ALMINE RECH

Joseph Kosuth
The-exchange-value-of-language-has-fallen-to-zero

Mar 28 — Nov 22, 2026 | Casa dei Tre Oci (Berggruen Institute Europe), Venice, Italy

As a tribute to a pioneer of Conceptual art with a long-standing connection to Venice, the exhibition presents a selection of seminal works from the oeuvre of Joseph Kosuth, together with a newly commissioned neon installation.

Through the provocative title *The-exchange-value-of-language-has- fallen-to-zero*, Kosuth reflects on the loss of linguistic weight in today's media-saturated cultural climate. By reactivating and repurposing his own works, he challenges the assumption that words possess fixed meanings. Instead, meaning emerges as a contingent construction, an event produced through the relationship between text and the space in which it is encountered, echoing the philosophical investigations of Ludwig Wittgenstein.

The exhibition opens with the site-specific installation *A Chain of Resemblance*, which wraps around the entrance hall of Casa dei Tre Oci. The work requires both seeing and reading to unfold the appropriated text by Michel Foucault, who describes the world as a network of interconnections of natural species which continually reflect and influence one another.

The first floor presents groundbreaking works from the 1960s and 1970s, including *One and Three Mirrors* and *Clock – One and Five* from the *Proto-Investigations* (1965). In these works, meaning emerges through the relationship between image, object and text, while the viewer becomes an active participant in the process of interpretation.

These early works lead to the celebrated Investigations, in which Kosuth further explored the construction of meaning and the definition of art itself. Works such as *The Fifth Investigation* (1969) present an exercise in conceptual reflection, while *The Seventh Investigation (A.A.I.A.I.) Proposition One* (1970) installed on the Canal Grande, extends these ideas into the public space.

Kosuth's radical position, articulated in Art After Philosophy, is represented through works such as *One and Eight – A Description* (1965) and *Titled (Art as Idea as Idea) [Question]*(1967), tautological works that contain within themselves the very definition of Conceptual art. The exhibition includes projects addressing authorship, spectatorship and institutional critique, namely *Where Are You Standing?* (1976) and *Text/Context* (1978–79), which document Kosuth's anonymous textual interventions on billboards in public space.

Since the 1960s, Kosuth has consistently investigated language as a primary medium of art. Spanning installations, exhibitions, public commissions and theoretical writings, his practice has played a fundamental role in shaping Conceptual art and remains a key reference within contemporary artistic discourse.