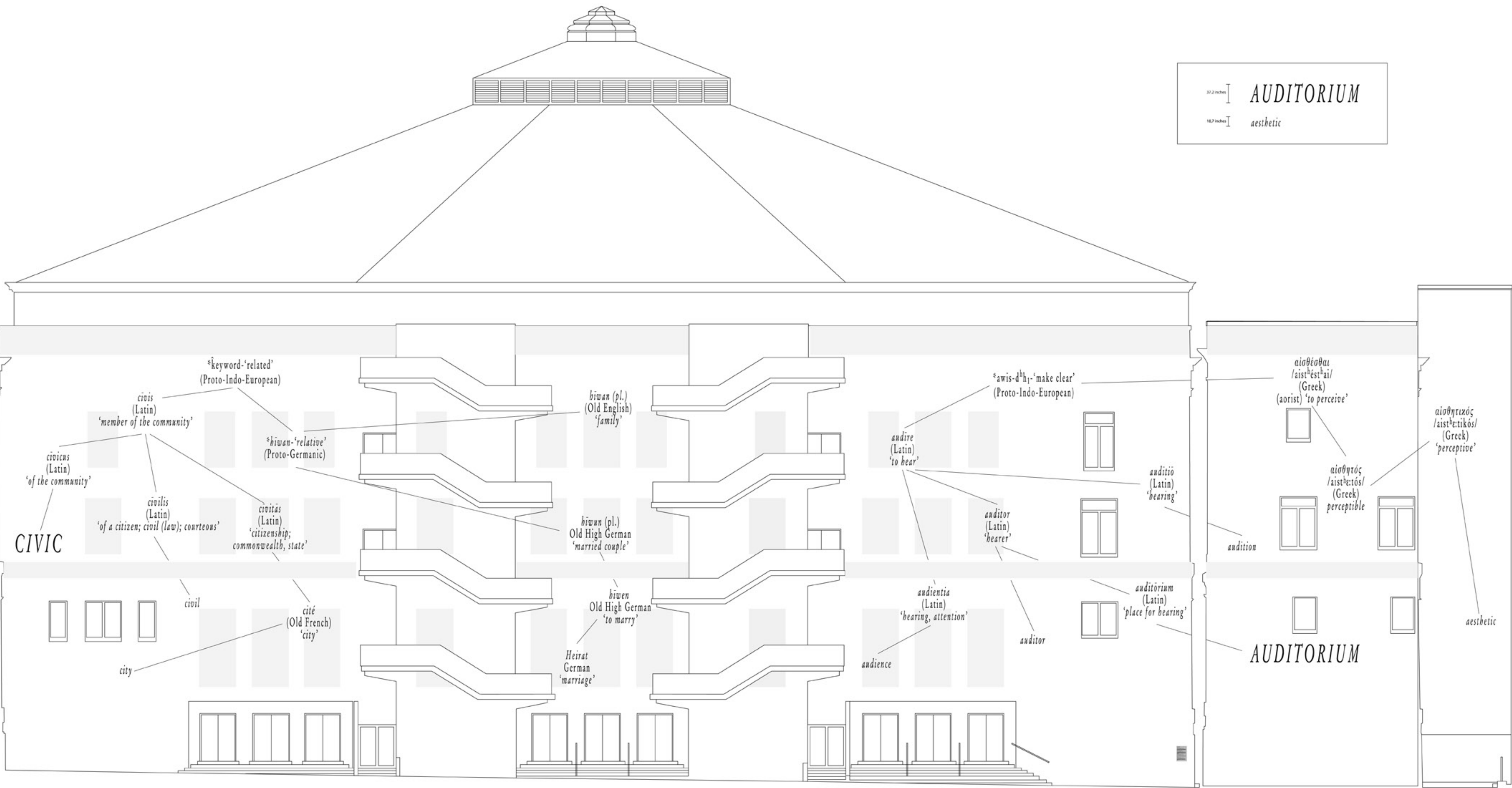


Joseph Kosuth 'W.F.T. (San Francisco)', 2016

Art Proposal for the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium (Western Façade)

