

PRESS RELEASE

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# Joseph Kosuth

## NOTATIONS FOR THINKING

### *a selection*

Opening 13.09.2017

Exhibition: 14.09.2017 - 5.01.2018

[dip] contemporary art is delighted to present a solo show by Joseph Kosuth (b. 1945, USA). A pioneer of Conceptual art and installation art, Kosuth has been initiating language based works and appropriation strategies since the 1960s.

**NOTATIONS FOR THINKING** *a selection* is Kosuth's first exhibition in the region of Tessin, Switzerland. The opening reception takes place on Wednesday, September 13th, from 6:00 to 8:30pm, at the presence of the artist.

For Notations for Thinking, Kosuth has devised a neon installation work referring to the writings of the German writer Herman Hesse who was based in the region for over forty years. The work will span fourteen meters and wrap around the walls of the main gallery space. Featuring a new installation work alongside a selection of more recent works, the exhibition reflects the artist's investigation into the role of language and meaning in art, a recurrent interest which Kosuth has consistently explored over the course of a career spanning more than fifty years. In addition, Notations for Thinking demonstrates Kosuth's longstanding enquiry into the perception, the use of neon as a medium, as well as the appropriated use of literature, philosophy and psychology.

#### *'A Conditioning of Consciousness', 1988*

Joseph Kosuth has an interest in the narratives and discourse of psychoanalysis, and exclusively dedicated the 1980s to referencing the writings of Sigmund Freud in his work. Kosuth has appropriated, decontextualized and re-worked a number of Freud's texts in his installations, special projects, and site-specific works, feeling a personal and intellectual responsibility to participate in commemorating Freud's contribution to the cultural life of the past century. When invited to the Sigmund Freud Museum in Vienna, Kosuth presented the installation *Zero & Not*, marking the fiftieth anniversary of Freud's death and leading to the *Kunstlergesellschaft* at the Artists Society of the Sigmund Freud Museum. This formed the basis for the contemporary art collection of the Freud Museum, which today features distinguished international artists. For this, in 2003, Kosuth received Austria's highest civil honour for accomplishments in science and culture, the Decoration of Honour in Gold. In 2014 Kosuth co-curated the exhibition *Sigmund Freud and the Play on the Burden of Representation* at the 21er Haus in Vienna with the Belvedere Collection in cooperation with the Freud Museum. Kosuth's production of works of art in relation to the exegesis of Freud's cultural contribution puts into dialogue the practice of psychoanalysis and the project on meaning which contemporary art constitutes.

#### *'The Paradox of Content #' [yellow], 2009*

This body of work stems from a larger installation titled *'An Interpretation of This Title' - Nietzsche, Darwin and the Paradox of Content*. A commissioned installation made for the 2009 Edinburgh Festival which coincided with the bicentenary of Darwin's theory of human evolution and natural selection. While exploring a variety of philosophical

implications drawn from Darwin's work, Kosuth contrasts the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's relationship with Darwin's theories as a device to undo the false opposition of scientific versus aesthetic approaches. Kosuth's pairing in this work shows how both thinkers paradoxically inform each other and evolve within shared cultural paradigms of how one comes to know the world. Kosuth presents the drawings of Charles Darwin not as mere illustrations of discrete observations, but as depictions of a scientific order being posited. The drawings function as maps of relations unseen before Darwin's verification, as much as they are representations of the 'face' of science as belief in the making. They constitute both creativity and a truth confirmed and legitimated through reason and evidence. We have a historical view of the formation of foundational 'beliefs' through discourse and their exegesis from the hand of a man. These tree-like diagrams literally highlight Darwin's creative composition of scientific order and an aesthetic realization of objective truth concerning the evolution of life. The artist reworks these 'relational maps' by a process of appropriation and illumination.

*'Mondrian's Work XIV', 2015*

Conceived in 2005 this series is both a tribute and a play on Piet Mondrian's singular abstract compositions. Kosuth appropriates the Dutch artist's carefully balanced compositions, as well as Mondrian's own words, and weaves both form and text together, thus creating an additional level of 'pure' abstraction. A selection of quotes by Mondrian run along and follow Mondrian's distinctive pared down pallet, conceptually re-tracing the artist's attempt to express the universality of ideas, and a unique inner vision rather than the physical appearance of things, through the careful orchestration of the use of primary colours, flatness of forms and the dynamic tension between the vertical and horizontal elements, the positive and negative, the masculine and the feminine. Kosuth presents a re-visitation of Mondrian's iconic series by creating a space and relationship between Mondrian's own theoretical textural language and the representation of his canvases, creating a space and a tension, literally mirroring and illuminating, Mondrian's theory against his practice. Ultimately Kosuth shows how both theory and practice collapse into each other while revealing his own kinship with Mondrian's work. Kosuth believes that one must maintain the capacity to play. For him this means to follow the direction of the work with as much flexibility that his problematic as an artist permits. Rather than observing the more conventional concerns of maintaining a perceived 'stylistic' uniformity on formal grounds, the visual information of a work is at the service of the internal agenda of the work itself. As a result, the continuity one sees in the work is established through the consistency of his approach.

