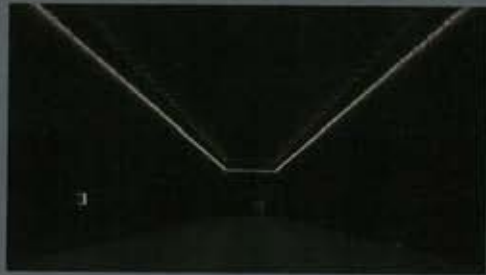


'Waiting for — (Texts for Nothing)' Samuel Beckett, in play



no'thing (nô't, n. & adv. 1. No thing
(with adv. following, as — great to say).

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Introduction

'(Waiting for—) Texts for Nothing' Samuel Beckett, *in play* is the second major installation I have commissioned from artist Joseph Kosuth. The first, 'An Interpretation of this Title' Nietzsche, *Darwin and the Paradox of Content*, was created for the Talbot Rice Gallery Library, Edinburgh. '(Waiting for—) Texts for Nothing' Samuel Beckett, *in play* was developed for the architecture of the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA). By contrast with the light-filled, symmetrical splendor of the Georgian period architecture of the Talbot Rice, ACCA is a dark void: vast, enclosed, mysterious, and indomitable in character.

In both instances, I had the 'space' in mind when approaching Joseph to make a new installation work. From the moment I walked into the Talbot Rice, even though it seemed a bit drab and shabby at that time, decorated with inappropriate Victorian colours and housing odd sorts of collection paraphernalia, it was clear this was a special space. To my way of thinking, there could be no other artist than Joseph for this particular opportunity inside the Edinburgh Festival's 'enlightenment' year.

The conjunction of a university library, the historical protagonist Darwin, the haunting of Sir Walter Scott in remnant furniture housed in the room, and the neo-classical luminosity of the space seemed a natural incentive for an artist so bibliophilic and historically sympathetic as Joseph. His love of intellectualism, combined with his paradigmatic shifting of aesthetic considerations and philosophical interrogations, and his pursuit of the construction of meaning through language and signs made my decision an obvious one.

What emerged in the Talbot Rice—a philosophical parry between the pronouncements and meditations of Nietzsche, interspersed between the schematic 'trees' and notations of Darwin, all rendered in Joseph's distinctive media of sculpted neon words and ribbons—was a perfect representation of late enlightenment thinking in its variety of pursuits and contradictions.

Luminous and emanating, the words were arranged in a line along the walls, intersected by niches housing schema from Darwin's notebooks.

It was, however, a circular journey undertaken by the reading audience, which negotiated the rectangle of architecture from left to right, arriving at both the end and the beginning. Joseph's response to the architecture of the Talbot Rice was to make it an active site of enquiry, reflecting the history of that space, and to create a spatiality of paradox.

He used the interruptions of the space, the niche divisions, to accentuate the fits and starts of philosophical and scientific enquiry.

This deliberate breakdown added a psychological pathology to his project, a pathology that empathised with the trepidation with which Darwin commenced and pursued his 'heretical' enquiries into evolution. Similarly, the crisis of Nietzsche's interior monologue, as he grappled with his *Übermensch* and the *Will to Power*, which would elevate man beyond his ape heredity, as proposed by Darwin, and detach him from a God who ist Tot!

This second commission, '(Waiting for—) Texts for Nothing' Samuel Beckett, in play, as dark as the previous was light, similarly activated a journey in the architectural given of the space. Enclosing the entry to make a smaller, narrower aperture, Joseph created a deep, dark space in which to investigate the existentialism of Beckett's words.

Installed high around the walls of ACCA's rhomboid-shaped gallery, sculpted neon words again charted a linear journey of thoughts and monologues. Beckett's experimental work, *Texts for Nothing*, in which he pursues gaps and silences as meta-meaning—as the something of 'nothing'—was activated by Joseph as a play of words, interiority, and space. Visitors were compelled to enact this Beckett-Kosuth collaboration to experience the construction of meaning.

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In comparison to the bright and readable texts of the Edinburgh project, legibility in the Melbourne project was deliberately oblique, its clarity obscured by the front painting of the neon words—there was a blurring. Meaning remained elusive and likely to collapse if one approached the texts head on. Intelligibility was only restored when the words were encountered from the side. At no time, however, could all meaning be grasped. The audience engaged in an elusive pursuit of clarity.

Using the perpetual return of the space as a physical determinate and much like the characters in a Beckett play, the audience for Joseph's project was staggered towards an inconclusive end—beginning. '(Waiting for—) Texts for Nothing' Samuel Beckett, in play was a self-reflective project. The work revealed and described itself as each fragment was encountered. As the audience read, language became actual, describing a physical and phenomenological reality; the rubber floor referenced in the text became the material upon which the audience was standing; the silence, the room, the blackness, the space; the eternal quest 'I can't go on/I must go on', describing the expedition already commenced in the installation.

Unlike theatre, where the audience watches as the actors construct and perform meaning, in Joseph's play of Beckett's words, the viewers perform this function themselves. The 'waiting for' in the title of the project is both a reference to Beckett's play and to the fact of 'waiting for'

a viewer/reader to set Joseph's own play in motion. This project confirms the tenet of conceptualism, that the viewer becomes an active agent for the construction and reception of meaning.

A brief respite from this journey that returned endlessly upon itself was provided by the small X-ray duo-tran of the Casper David Friedrich painting 'Two Men Contemplating the Moon' (1830), which was installed towards the end of the space on the right-hand side. The inclusion of the 'painting', one to which Beckett was particularly drawn and for which he had an existential sympathy—indeed, one he thought to exemplify his Godot *mise-en-scène*—delivers a tableau that duplicates the visitor's own looking into the void.

Having gazed briefly at the two characters staring out to space, their backs turned against the viewer to create an extended telescopic arrangement with the visitor, and finding 'nothing' but the distant and the ineffable, the viewer was sent back into the abyss to recommence the search: the quest to construct meaning, continued, and endless.

Alongside this newest commission, Joseph exhibited three significant projects from his oeuvre in three separate galleries. The majestic and epic '(Waiting for—) Texts for Nothing' Samuel Beckett, *in play* was joined by one of Joseph's earliest projects 'Titled (Art as Idea as Idea)' [Nothing] (1968)—a set of 10 dictionary-definition-based text works, each describing 'nothing', revealing the enormity and content of such negation.

With white text reversed-out of an un-nuanced black square, each work performed the interrogation of positive/negative meaning.

Joseph's project 'Ulysses, 18 Scenes' occupied the next gallery. Alongside '(Waiting for—) Texts for Nothing' Samuel Beckett, *in play* it offered another example of Joseph's spatial play, and an investigation into the temporal-psycho-linguistic geography of Joyce's mammoth novel. Joseph's installation clarified Joyce's own experimentation with a travelling point of view and fragmentary plotting. The white neon words—locating the scenes of the novel as objective sites converted to subjective content—were arrayed like a set of constellations, perhaps alluding to David Hayman's characterisation of Joyce as a 'cosmic joker', or to Wittgenstein's points in the visual field.

The third project was a reconfiguration of Joseph's 1988 project for the Freud Museum, Vienna. 'Zero & Not' is an investigation of linguistic meaning and slippage. On an enlarged wallpaper version of a passage from *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, in which Freud investigated the interpretive tricks and 'Freudian slips' that demonstrate our unconscious and anxious reading and speaking, Joseph erased words by putting a black line through them. While deleted, the words still existed as a form of undertow, the original text still haunting and lurking in consciousness.

All four projects were, separately and collectively, evidence of Joseph's continuous interrogation of the construction of meaning through consciousness and representation, through words and their unstable ontological condition as representations.

Juliana Engberg

'A Text for Texts for Nothing'

'The meaning of a work of art or of a theory is as inseparable from its embodiment as the meaning of a tangible thing—which is why meaning can never be fully expressed. The highest form of reason borders on unreason.' *Maurice Merleau-Ponty*

'What is inexpressible (what I find mysterious and am not able to express) is the background against whatever I could express has its meaning.' *Ludwig Wittgenstein*

1.

Abandoned for years by the major critics of Beckett's work and rarely included in anthologies of his work, *Texts for Nothing* was seen as outside of the mainstream of Beckett's writing. Previously viewed as somewhat of a pause in the oeuvre of Beckett, for me as an artist approaching his work, this writing, for my purposes, is quintessential Beckett, the perfect example of his particular artistic integrity. Beckett's project as an artist has been instructive to me and touches on questions which occupy my own work, that is, a concern with meaning. One of many differences, of course, is that Beckett approaches the question of meaning from its absence, and in my work I have been concerned with how meaning is made. But, that said, the approach can neither be obvious nor singular.

Texts for Nothing is the least narrative of all of Beckett's writing and has been most useful for me. To manifest descriptions of the parts unsaid and only to be seen in Beckett is to underscore that this work, and that is also my work, waits for the viewer/reader, that it is a process and it is incomplete. It is work which only begins, it does not end. My work is made possible by what is shared in both works—this work, in both senses, constitutes language itself; it is self-described, and as an object it is an absence, an absence from which our questions about meaning can flow, even if only through a lack which manifests itself as a form of desire. We have language, self-erasing as it arrives, seeing itself reflected in the collapse of its own significance, and meaning being manifested through confrontation with its own nothingness. Meaning here is what is left behind as a kind of residue of the word's effect.

In the case of *Waiting for Godot*, it has been described as a drama concerned with the collapse of language, belief and, ultimately, meaning. By doing so Beckett bares the device of all other theatrical projects, before and after; the 'how' of traditional, even modern theatre pales, nearly becomes meaningless, in the face of the 'why' that is revealed as quite possibly unsupportable. Not unlike the philosophical project of Wittgenstein, or the artistic project of Ad Reinhardt, saying what's not possible may be the only approach to showing what is. The hope is to know what it is that we can believe, and where meaning may be found.

II.

Installations, as a structural or constructive element, can be seen to often be conceived by the artist as a kind of stage set, an autonomous one, built to generate the play which follows from it. The play—itsself a connecting and disrupted narrative of discourse, of historical and cultural references—makes formal associations with both art and non-art sources, and contains both social and political meaning within a cultural view, along with the psychological and other associative responses to an architectural setting already internalised as part of the installation. The play arrives with the viewer and it consists of the approach itself toward what the viewer finds there. The dialogue, as initiated, is provided by this discourse, and it begins as an interior one. The 'theatre' of which I speak is one anchored in the world, and, as installation, it has been a liberating platform for practising artists who established it as their own postmodern zone of play. The actors in this play are without a script and the viewing audience and the actors are, in fact, one and the same; neither the 'fictive' nor the properly theatrical are to be found in the program of this artistic enterprise. There is no need for absorption nor a passage to transcendence, there is only a construction within a cultural discourse at a moment of our own history, one having a language, that needs to be seen as an interface where meaning in this world is in the process of construction. It is a meaning which shows, constructed in a way which is specific to art, and its assertions are no less significant—philosophically or culturally—for being manifested and implicit.