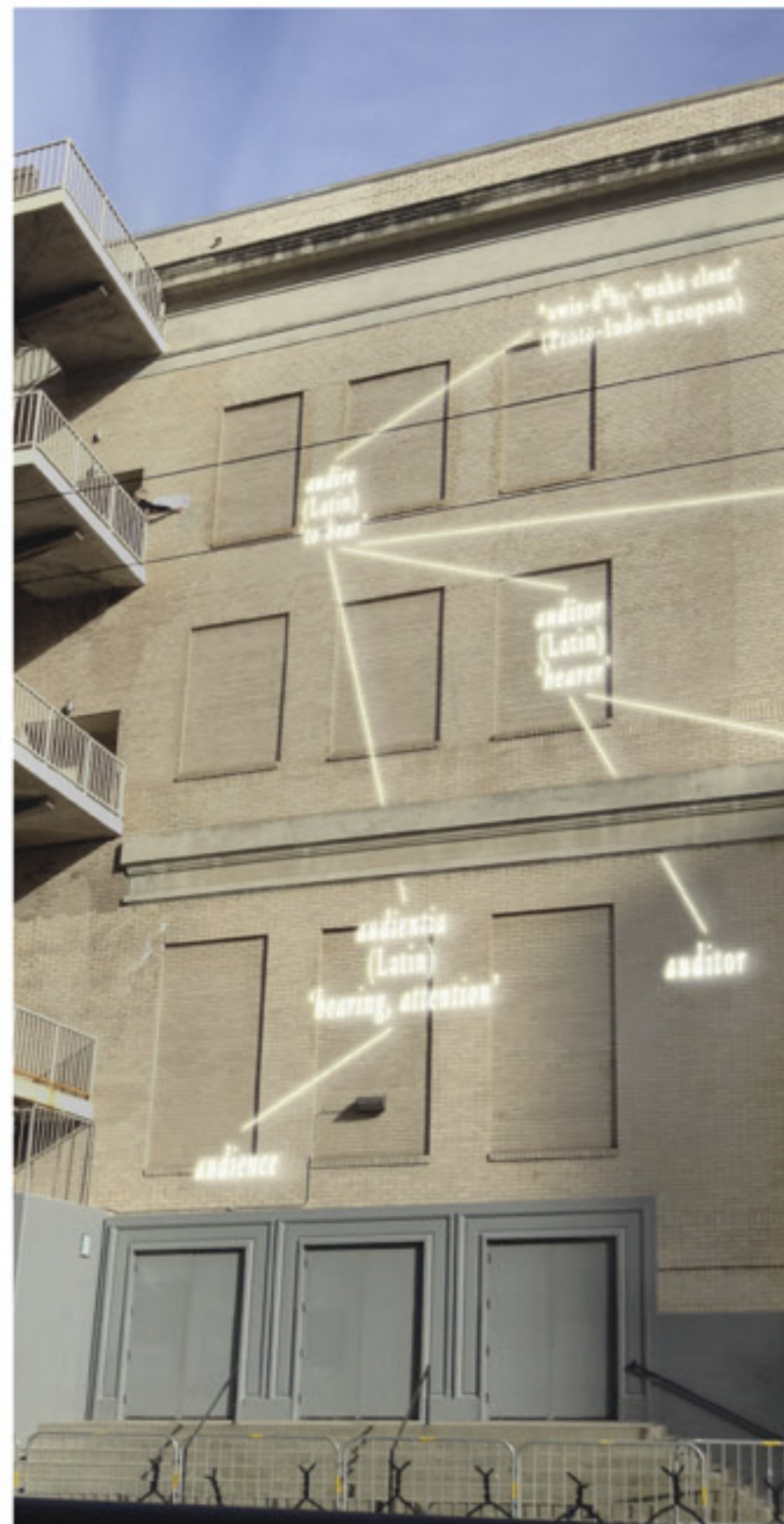


'W.F.T. (San Francisco)' 2016
Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, San Francisco

