

UGO RONDINONE

WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN
AND THE MOON COMES UP

MUSÉE

D'ART

D'HISTOIRE

VISITOR GUIDE

How is a place, an experience, a way of seeing radically reinvented? That is the question Ugo Rondinone (1964) explores in *when the sun goes down and the moon comes up*, on view at the MAH from January 26 to June 18, 2023. For the third annual Open Invitation, the artist has taken over the MAH's building and collection to create a web of unexpected connections and echoes.

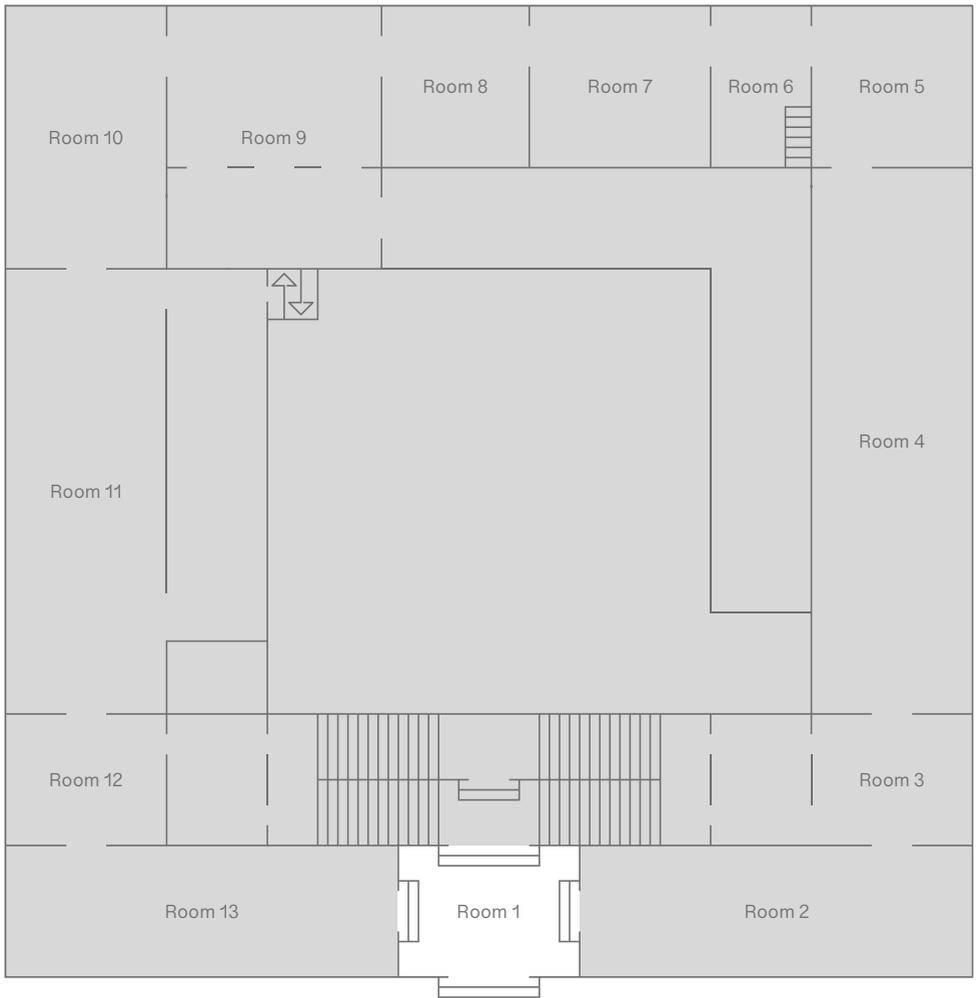
Staging his own work in conversation with the museum's collection, all while responding to the museum's architecture, Rondinone takes us to the other side of the looking glass, presenting an intimate, night-time voyage into the psychology of the human condition.

Through an installation filled with contrast, two spectacular sculptures emblematic of his work serve as reference points. *the sun* and *the moon* guide visitors in an exploration of the great matters of our relationship to the world: love, desire, death and nature call to each other and clash in a wide-ranging and surprising orchestration.

Two emblematic figures of Swiss art make their mark on this exhibition. Ferdinand Hodler (1853-1918), with his warriors, lake views, and dying portrait of Valentine Godé-Darel on one side of the building; and Félix Vallotton (1865-1925), with his nudes, landscapes, still lifes and woodcuts on the other, join in a conversation launched by Rondinone. The curator has even imagined their richly decorated apartments with works and objects from the museum's collections.

Finally, the exhibition trajectory extends to an installation of coloured filters on the building windows, a piece titled *love invents us*. The transformation tints the visual experience of visitors, immersing them in a coloured poetry. It blurs the boundaries between inside and outside, turning the museum at nightfall into a projection room and a place of luminous radiance, where works of art are held within a work of art.

