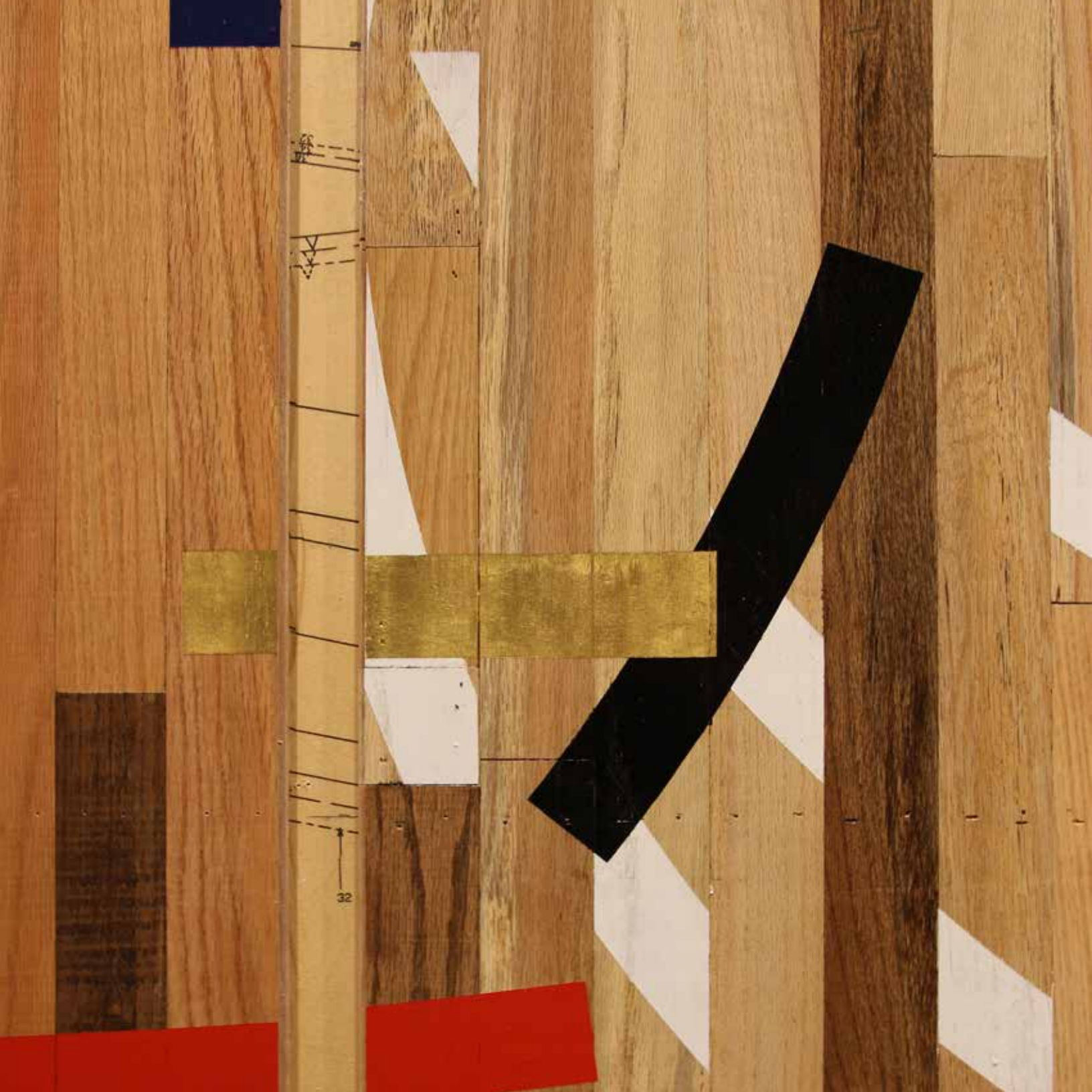
*Space of Play, Play of Space* is a multi-site exhibition by Ronny Quevedo that locates the viewer as competitor in an imaginary, negotiated environment. The artist interrogates notions of borders and boundaries to explore our relationship to nationalisms, territories, and migrations to create a metaphor for shifting global landscapes.

Quevedo's exhibition is divided into two parts. A gallery exhibition hosts an array of works that enact an investigation of the self through the games we play. The artist employs autobiographical elements, which are mixed with invented cultural sites resembling jumbled athletic fields and arenas.

