

SEANKELLY

Prentnieks, Anne. "Joseph Kosuth," *Art Forum*, November 2015.

ARTFORUM

Joseph Kosuth



View of "Joseph Kosuth," 2015.

Prone to immersive installations over the course of his influential career as a pioneer of Conceptualism, Joseph Kosuth presents more than forty of his text- and light-based works from the past fifty years in the jam-packed exhibition "Agnosia, an Illuminated Ontology." Words, phrases, diagrams, and pictures creep and crawl along the walls and ceiling beams, with their guts—electric cords and darkened stems of neon—on full view. It is a retinal overload that simultaneously blurs and distills the cacophony of meanings within each work.

Some examples of the chaos, organized neither by chronology nor theme: *Five Colors, Five Adjectives*, 1965—literally, the word "adjective" in five languages and five different colors—is a cerebral and comically deadpan take on adjectival inference. Stacked above it is *À Propos (Réflecteur de Réflecteur)*, #83, 2004, a line of italic serif text that snakes up the wall, turning at sharp ninety-degree corners. *Double Reading #20*, 1993, depicts Calvin, of Calvin and Hobbes fame, lamenting the banality of TV before shushing Hobbes for interrupting a deodorant commercial. And other works, such as *Texts (Waiting for-) for Nothing, Samuel Beckett, in Play*, 2011, work from the series "The Paradox of Content," 2009, and *A Conditioning of Consciousness*, 1988, quote or reference Freud, Beckett, and Darwin.

Kosuth's pairings of high-minded content with common materials have a hypersaturating, destabilizing effect that eliminates hierarchies of information. It's just like our over-connected, faux-democratic, super-digital culture today: a virtual ambush of information through which meaning is eventually, hopefully, distilled.