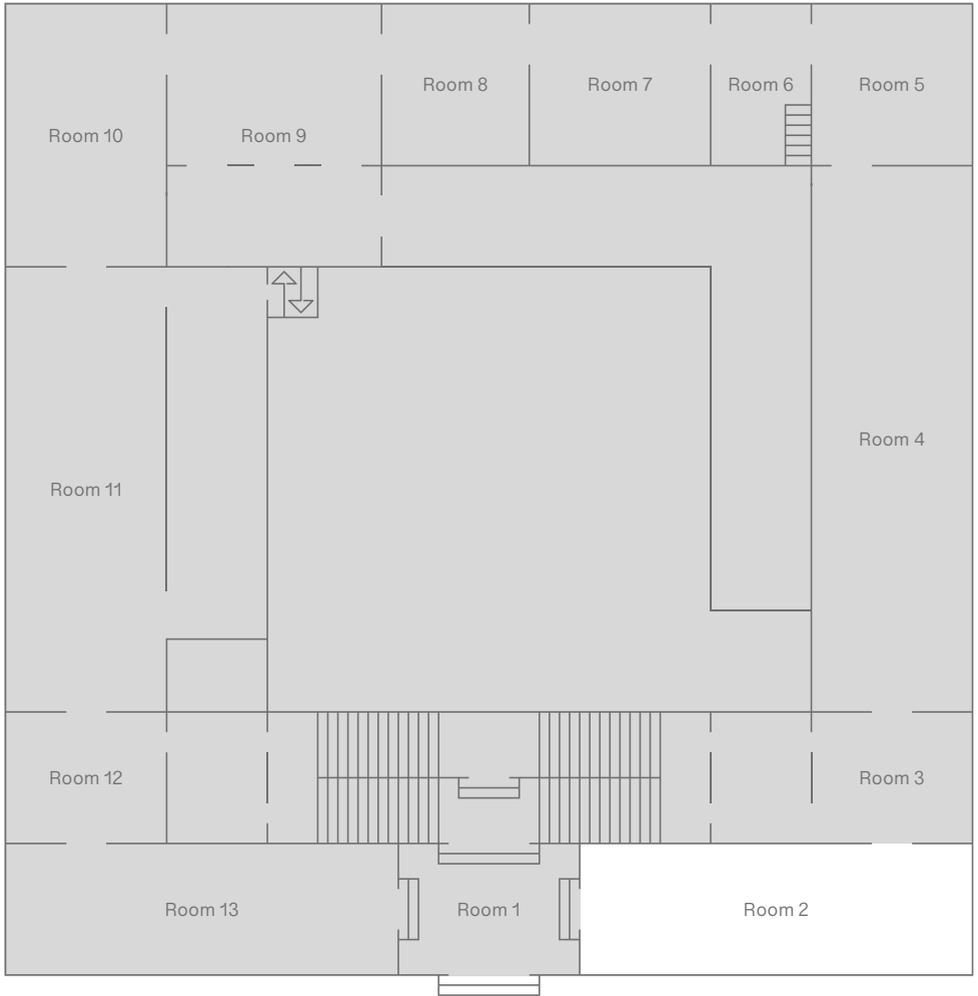
Unfolding through all the upper floor galleries, Ugo Rondinone's narrative and poetic presentation brings together more than five hundred pieces from the MAH's collection with his own work as an artist and curator. After encountering *the sun*, the towering sculpture installed in the entrance hall, viewers then freely choose the course of their visit.



RHYTHMIC SPACE. OPENING

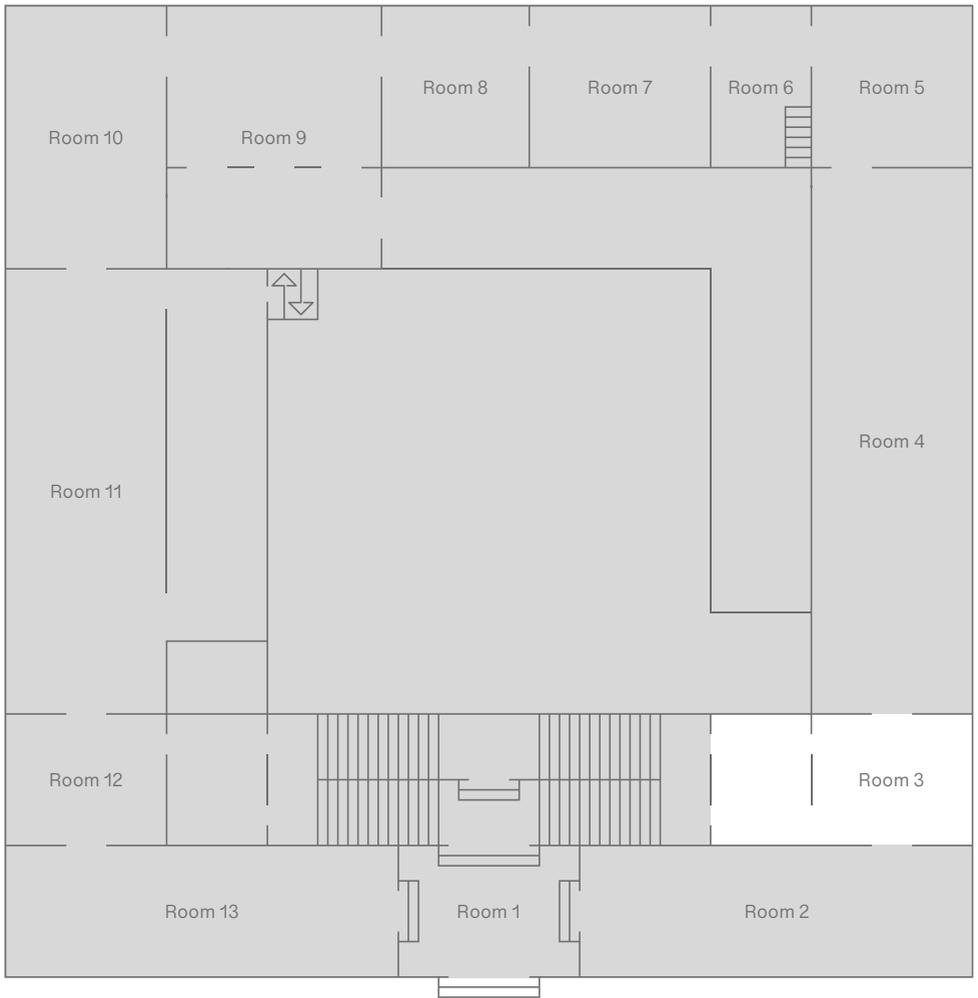
the sun, 2017, one of Rondinone's emblematic pieces installed in the entrance hall, becomes a key to the exhibition. A five-metre circle made of bronze branches, this sculpture is a symbolic gateway, a threshold that the viewer's eye traverses, coming out the other end transformed. *the sun* is the image of a circular trajectory through the museum galleries, which can be travelled in either direction. Finally, it is an illustration of synergetic functioning, in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, a symbol in itself of the relational exhibition the artist presents to us.

