

# 'PLAY OF ADVICE' (1996)

*A Bildungsreise* to the Value of Public Art

A thesis submitted to the Faculty Humanities

for the degree of Master of Arts within the Programme of Art, Media & Society at Tilburg University

Eindhoven, the Netherlands

Augustus 2017

Liza Voetman

Liza Voetman

ANR: 457243

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. L.H.M. Hanssen

Second reader: Dr. D. Rutten

Tilburg University, Faculty Humanities

For those who dare to ask

Eindhoven, Summer 2017



## PREFACE

I visited Léon Hanssen with the idea to write my MA thesis about Hegel's dialectics, the negation of the things around us, and the issue concerning the (im)possibility of complete objectivity. Once in his office, which I had visited more frequently during the oral examinations of art history the year before, he asked me for my story. So I told him about my fascination for Hegel's philosophy, originating from my time at the art academy and still present. But Hegel's theory was broad, what was my primary interest? I could immediately answer that question: understanding the things around us. So I gave the familiar example that I have been giving for years, one that even once insulted by my philosophy teacher. It goes like this: the cup [ read: a random cup that comes to your mind right now ] can only be really known when you have seen all the cups in the entire world. In addition, 'knowing' the cup relies on history: on all the cups we have ever seen, which form our understanding of the general cup - as we currently have in mind. Fortunately, Hanssen found it a fitting example too. We ended up with the notion of conceptual art in my story, as the subject on which I wanted to apply this dialectic theory. Does conceptual art capture the 'essence' of *anything*, to turn about as a unanimous, common experience? I believe it is possible that art can have a unifying meta function. Hanssen introduced the famous painting of Margrith, *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* - and especially the book that Foucault wrote about this artwork - which shows us a pipe but tells us it is not a pipe. While Hanssen was searching on the Internet to a copy of the book, I talked about my previously written hermeneutic paper *The Understanding of an Object* in which I investigated Joseph Kosuth's tripartite communication artwork *One and Three Chairs*. Kosuth: being the artist behind the public Mondrian quotation at Eindhoven Central Station, high placed against the wall in the public concourse. With this notion, everything suddenly came together. The thesis in front of you, as a result of these first thoughts in Hanssen's office during that early days in December '16, relies on my deep rooted belief that art can exist and reach a larger audience than purely the specific art lover in the museum, by interrupting society outside these safe walls.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In particular, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Léon Hanssen, for all his insights and considerations, his particular food for thoughts and knowledge, and specifically his confidence and stimulation to go beyond the existing frameworks. And Arne: thank you, with all my love. For your mountains of trust, your patience and support, your understanding, insights, and order, and your devotional role as a stable rock in my time as an emotional roller coaster. Without you I could not have done this, and from now it is time for us.

I also would like to say thanks to my parents, for reading my writings during this journey and hearing my noise, for the door that is always open, and all our conversations.

Furthermore, I would like to thank all those who have made this thesis possible. Without your help, it could not have been conducted. Thank you Peter Foolen, Jan Debbaut, Pieter Alewijns, Rik van Stiphout, Marianne Vaessens, Farnaz Verbocht, Sandra Smets, Marjolijn van der Meijden, Relinde Ter Borg, Steven ten Thije, Frank Lubbers, Frank Bukkems, Lawra Korfke, Annebeth Oosterkamp, Rob ter Steege, Eduard Weijgers, Johan van den Boomen, Petra Hoogendoorn, Jesse Voetman, and last but not least Daan Rutten (2<sup>nd</sup> reader).

I wish you all a nice reading journey,

Liza

## ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses the work of art *Play of Advice* (1996) by Joseph Kosuth, which is situated in the railway station of Eindhoven, the Netherlands. The analysis consists of five parts: the history, context, artist, artwork, and passant. The case study of *Play of Advice* concerns current issues about public space (the increasing control of openness and accessibility), the value of art in this public space of the city, and the possible importance of the artist's autonomy here. It is shown that *Play of Advice* lets the ordinary passant experience something unusual, and therefore interrupts the dominant structures/conventions of the current time with its socio-political message. The autonomous value of this artwork has been reinforced with time, and makes clear that artworks can grow into city icons over time. However, since contemporary public artworks increasingly occur in a professional context by commissions, this examination reveals that it is important to maintain the intrinsic intent of the artist above social requirements.