Using the visual vocabulary of games and sports, Quevedo employs lines and varied indices of demarcation to investigate rules and boundaries. In a way, he's talking about fundamental fairness, but more so he's manipulating and bending the guidelines to radically re-imagine new paradigms. This idea of multiple fields and multiple sets of rules all at once overlapping, disagreeing, coinciding, and conflicting means Quevedo is less a coach drawing up a specific play than a game maker designing a new game. In this way, he is talking about not just finding ways to be more effective within a broken system, he's talking about developing entirely new models for engagement.

The gallery portion of *Space of Play, Play of Space* is complemented by a field-sized drawing titled *Medio Tiempo (synthesis quotient)* [Rust Oleum on grass, 175 x 125']. This dynamic work is viewable from sidewalks, streets, and windows nearby. A lawn sign greets visitors, who are encouraged to directly engage with and experience the work by walking on, over, and through the drawing.

While his work is about play, it's a valid question to ask whether it's playful? The answer is both yes and no. It's certainly critical in nature, but his mingling of cultural practices with physical engagement with space through sport makes the work accessible, despite its abstract nature. While somber at times, Quevedo's work is not pessimistic. It's forward looking because it speaks to the possibility for adaptation - his idea that the rules of the game should not only be malleable but can change for the better through iteration.



## Space of Play, Play of Space

Elena FitzPatrick Sifford

Muhlenberg College

A hanging gym floor is punctuated with zips and arcs of polychromatic lines that lead the eye up, down, and around, stopping, starting, pulsing. The wooden floor boards, not perfectly aligned, at times skip beyond the matrix of the work, are missing in part, or appear to be unmatched planks replacing the originals. We expect a basketball court's formulaic baselines and free throw line; instead the lines take on a life of their own on what is not a basketball court at all, but an abstraction of an indoor soccer field. The court is reformulated in staccato, the lines evoking the movement of both terrestrial and heavenly bodies. In Ronny Quevedo's *Ode to Liga Deportiva Guayaquil de Indoor Futbol (Working Class Epistemology)*, the transient space provides a platform for the intersection of marginal and hegemonic identities, as meeting points and places of negotiation. Quevedo speaks of a public school gym, used not only for sport, but as a space for communities to come together for socializing, voting, or community organizing. These are spaces of both competition and exchange. The title implies that there are other ways of knowing, other forms of knowledge beyond the alphabetic or conceptual, movement and embodiment here are monumentalized in wood.

*(lyra)* features a similar court-like space, but instead of wooden floor boards, the form is filled with navy and white lines punctuated with metallic speckles resembling stars in the night sky. The work references the constellation Lyra and the star Vega, dedicated to Quevedo's father. It takes on further familial connection through the use of wax dress maker paper, referencing the artist's mother's trade as a seamstress. Punctuated with silver leaf, it unites high and low materials, and brings to light the question of value. In the Ancient Andes, textiles were the most precious objects, far more valuable than the gold or silver prized by Europeans. These connections to the indigenous Americas permeate the *oeuvre* of Quevedo, who immigrated to the United States from Ecuador. In *(lyra)* we also see reference to the textile arts in its visual parallel with the Inka quipu, a knotted system of cords used to record information based on the type and number of knots as well as color, fiber, and ply of the strings. The Inka literally wrote in thread. Much as the cords of the quipu splay outwards when displayed, the lines of Quevedo's work radiate out from their points of origin.

Figure 1.  
Ronny Quevedo  
*Ode to Liga Deportiva  
Guayaquil de Indoor Futbol  
(Working Class Epistemology)*  
2019  
8x12 ft  
Enamel and wooden planks  
on panels

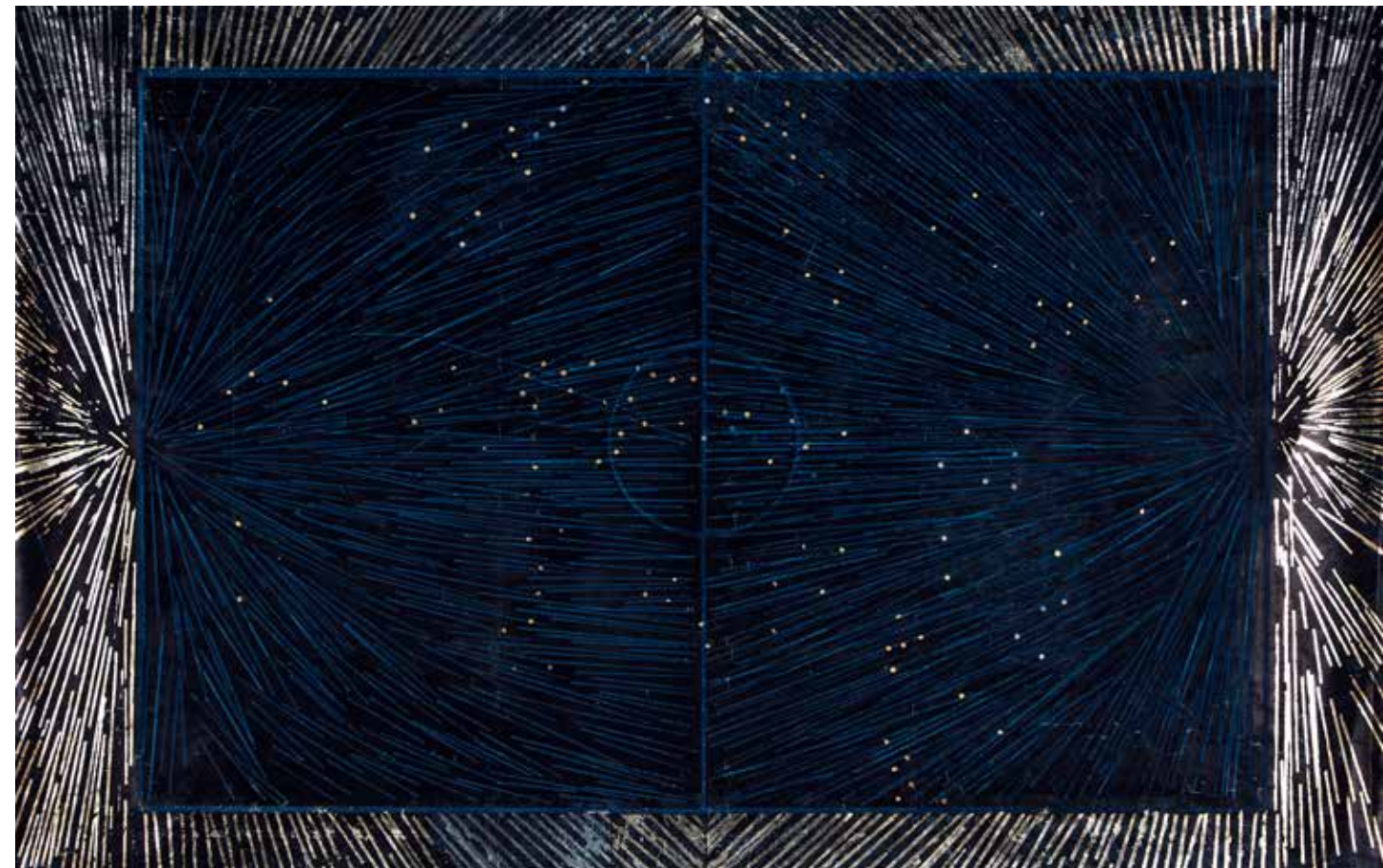


Figure 2.  
Ronny Quevedo  
*(lyra)*  
2017  
silver leaf on dress maker wax  
paper  
26 x 39 inches  
Collection of artist

Figure 3.  
Inka quipu



Figure 4.  
Ronny Quevedo  
*Ulama, Ule, Olé* (detail)  
2012  
Milk crates and zipties



Motion is a constant theme. In *Ulama Ule Olé's* Quevedo uses milk crates and zipties to construct a hook used in Ulama, a Mesoamerican ballgame played since as early as 1400 BCE. Called *tlachtli* by the Aztecs, and today called ulama, the game could be used to solve political disputes. Still played in Mexico today, ulama is a microcosm of the battle between day and night, a balancing of the forces of the universe. Quevedo's court-inspired works similarly channel human motion through space as metaphors for the movement of the cosmos. Again subverting high and low materials, *Ulama Ule Olé* replaces the carved monumental stone goal with milk crates that conjure makeshift basketball courts constructed from the mass produced and discarded materials of the urban landscape. The Aztec sacred precinct becomes urban playground becomes art gallery.