Visitors are invited to choose to begin either to the right or left and experience the principle of symmetry that is at the root of the exhibition.



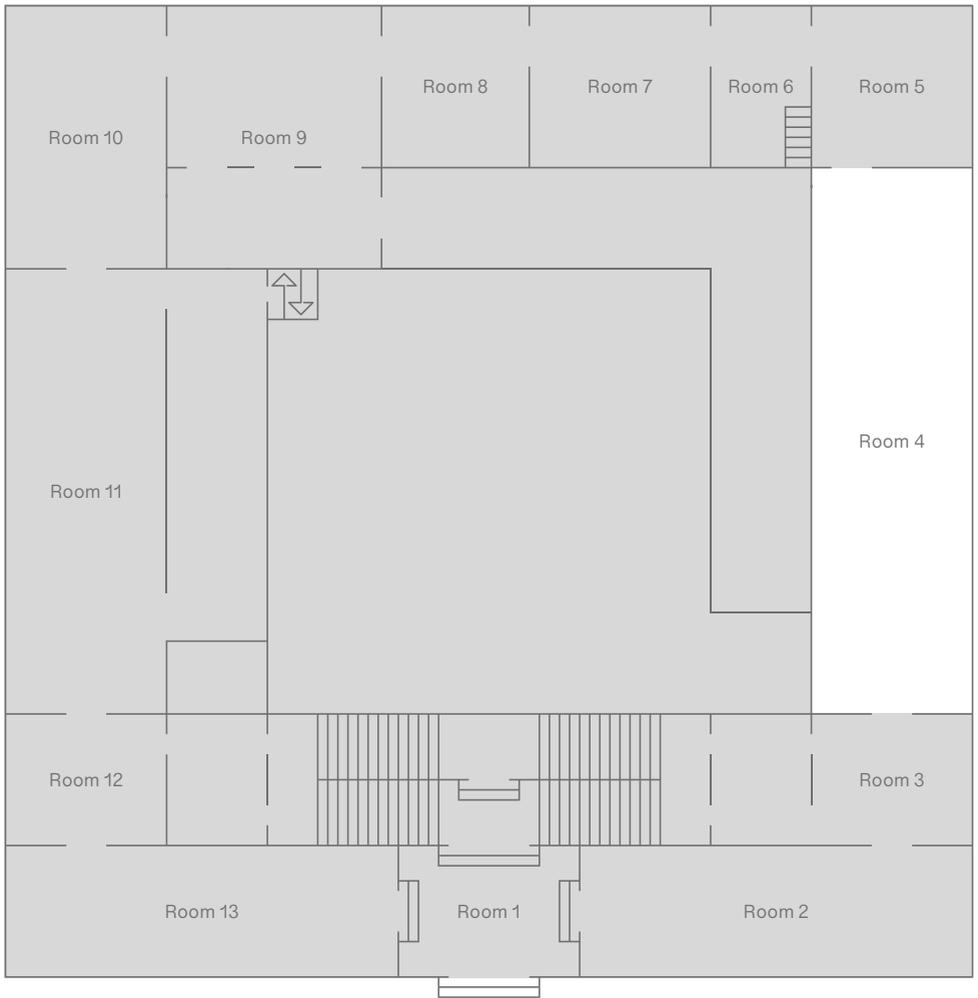
RHYTHMIC SPACE. TEN PILLARS

Rondinone proposes a personal interpretation of the work of Ferdinand Hodler, a major figure of Swiss art whose work is marked by the themes of life's fragility. Visitors are welcomed by a bouquet of martial figures, ten large paintings of Swiss warriors. Installed on pedestals, these paintings are transformed into sculptures, filling the space not walls. A new perception of depth is created. On the back of each pedestal, several of Hodler's sketches and preparatory drawings allow Rondinone to show the backside of the work, the pathways and detours of creation, all leading to the final inspiration on canvas. Finally, *love invents us*, 1999, tints the space in red, hinting at the warrior's intensity and the violence of the emotions he embodies.



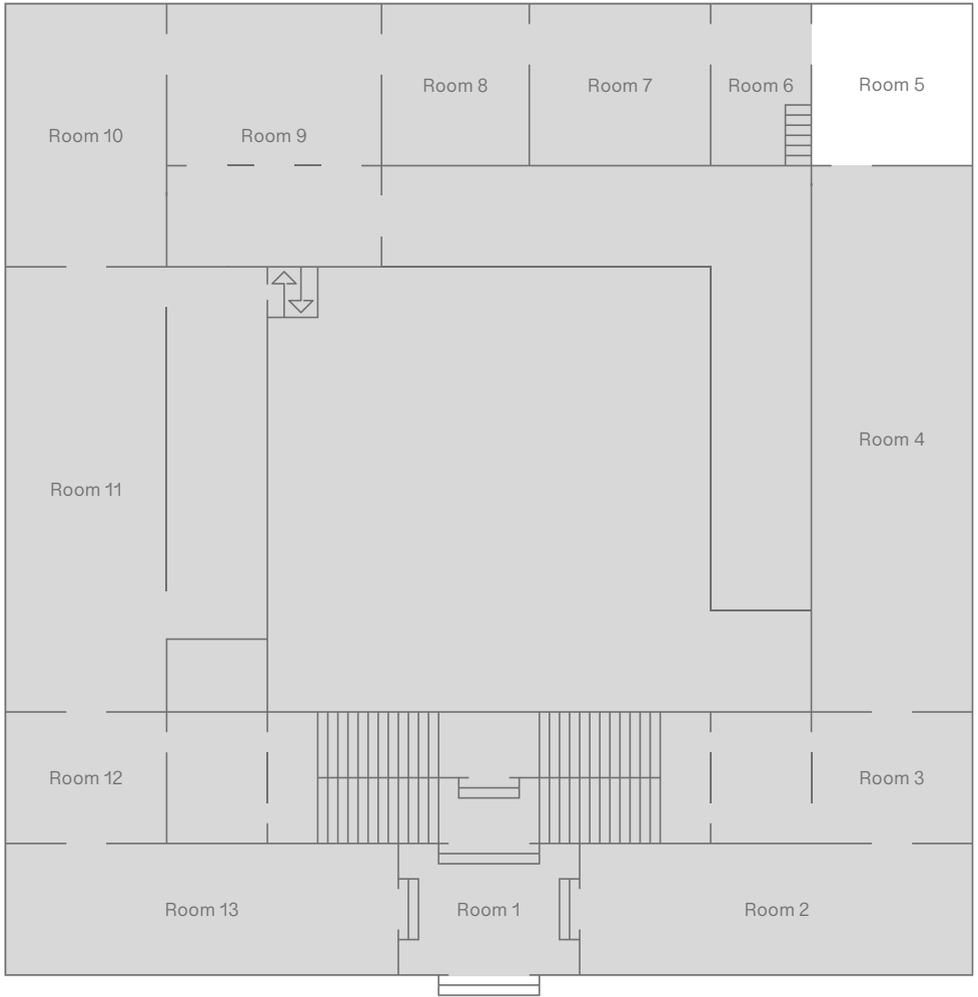
RHYTHMIC SPACE. PATHWAYS

Hodler's apartment is here recreated in an imaginary way and is based on the very inspired dandy Jean des Esseintes who is the whimsical protagonist and aesthete in Jori-Karl Huysmans' novel *À Rebours* (1884). All the objects are from the MAH's collection: the figurative pieces are male silhouettes, suggesting another facet of the artist's desire. Then there are porcelain pieces, fans and even watches that are transformed into a graphic and visual lexicon perhaps representing the inner life of the artist. Three aesthetic unconsciouss overlap in a ballet of references: that of Hodler, the museum and Rondinone, who has orchestrated the whole. *love invents us* lends a green atmosphere to the space. Designed in collaboration with Frédéric Jardin.