*Keywords: public space, public art, autonomy, engagement, public art policy, city's image, Eindhoven, railway station, play, intervention*





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	5
Acknowledgments	6
Abstract	7
Table of Contents	9
List of Figures	12
List of Appendices	14
<b>Introduction</b>	15
Research Structure	18
<b>1: History</b>	26
<i>Travaux Publics [ Public Works ] 8.12.1996-9.2.1997: An Introduction</i>	26
The Origin of the Artwork	33
Conclusion	47
<b>2: Context</b>	50
SECTION 1: THE PUBLIC SPACE	51
Introduction: defining 'public'	51
Contemporary changes in public space	53
A Hub of Mobility: A Closer Look at the Railway Station	56
The Changing Nature of the Central Station	58

Analysis: (the Public Space in) Eindhoven & its Central Station	61
1. The City of Eindhoven	61
2. The Public Space of Eindhoven	61
3. The Public Space of the Eindhoven Central Station	62
SECTION 2: PUBLIC ART	67
Introduction	67
Public Art: Between Freedom and Control	69
Public Art: A Dropdown List of Requirements	76
Analysis: Eindhoven, the municipal art policy since 1950	77
Analysis: Eindhoven, the municipal policy today	80
Conclusion	87
<b>3: Artist</b>	90
Step 1: A Close Reading of Kosuth's Artists Manifesto	93
Step 2: Linguistic Interventions in Public Space	95
Step 3, section 1: Interpreting <i>A Comment on Intentions</i>	98
Step 3, section 2: An Interpretation of Mondrian's quotation at Eindhoven	
Central Station (seen through the eyes of Kosuth)	102
The choice for a quote from Mondrian	102
The choice for the place in the Central Station	108
The choice for neon tubes	109
Conclusion	111
<b>4: Artwork</b>	116
Introduction: A Short Look at Hermeneutics	117
<i>Play of Advice</i> : Interpreting 4 Parts of Its Whole	119
Text (part one)	123
Height	125

Text (part two)	127
Neon	128
Yellow	129
Analysis	132
Conclusion	136
<b>5: Passant</b>	137
And then, the artwork was gone	137
<b>Conclusion</b>	142
Research findings	143
What really happens here?	146
Discussion	147
Bibliography	149
Appendices	155

## LIST OF FIGURES

1. (Illustration: 20) Cloud-shaped organogram as structure of this thesis
2. (Mind map: 21) Overview of the main concepts of this thesis
3. (Photograph: 23) *Travaux Public* [ Public Works ] logo from 1996
4. (Photograph: 24) *Play of Advice* from Joseph Kosuth 1996, taken by Ruud Balk
5. (Photograph: 29) Zoom-in image of the installation of the neon tubes from the artwork *Play of Advice*
6. (Photograph: 30) Kosuth's text fragment *A Comment on Intentions* for the publication *Travaux Publics* [ Public Works ] 1996
7. (Photograph: 31) *Play of Advice* published within the publication *Travaux Publics* [ Public Works ] 1996
8. (Photograph: 34) Fax from Jan Debbaut (former director Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven) to 'whom it may concern' at 14.12.1995
9. (Photograph: 39) Fax René Padt (Kosuth's assistant) to Peninsula (art initiator of the exhibition *Travaux Publics*) at 17.05.1996
10. (Photograph: 40) Design *Play of Advice*
11. Idem. (41)
12. (Photograph: 42) Fax from Van Gennip (neon supplier) to Peninsula at 18.02.1997
13. (Photograph: 43) Fax from Peter Foolen (member Peninsula) to Joseph Kosuth at 19.07.1998
14. (Photograph: 46) Photograph *Play of Advice* taken by Peter Foolen at the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2017
15. (Print screen: 48) Google Maps location *Play of Advice* (Central Station Eindhoven)
16. (Illustration: 55) Railway Station sketch
17. (Scan: 60) *Travaux Publics* poster from 1996
18. (Scan: 66) Article from *Eindhovens Dagblad* published at 19.11.1996
19. (Photograph: 88) Process impression photograph
20. (Photograph: 100) Submission text *A Comment on Intentions* by Kosuth
21. (Photograph: 101) Submission design text *A Comment on Intentions* for publication
22. (Photograph: 103) Selected quote Piet Mondrian by Kosuth
23. (Photograph: 104) Selected quotes Piet Mondrian by Kosuth

