SIGMUND FREUD AND THE PLAY ON
THE BURDEN OF REPRESENTATION
An installation by Joseph Kosuth

21er Haus
19 September 2014 to 11 January 2015

Joseph Kosuth
"O. & A./F!D! (TO I.K.
AND G.F.)", 1987
Screenprinting
263 x 230 x 22cm,
Photograph
168 x 133 cm
Sigmund Freud Privatstiftung, Vienna / © Bildrecht, Vienna, 2014, © Belvedere, Wien
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With works from the Belvedere Collection and the Sigmund Freud Museum Contemporary Art Collection, among others

The 21er Haus marks the 75th anniversary of Sigmund Freud’s death in September 2014 with an exhibition, calling to mind the heritage of this pre-eminent protagonist of the twentieth century. This is done – as always – from a contemporary point of view, putting in play questions concerning representation, Freudian Theory, and the visual arts. “It is a special honour that it has been possible to win over Joseph Kosuth for this project, an American pioneer of Conceptual Art who is connected to Freud, psychoanalysis, and Vienna in multiple ways”, director Agnes Husslein-Arco is pleased about the collaboration with the Sigmund Freud Museum.

Sigmund Freud’s concept of the human mind and his theory of the mental realm have revolutionized our view of the self and our thinking as such through psychoanalysis as a language-based method of recognition of what used to be inaccessible and literally unconscious. His new perspectives and approaches have been adopted and developed further by numerous disciplines and beyond their boundaries. It is not least the visual arts in which fundamental influences of psychoanalysis have manifested themselves, since both of them are fields devoted to the power of images and their symbolic meaning.

Joseph Kosuth’s radically analytical artistic practice is not primarily based on objects, but in a very essential manner on language and can be understood as a reflection of perception and its processes as such. The writings of Sigmund Freud on language and the psychoanalytic method were particularly crucial for Kosuth’s works of the 1980s. His extensive preoccupation with the subject reached a climax in 1989: On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Freud’s death, he realized his installation Zero & Not at Berggasse No. 19, where the psychoanalyst had lived and worked until his expulsion in 1938 and which today houses the Sigmund Freud Museum. The installation remained there seven years. And it laid the basis for the contemporary art collection of the Sigmund Freud Museum, which today features distinguished international artists.

Now, 25 years later, the 21er Haus and Joseph Kosuth are staging a new version of Zero & Not as the main spatial organizing element of the exhibition Sigmund Freud and the Play on the Burden of Representation. It combines most of the artist’s own key Freud-related works with the Sigmund Freud Museum Contemporary Art Collection, a selection from the Belvedere Collection, as well as a number of other recent works on the subject of art and psychoanalysis. In its artistic and curatorial approach, the show is the latest in Kosuth’s series of Curated Installations, such as his projects at the Vienna Secession and the Brooklyn Museum of Art. As the title suggests, it deals with the heritage, continuity, and topicality of Freud’s topography of the psyche in contemporary art, ambivalently oscillating between lightness and gravity.
Joseph Kosuth on the exhibition

We must first begin with an understanding that there is not one conversation in play about representation but several, and our options are not limited to one choice but include all of them, indeed, this heterogeneous location of our view is the play between these points of view, one with its own context. Our productive activity, shall we even say, our creative process, has as its objective not merely considerations for our future production but also for our creative view of our reading of the past. So ‘the burden of representation’ being put in play here is the necessity of art to break, in the experience of its own time and not simply of the past, from those inherited meanings of representation which are now part of how we see.

The present exhibition, *Sigmund Freud and the Play on the Burden of Representation*, is the most recent addition to a series of works that goes back to the beginning of my practice in one form or another. But two installations of mine done in the early 1990’s, *The Play of the Unsayable* at the Vienna Secession and the *Palais des Beaux Arts* in Brussels for the Wittgenstein centennial, and *The Play of the Unmentionable* for the *Brooklyn Museum* in New York, were the first large institutional versions of my ‘curated installations’ and they were done, among other objectives, with the intention of rupturing the status quo of how exhibitions are made and doing that by raising questions about the habituated, institutionalized approach to the construction of an exhibition. It is important to note that I am not an art historian, nor am I a curator. I am an artist, and we will consider here what such a difference means. Since the beginning of my practice as an artist, I have made it clear that it is my belief that the primary material of an artist is meaning (if only its cancellation) and thus, in my work, linguistic relations between objects and images, and language itself, has had a primary role. Forms and colors, for example, are a used up approach to art making even though they may continue to be present and used for other purposes and having other meanings than they have had traditionally. A result of this understanding has often meant that the ‘material’ of the work has been the context itself.

Curated by Joseph Kosuth, Mario Codognato and Luisa Ziaja
In cooperation with the Sigmund Freud Museum, Vienna
LIST OF ARTISTS

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BIOGRAPHY JOSEPH KOSUTH

Joseph Kosuth is one of the pioneers of Conceptual art and installation art, initiating language based works and appropriation strategies in the 1960’s. His work has consistently explored the production and role of language and meaning within art. His nearly 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 most of the Documentas and Venice Biennales in recent decades. 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, being the choice of Marcel Duchamp one week before he died. 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. 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. In October 2009 Kosuth’s exhibition ‘ni apparence ni illusion’, an installation work in white neon that runs for 280 meters throughout the 12th century original medieval walls of the Louvre palace, opened at the Musée du Louvre in Paris. In May of 2012 Kosuth was inducted into the Royal Belgian Academy.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition Title
SIGMUND FREUD AND THE PLAY ON THE BURDEN OF REPRESENTATION
An installation by Joseph Kosuth

Exhibition Duration
19 September 2014 to 11 January 2015

Venue
21er Haus

Exhibits
145

Artists
72

Curated by
Joseph Kosuth, Mario Codognato and Luisa Ziaja

With works / loans from
Belvedere ; Sigmund Freud Museum Contemporary Art Collection; SAMMLUNG VERBUND, Wien; evn sammlung, Maria Enzersdorf, Austria; Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna; Georg Kargl Fine Arts, Vienna; Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna; Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna; Galleria Lia Rumma, Rom; Artelier Contemporary, Graz; Daimler Art Collection, Stuttgart; Galerie Dhiel, Berlin; Galerie Anselm Dreher, Berlin; Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig/Berlin; Sammlung Geyer, Vienna; Herald St, London; Sammlung Carl Kostyál; Christine König Galerie, Vienna; Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Stuttgart; Galerie Wilfried Lentz, Rotterdam; Studio lost but found, Berlin; Städtische Sammlung Erlangen, Erlangen; Sean Kelly Gallery, New York; Sperone Westwater Gallery, New York; Sprüth Magers London Berlin ; Timothy Taylor Gallery, London; Galeria Vistamare, Pescara; Dr. Robert Waditschatka; George and Betty Woodman, The Estate of Francesca Woodman, New York; Galerie Thomas Zander, Köln and private lenders

In cooperation with
Sigmund Freud Museum, Vienna
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Opening Hours
Wednesday and Thursday 11 am to 9 pm
Friday to Sunday 11 am to 6 pm
Open on holidays

Regular Tickets
€ 7 (21er Haus)
€ 21 (21er Haus yearly ticket)

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