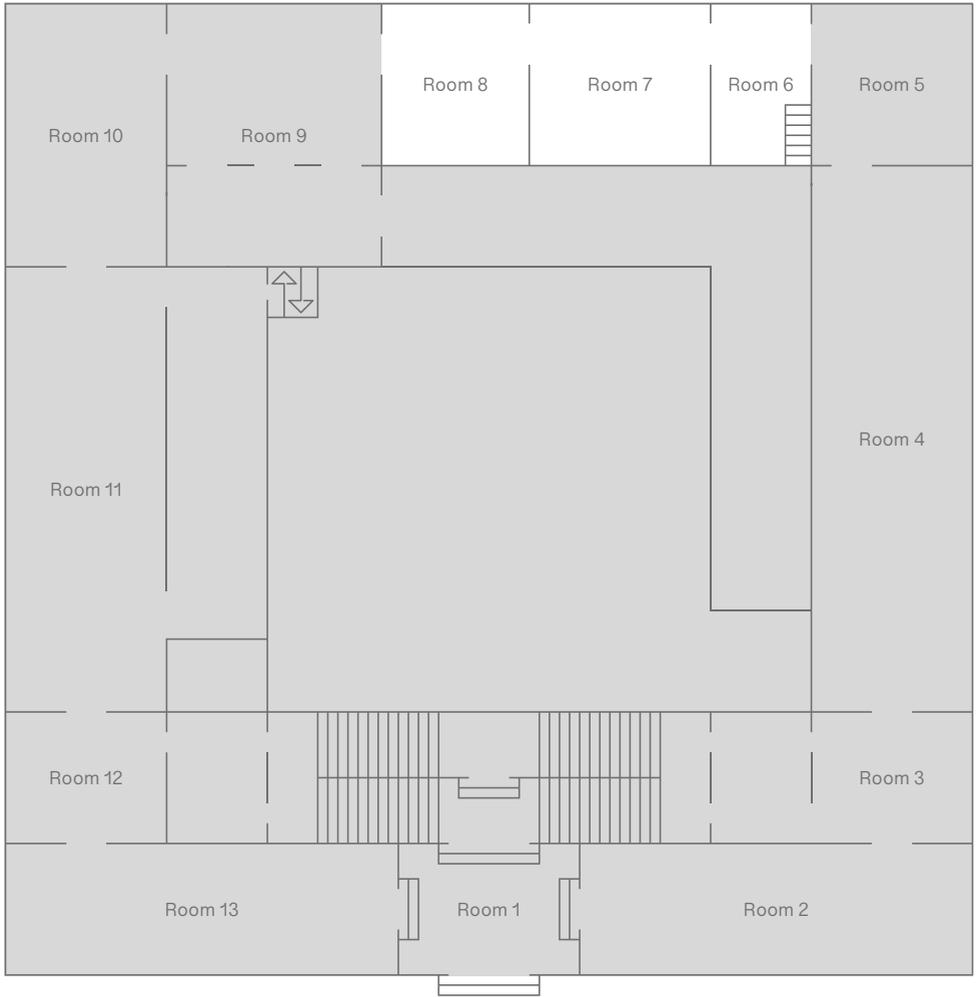
RHYTHMIC SPACE. OPEN SKY

the horizons, 2020, by Rondinone respond here to Hodler's paintings depicting Lake Geneva in a room of echoes and contrasts. The animal silhouettes transmit a strong symbolic dimension because each among them holds water drawn from the different oceans of the earth; vastness is invited into form, the boundless into the bounded. The surface of the water in Rondinone's sculptures replicates the demarcation of the sky and ocean, a play of contrasts between water and air. This is also found in Hodler's views of Lake Geneva. From pigment to mineral, from canvas to sculpture, from lakeside to seaside, there is a fascinating play of coming and going that enchants the eye, and which *love invents us* here tints yellow.



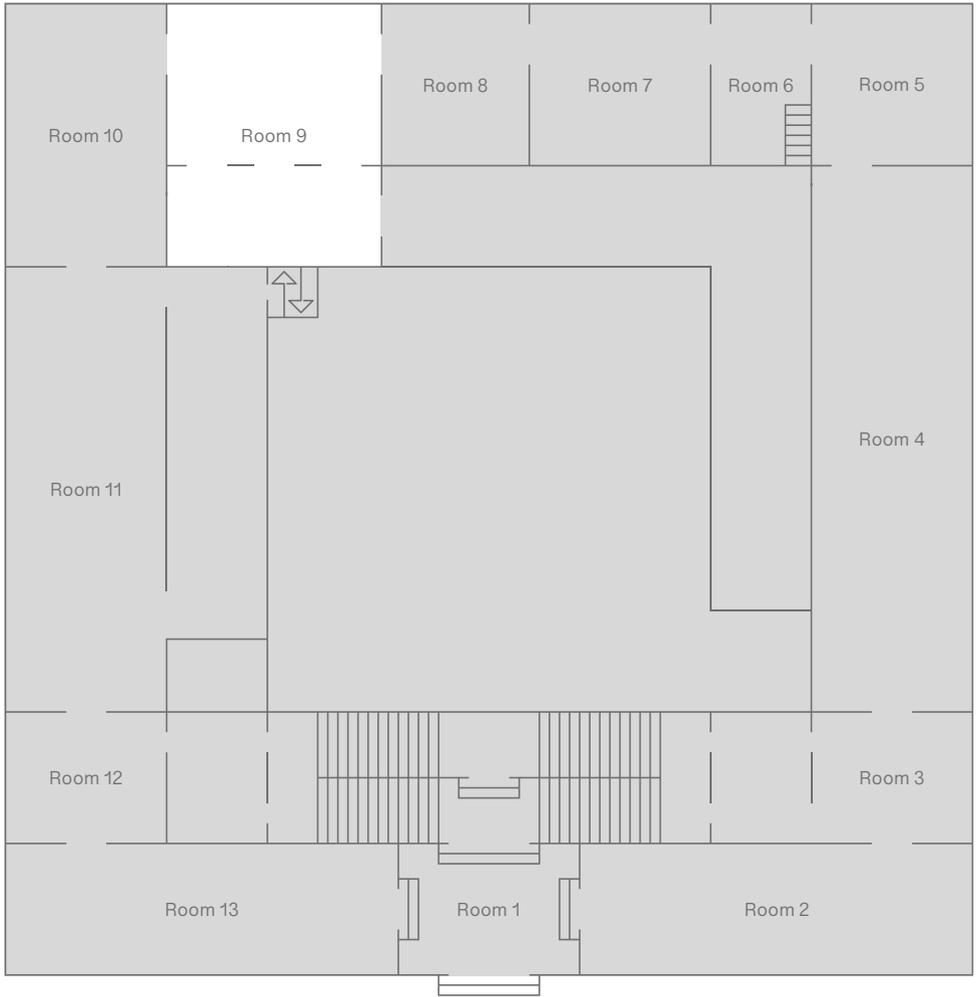
RHYTHMIC SPACE. CLOSED SKY

This space includes seventeen drawings Hodler devoted to the agony of Valentine Godé-Darel, his mistress and muse. These extremely disturbing and moving representations aim to seize death at the moment it strikes while tracing the progression of her sickness in the space and through time.



