

Maxima Proposito (Ovidio)

*Joseph Kosuth*

Vistamare, Pescara

Opening 25 November 2017 6.30pm

27 November 2017 – 2 March 2018

Joseph Kosuth's new solo show at Vistamare in Pescara is based on the Roman poet Ovid. This is the first time the artist works with the contemporary of Horace and Virgil, who was born in Sulmona, in the province of L'Aquila, near Pescara. The work constitutes a series of appropriated texts written by Ovid under the rule of Augustus during the height of the Roman era, a very literate, cosmopolitan and sophisticated time.

Kosuth presents a selection of writings in both English and Latin that form both a site-specific overall installation running throughout the four-room gallery space, while at the same time each text fragment represents an equally authoritative and independent work element; words and sentences are chosen that bring with them meanings of a particular historical depth. The project therefore includes a totalizing conceptual frame that unfolds within the architectural gallery context, while at the same time offering a constellation of independent works. Installations function importantly in the work of Kosuth, however, non-installed smaller works, also permit the artist the possibility of working through certain ideas, which are concerned with issues other than those which are site context-dependant.

These fragmented meanings stand independent of Kosuth's, while he simultaneously employs them in the production of *his* meaning. As it often the case in his work practice, it is meaning which is context dependant. The viewer is encouraged to *think*, to participate in the making of the meaning of the work. For Kosuth, the viewer completes the work. This way, the viewer connects with the creative conceptualizing process of the artist, rather than experience an artwork as a fragment of history or a retinal form of entertainment. The viewer/reader in this case is invited to approach Ovid's writings in this setting, through a different lens, ultimately working through the 'new' meaning created by both artist and audience.

The artist's use of readymade texts was established at the beginning of his work in the 1960's. Indeed, there is even a short series within *The First Investigation*, which is comprised of quotes by artists. For Kosuth, all work begins with 'borrowed' material, but usually it is masked by the naturalization of habit and the authority of tradition. Just as an author writes with words invented by others, yet still claims the personal expression and subjective responsibility of authorship, Kosuth borrows not just words but sentences and paragraphs--sometimes even books and whole libraries--written by others. But the meaning produced is claimed by him within the context of his work. He feels that such a working procedure reveals the actual character of art. The artist's use and selection of quotes by writers or thinkers that represents a certain body of theory or literature that have made a significant contribution to present day culture is text based and context bound.

Opening hours Monday 10am - 1pm | Tuesday to Friday: 10am - 1pm | 4:30pm – 7:30pm

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