Installations arrived as the result of the need of artists to produce works which were in the world, whether employing objects or not, but which were not framed by the limits imposed by the fictive space requirements of modernist sculpture and painting. Thus, in important ways, installations were also free of the ideological baggage of Modernism, particularly given the consequences of the hijacking of late Modernism by Greenberg, Fried and their followers. That their contribution was seen at the time as more than just an intellectual event in academia (where it has since been consigned) remains a curiosity for my generation. One can now see that the contribution then was primarily negative because there emerged no art of any significance which was generated by or had the support and positive influence of this theory. Its role was primarily one of a negative framing and misreading of work, such as Pop Art and Minimalism, which, in fact, has since proven to be both significant and consequential. If by 'reactionary' one means a response intended to maintain the status quo, this certainly defines the efforts of Greenberg, Fried, et al. It was the theoretical shoring up of a form of art that was already beginning to lose its relevance. That was certainly obvious to many of us even then, and it is simply a fact now some forty some years later. The lesson here is about the power of art to define its own self-conception within the practice itself as it participates in shaping the culture of its time. What it also reveals is the limited value and effect of any theory without the anchor of an actual artistic practice supporting it. The system of beliefs which accompanies and shapes the view of an object intended as art as being not simply an object but as a 'construction' was for me exactly where the rupture needed to take place, and

it was the location where a practice concerned with *why* found itself with a mission that felt, at the time, like historical necessity. And, it should be said, that even if still modernist in many ways at the time, Minimalism nonetheless was important for making a break which showed the way out of that swamp of meaning which sculpture and painting increasingly represented. (This was long before the market turned minimal art back into sculpture for its own purposes.)

My accounting here reflects my own practice and the thinking upon which it was based. I began installation based work in 1965 as an important aspect of works like 'One and Three Chairs', 'One and Three Windows', 'Wall—One and Five' (utilising furniture and other common objects in ways which were not employed in pictorial compositions but more as quotations, actually constructive elements used within a concept); as well, other works included in the *Protoinvestigations*, such as neon installation works, had the requirement that they must be mounted directly on the wall and not be put on a portable panel. Besides pushing them from being a kind of cultural 'signage' to being an object, such mounted panels would also have separated them from being viewed as part of a specific architectural location while it freed them to float in the market more conventionally as an art object, such 'freedom' then permitting the art market to provide its own meaning. My installation work continued through the 1970's with the series of room installations of the *Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Investigations* and has continued to the present.

That late, high point of Modernism, the space of a flag or target by Jasper Johns, was also the beginning of the unravelling, the shift of subject and approach, away from the limits of the painted surface or the sculpted tableaux and ultimately the limits of perceived limit itself. Modernism was concerned with *how*, Postmodernism, as I see it, is concerned with *why*. With *why*, art presumes an implicitly manifested philosophical aspect. And with *why* Postmodernism returned art, if yet only potentially, to also having a political life within culture. One can honour the passage from Manet to Johns by seeing its own limits for what they were and utilising the view it provided of those limits.

The view from the balcony now is a view which includes both Modernism and Postmodernism, and the terrain we see is one built over the past thirty or forty years, and resulting in another culture with other expectations and a different mission. If Johns showed us how a canvas wasn't a window into another space, installations constituted a leap and a break: they are already in the world we inhabit and the effect they have is meant to happen there. The questions our works became free to ask are a result of us, as artists, finding ourselves there. The work which this has initiated in the past decades has shown that playing field to be a fertile one, as has the theory also initiated by 'Institutional Critique', which in its various forms has benefited most significantly. It is actual works upon which art theory must be anchored, and without the discourse begun by Conceptual Art's earliest works, such a conversation couldn't be taking place.

It is no accident that my first major show at the Leo Castelli Gallery in 1971 (after my previous smaller one there of 'The Second Investigation' in 1969) was 'The Eighth Investigation', now in the Panza Collection, comprised of a large table, 12 chairs, 24 wall clocks, and 12 notebooks filled with appropriated texts taken from various authors on Function, Tautology, and Time. The 'viewer/reader', as I called the audience for this work at the time, was expected to sit down and read, and to make the connections within a field of contingency of meaning that the order of the clocks facilitated. Whatever absorption this work required was in the reading of the texts, and the fictive space requirements of convention and modernity died right there. On the wall, and in the notebooks, was a chart and *mode d'emploi* which ended with my declaration of the work

as 'Post-Modern'. This was 1971 and it was on the same wall in the same room that Jasper Johns' first flag painting was shown some years before. Even without any intention to self-historicise, one still might pause to say that there is a history and mission to the practice of which I speak and it's important to know it to fully understand that aspect of Postmodernism which installation work constitutes and which emerged in the following decades.

The material of an installation is, first, a psychological and social experience provided by the room's architecture. This results from the meaning of the social and cultural history of its use along with the combined experience of the psychology of that particular architectural context added to our prior architectural experience. We know and experience that while we also know we are standing in the world. We also know in a museum or a gallery that, like anything else, it's being there could be of limited duration but we suspend that understanding. The world (as that location, that institution or place of cultural activity) will change and continue in another way. This location in time provides temporary installations, that texture of history which is part of one's more immediate experience of them. There are other aspects to permanent installations which make them valuable in another way, but to understand both better we must begin with the temporary. The point is that an installation work, even a temporary one insofar as the experience of the work goes, is attached to a location, is fixed as part of the architecture and seals its fate along with the history and culture of that one location in the world. The implication being quite unlike the free-floating object that transcends any particular place, finding its aura in the market on its way to the final resting place of the heavenly museum. It is the loss of the sense of self with absorption which removes the viewer from the 'here and now' and makes the experience of a fictive space even possible. Why installations are so intrinsically linked with this understanding of Postmodernism is that their commitment to a location links them to the 'here and now' and is yet discursively part of what makes them art, and as such, as art, they can do so while they remain in the world.

One cannot hope to prescribe work having an engagement with questions concerning the production of meaning to always turn out results that are either well-designed or aesthetically pleasing— along the lines of long received criteria of attraction and market desirability, nor, with any more or less likelihood, should we expect a rigorous and prescriptive form of visible uncanniness, of demonstrating an ugly or non-art gravitas to be a part of the experience either. Such an insistence ultimately functions as a form of style. How one makes a work must be in the service of why it is being made. To that end a work can look like anything at all, including not necessarily being visible at all. Beyond the signifying needs inherent in how the work must manifest itself and what is required for it to construct the meaning that it does, how it looks really doesn't matter beyond its role in that requirement. We do know that historically new art, when it is making a contribution to the history of ideas, often doesn't look like art. Driven primarily by artistic intention, such work, if judgement is the issue, must be judged by its own standards, those standards required for the work's reception which permit it to be put into play culturally. The viewer/reader must also be armed, apparently, with the admonition that seeing isn't as simple as looking.

This postmodern project, however, out of the process of an etymological-like formative historical path of growth within culture, has internalised a carried over feature of Modernism. This can be seen to be that art requires a self-definition, even if a continually transformatory one, to be put in play in the service of maintaining the recognition of itself: that of having a quality of transitory autonomy. This feature is a necessary one for art to be readable and meaningful in a given cultural and historical moment. This is the operative play of art, and it's part of the nature of

the dynamic of its own inherent cultural force to self-describe itself in relation to the world in which it finds itself, even if always in a way which is subject to revision by the practitioners of culture themselves who must embrace it. It is this internal drive of art toward implicit autonomy that provides it traction with the world. Art's ultimate refusal to participate with the world as a knowing partner within a context of other meanings (corporate, religious, entertainment, et al.) is how it preserves and maintains its own particular, even if non-prescriptive, character. 'Viral-like', as Felix Gonzales-Torres put it so eloquently, art's paradoxical dialectic requires that it must take on the forms and meanings of the world of the living—and borrowing freely—as part of a dynamic of an interior order which protects its identity as something other than the world in order to make meaning for the living in the world.

That which distinguishes the actual production of art from that of paintings by monkeys or the drawings of children, is that intentional act manifesting a specific kind of meaning—art—within human cultural and social meaning, one which necessitates an individual's intention of taking subjective responsibility for that act, and without which such an activity can have no political life. Without such a profile of autonomy art could never see itself, that is, it would lose its self-reflectivity, and thus its capacity as a critical and political force within culture. Or, as Gaston Bachelard put it, '... as soon as art has become autonomous, it makes a fresh start'. In this way art manifests itself as a continual and dialectical new beginning; as part of its own 'autonomous' spiral it must be able to see itself, which also means to see the world in itself, as it proceeds. This self-reflective moment constitutes in culture the basis for its political life, as a critical space and a transformatory moment within its role as part of the production of consciousness itself. And as it does so, human intention takes on its role as a producer of meaning along with the subjective responsibility for having done so, and thereby anchors the cultural discourse of which it is a part to the historical moment in which it happens. It is this which gives art its authenticity, both in the present and for future generations.

Joseph Kosuth

'Désinence'

'Birth was the death of him.'

Samuel Beckett, *A Piece of Monologue*, 1977

So unique an artist is Joseph Kosuth that he has no real precursors just as he lacks true descendants. His broader contributions to culture, at their summing up, will be analogous to the final line of an epic poem, echoing an artistic rank and intellectual inimitability of such achievement that it will be clear that they are permanent. Of late, Kosuth appropriates other voices as a means to instrumentalise his own, which is to say his art is not about Freud or Wittgenstein, Nietzsche or Borges, but emerges from the silence between one voice and the next ... when they are not sounding, he is. As Samuel Beckett once said of James Joyce: 'His writing is not about something: it is that something itself.' We will return to this but first, considering the voices weaving throughout Kosuth's art, paired with his repeated attention to nihilism—'Zero & Not', 1986 or 'The Play of the Unsayable, Ludwig Wittgenstein and the Art of the 20th Century', 1989—one properly wonders: Where is Samuel Beckett in all this? In fact, the playwright has never been far from the artist's mind, and at last, Beckett debuts in Kosuth's '(Waiting for—) Texts for Nothing', 2010, through several of his most significant efforts, not least *Waiting for Godot*, 1948-1949, and *Texts for Nothing*, 1950-1952.

'... you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on.'