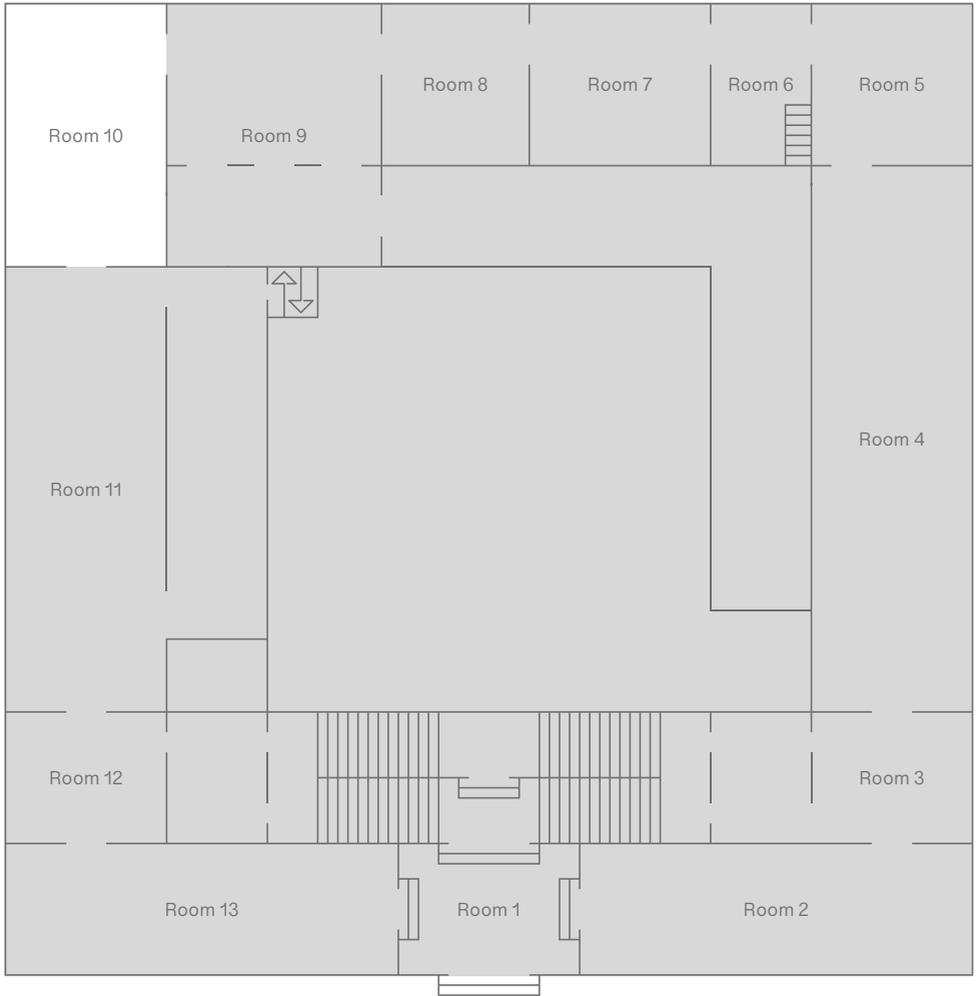
RHYTHMIC SPACE. THREE STEPS

These three rooms all present a dialogue between Ugo Rondinone's large *landscape sculptures*, 2023, which recompose and rearrange a landscape from surprising angles, and the small *diary paintings*, 2005-2012. A conversation is launched between primordial elements. The materiality of the pictures echoes Rondinone's transformation of clay in these mysterious geometric landscapes.



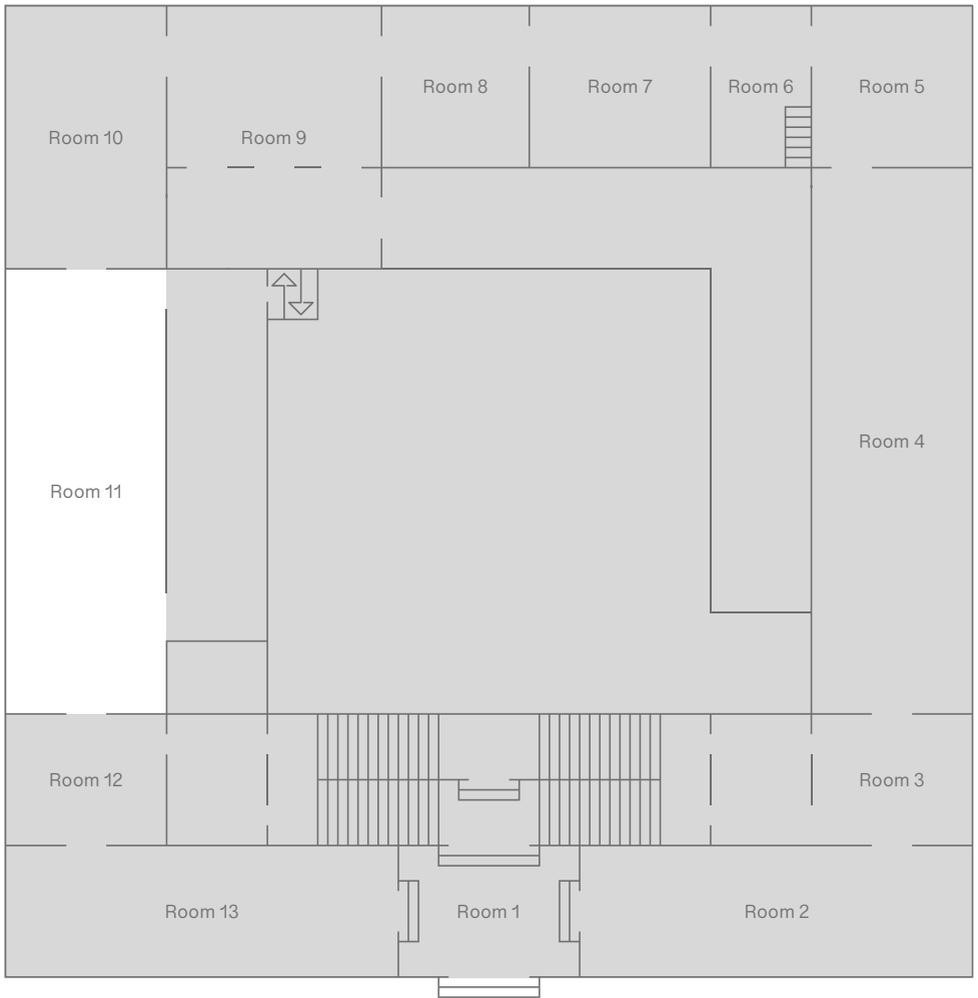
RHYTHMIC SPACE. BEFORE AN INVISIBLE HAND OPENS THE DOOR