24. (Picture: 106) *Tableau-poème : textuel* (1928) by Piet Mondrian, retrieved from:  
<https://nl.pinterest.com/bullesconcept/bulles-concept-autour-de-mondrian/>
25. (Picture: 107) *Mondrian's work III* (2015) made by Joseph Kosuth, retrieved from:  
<http://www.brandstrup.no/artists/joseph-kosuth>
26. (Photograph: 114) Placement instructions (information) *Play of Advice*
27. (Photograph: 120) Design *Play of Advice*
28. Idem. (121)
29. Idem. (122)
30. (Picture: 126) *The Weather Project* (2003) by Olafur Eliasson, retrieved from:  
<http://olafureliasson.net/archive/exhibition/EXH101069/the-weather-project>
31. (Photograph: 141) Photograph current situation at Eindhoven Central Station
32. (Scan: 148) *Travaux Publics* poster by Peninsula from 1996

## LIST OF APPENDICES

1. (Scan: 156) 'A Selection of New Editions' by Peninsula
2. Idem. (157)
3. (Scan: 158) Entr'acte Van Abbemuseum (8.12.1996/9.02.1997)
4. Idem. (159)
5. (Scan: 160) Fax from Joseph Kosuth (32-9) to Peninsula at 05.03.1998

*Given the large amount of consulted documents the complete archive is only available on request; please send an email to [lizavoetman@gmail.com](mailto:lizavoetman@gmail.com)*

## INTRODUCTION

The yellow neon tubes, high against the wall within the Central Station concourse in Eindhoven (the Netherlands), are telling the following words: “Conventie, een soort herinnering, is het grootste beletsel om te genieten van leven en kunst.<sup>1</sup>,” signed Piet Mondrian. When you don’t recognise its existence, maybe you’re wandering, hurried, or simply just not looking, it already passed by. And so does the work still may be unnoticed for lots of people every day. Sometimes, it loses its light for a couple of days. And although it perhaps may not impose you like the disco ball at the dancefloor, it’s still there.

This thesis is a wonder to art. Something that many people approach, expect and experience in a different way. And some of them do not do that at all. Art is never unilaterally explained. The current art climate is a response to previous times. To the movements, the ideas, the thinkers from history. But it is also a reaction to the here and now, to what happens, what is alive. The work of art can act as a mirror to society by reproducing it as it is or used to be. However, it can also create a personal dimension, showing a new reality. The work of art can be made from the artist's intrinsic experience, conveying him/herself to the act of creating him/herself, but it can also send a direct politically committed message to the world. On the one hand, we can say that the artwork always carries a message. But on the other hand, we can say that the artwork itself does not want anything; that it earns its value in the meaning we assign it ourselves, which we experience ourselves. That

art is a complex phenomenon may be clear. And that there are many disagreements here, seems to be evident. However, this is not the problem that is addressed directly in this thesis. Of course, I have - after six years of studying arts and culture - a personal vision on this topic, but I notice that even this vision is still subject to change. My doubt lies mainly in the relationship between the autonomy of artists and their socially committed attitude, which both have an important right of existence and a profound history. In order to substantiate the central issue of this thesis, I should first briefly return to the autonomy of artists, and its possible end.