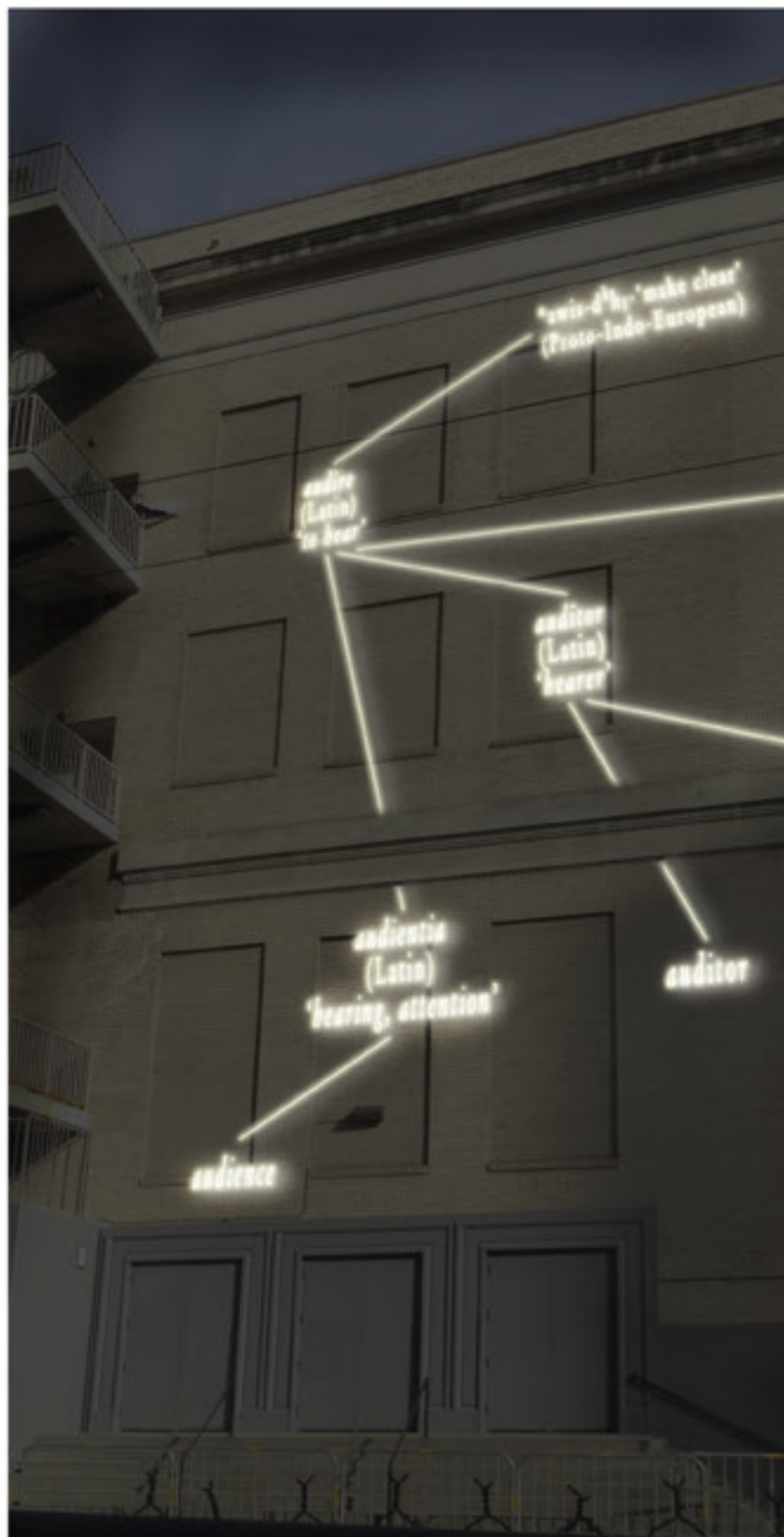
Architecture is the most psychological of the arts; it defines the approach to work and frames your response to the kinds of meanings you find in it. The appropriation of architecture as part of my work in general is because it is so formative of the dynamic which constructs the meaning of cultural production—in this case—the façade of a distinguished public building—a concert venue that has been re-purposed over the last century housing spectacles ranging from politics to sports to culture, in short a beloved and democratic arena used by the citizens of San Francisco. Our experience of art, whether on the façade of a former bunker, the Louvre, an ancient castle, a massive ex-industrial space, a new building by Frank Gehry, or on the façade of this auditorium, is formed by the differences in the social history of any building's prior use (which is why that building takes the form it takes, and constructs the kind of ambient environment that it does) as well as the cultural meaning that goes with it. Either an artist takes that into account critically or these relations are formed for them uncritically. These issues, that is, the full context of art, seemed quite relevant to me as an artist already in the 1960s and determined the kind of work I made.