These two spaces present an artistic staging on the theme of temporality. Visitors find a selection of the museum's clocks, some standing, some on the wall, and others placed on the same gray pedestals used elsewhere. As a result, the aesthetic and material qualities of everyday objects become more visible and prominent. They are contemplated on the same level as works of art. A sculpture by Rodo (Auguste de Niederhausern) and engravings, all featuring Adam and Eve, complete the presentation. The orange filter of *love invents us* is complemented by a sound installation that amplifies the sounds of the clock needles and mechanisms. The visitor joins a quasi-synaesthetic experience of time.



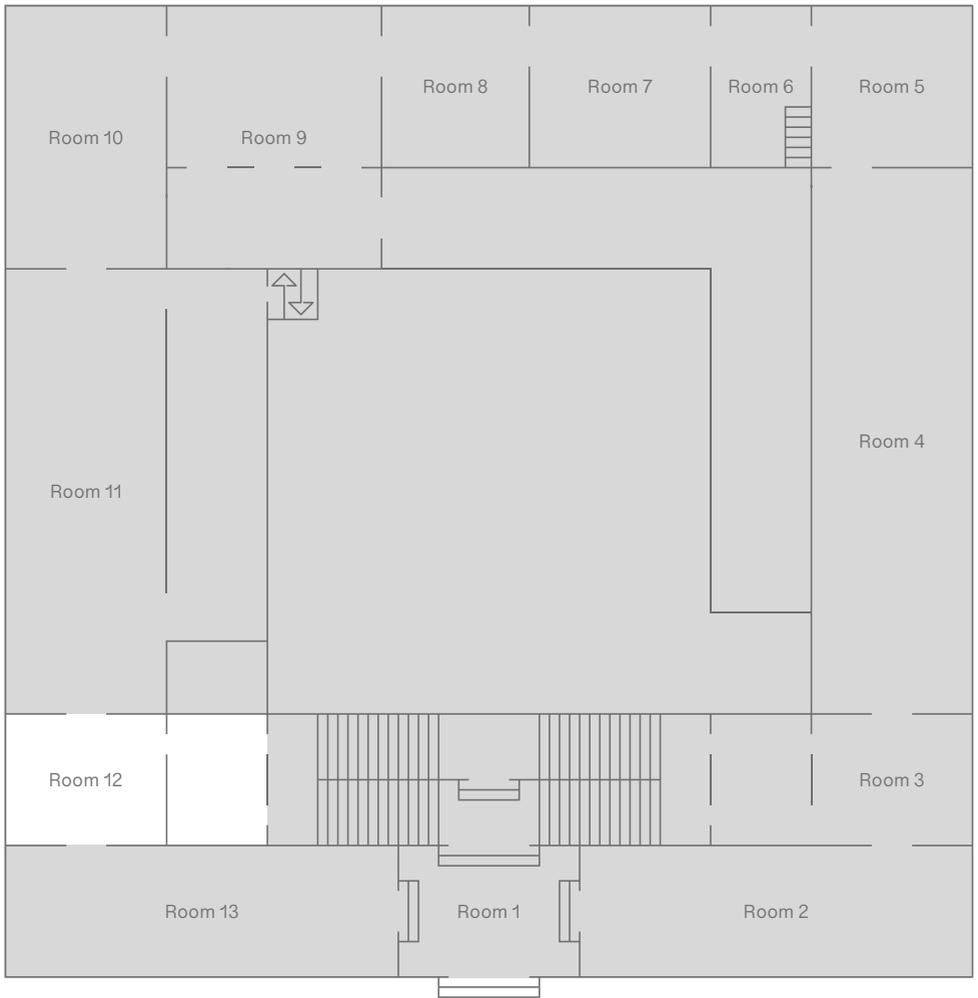
RHYTHMIC SPACE. OBLIQUE SHADOW

With *the moon*, the silver sculpture that is the pendant to *the sun*, a new symbolic passage is presented to the viewer. It is the point in the exhibition where begins (or ends, depending on the direction of the path chosen) where Vallotton's work is reframed. This spectacular piece is surrounded by engravings from Vallotton's renowned series *Intimacies*. Here, Vallotton explores the relationships of couples and plays with the themes of betrayal, secret, and closeness to the other. These black and white images are an invitation to explore the reverse side of the visible: they hint at what is hidden behind appearances. These subjects behind closed doors then function as a surprising counterpoint to *the moon*. The play of scale perfectly expresses Rondinone's fascination with duality and the art of contrasts.