Reading these words, whether in Beckett's novel *The Unnamable*, 1954, or in Kosuth's installation at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, brings to mind the voice of another notorious figure pleading with such aching, it seems as if he had adapted his speech from Beckett's tormenting line:

'And rest can never dwell, hope never comes ...
... Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallowed up in endless misery.'

But then, just as in Beckett's line, the voice rallies to declare:

'Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering: but of this be sure –
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to his high will
Whom we resist. If then his providence
Of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labor must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil'

It is the voice of Milton's Satan in *Paradise Lost*. After his failed rebellion to take control of God's Heaven, he is cast down to Pandæmonium, and while this ends the bliss of heavenly life, it triggers his free will to try again, to restart, 'fail again, and fail better' (*Worstward Ho*, 1983). And so, he volunteers to turn the earthly Paradise God has created from fair to foul. This phrase, '... you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on' becomes Satan's existential anthem in Milton's epic poem; an expression of paralytic exasperation that signals an ending, or more precisely a *désinence*, meaning a termination, as in the final line of a verse. And following on, the *désinence* triggers a restart—Satan's attempt to fail better—rather than a beginning. The notion of the *désinence* becomes a powerful metaphor knitting together the critical and creative bond between Beckett and Kosuth; over their careers, both men lavished their talents on creating their own *désinence* with the intention to readdress art, and by consequence, restart the culture at large.

13

In 1955 Beckett published, in a single volume, *Stories and Texts for Nothing*; the four stories had been written more than a decade earlier, while the thirteen *Texts for Nothing* were completed between 1950 and 1952. The span of time represents Beckett's most significant creative period and the two works were undoubtedly published together to frame those six years demonstrating the dramatic developments in his writing. *Stories* is a dogged account of the experience of existence lifted up through a narrator's (or narrators') unconscious life. The narrative form remained important to Beckett in these stories, although not for very much longer than it took him to write them. He employs the narrative account to treat us to a scale of disquieting experiences—from private grotesqueries—'They never lynch children, babies, no matter what they do they are whitewashed in advance. I personally would lynch them with the utmost pleasure' (*The Expelled*)—to broad psychoanalytic verdicts—'It is not my wish to labour these antinomies, for we are, needless to say, in a skull, but I have no choice but to add the following few remarks. All the mortals I saw were alone and as if sunk in themselves' (*The Calmative*). The unconscious life had been of interest to the author at least since he began writing *Watt*. Commenced in 1941 and completed five years later, in a draft of the novel Beckett wrote a note to himself: '... the unconscious mind! What a subject for a short story.' *Stories* is at once the fulfillment of that jotted line, but equally, if oppositely, the object of Beckett's discontent with the narrative form.

Stories, then, signals the *désinence* of the narrative form in Beckett's prose, a paradigm shift acknowledged by nearly all Beckett scholars. The disparity between *Stories* and *Texts for Nothing* could hardly be greater; he chose to number these thirteen texts rather than title them, but more crucially the texts remain splinters of experience resistant to being combed out into end-oriented narratives. To compare *Stories* with *Texts for Nothing* is to see Beckett coming to the conclusion that what the narrative form had always promised, to express experience, was, in the end, unsayable. He condemned one form of prose writing to recommence another precisely as he finished off the last of the three stories, appropriately titled *The End*, with this final and fateful line: 'The memory came faint and cold of the story I might have told, a story in the likeness of my life, I mean without the courage to end or the strength to go on.'

S.E. Gontarski writes: 'The *Texts for Nothing* would redefine at least Beckett's short fiction, if not the possibilities of the short story itself, as narrative *per se* was finally discarded (as it was for the most part in the 'trilogy' of novels), replaced by attempts of consciousness to perceive, comprehend or create first a life, then a more or less stable, static image, an essence, failing at the latter no less often than the former.' The conceit of the 'character' disappears into incoherence thus neatly leaving behind the conceit of 'end-oriented story telling'. In *Text IV* the disembodied voice concedes: 'No need of a story, a story is not compulsory, just a life, that's the mistake I made, one of the mistakes, to have wanted a story for myself, whereas life alone is enough.' And so he abandons narration, which is so obvious once we weigh Beckett's precise choice of language for his titles. While 'text' means 'typescript' which is all form and no plot, 'story' evokes narrative content without much to say about any specific form. With *Texts for Nothing* Beckett deserted literature's most traditional archetype of story telling—the voyage or quest—in order to restart, to *fail better*, with a new form of literary expression. By now it is fair to conclude what Gontarski only implies, that the larger literary world experienced *Texts* as a disruptive innovation with deep resonance well beyond Beckett's oeuvre.

14

By its very meaning, disruptive innovation promises an unruly ending, and in the case of *Texts for Nothing* what the *désinence* produced was a literal interruption in the way Beckett conceived and created his art, carrying him from narrative to post-narrative writing. This instrumentalising of the *désinence*—simultaneously a critical and creative rupture—is what he shares with Kosuth in a deeply profound sense. Only 14 years after *Stories* and *Texts for Nothing* were first published, *Art After Philosophy I and II* appeared and in this seminal document Kosuth declared that conventional practices of art historical and critical discourse had lately experienced their own *désinence*; that metaphorically speaking, they had written their last line of verse. While creatively distinct, what *Texts for Nothing* was for Beckett, *Art After Philosophy I and II* was for Kosuth. Polemical 42 years ago, Kosuth was provoking, true enough, but as with any efficacious innovation his ideas were, more significantly, transformative. He wrote these following lines in 1969, and by now they are nearly scripture in the artworld:

'Being an artist now means to question the nature of art. If one is questioning the nature of painting, one cannot be questioning the nature of art. If an artist accepts painting (or sculpture) he is accepting the tradition that goes with it. That's because the word art is general and the word painting is specific. Painting is a kind of art. If you make paintings you are already accepting (not questioning) the nature of art. One is then accepting the nature of art to be the European tradition of a painting-sculpture dichotomy.'

And one can then, roughly hear, through Kosuth's bold defiance, Beckett's voice:

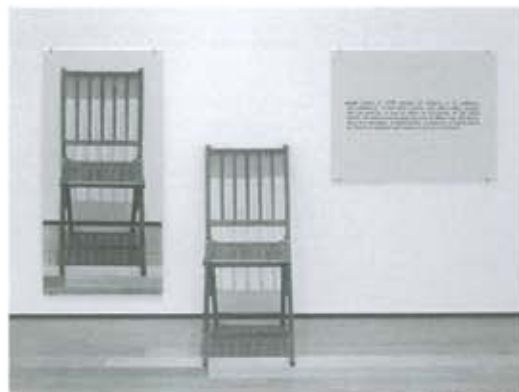
'Being a writer now means to question the nature of literature. If one is questioning the nature of the narrative form, one cannot be questioning the nature of literature. If a writer accepts the narrative form he is accepting the tradition that goes with it. That's because the word literature is general and the word narrative is specific. Narration is a kind of literature. If you write in the narrative form you are already accepting (not questioning) the nature of literature. One is then accepting the nature of literature to be the European tradition of the narration of the quest or voyage.'

Others were aligned with Kosuth. In 1965 Donald Judd sensibly began *Specific Objects* writing: 'Half or more of the best new work in the last few years has been neither painting nor sculpture.' But it is difficult to claim that any one voice was more persuasive and therefore transformative than Kosuth's. Continuing on in *Art After Philosophy I and II* Kosuth makes this crucial point:

'The event that made conceivable the realisation that it was possible to 'speak another language' and still make sense in art was Marcel Duchamp's first unassisted Ready-made. With the unassisted Ready-made, art changed its focus from the form of the language to what was being said. Which means that it changed the nature of art from a question of morphology to a question of function. This change—one from 'appearance' to 'conception'—was the beginning of 'modern' art and the beginning of Conceptual Art.'

To speak another language . . . Kosuth judiciously credits Duchamp with having crafted his own *désinence*, thereby restarting culture, by changing 'the focus from the form of the language to what was being said'. This we claim for Beckett's post-narrative writing too, but we must also make the claim for Kosuth condemning high modernism's mere visuality, to recommence another language for art. This he did finishing off the last line of *Art After Philosophy I and II* with an entitlement: 'Art is the definition of art.' That art is 'essentially' a tautology—art is analogous to an analytic proposition, and that it is art's existence as a tautology that enables art to remain 'aloof' from philosophical presumptions—Kosuth writes—is crisply expressed in his masterpiece 'One and Three Chairs', 1965.

That a new language literally arises in the interval after the *désinence* is precisely the pattern for meaning creation that Kosuth shares as an intimacy with Beckett. Considering *Texts for Nothing*, H. Porter Abbott writes: 'In this new departure, the *un-quest* or absolute of non-narrative—the twelve gaps between these Texts—is as important as the Texts themselves. The importance of these gaps is at once ontological and metaphysical, for they represent the absence out of which something keeps miraculously coming: "I'm the clerk, I'm the scribe, at the hearing of what cause I know not." The gaps give fresh



'One and Three Chairs' [Eng] 1965
Collection of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA

emphasis, as here at the start of *Text 5*, to the way words erupt, ever the same, yet always with bizarre strokes of difference.' For Beckett it is this course of *désinence*—restart—continuation: 'I stay here, sitting, if I'm sitting, often I feel sitting, sometimes standing, it's one or the other, or lying down, there's another possibility, often I feel lying down, it's one of the three, or kneeling.' (*Text 4*)—from which meaning emerges, and not just in-between the thirteen texts, or between their individual lines but *désinence*—restart/continuation can be ascribed to his entire oeuvre. H. Porter Abbott: 'Almost everything he wrote, including the individual books of the trilogy, has had the quality of a new undertaking, and a new departure.' Similarly, for Kosuth meaning springs from the absence that is the interval, the gap; out from the breach between the chair and its definition, tautological meaning unfolds collapsing restart into continuation.

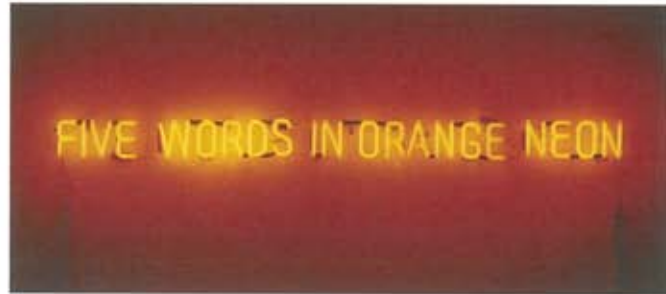
Published for the first time four years after Beckett's death, his novel, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* was written in 1932 when the author was 26 and living in Paris. While passages strike us as immature—it was his first novel, never finding a publisher—it also shares themes, character types and elements of style which we find so satisfying in later prose, especially *Molloy* and *More Pricks Than Kicks*. It is a work of autobiography. Although a 'Mr. Beckett' appears in the novel, Belacqua the protagonist, a writer and teacher, stands in for the author whom we first meet at the end of a dock masturbating while fantasising about Smeraldina-Rima, his German girlfriend. *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* possesses the droning indignities and caustic humiliations suffered by humankind that we know from later Beckett, but it also gives us an early glimpse of his contempt for the reader, which he would cultivate over a lifetime. Beckett-Belacqua says: 'The experience of my reader shall be between the phrases, in the silence, communicated by the intervals, not the terms, of the statement, between the flowers that cannot coexist, the antithetical (nothing so simple as antithetical) seasons of words, his experience shall be the menace, the miracle, the memory, of an unspeakable trajectory.'