During the research phase of this project, it became quite evident that it would be a challenge to capture the encyclopedic nature of the uses of this important building from its inauguration in 1915 as part of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition to the present. The San Francisco Civic Center, where the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium is situated, near City Hall, the State Office Complex and the San Francisco Public Library has a shared history where politics and culture meet. The essence of this building and the historic plaza of which it is part is what I have tried to address in the public artwork I am proposing. The basis of this project is language itself. It is a work that is both a reflection on its own construction as well as on the history and culture of its own location. The structure of this installation has two parts: the etymology of the words 'Civic' and 'Auditorium' in white neon on the western façade. The work reflects the cultural and social history of the evolution of language itself, how the history of a word demonstrates its relationship to cultures and social realities quite distinct and disconnected. The word 'Civic' is intricately connected to the long history of civil rights activism that has taken place (and continues to take place) in the plaza—from Gay Rights to Black Lives Matter. The word 'Auditorium' on the other hand is more specific to the building itself, referring to the collective audience assembled by Bill Graham, who found a way, as a concert promoter to not only promote concerts but also community. It is only in the present when a word is used, as it is with a work of art being experienced, that all which comprises the present finds its location in the process of making meaning. Here, in this work, language becomes both an allegory and an actual result of all of which it would want to speak.

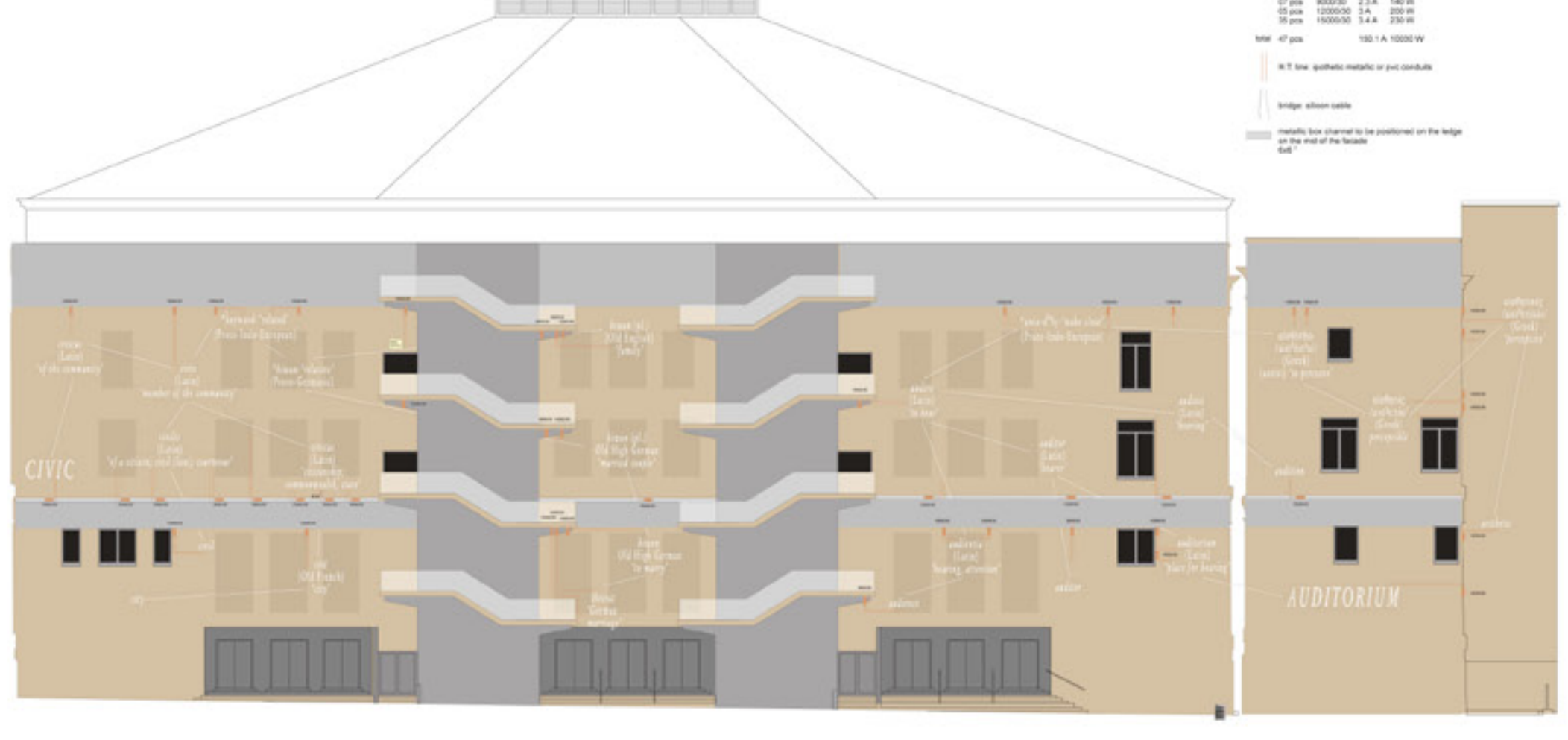
Detail 1: Day View



Detail 2: Night View



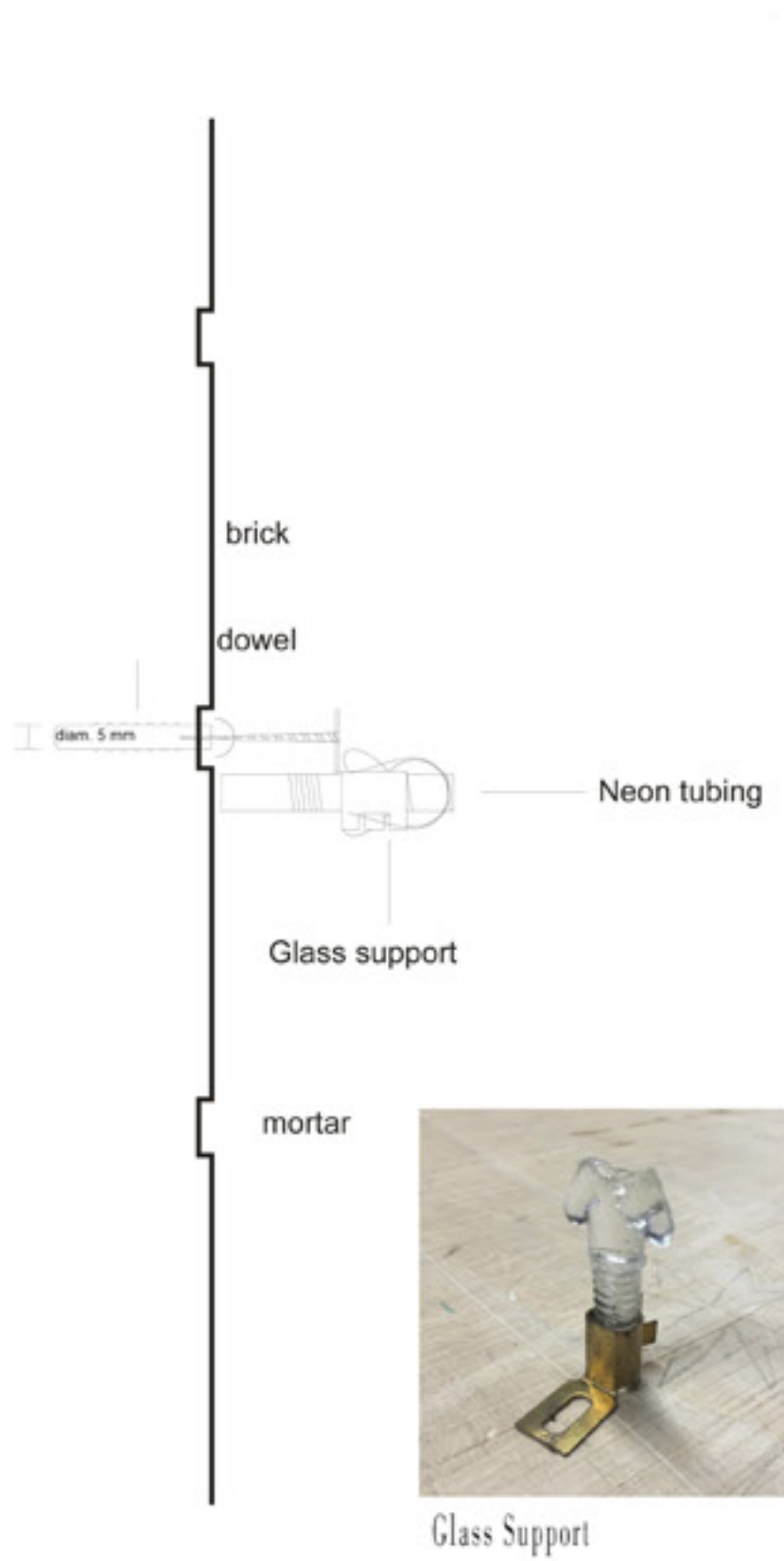
Schematic for the Electrical Wiring



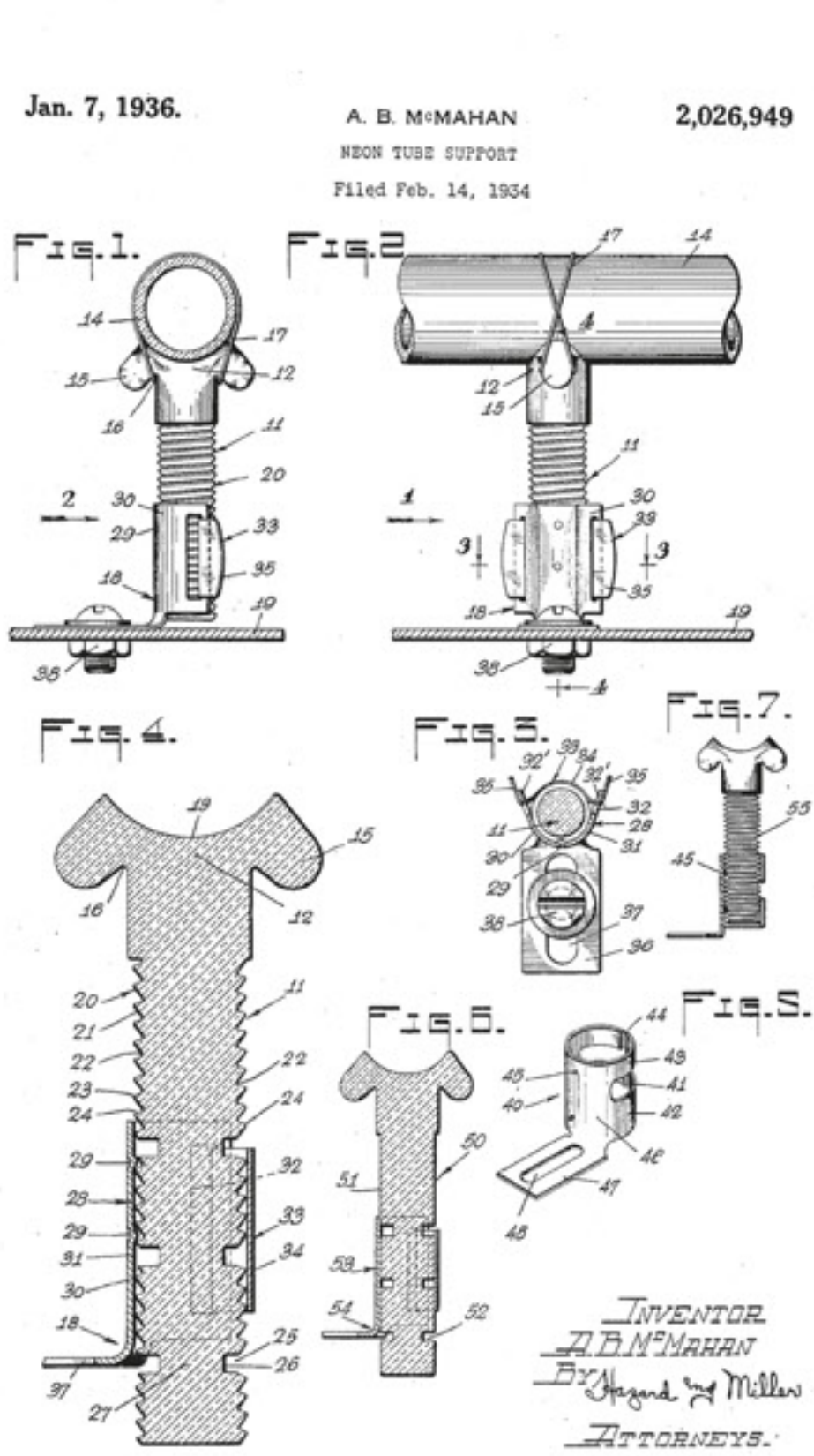
Documentation of a Work by Joseph Kosuth being installed on the façade of a government building in The Hague, The Netherlands in 2011



Installation Schematic



US Patent for the Glass Support from 1936



Placement of the art work