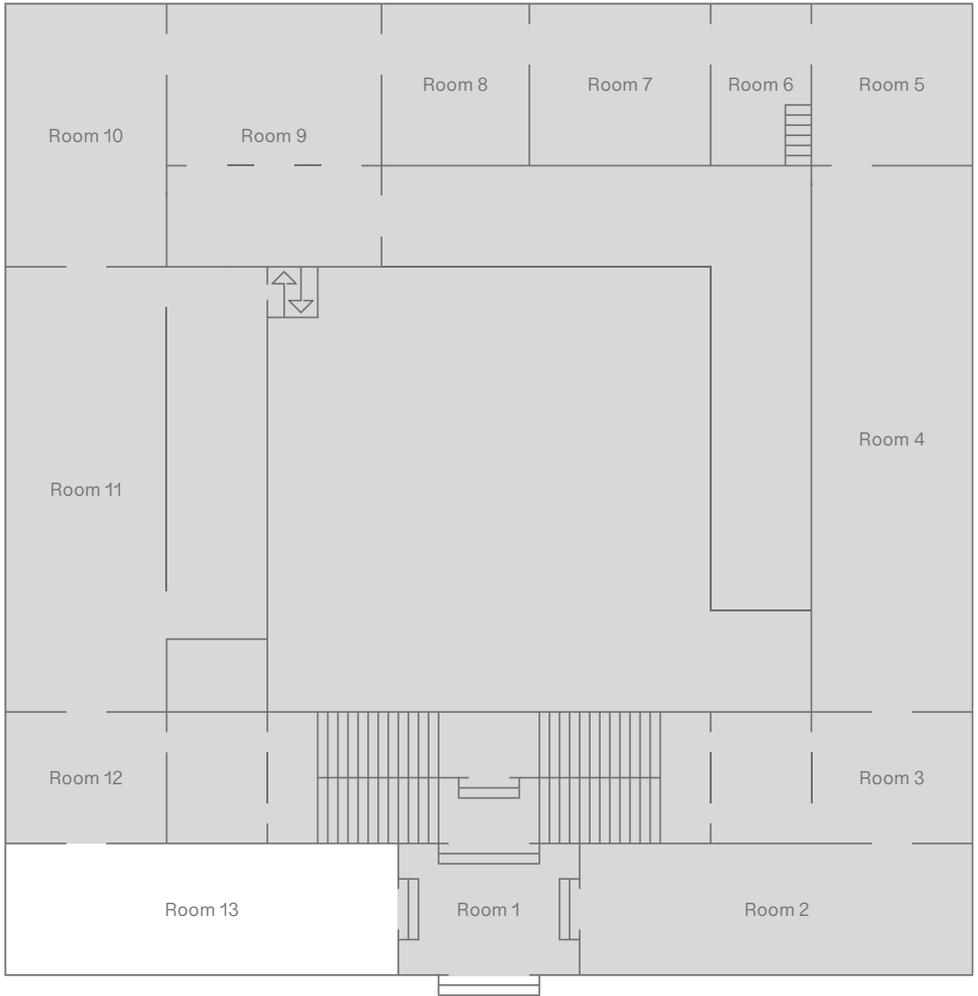
RHYTHMIC SPACE. ON THE EDGE

Seven representations of landscapes and still lifes by Vallotton reintroduce the theme of passing time, as well as the emotion of landscapes, a fundamental motif of Romanticism. Selected sculptures respond to them: Rondinone's seven nude dancers made from wax mixed with different soils collected from across the world. Each of these bodies is also a landscape, a configuration of earth and material. Black filters darken the display cases sheltering the museum's armor. *love invents us* lends a purple halo to it all.



RHYTHMIC SPACE. THE CYPRESS TREES

Vallotton's apartment is here recreated in an imaginary way and is based on the very inspired dandy Jean des Esseintes who is the whimsical protagonist and aesthete in Jori-Karl Huysmans' novel *À Rebours* (1884). All the objects are from the MAH's collection: the figurative pieces are male silhouettes, suggesting another facet of the artist's desire. Then there are archeological pieces, antique furniture and objects and even precious fabrics that are transformed into a graphic and visual lexicon perhaps representing the inner life of the artist. Three aesthetic unconsciouss overlap in a ballet of references: that of Vallotton, the museum and Rondinone, who has orchestrated the whole *love invents us* lends a pink atmosphere to the space. Designed in collaboration with Frédéric Jardin.



RHYTHMIC SPACE. THE WATERFALL

Echoing the first Palatine room on the other side of the hall are seven of Vallotton's nudes presented vertically on the same kind of pedestal with drawings installed behind. Here the fragility of the human body responds to the theme of war presented on the other side of the hall. Rondinone creates a tension between diametrically opposing forces, drawing in viewers and having them confront extremely powerful and archetypal representations. The blue filter of *love invents us* here offers a light that accentuates the vulnerability of flesh exposed to looking and nevertheless confiscated from touch, a phenomenon that is at the root of an entire dialectic of desire in painting.



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