At the end of the nineteenth century with the rise of the avant-garde, autonomous art gained a foundation. It was an era in which artists could give voice to their own artistic freedom, instead of the political and economic

---

<sup>1</sup> Original manuscript Mondrian: “Convent is sort of memory *grootste hinder* to enjoy life and Art”, edited version by Holtzman/James: “Convention is a sort of memory, greatest obstacle to enjoyment of life and art’ (p. 368) (quite is also published in *Piet Mondrian- The Complete Writings* by Louis Veen (2017, p. 585))

changes. Before that time, art was made in the service of the court, the church and the nobility. De fin de siècle set art free. The concept of 'free' should therefore be understood literally, given that *l'art pour l'art* was completely detached from society (Honour & Flemming, 2011). Modernity was a real break from the past, when the artists were still working under contract. However, this acquired autonomy brought a dividing line between art and life, which was abolished at the time of postmodernism (Honour & Flemming, 2011). The postmodernists at their turn questioned this acquired freedom, and began to wonder about the position of the artist in life. It may be clear that the position of the artist in society has been subject to major changes, which are reflected in the artistic visual language itself.

Many artists seek this social relationship today. It can be argued that this is due to the fact that these socially concerned artworks are financed by the government, since these works have some relevance to the 'outside' world (Bussemaker, 2015). In addition, these works often contribute directly to the political debate, given the content they proclaim. This has several consequences, which I do not want to call positive or negative. I just want to briefly show what is possibly going on. First of all, the artistic freedom has been confined partly when it wants to count on financial support. In addition, this socially engaged art often has a politically illustrative, unambiguous character (Doorman, 2016). It set forth what's happening in the world, but in a visual way. Thirdly, what comes to my mind is the position and identity of the artist, who is increasingly asked to work hybrid and commissioned. The division mentioned above is still visible today: on the one hand the belief in the autonomous and independent freedom of the art world, direct social

involvement on the other. This game is often played within the walls of the art world, a world that does not directly interact with the outside world. In other words, the artwork that exists within the museum is only visible to a specific audience. Hence, the art world maintains its own autonomy and 'ivory tower' - the *l'art pour l'art* (Doorman, 2016) - whereby the artwork is not visible to the common public. Nevertheless, this disintegration of art with society is lifted by the public artwork on the corner of the street passed-by the ordinary wanderer; but this does not immediately mean that all public artworks actually convey a message to this passant. Besides, it can be argued whether there is still space for play in today's public space, based on the artist's own artistic motives. Does our neoliberal society still allow for autonomous art in public space? Is this important to maintain? Here, we reach the central issue this thesis focuses on.

For several reasons I think it is important that art is publicly visible. 1. The more people get to know the work, the more people can comment on it, and experience its existence. 2. The public work will probably encourage more people to go to an actual museum. 3). The public work really contributes to society, since it literally behaves in it. Therefore, it can contribute to the public debate. 4. I am convinced that public art can take away certain classifications by means of its visual experience. In society, we find ourselves in different domains and areas, and there is no metalanguage we can all speak. Perhaps, public art is the white spot in the middle where nothing is needed and everything can be. But at the same time, this absence of utility also seems to be the problem for many. It can be stated that art in public space is a complex phenomenon considering the many factors that



you need to keep in mind. Furthermore, we cannot take its existence for granted, and certainly not all public works are able to contribute to life. Therefore, this thesis critically examines and analyses the existence, effect, and role of public art within the urban space by means of the conceptual text work *Play of Advice* (1996), which is made by the American conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth for the Central Station concourse of Eindhoven, the Netherlands. Although the artwork is located at this prominent public spot, it exists as a high-placed text line that does not appeal to us directly, and does not even have to be noticed. The artwork is about conventions, realized in bright neon tubes. What does it do to us, and what does this tell?