*As a person of color, you are constantly asked to establish and compensate for difference in relation to power. -Ronny Quevedo'*

*Errant Globe* features the inner bladder of a soccer ball placed within a globe stand. Quevedo draws from the work of Martiniquan philosopher Édouard Glissant's notion of the errant. Rather than valuing rootedness and permanence, Glissant calls our attention to the errancy of nomadism. Glissant speaks to moving, wandering, and searching as a condition of the Other, and the search for self acceptance of this condition that defies existing norms. The inner bladder, made from rubber, again references the Mesoamerican ballgame. Rubber was traded throughout tropical lowland Central and South America and remains an



Figure 5.  
Stone goal, Chichén Itzá

important commodity in those regions. The rubber used to create the *Errant Globe* thus evokes trade and migration, and its replacement of the entire earth signifies a globalized world. It rejects the expectations we have for a perfectly spherical globe, displaying the depressions and wrinkling of its material, partially deflated, the ball's innards exposed.

Figure 6.  
Ronny Quevedo  
*Errant Globe*  
2015  
Soccer ball baladder and globe  
stand  
14 x 14 x 14

*The founding books have taught us that the sacred dimension consists always of going deeper into the mystery of the root, shaded with variations of errantry. In reality errant thinking is the postulation of an unyielding and unfading sacred.*  
-Édouard Glissant<sup>ii</sup>

*Medio tiempo (synthesis quotient)* evokes the permanent and the impermanent. Created in field marking spray paint using a cart for marking field sport boundaries, the lines beg us to walk through, or run through them. Inspired by land art predating Spiral Jetty, Quevedo's work evokes the Nazca Lines, ancient geoglyphs in the Peruvian pampa. Though the animal forms (animals exotic to the dessert plane like hummingbird, monkey, and whale) are best known, the site is most populated with non-representational lines and trapezoidal motifs. The Nazca lines were likely pilgrimage points centered on rituals tied to the



acquisition of water. The ancient lines were created simply by removing rock to expose the earth beneath. Adjustments could be made, and they have been preserved for over 1500 years. Quevedo's lines, however, are made of spray paint. During their creation, the spray paint feels permanent. Mistakes cannot be fixed. You can't simply place rocks back over the error. In time, the spray paint will fade, and eventually after a few rainfalls, it will be gone entirely. The Nazca lines marked pilgrimage routes, and similarly Quevedo's "Space of Play" frames sport as its own form of ritual with orchestrated movements in groups across a landscape.

Figure 7.  
Nazca Lines with Condor



Figure 8.  
Ronny Quevedo  
*medio tiempo*  
(*synthesis quotient*)  
2019  
field paint on grass



The space created emerges from an immigrant and working-class ethos of reusing and recycling. A decrepit gym floor, discarded milk crates, wax sewing paper, cans of spray paint, and a deflated soccer ball have all been repurposed and monumentalized. Through them, we are transported to the ancient civilizations of the Americas and back to the present day. We are reminded of the possibility of transformation, and with it, we are forced to reconsider the quotidian.

Figure 1. Ronny Quevedo, *Ode to Liga Deportiva Guayaquil de Indoor Futbol (Working Class Epistemology)*

Figure 2. Ronny Quevedo, (*lyra*)

Figure 3. Inka quipu. Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Photograph by Lynn Dombrowski, <https://flic.kr/p/aUcS6p>

Figure 4. Ronny Quevedo, *Ulama Ule Olé*

Figure 5. Stone goal, Chichén Itzá, Mexico. Photograph by Kåre Thor Olsen, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chichén\\_Itzá\\_Goal.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chichén_Itzá_Goal.jpg)

Figure 6. Ronny Quevedo, *Errant Globe*

Figure 7. Nazca Lines with Condor, Nazca Desert, Peru. Photograph by Paul Williams, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/bluelemur/2730076098/>

Figure 8. Ronny Quevedo, *Medio tiempo (synthesis quotient)*

i. Personal communication with the artist, September 5, 2019

ii. Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 21.



page 13-15:  
*medio tiempo*  
(*synthesis quotient*)  
2019  
field paint  
site-specific drawing



Installation view of Space  
of Play, Play of Space

page 15:  
Ronny Quevedo  
every measure of zero  
(Mexico 68)  
2018  
silver leaf, gold leaf and wax  
on dress maker paper  
10 x 13 in.

