

The book “Joseph Kosuth Locations of Meaning” was conceived on the occasion of the solo exhibition that was held at the Torrione Passare in Molfetta in 2005, entitled “Thirteen Locations of Meaning”.

Analysing the artist's theory and practice in the light of a long and varied career that began in the mid 1960s, the volume embraces the specificity of Kosuth's linguistic operation in its entirety, retracing its historical idiosyncrasy and at the same time examining its contemporaneity and latest developments through an iconographic documentation of the various stages of the “Locations of Meaning” series, both preceding and following the exhibition in Molfetta.

The book aims to offer a moment of reflection on an artistic operation that has never ceased to elaborate – in depth – some of the central questions surrounding the “making of art”, starting with the contextual motifs of the neon installations in different locations, from Rome's Castel Sant'Angelo in 2000 (‘L'Assenza invadente del Divino’ - ‘Six Locations of Meaning’), to the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sarajevo (‘Eight Locations of Meaning’ 2001), the New Art Museum in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (‘Water – Sand – Space’ - ‘Ten Locations of Meaning’ 2002), the Museo d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea of Trento and Rovereto in 2002 (‘Ten Locations of Meaning’), and finally at the Centro Atlantico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas, Gran Canaria in 2007 (‘Terra Ultra Incognita’ - ‘Fourteen Locations of Meaning’).

By adhering to the diverse linguistic contexts, interpreted as the cultural and social baggage of each location/community, Kosuth's reflections concentrate on “putting into question the Meaning” of the work of art, focusing on the historical, political and anthropological background of the public spaces that play host to them. From this starting point, he elaborates an intellectual speculation that puts into motion the use of the word “meaning”, which is translated into a total of fourteen languages, including the dialect of Molfetta (“*segnefecate*”) along with Arab and Turkish.

In Kosuth's work the evolution of the semantic structure, conforming to the cultural, and, in particular, the linguistic context, means that viewing also becomes an elaboration of the concept, tracing a dynamic idea that moves beyond the boundaries of a simple representation of what is seen or lived, out towards a mental analysis of the world. Always presented between quotation marks, almost as though each were an illuminating suggestion for an interpretation, the translations of the word “meaning” set up fundamental references to tautology, to theory as a *modus operandi*, to links with hermeneutics and structuralism and to anthropology. [G.Z.]