The choice for this specific case study includes two different issues, relying on my six years of experience as an art student. The first emerged from my deep-rooted desire to depict the essential value of public art in today's society. What is its *raison d'être*, and how can it become something significant within a city and for its citizens? I am convinced that art needs to contribute to life. Not only within the art world - while hiding between the walls of the museum, purely being seen by the interested one, the knower, the maker, the lover - but to be a real addition to the physical street. To the wanderer on this street, to the businessman, the child, the neighbour, and the ice-cream seller. I believe a critical investigation can positively contribute to a better understanding of how public art is able to contribute to the public space, the public's engagement, and the general image of the city. I trust that public art can start an important dialogue with that strange, huge world outside. However, therefore the artwork must really *do* something. While

standing still, without having any connection with its context itself - like for instance the many abstract figurations on the roundabouts within this small country - public art probably loses its meaning. Furthermore, it can be questioned to what extent the many statues within this country carry a degree of value, strength and meaning. They almost seem to be intangible in their position, and very clear in their imagery. Is public identification with this status symbol/icon necessary, and perhaps enough, to be meaningful to the crowd? Based on the assumption that public art can positively contribute to the urban public space and its public, this thesis stimulates new recommendations for a well-functioning and up to date cultural policy towards public art and its future prospective.

The second motivation for this thesis is based on my interest in conceptual art, considering these works almost pursue an objective and common essence, while art is often considered subjective in nature. Is conceptual art really able to include the essence of *anything*? And what about the linguistic expressions within conceptual art, what does this do to us? When placing a conceptual text work in the urban space of the railway station, it enters a dialogue with that hurried, dynamic, and vibrating juncture where thousands of travellers pass on a daily basis. In this moving environment, that people usually enter with a specific goal in mind (travel, pick someone up, buy a ticket), it can be asked to what extent this text is actually read. The additional question therefore is whether Mondrian's quote really should be read, in order to stimulate its dialogue with both the passant and the context. Perhaps, its -

effect is hiding in the very brief moment the work of art has to influence the passant without the latter exploring the deeper content of the text itself. This thesis therefore investigates the existence of text as conceptual artistic expression within the public space. Hereby it focuses on matters such as autonomy and engaged commitment of both the artwork and the art practice of the artist himself, in order to find out to what extent there is still space for the artists autonomy and autonomous works of art within the contemporary public space. Perhaps, this has come to an end.

### **Research structure**

This examination has a broad set-up and reveals many different phenomena, such as the city's image, its public art policy, the autonomy of the artist and the intrinsic character the artwork, the socio-political commitment of art, and the role of the passant. Together, this thesis provides insight into the urgency of public art and how to deal with it. This thesis contains a qualitative investigation that focuses on one single case study, the artwork *Play of Advice*, since it seems to include an essential effect. Thereby, it can test the issues mentioned above, given the redevelopment of Eindhoven Central Station, and how different forms of interaction are related. Focusing on *Play of Advice*, both empirical and theoretical research methods helps to indicate its existence, role, and effect. The used data consists of both collected documents, literature studies, empirical observations, and field work by means of interviews. After, the artwork can be analysed and interpreted. With this, I aim to offer a direction forward on the question

*what really happens here (read: within the dialogue between the artwork, the context, and the passant)?*

since this will provide insight into the connections of artworks in public space with our contemporary society and how these artworks may be of value. This thesis investigates *Play of Advice* using close reading: it analyses its entirety from all connected perspectives and relationships. In addition, this examination cannot be approached as a discovery trip, but as a *Bildungsreise*: a developmental journey that follows a course while it takes different turns, acquires knowledge, and eventually reaches its destination. Where this destination might be is not sure yet, but the information sites required for this journey have been determined in advance. However, they still need to be experienced in order to connect. In the end, you never know exactly where you will end up at the end of your journey.