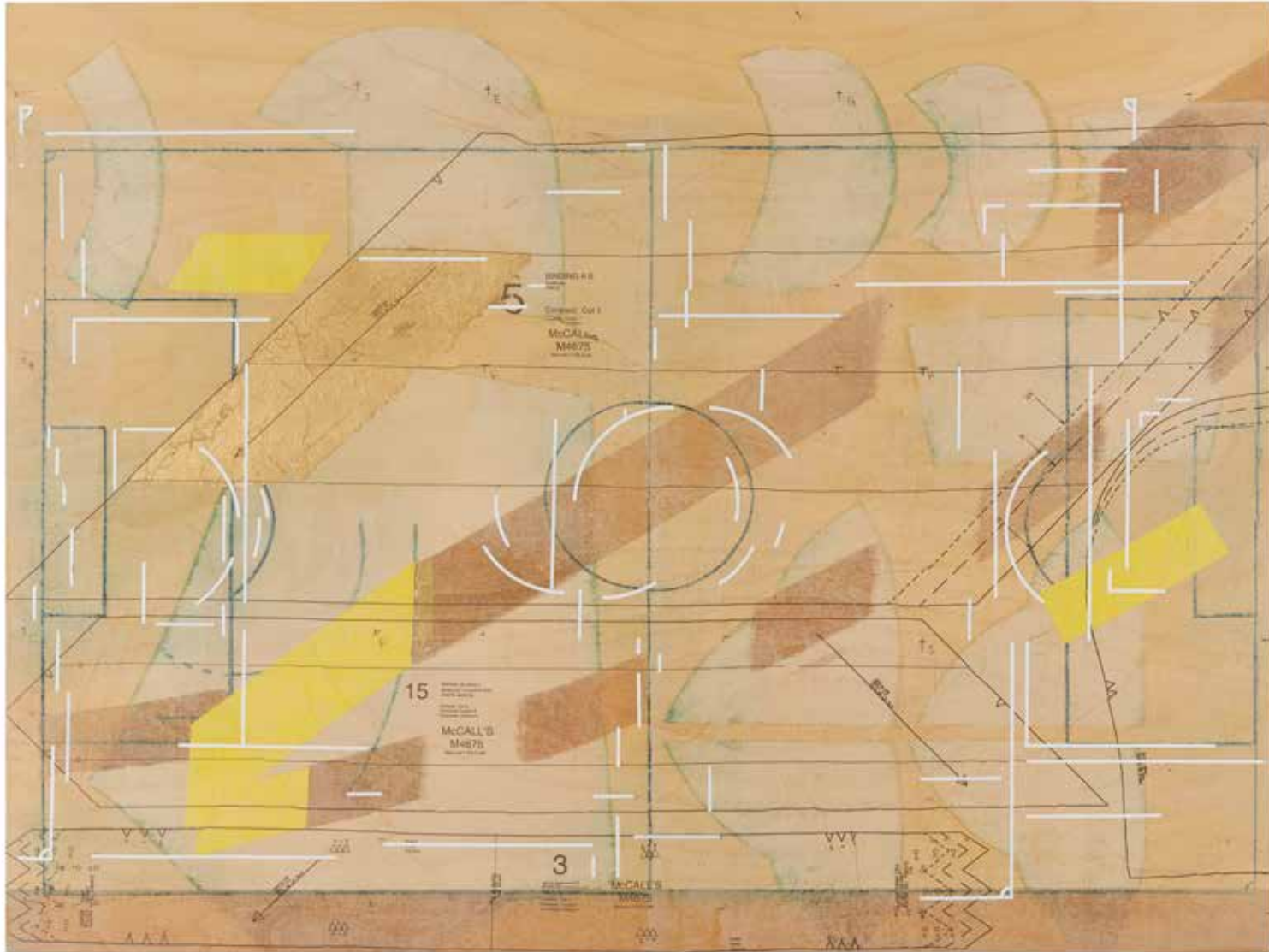




Ronny Quevedo  
*field of play* (detail)  
2016  
wax and embossment on  
paper  
31.5 x 48 in.