'Silence is the fabric upon which the notes are woven', Lawrence Duncan once said about music, and it is as if Beckett was conjuring music when he described the elemental experience of the reader immersed in the nihilistic absence of words. Significantly, and this should not be missed, out of the mouth of Beckett-Belacqua comes a very early declaration challenging the narrative form with the instrument of silence; a challenge that would only be fully realised after abandoning the narrative mimesis in *Texts for Nothing*. With hindsight we now see that Beckett-Belacqua could not have been any more condemning of the narrative form eighty years before: *experience is unspeakable*.

It is far from surprising to learn that Kosuth has included, within his installation '(Waiting for—) *Texts for Nothing*', this very passage from *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, describing the reader's experience of discovering meaning in silence. We are about to hear Kosuth as Beckett falls silent. In the installation, the Beckett-Belacqua voice precedes a series of truncated camera and stage-design directions quoted from Beckett's 1975 television play *Ghost Trio*. Set together they read:

'The experience of my reader shall be between the phrases, in the silence, communicated by the intervals, not the terms, of the statement, between the flowers that cannot coexist, the antithetical (nothing so simple as antithetical) seasons of words, his experience shall be the menace, the miracle, the memory, of an unspeakable trajectory. | Long narrow grey rectangle between

grey walls, empty, far end in darkness. | The
light: faint, omnipresent. No visible source.
As if all luminous. Faintly luminous.
No shadow. [Pause] No shadow.
Colour: none. All grey. Shades of grey.'



'Five Words in Orange Neon', 1965.

In the hands of Kosuth this text aligns different experiences as a tautology roughly equivalent to Martin Heidegger's separate notions of 'being' and 'is'. Your phenomenological experience (being), standing within '(Waiting for—) Texts for Nothing', reading grey shaded words that describe (is) your experience, becomes the experience unfolding over time. Notably, for this project Kosuth has used a new style of neon in which the faces of the white neon words have been dipped in matte black paint, visually 'muting' the text so that words are subtly back-lit onto matte black walls becoming faintly luminous. This tautology-crafting is akin to earlier work, like Kosuth's 'Five Words in Orange Neon', 1965, where the title precisely describes the work of art before you. But the significant difference between that earlier work and '(Waiting for—) Texts for Nothing' is that it can legitimately lay claim to a new instrumentalisation of theatre and 'Five Words in Orange Neon' cannot.

Immediately preceding the passage from *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* Kosuth has set an awfully captivating descant of texts gathered from *Waiting for Godot*, *Worstward Ho*, *Three Dialogues*, and *The Lost Ones*. Like *Texts for Nothing* this phrasing defers anything approaching the end-oriented narrative, instead remaining open-ended, and expressive of a paralytic exasperation the rank of Beckett's '... you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on' or even of Milton's Satan. We are hearing Kosuth's strident voice in the silences.

'Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better. | E.: Let's go. VLADIMIR: We can't. E.: Why not?
V.: We're waiting for Godot. | To be an artist is to fail, as no other dare fail. | Floor and wall are of solid rubber
or suchlike. Imagine then the silence of the steps. | I believe in silence. | E.: I knew it was him. V.: Who? E.: Godot.
V.: But it's not Godot. E.: It's not Godot? V.: It's not Godot. E.: Then who is it?'

Things go nowhere. Artistic, ideological, theological, philosophical, and personal miscarriages fill the intervals, the voids of successive silences between Beckett's lines; repeated *désinence* triggering free will and the artist's conceit to fail again, and better this time. Just as with the faintly luminous lighting provided by the subdued neon, Kosuth has wrought experience through Beckett once more; the floors in the installation, literally covered with solid black rubber, swallow the sound of your own steps. While reading 'imagine then the silence of the steps', you are experiencing the erasure of your own presence. 'Birth was the death of him', Beckett says in *A Piece of Monologue*, 1977. Nihilism spikes.
Things go nowhere.

With this installation, Kosuth has created a new kind of theatre in these faintly luminous trapezoidal chambers where his audience unwittingly takes on the role of his actors playing against the company of Beckett's dark silence. Kosuth has contemplated the potential of this outlier theatre in a catalogue essay for a recent exhibition at Galleria Lia Rumma in Milan.

'An installation, as a structural or constructive element, can be seen to often be conceived by the artist as a stage set, an autonomous one, built to generate the play which follows from it. The play—itself a connecting and disrupted narrative of discourse, of historical and cultural references—makes formal associations with both art and non-art sources, and contains both social and political meaning within a cultural view, along with the psychological and other associative responses to an architectural setting already internalised as part of the installation. The play arrives with the viewer and it consists of the approach itself toward what the viewer finds there. The dialogue as initiated, is provided by this discourse, and it begins as an interior one. The 'theatre' of which I speak is one anchored in the world, and, as installation, it has been a liberating platform for practising artists who establish it as their own postmodern zone of play. The actors in this play are without a script and the viewing audience and the actors are one and the same; neither 'fictive' nor properly theatrical are to be found in the program of this artistic enterprise.'

This sounds provisional, it is, and should be, because Kosuth is again exploring the outer reaches, speculating about what the convention of art and theatre could become.

To remain in the metaphorical atmosphere of the outlier theatre, there is a *deus ex machina* to all this. With the end of each act in *Waiting for Godot* the day fades as Vladimir and Estragon stand beside their desiccated tree, three wretched silhouettes against the evening sky. With the rising moon, and the fall of night, the two may stop waiting for Godot and in this sense it is the moon that provides their *deus ex machina*, rescuing Vladimir and Estragon from the misery of daily existence. The common interpretation is that the darkness of the evening sky represents death, and so just as nightfall offers a reprieve to Vladimir and Estragon, so too death will relieve the last of humankind from the anguish of life. Remarking on the moon, Estragon offers that it is 'pale for weariness [...] of climbing heaven and gazing on the likes of us'.

And while Estragon's memory has long since failed, at least in this moment, he seems to grasp his inescapable predicament, the endless, numbing repetition of life.

Ruby Cohn, the celebrated Beckett scholar, remembers that Beckett had a reproduction of one of the three versions of Caspar David Friedrich's painting of a rustic landscape scene where two people, their backs to us, contemplate the moon rising in the evening sky. Friedrich's painting, the playwright told Cohn, was the inspiration for *Waiting for Godot*. Between 1819 and 1830 Friedrich painted his three versions; the first version, 'Two Men



'Two Men Contemplating the Moon', ca. 1825-30, Caspar David Friedrich (as appropriated by Joseph Kosuth)

Contemplating the Moon' from 1819 was followed by a second titled 'Man and Woman Contemplating the Moon', ca. 1824, and ultimately the third appeared around 1830; it was given the original title, and presented to Friedrich's physician to settle a bill. According to Cohn, Beckett said that it was the second version, 'Man and Woman Contemplating the Moon', which had been the original muse for the play, but at other times he credited 'Two Men Contemplating the Moon', but the paintings are close enough in composition and mood that he could have easily confused the two.

In '(Waiting for —) Texts for Nothing' Kosuth has included the third version of Friedrich's picture from 1830 in a frame with specially designed lighting so that, quite apart from the muted texts, soundless flooring, and deep black walls, it appears shimmeringly vivid. And yet, within Kosuth's outlier theatre, Friedrich provides a melancholic moonlit scene eliciting an emotional tug that commands our silence with awe. As Arthur Schopenhauer once wrote: 'Why has looking at the moon become so beneficiary, so soothing and so sublime? Because the moon remains purely an object for contemplation, not of the will. Furthermore, the moon is sublime, and moves us sublimely because it stays aloof from all our earthly activities...'

It is one thing to come to terms with the intervals, the gaps, the absences and silence out of which recommencement keeps miraculously emerging. But this poignant experience, whether captured through Kosuth's art, Beckett's writing or more likely both, begs a much larger question . . . the mystery of what existed in the silence before the first commencement. Is there something out there in all that absence and all that silence from where all things come? It is the same absence and the same silence the two figures in the Friedrich painting contemplate, just as if they were standing next to you in '(Waiting for—) Texts for Nothing', or just as well, next to Vladimir and Estragon.



'(Waiting for —) Texts for Nothing #3', 2010
Courtesy Lin Rumma Gallery Milan/Naples

The question was never more pointed than when Moran asked in *Molloy*, 'What was God doing with himself before the creation?' His question lifts up one of the great theological mysteries. There are no easy answers. None other than St Augustine dodged the question in *Confessions*. In Chapter XII, the Saint asks: 'What was God doing before He made heaven and earth?' Slyly he replies: 'He was preparing hell . . . for those who pry into mysteries.'