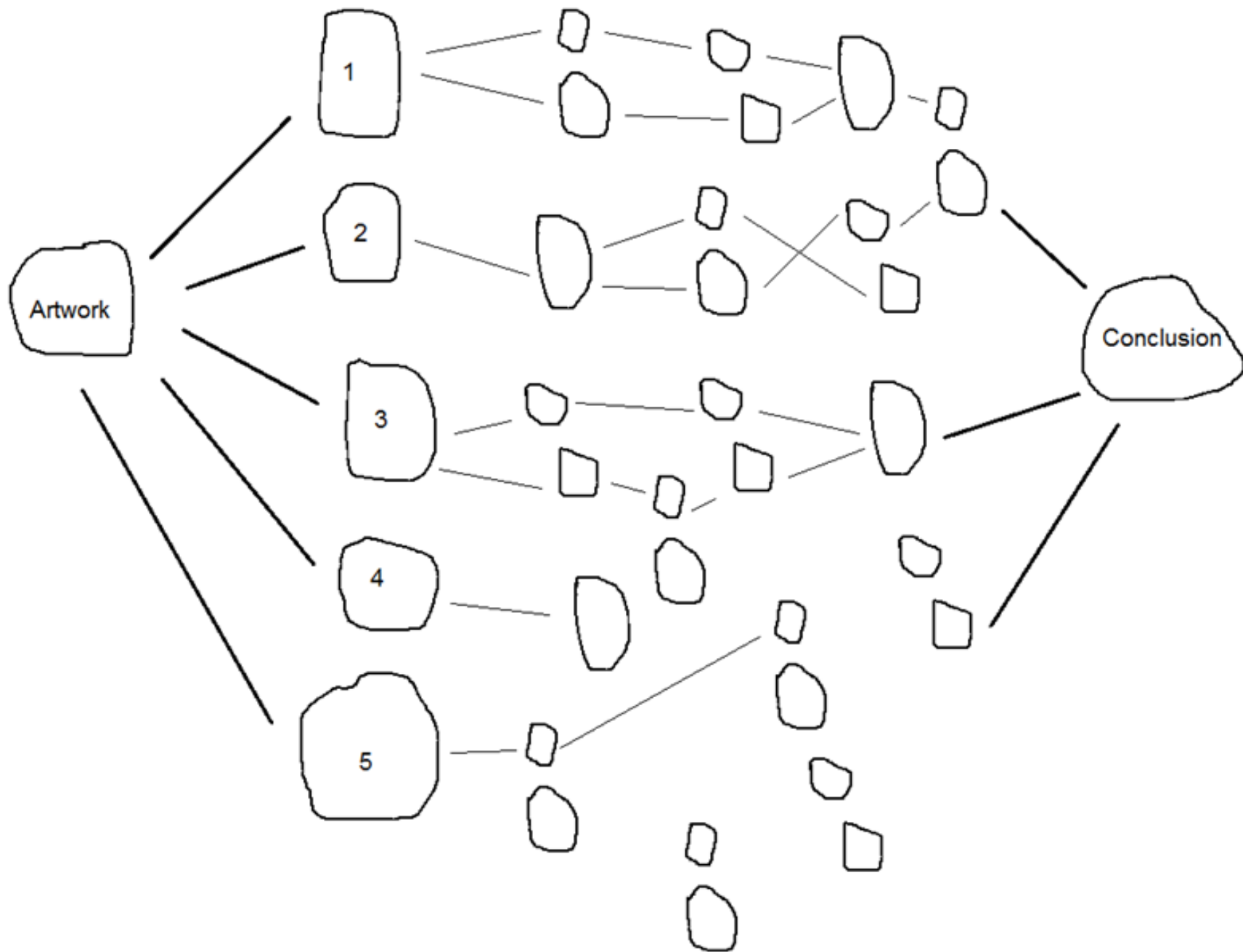
In order to answer the main question, an organogram is key (see: fig. 1, p. 20) to distinguish five different components (sites) that play a prominent role in analysing this artwork. These components are: the history, the context, the nature of the artwork itself, the artist, and the passant. Underlying all five components are many sub-items (for instance to the nature of the colour yellow, or the existence of the Central Station anno 2017) that connect through synaptic veins. This way, sub-items can touch upon different sections, be parked for a while to be picked up later. This journey is structured, but the items continue to work together - as synaptic veins - and deliver the experiences that colour this research in order to provide answers. The process of seeking answers therefore forms an -