Ronny Quevedo  
*Cabeza Magica*  
Contact paper, enamel, gold  
leaf, silver leaf and pattern  
paper on paper  
38 x 50 in.  
2012  
Collection of artist



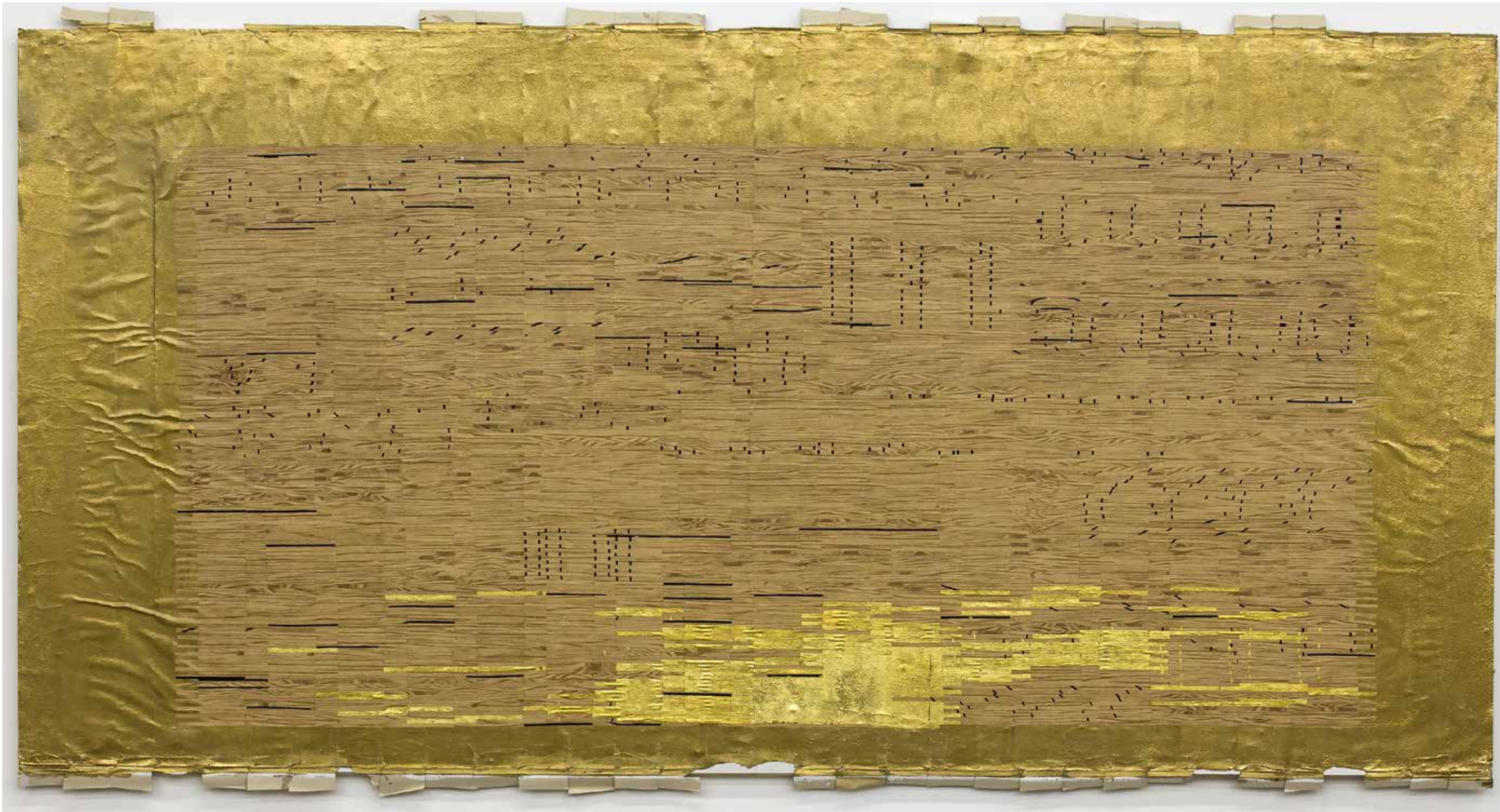


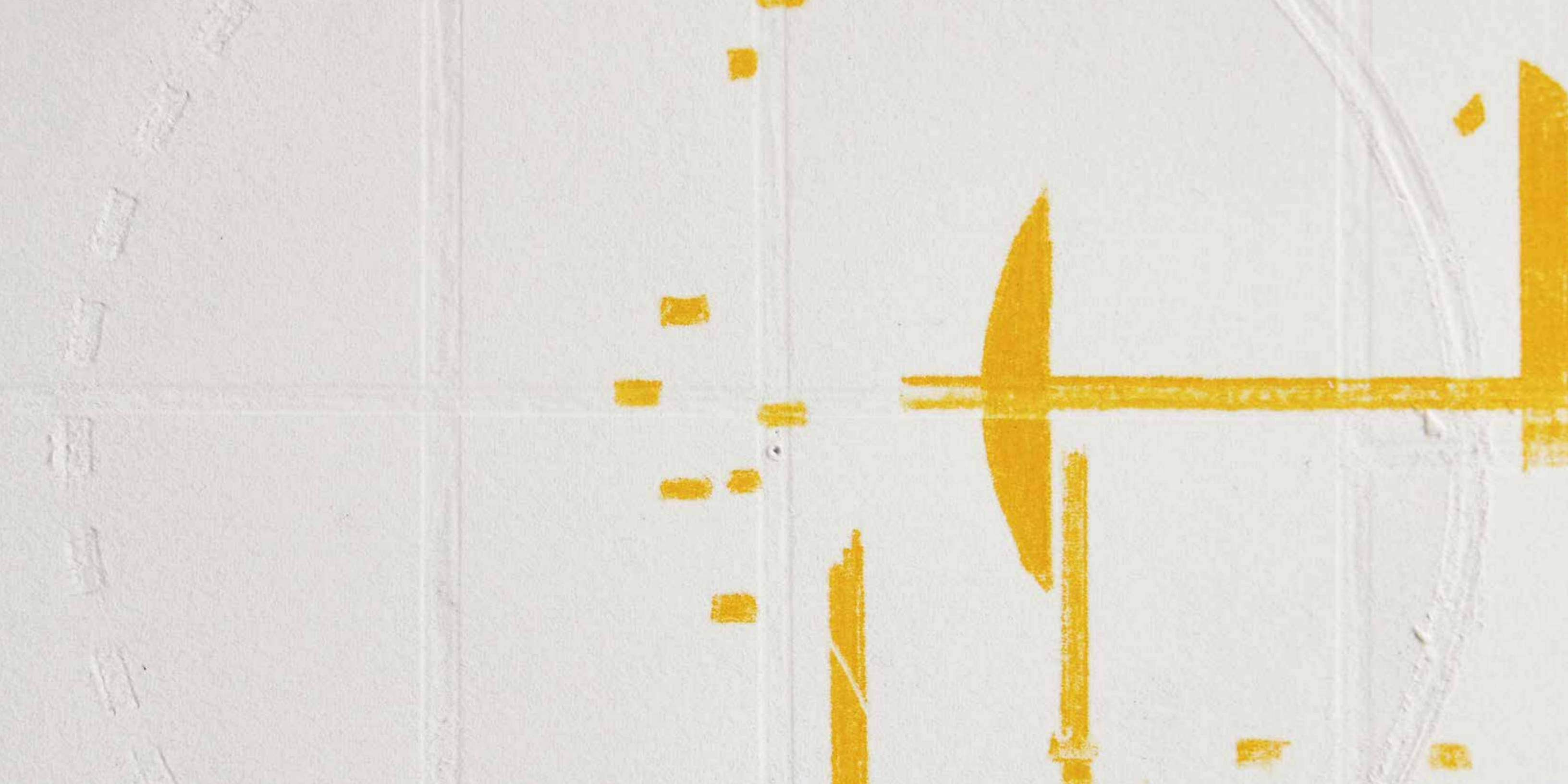
Ronny Quevedo  
*untitled*  
2018  
pattern paper, gold leaf and  
vinyl on panel  
30 x 40 in.



Installation view of *Space  
of Play, Play of Space*

Ronny Quevedo  
*History of Rules and  
Measures #1*  
2012  
Enamel, gold leaf, and  
contact paper on paper  
removed from drywall  
48 x 96 in.  
Collection of artist









RONNY QUEVEDO  
SPACE OF PLAY,  
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SEPTEMBER 18-NOVEMBER 2, 2019  
MARTIN ART GALLERY AT MUHLENBERG COLLEGE  
2400 CHEW STREET, ALLENTOWN PA