### Joseph Kosuth Biography

**Joseph Kosuth** is one of the pioneers of Conceptual art and installation art, initiating language based works and appropriation strategies in the 1960s. His work has consistently explored the production and role of language and meaning within art. His more than forty year inquiry into the relation of language to art has taken the form of installations, museum exhibitions, public commissions and publications throughout Europe, the Americas and Asia, including seven Documenta(s) and nine Venice Biennale(s), one of which was presented in the Hungarian Pavilion (1993). Awards include the Brandeis Award, 1990, Frederick Weisman Award, 1991, the *Menzione d'Onore* at the Venice Biennale, 1993, and the *Chevalier de l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres* from the French government in 1993. He received a Cassandra Foundation Grant in 1968. In June 1999, a 3.00 franc postage stamp was issued by the French Government in honor of his work in Figeac. In February 2001, he received the *Laurea Honoris Causa*, doctorate in Philosophy and Letters from the University of Bologna. In 2001 his novel, 'Purloined' was published by Salon Verlag, Cologne. In October 2003 he received the Austrian Republic's highest honour for accomplishments in science and culture, the Decoration of Honour in Gold for services to the Republic of Austria. Kosuth's work entitled *ni apparence ni illusion* opened at the Musee du Louvre, Paris in 2009 and became a permanent installation in 2014. *ni apparence ni illusion* was recently installed in the new location of the Hall Charles V in the Louvre. His commission to create a work for the façade of the Council of State at The Hague was unveiled in 2011. In 2012 Kosuth received *la classe des Arts de l'Académie Royale* from the Académie Royale Sciences des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts of Belgium. In 2015 the Instituto Superior de Arte, at the University of Havana, awarded him an *Honoris Causa* doctorate, presented during the 12th Havana Art Biennial where he exhibited an extensive installation at the Biblioteca Nacional.

Also in 2015 Kosuth revealed *A Monument of Mines*, a major site-specific installation for the new cultural center in Kongsberg, Norway. Kosuth recently unveiled 'One Field to the Next' a permanent work at the Taipei Main Station. Kosuth is currently working on a new public commission at the Miami Beach Convention Centre and his first publicly funded commission for a landmarked civic building in the United States, on the facade of the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium in San Francisco.

Born in Toledo, Ohio, 1945. Educated at the Cleveland Institute of Art, 1963-64; The School of Visual Arts, New York City, 1965-67; New School for Social Research, New York, (anthropology and philosophy) 1971-72. Faculty, Department of Fine Art, The School of Visual Arts, New York City 1967-1985; Professor at the *Hochschule für Bildende Künste*, Hamburg, 1988-90; *Staatliche Akademie der Bildende Künste*, Stuttgart, 1991-1997; and the *Kunstakademie* Munich, 2001-2006. Kosuth has functioned as visiting professor and guest lecturer at various universities and institutions for nearly forty years, some of which include: Yale University, Cornell University, New York University, Duke University, UCLA, Cal Arts, Cooper Union, Pratt Institute, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Art Institute of Chicago, Royal Academy, Copenhagen, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford University, University of Rome, Berlin Kunstakademie, Royal College of Art, London, Glasgow School of Art, The Hayward Gallery, London, The Sorbonne, Paris, The Sigmund Freud Museum, Vienna. Presently he holds the endowed Millard Chair at Goldsmiths, Department of Fine Arts, University of London. Joseph Kosuth lives and works in London and New York City.

### [dip] contemporary art

[dip] contemporary art is a newborn contemporary art gallery located in Lugano, opened in October 2016 by Michela Negrini.

Representing a range of international artists, [dip] aims at being a stimulating platform for exploring new developments in international contemporary art, across a range of practices and media, building a bridge between art and society, raising public attention on the issues that inspire and challenge our society.



Joseph Kosuth  
 'A Conditioning of Consciousness', 1988  
 Neon mounted directly on the wall framed black and white photograph  
 Courtesy of the Artist / Sean Kelly, New York. Photo by Jason Wyche



Joseph Kosuth  
 'The Paradox of Content #3' [Yellow]  
 Yellow neon 181 x 184 cm  
 Courtesy of the Artist / Sprüth Magers, London

**Info**

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**Visits**

Opening: 13.09.2017  
 Exhibition: 14.09.2017 to 5.01.2018

**Opening hours**

monday: closed (or by appointment)  
 tuesday/friday: 14.00 -18.30  
 saturday/sunday and mornings:  
 by appointment



Joseph Kosuth  
 'Mondrian's work XIV', 2015  
 Silkscreen on glass, white neon mounted directly on the wall 200 x 123.7 cm  
 Courtesy of the Artist and [dip] contemporary art, Lugano