Ronald Jones
Stockholm, Berlin and Ahmedabad

Photographic documentation

Installation 1

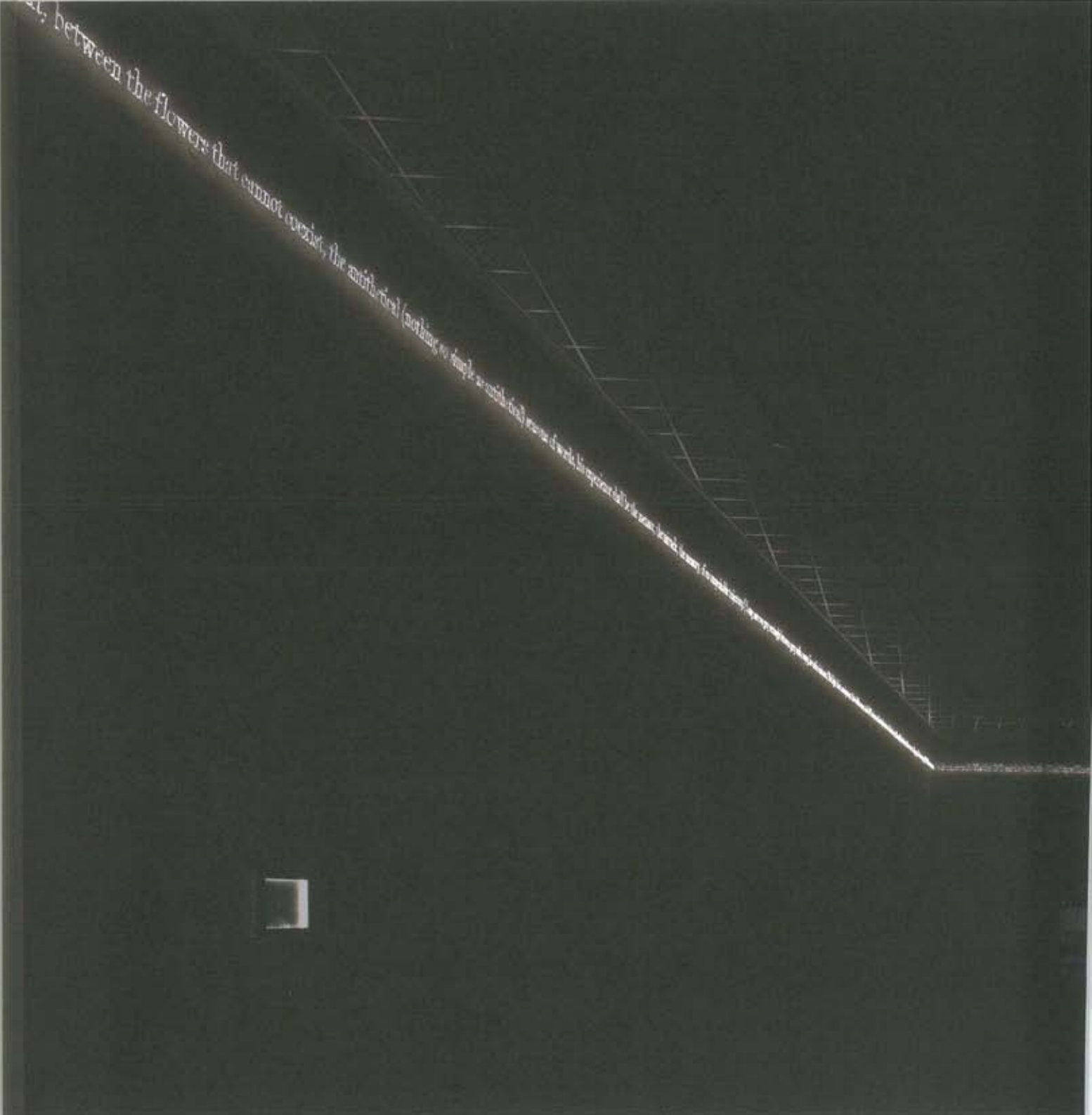
‘Waiting for—(Texts for Nothing)’

Samuel Beckett, in play 2010

able [Long hesitation] to depart. E. Such is life. [All the while, however, it is necessary to be prepared for the possibility of a sudden change in the weather.]

— *Journal of a Journey to the North Pole*

...of all luminous. faintly luminous. 1



... the things that are the most important to us. / They tried. They failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better. / E.L.

all luminous, Fairly luminous, No shadow, (Faint) No shadow, Colourless, All grey, Scales of grey, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

...more to be done with this ...
...more to be done with this ...
...more to be done with this ...
...more to be done with this ...
...more to be done with this ...
...more to be done with this ...
...more to be done with this ...
...more to be done with this ...
...more to be done with this ...
...more to be done with this ...

I'll never know, in the silence you don't know, you must

go on, I can't go on, I'll go on. VESTRAGON!

is, empty, far end in darkness. / The light: faint, omnipresent. No visible

the source. As if all luminous; faintly lum

e then the silence of the steps. | I believe in silence.

E.: I knew it was him. W: Who? E.: Godot. W:

Now, you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on. | **ESTRAGON:** No no. [Silence.] | **POZZO:** I don't want to be alone. I can't be alone.

to depart. For such is life, *what* that should concern us is the acute and increasing anxiety of the relation itself, as though sha

itself, as though shadowed more and more darkly by a sense of invalidity, of ineffectuality, of insignificance at the eyes of all that is outside; all that is outside.

the fly spin. M. spin. Sal. betta | S. Let's go. U. A. P. M. G. R. We can't. E. Why not? V. We're waiting for Godot. | To be an artist is to fail, as no other dare fail. | Floor and w

is it? The experience of my reader shall be between the phrases, in the silence, communicated by the intervals; not the terms, or the statement, between the flowers that cannot speak; the smooth-sided, polished



is a vertical line, a line of words, like a vertical line, the measure, the miracle, the memory, of an unspendable trajectory. (Along narrow grey rectan





the statement, between the flowers that cannot co-exist, the antithetical (nothing so simple as antithetical) seasons of





not? V.: We're waiting for Godot. | To be an artist is to fail, as no other dare fail. | Floor and wall are of solid rubber or suchlike. Imagine then the silence.

Installation Schema

45

| I don't know, I'll never know, in the silence you don't know, you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on. | *ESTRAGON*: No no. [*Silence.*] *POZZO*: I don't seem to be able [*Long hesitation*] to depart. *E.*: Such is

All that should concern us is the acute and increasing anxiety of the relation itself, as though shadowed more and more darkly by a sense of invalidity, of inadequacy, of existence at the expense of all that it excludes, all that

that it blinds to. | Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better. | *E.*: Let's go. *VLADIMIR*: We can't. *E.*: Why not? *V.*: We're waiting for Godot. | To be an artist is to fail, as no other dare fail. | Floor a

all are of solid rubber or suchlike. Imagine then the silence of the steps. | I believe in silence. | E.: I knew it was him. V.: Who? E.: Godot. V.: But it's not Godot. E.: It's not Godot? V.: It's not Godot. E.: Then who is it? | The

'(Waiting for—) Texts for Nothing #1'

'(Waiting for—) Texts for Nothing #8'

'(Waiting for—) Texts for Nothing #9'

the experience of my reader shall be between the phrases, in the silence, communicated by the intervals, not the terms, of the statement, between the flowers that cannot coexist, the antithetical (nothing so simple as antithetical)



'(Waiting for—) Texts for Nothing #10'

'(Waiting for—) Texts for Nothing #10'

seasons of words, his experience shall be the menace, the miracle, the memory, of an unspeakable trajectory. | Long narrow grey rectangle between grey walls, empty, far end in darkness. | The light: faint, omnipresent. No

No visible source. As if all luminous. Faintly luminous. No shadow. *[Pause]* No shadow. Colour: none. All grey. Shades of grey. | V: We have to come back tomorrow. E.: What for? V: To wait for Godot. S.B.

Photographic documentation

Installation 2

‘Titled (Art as Idea as Idea)’

Nothing Installation, Los Angeles, 1968

noth'ing (nóth'ing), *pron.* Not anything; nought. — *s.* **1.** That which does not exist. **2.** A thing, event, or remark of no account, value, note, or the like. **3.** *Math.* Absence of all magnitude or quantity; a zero.

nothing (nóth'ing), *s.* 1. An empty vessel. 2. A person or thing of no account, value, note, or the like. 3. *Math.* Absence of all magnitude or quantity; a zero.

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nothing (nóth'ing), *s.* 1. An empty vessel. 2. A person or thing of no account, value, note, or the like. 3. *Math.* Absence of all magnitude or quantity; a zero.



nothing (nô-), n. & adv. 1. No thing
(with adj. following, as ~ great is easy).

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(with adj. following, as ~ great is easy).

noth'ing (nŭth'ing), *pron.* Not anything; nought. — *n.* **1.** That which does not exist. **2.** A thing, event, or remark of no account, value, note, or the like. **3.** *Math.* Absence of all magnitude or quantity; a zero.

noth-ing (nŭth'ing), *n.* **1.** not anything; naught. **2.** no part, share, or trace. **3.** that which is nonexistent. **4.** a trivial action, matter, circumstance, thing, or remark. **5.** an unimportant person. **6.** a cipher or naught.

nothing (nothing). (Nig. no want, no thing) 1. a.
 To think, feel, or expect; to wish for, to see, to see
 nothing. "I wanted only the stars. I believe there was
 nothing more." R.K. "Roses", in part, about, in part
 (7) 30, the great stone wall of its former significance,
 then a nothing at the end of a long, open, clear street
 was a nothing to, to enter a world not of nothing, to make
 something to nothing, as by a process of creation or ac-
 cident; this, something of no importance or signifi-
 cance. "Catherine speaks an entire day of nothing," Bal-
 zac's "Madame de Verrier", 1: 34. "The artist had
 was nothing... but the fact of the thing was a fact,"
 Pound's "Colony," 43; a nothing more, more, more
 more, or still; a thing more so, "His purpose today
 as his life, and still more so that of his dream, the
 other part." Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice," 47;
 a person of no importance, or a thing of no value, or
 such, that which is without quality or magnitude, that, a
 sign or mark 35.

nothing (nothing), a. 1. the nothing of
 thing, nothing 2. Not a thing or substance.
 3. Not a person or personification.
nothing (nothing), a. 1. the nothing of
 thing, nothing 2. Not a thing or substance.
 3. Not a person or personification.

nothing (nothing), a. 1. not anything or
 being; nothing derived by itself 2. show that
 there is not; create a world out of nothing.
 3. being of no importance or significance; per-
 son of no importance; people regard him as a
 nothing. 4. very; enough. "I make nothing of it,
 he thinks to understand. 5. fall to use or do.
 6. treat as unimportant or worthless. 7. think
 nothing of, or consider as easy to do. 8. treat as
 unimportant or worthless.

nothing (not) /not/, n. [From no, old n. thing.] 1. Not
there, empty. 2. opposed to something and something
3. That which does not exist, a possibility. 4. A thing
which, or aspects of its amount, value, size, or the like,
is finite. 5. Absence of all attributes or quantity; a zero.

nothing (not) /not/, n. [From no, old n. thing.] 1. Not
there, empty. 2. opposed to something and something
3. That which does not exist, a possibility. 4. A thing
which, or aspects of its amount, value, size, or the like,
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nothing (not) /not/, n. [From no, old n. thing.] 1. Not
there, empty. 2. opposed to something and something
3. That which does not exist, a possibility. 4. A thing
which, or aspects of its amount, value, size, or the like,
is finite. 5. Absence of all attributes or quantity; a zero.

n. not anything of ac-
t the like; non-existence;
zero; trifle; adv. in no
way n. [fr. no thing].

no'thing (nū-), n. & adv. 1. No thing
(with adj. following, as ~ *great is easy*).

noth-ing (nuth'ing). [Orig. two words, *no thing*.] **I. n.**
No thing, not anything, or naught (as, to see, do, or say *nothing*; "I opened wide the door: Darkness there, and *nothing* more!" Poe's "Raven"); no part, share, or trace (*of*: as, the place shows *nothing* of its former magnificence; there is *nothing* of his father about him); also, that which is non-existent (as, to create a world out of *nothing*; to reduce something to *nothing*, as by a process of extinction or annihilation); also, something of no importance or significance (as, "Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of *nothing*," Shakspeare's "Merchant of Venice," i. 1. 114; "The defeat itself was *nothing* . . . but the death of the Prince was a blow," Besant's "Coligny," ix.); a trifling action, matter, circumstance, or thing; a trivial remark (as, "In pompous *nothings* on his side, and civil assents on that of his cousins, their time passed": Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice," xv.); a person of no importance, or a nobody or nonentity; in *arith.*, that which is without quantity or magnitude; also, a cipher or naught (0).

noth·ing (nuth'·ing) *n.* not anything of account, value, note, or the like; non-existence; nonentity; nought; zero; trifle; *adv.* in no degree; not at all. **-ness** *n.* [fr. no thing].

nōth'ing, n. [AS. *nān thing*; *nān*, none, no, and *thing*, thing.]

1. not anything; no thing; not any being or existence: the opposite of *anything*, *something*; as, I opened the chest, but there was *nothing* in it.

2. (a) lack of existence; nonexistence; nothingness; (b) insignificance; unimportance.

3. a thing that does not exist.

4. (a) something of little or no value, seriousness, importance, etc.; triviality; (b) a person considered of no value or importance.

5. in mathematics, lack of any quantity either plus or minus; zero.

6. no part, quantity, or degree; as, the troops showed *nothing* of their fatigue.

no'thing (nŭ-), n. & adv. 1. No thing
(with adj. following, as ~ *great is easy*).

noth'ing (nôth'ing), *n.* 1. Not anything; no thing; nought. 2. What is of no significance. 3. *Arch.* Absence of magnitude or quantity; also, a cipher. 4. A thing of no account, value, or the like; a nobody. — *adv.* In no degree; not at all; in no wise.

with'out (wîth'out), *adv.* 1. and *conj.* as things existing by themselves. 2. *thing* that does not enter, create a world out of nothing. 3. *lacked* of an importance or significance; *point* of an importance; *point* beyond that of a *nothing*. 4. *not*, *except*. 5. *without* of a *thing* to be understood. 6. *not* to use or do. 7. *without* of consequence or importance. 8. *without* of a *thing* as easy to do. 9. *without* of consequence or importance.

Photographic documentation

Installation 3

'Ulysses, 18 Scenes'

Zürich, 1998 | Dublin, James Joyce Centennial, 2004

The Newspaper

The Land

The Library

The Streets

The Concert Room

100



The Shelter

The House

The Bed

The Strand

The School



The Strand

The Bath

The House

The Graveyard

The

Newspaper

The Lunch

The C

The Streets

The Library

The Rocks

The Hospital

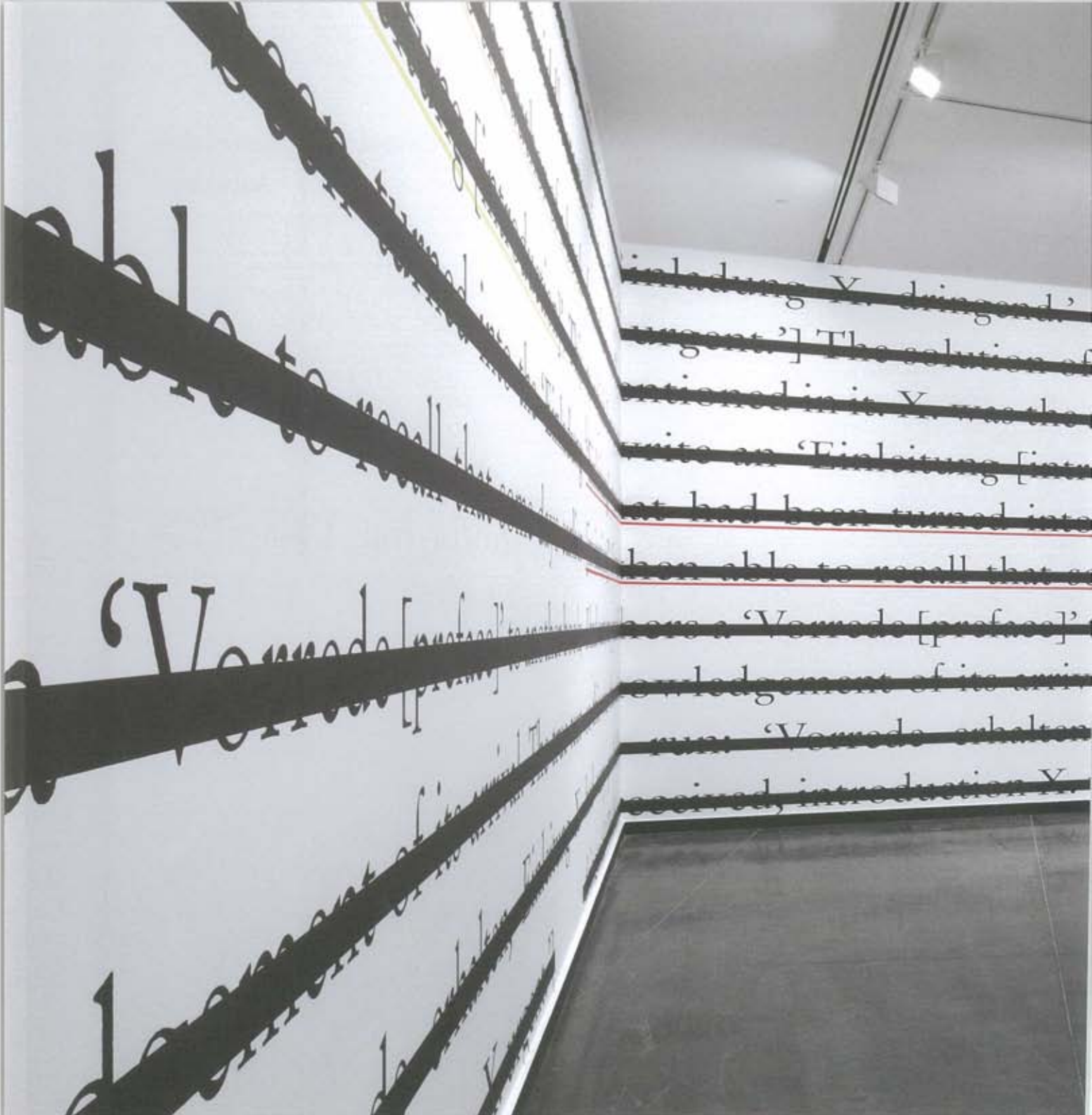
The Tavern

Photographic documentation

Installation 4

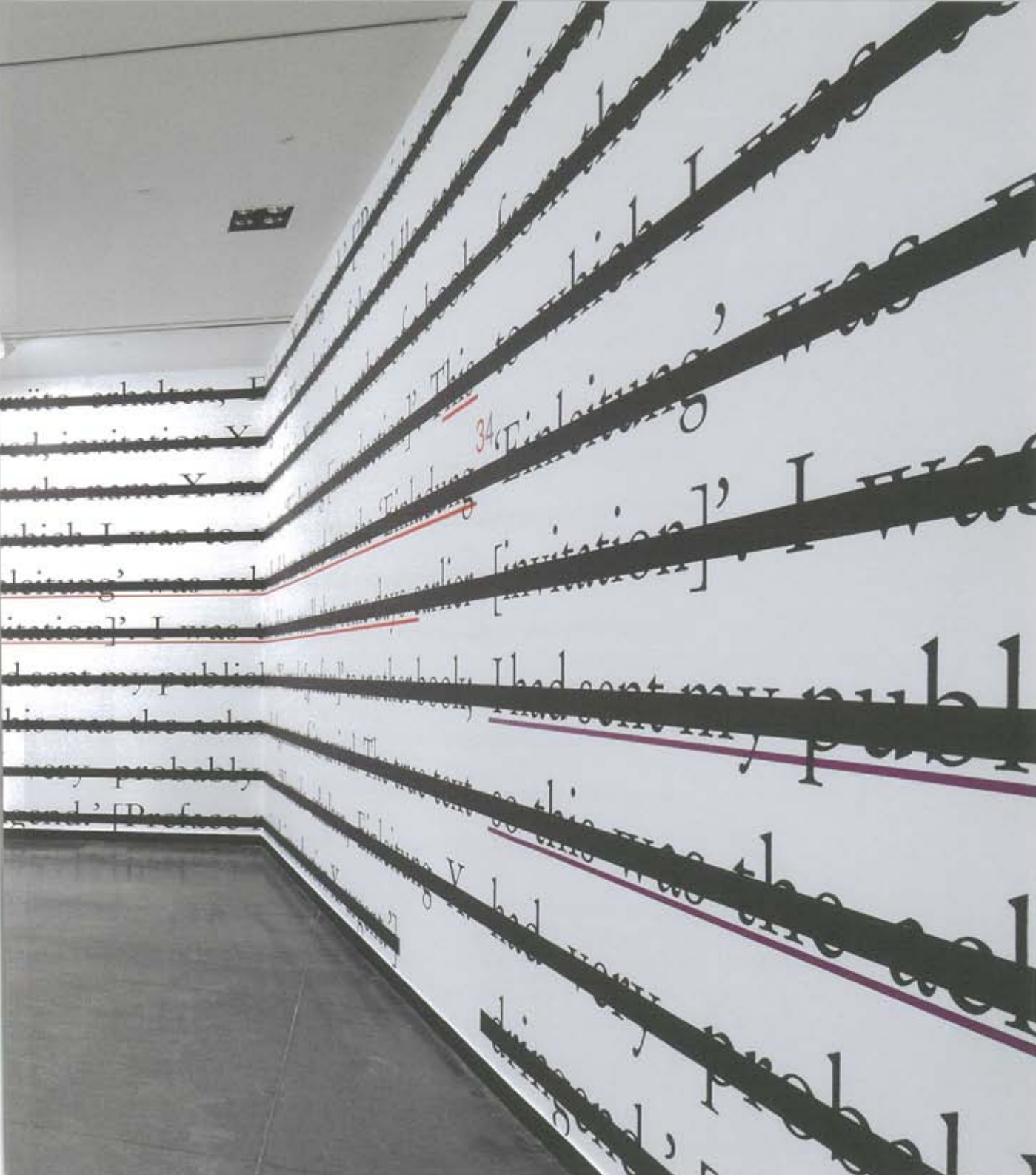
'Zero&Not' 1985 -1989

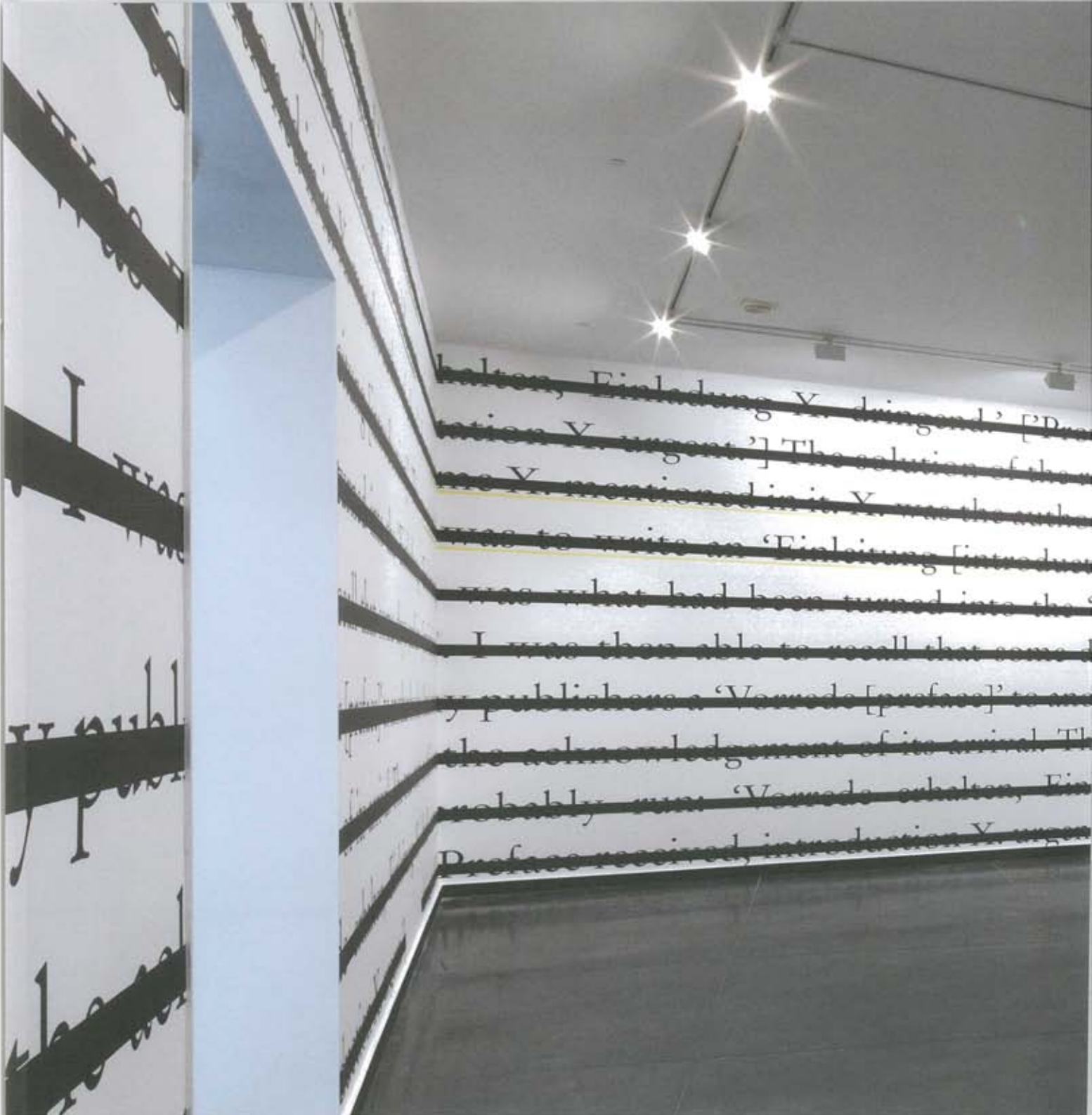
Lyon, Stuttgart, Gent, New York, Mexico City, Vienna





