

who knows one

curated by Haim Steinbach

Darren Bader, Kenji Fujita, Liam Gillick, Rachel Harrison, Alfredo Jaar, Zerek Kempf, Peter Kogler, Joseph Kosuth, Agnieszka Kurant, Miltos Manetas, Helen Marten, Moshe Ninio, Susan Philipsz, Magali Reus, Mika Rottenberg, Nancy Shaver, Eran Schaefer, Gwen Smith, Ettore Spalletti, Steel Stillman, Slavs and Tatars, Noncommittal, Joe Winter

Vistamare, Pescara

Opening September 28, 2019, 6.30 pm

September 28, 2019 – February 14, 2020

Vistamare is proud to present **who knows one**, a group exhibition curated by Haim Steinbach.

The artist has invited twenty-three artists, from different backgrounds and with different professional experiences, choosing to ask a question, **who knows one**, which encourages them to ponder the very significance of the work of art, a question that also involves the eventual viewer of the artwork, leaving all of us engaged in the search for an answer.

The initial question, **who knows one** (when read literally as referring to the number 1), is a children's nursery rhyme, a tongue-twister from a Hebrew text in the Haggadah (circa 1500 b.c.) – a compendium of rabbinic homilies and tales, incorporating folklore, historical anecdotes and practical advice – suggesting doubts and questions related not only to the world of art but also to broader philosophical and religious thought systems which force the individual to reflect on the very meaning of life. Each artist has replied using the tools he or she finds most congenial, and the exhibition unfolds in the form of series of works, differing in character and often enigmatic, in which the word plays a prominent part.

The question of "who knows one" comes from the allegorical poem of the same title which is part of the Hebrew text "Haggadah." The Haggadah is read around the dinner table on the occasion of the start of the Passover holiday. The poem's telling is both historical and ethical in its reference to the exodus and the Ten Commandments ("who knows ten"). It presents the complexities and contradictions of the quest for knowing: what am I doing here? Who am I? Where am I going?

In 1948 Barnett Newman made the painting, "Onement I". According to the Museum of Modern Art, "this is the first time the artist used a vertical band to define the spatial structure of his work."

What is "first", how to capture an instant in time? As with Newman, Samuel Beckett's last poem, "What is the Word" indicates a basic attempt to capture an idea. A work done is both a definition, as well as a question.

The allegory of "who knows one" also raises the question of where is God? And at the same time, it affirms that God is one. It raises the question of being.

In the case of one artist who was invited to participate in the show, the question raised by the title was turned inside out as if thrown back at the artist. It challenged the premise of the calling as if to say, "What do you know?" "What do I know?" And anyway "What is the point?"

—Haim Steinbach

Haim Steinbach (Rehovot, Israel, 1944) participated in the 1997 edition of the Venice Biennale as part of the international exhibition curated by Germano Celant. His works are present in the permanent collections of museums worldwide: The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; the Menil Collection, Houston; the Städel Museum, Frankfurt; Tate Modern, London; the Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; the Israel Museum, Jerusalem; the Museum Moderner Kunst in Vienna and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago.