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### Joseph Kosuth: Glass (one and three), 1965

Stigter, S.

**Publication date**

2007

**Document Version**

Final published version

**Published in**

Inside installations: preservation and presentation of installation art

[Link to publication](#)

**Citation for published version (APA):**

Stigter, S. (2007). Joseph Kosuth: Glass (one and three), 1965. In T. Scholte, & P. 't Hoen (Eds.), *Inside installations: preservation and presentation of installation art* (pp. 20-21). ICN / SBMK. <http://www.sbm.nl/uploads/inside-installations-kl.pdf>

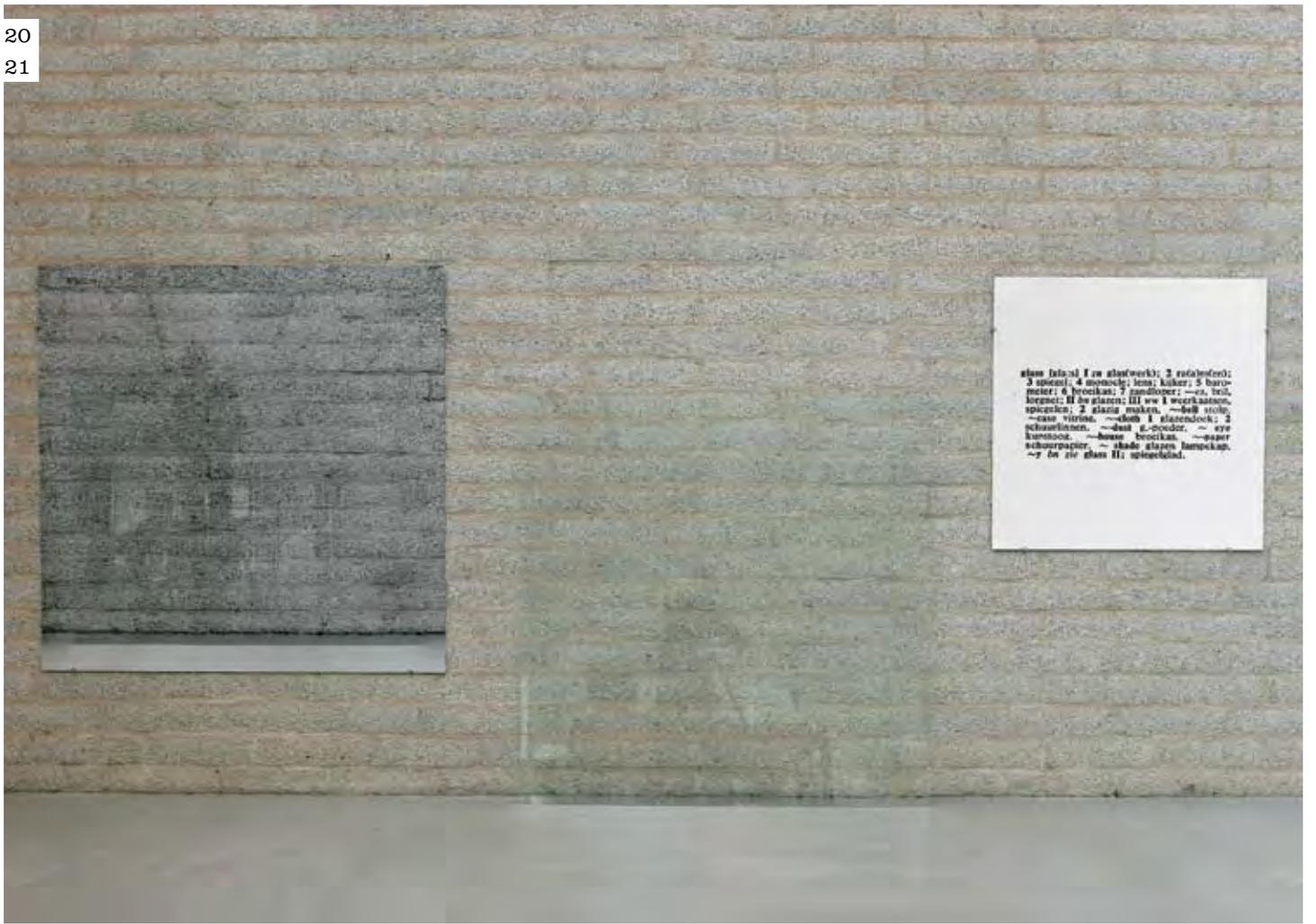
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glas (lat.) I w glaswerk; 2 rafa/besed; 3 spion; 4 monocle; lens; kuker; 5 baromet; 6 bockan; 7 sandloer; --a, teil, loegnet; II de glazen; III w I werksaam, spiecken; 2 glazig maken, --aH stiel; --case vinn; --doh I glazenok; 2 schavinnen, --doh g.-poder, -- eye kurood, --hose bockan, --paper schourpapier, -- shade glazen bueckap, --y de de glaz II; spieckelad.

Joseph Kosuth, **Glass (one and three)**

# Joseph Kosuth, **Glass (one and three)**, 1965

Kröller-Müller Museum; Sanneke Stigter

In this work the matter 'glass' is depicted by the material itself in the form of a sheet of glass, by language in the form the definition of glass taken from an English-Dutch dictionary and by image in the form of a photograph of the very glass plate in the installation. When the work was realized for the first owner in 1977 the photograph of the glass showed the same background as the actual scene where the whole work was installed, generating a visual connection to the site. This site-related characteristic was lost when the work was acquired by the Kröller-Müller Museum where the original photograph continued to be used. The work is one of a series the artist calls 'object definitions', all dated 1965. Kosuth explores the nature of art while he seeks to 'de-objectify' the object in art. The artwork is created by instructions on a certificate provided by the artist. The question is how to interpret and follow these guidelines.

It was claimed that it would be in accordance with the artist's idea to replace the photograph of the object with a new one made at the site where the work would be installed. This practice was looked at in more detail because the necessity of replacement is not defined by the certificate. The certificate was analysed and compared with the curatorial management of similar work. This has led not only to a better understanding of the work, but to a rectification of the title as well. The work had always been referred to as 'One and three glass' analogous to similar work such as 'One and three chair'. The proper name for this work however turned out to be **Glass (one and three)**.

Interviews with the artist and the artist's writings that clarify the need for replacement of the photograph all date from after 1965 but before the first document on **Glass (one and three)** from 1973. When it was first realized, Kosuth obviously had begun to use glass for a reason. Glass served as an object as transparent as possible, similar to how a site-related photograph renders an image as transparent as possible. This makes the photograph less of an object by itself and more of an image – the only function the photograph needs to fulfil in an 'object definition'. Although Kosuth might have refined his ideas over time, from the results of the research it could be concluded that it would indeed be best practice to replace the photograph with a new one that matches the surroundings of the site where the work would be installed. This new practice of managing the artwork challenges the practice of the museums' documentation system because one of the three constituents of **Glass (one and three)**, the photograph, is thus not really part of the work when it is not installed, whereas it is a tangible part that needs storage space. This 'inactive part' can be kept as a record of the history of the work and will serve as a document. It can become an active part again when the same site is used that is depicted in the photograph. Considering the fact that the aspect of the work is determined by its surroundings, could the site be considered a (temporary) part of the work as well?

A conceptual work based on a certificate makes the conservator reflect upon his own practice, especially with regard to conservation ethics based on the idea of originality and authenticity. The aim of renewing the photograph in an 'object definition' by Joseph Kosuth however is the creation of an image of the object as transparent to its surroundings as possible, so that it can de-objectify itself as a photograph in favour of the depiction of the object through this medium. The resulting 'site-related' character could be regarded as a by-product of the visual properties of the photograph. Site-specificity is not the objective of the artwork but the result of good practice managing **Glass (one and three)**.

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TEXT EDITOR Helene Reid (Subtext Translations)

DESIGN Ariënne Boelens

EDITION 5000

PRINTER Drukkerij Lecturis

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Phil Collins, **they shoot horses**, 2004

© Phil Collins, Courtesy Kerlin Gallery, Dublin | Tate Collection (T12030)

Tacita Dean, **Disappearance at Sea**, 1996

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Olafur Eliasson, **Notion Motion**, 2005 | Photo: Hans Wilschut

Carlos Garaicoa, **Letter to the Censors (Carta a los censores)**, 2003

© Carlos Garaicoa Manso | Photo: Tate Conservation | Tate Collection (T11864)

Pierre Huyghe, **Two Minutes Out of Time**, 2000 | Photo: Peter Cox

Greg Lynn & Fabian Marcaccio, **The Predator**, 1999 | Photo: Gregg Lynn Studio

Gustav Metzger, **Liquid Crystal Environment**, 1965-66 (Remake 2005)

© Gustav Metzger | Tate Collection (T12160)

Bruce Nauman, **MAPPING THE STUDIO II with color shift, flip, flop & flip/flop (Fat Chance John Cage)**, 2001

@ ARS, NY and DACS, London 2005 | Photo: Tate Photography | Co-owned by Tate (T11893), Pompidou Centre Paris, Kunstmuseum Basel

Nam June Paik, **One Candle**, 1988 | Photo: Axel Schneider

Tino Sehgal, **This is Propaganda**, 2002

No photograph available as the artist does not allow any documentation of his installations.

ISBN 978-90-812088-1-9



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