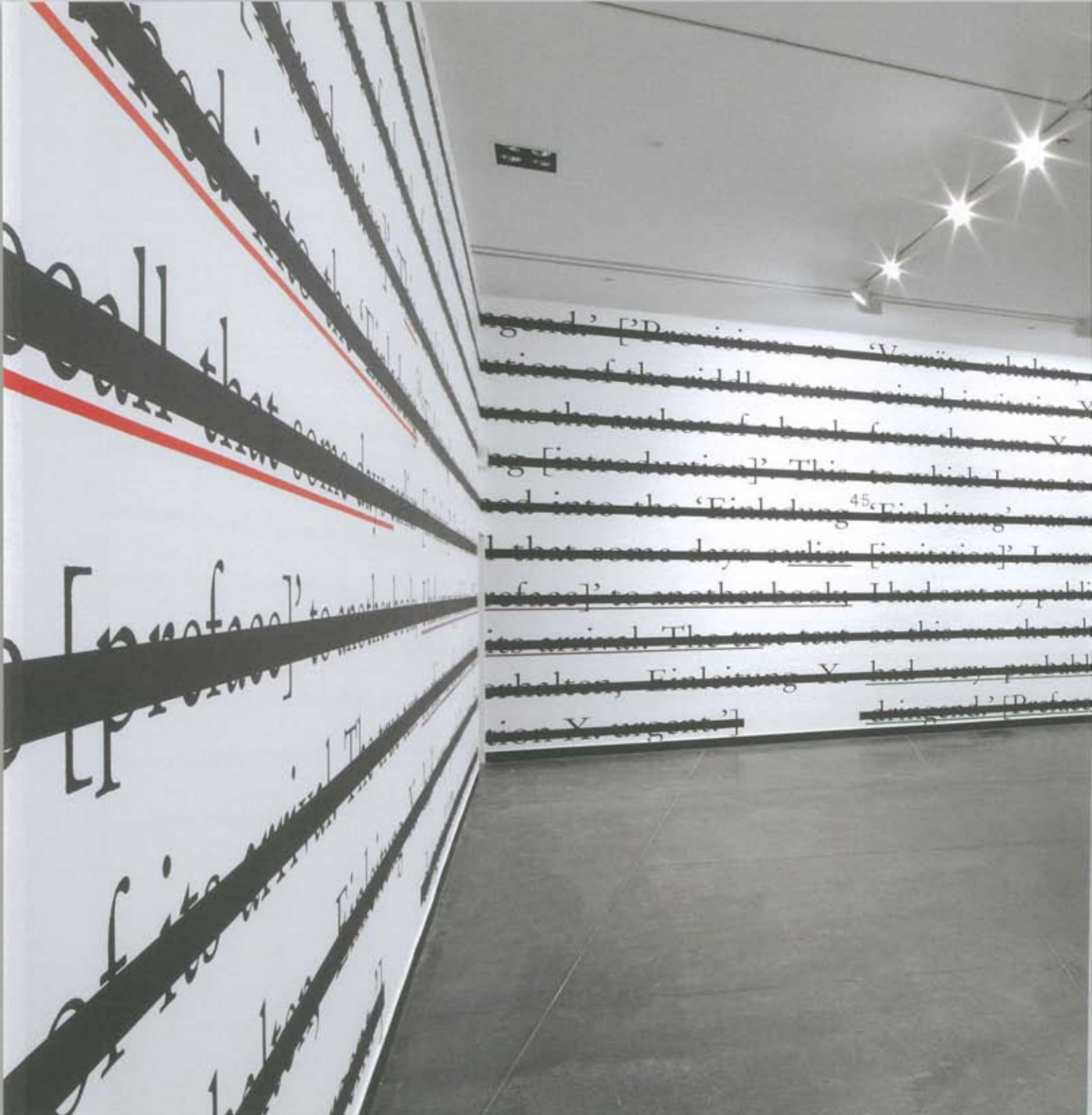






...alten, Einleitung V. d. Dingel, [P.D.
...tion V. d. Dingel.] The solution of the
... V. d. Dingel in it V. d. Dingel
... was to write an 'Einleitung [introduction]
... was what had been turned into the
... I was then able to recall that some
... y publishers a 'Vorrede [preface]' to
... the acknowledgement of its arrival. Th
... probably was: 'Vorrede v. d. Dingel, Ein
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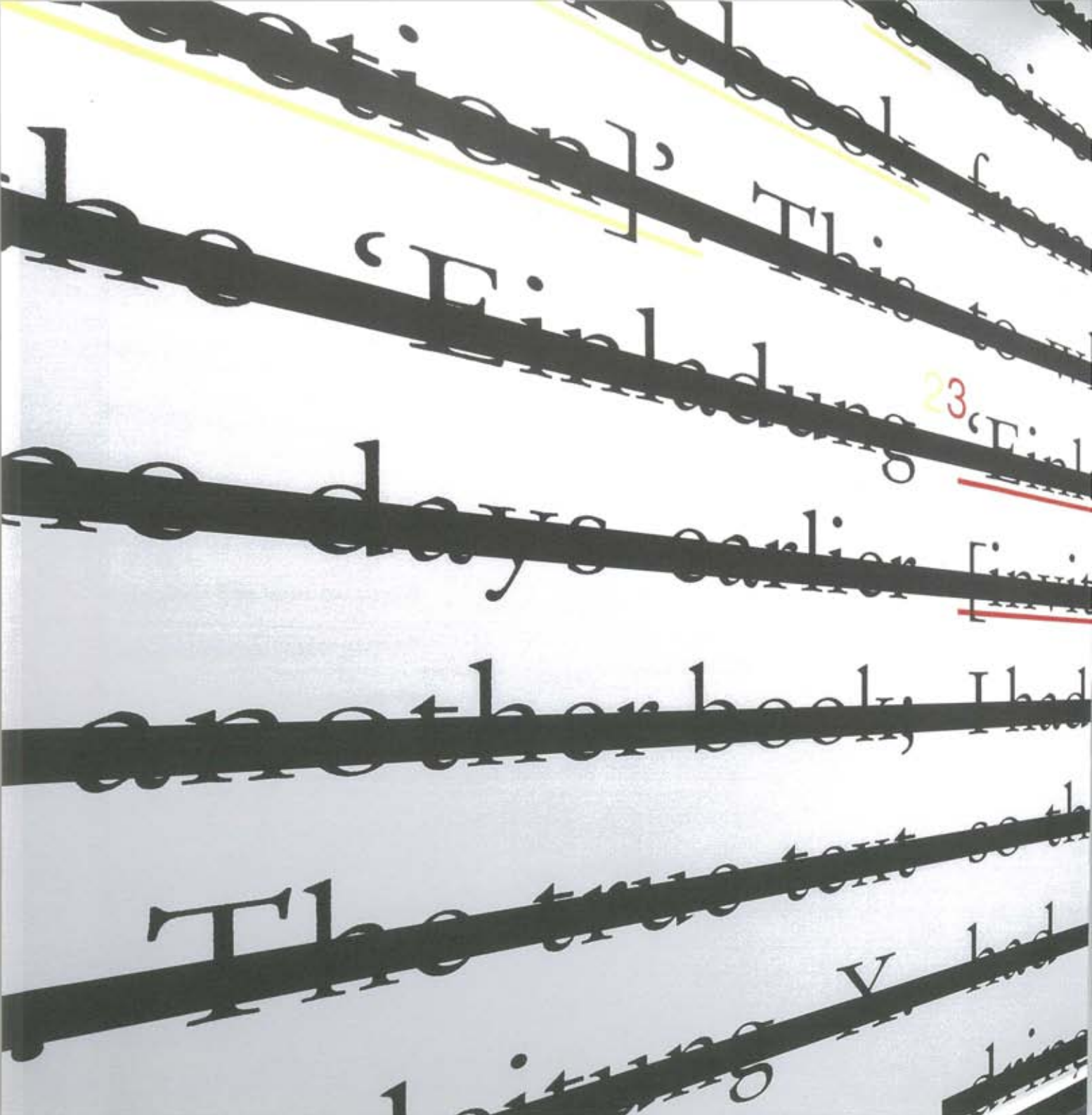
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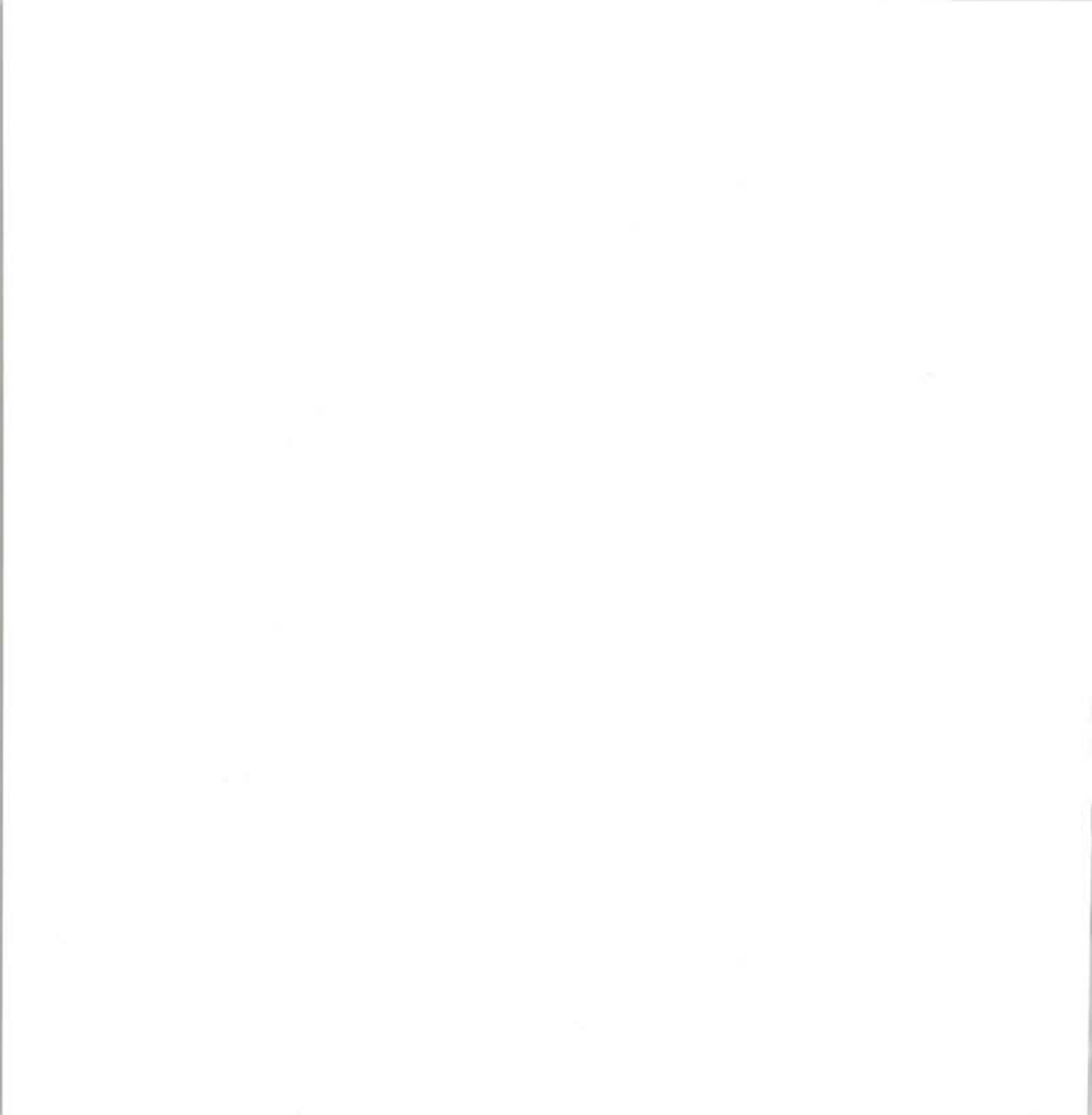
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Biography

Joseph Kosuth is one of the pioneers of Conceptual Art and Installation Art, initiating language-based works and appropriation strategies in the 1960's. His work has consistently explored the production and role of language and meaning within art. His over forty year inquiry into the relation of language to art has taken the form of installations, museum exhibitions, public commissions and publications throughout Europe, the Americas and Asia, including five Documenta(s) and six Venice Biennale(s), one of which was presented in the Hungarian Pavilion (1993). Awards include the Brandeis Award, 1990, Frederick Weisman Award, 1991, the *Menzione d'Onore* at the Venice Biennale, 1993, and the *Chevalier de l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres* from the French government in 1993. He received a Cassandra Foundation Grant in 1968, being the choice of Marcel Duchamp one week before he died. In June 1999, a 3.00 franc postage stamp was issued by the French Government in honour of his work in Figeac. In February 2001, he received the *Laurea Honoris Causa*, doctorate in Philosophy and Letters from the University of Bologna. In 2001 his novel 'Purloined' was published by Salon Verlag. In October 2003 he received the Austrian Republic's highest honour for accomplishments in science and culture, the *Decoration of Honour in Gold for Services to the Republic of Austria*. In 2009, Kosuth's exhibition 'ni apparence ni illusion' an installation work throughout the 12th century walls of the Louvre palace, opened at the Musée du Louvre in Paris, and will become a permanent work in October 2012.

Born in Toledo, Ohio, January 31, 1945. Educated at the Cleveland Institute of Art, 1963-64; The School of Visual Arts, New York City, 1965-67; New School for Social Research, New York (anthropology and philosophy), 1971-72. Faculty, Department of Fine Art, The School of Visual Arts, New York City 1967-1985; Professor at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Hamburg, 1988-90; Staatliche Akademie der Bildende Künste, Stuttgart, 1991-1997; and the Kunstakademie Munich, 2001-2006. Currently Professor at Istituto Universitario di Architettura, Venice, Italy. Has functioned as visiting professor and guest lecturer at various universities and institutions for nearly forty years, some of which include: Yale University, Cornell University, New York University, Duke University, UCLA, Cal Arts, Cooper Union, Pratt Institute, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Art Institute of Chicago, Royal Academy, Copenhagen, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford University, University of Rome, Berlin Kunstakademie, Royal College of Art, London, Glasgow School of Art, The Hayward Gallery, London, The Sorbonne, Paris, The Sigmund Freud Museum, Vienna. He lives in Rome and New York City.

Joseph Kosuth

'(Waiting for—) Texts for Nothing' *Samuel Beckett, in play*

This book is the second of a two-volume set featuring Joseph Kosuth's two exhibition projects curated by Juliann Engberg, Artistic Director, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, Australia | Curator, Visual Art Program, Edinburgh International Festival, 2009.

Vol I. Joseph Kosuth 'An Interpretation of This Title' *Nietzsche, Darwin and the Paradox of Content*

Exhibition for the Edinburgh International Festival, at the Georgian Gallery, Talbot Rice Gallery, within the Old College of Edinburgh University, Edinburgh, 7 August – 26 September 2009

Exhibition at the Anna Schwartz Gallery, Sydney, 13 February – 10 April 2010

Vol II. Joseph Kosuth '(Waiting for—) Texts for Nothing' *Samuel Beckett, in play*

Exhibition for the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), Melbourne, 21 December 2010 – 27 February 2011

Vol II. Joseph Kosuth '(Waiting for —) Texts for Nothing' *Samuel Beckett, in play*

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Ronald Jones is an artist and critic. He leads The Experience Design Group at Konstfack University College of Art, Craft and Design and is a Guest Professor of Experience Design at the National Institute of Design in India.

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Joseph Kosuth

'(Waiting for—) Texts for Nothing' *Samuel Beckett, in play*

Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne

21 December 2010 – 27 February 2011

Curated by Juliana Engberg, Artistic Director, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, Australia

Associate Curator: Charlotte Day

Assistant Exhibitions Coordinator: Jane Rhodes

Installation Team: Jess Johnson, Ned Needham, Luke Pither, Jordy Marani, Nick Mangan, Darren Munce

Photography: Christian Capurro

Special thanks: Galerie Bruno Bischofberger AG for the loan of Joseph Kosuth's 'Ulysses 18 Scenes' which was integral to the exhibition as conceived for ACCA; our supporting partner Herschels and ACCA exhibition patrons: Daniel & Daniele Besen, Joan Clemenger, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Peter Jopling QC, Mark & Louise Nelson, Dr Michael Weleh, Robyn & Ross Wilson,

Roger Wood & Shelley Lasica, and two anonymous donors

Joseph Kosuth Studio Rome | New York

Exhibition Coordinator: Maria Cristina Giusti

Installation Coordinator: Seamus Farrell

Installation Team: Neonlauro's Raimondo Piaia, Stefano Bazzo, Sandro Bin

Special thanks: Fiona Biggiero, Barbara Cortina, Liz Dalton, Daniele Felici, Sanna Marander, Mozghan Motamedi, Dan O'Neill, Cindy Smith, Cynthia Wang

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Joseph Kosuth is represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery in Australia; Sean Kelly Gallery in New York; Sprüth Magers Gallery in Berlin | London and Lia Rumma Gallery Milan | Naples



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