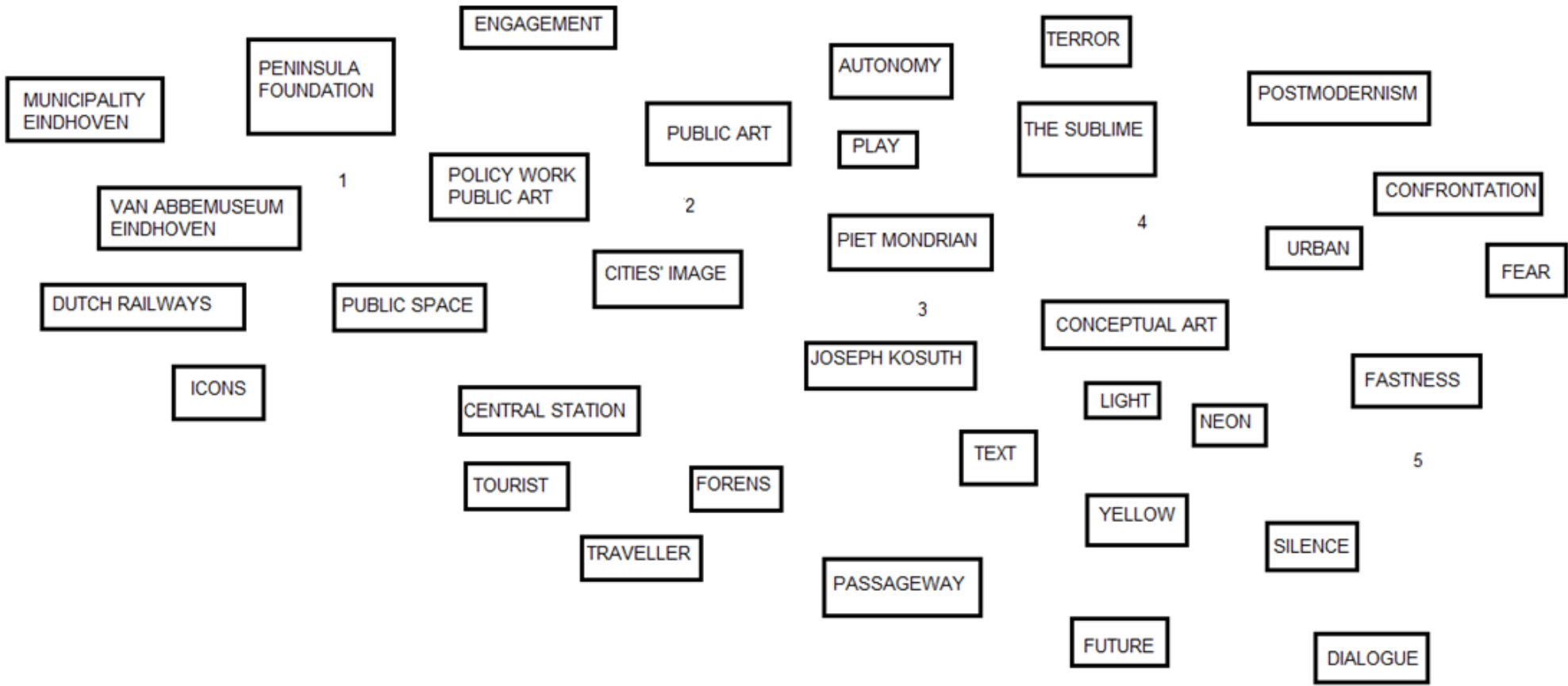
important part of the investigation, since it provides a deposition on the answer to the main question what happens within this dialogue. All five components are investigated and based of different research methods. For the components 'Context' and 'Artwork' I will outline a theoretical framework, after which I analyse the case study. For the components 'History', 'Artist', and 'Passant', however, I start empirically, since these parts are purely based on collected documents, empirical observations, and analyses. All five chapters end with a partial conclusion, which ultimately leads to the final conclusion.

In the first chapter of this investigation I focus on the origin of *Play of Advice*, in order to give an indication of its existence. How was this artwork realized? How did it originate? And who made it even possible? These data are collected both through interviews and collected documents. Afterwards, I dive deeper into the current situation of the artwork, seen from the public space and the public within this space. In the second chapter, public space and public art are central. What kind of space is the Central Station actually? How does our current treatise of the public space affect the artwork, and vice versa? How does this case relate to the former municipal policy in Eindhoven, and the current discourse with public art in the city of Eindhoven? This chapter makes use of both literature studies as well as interviews with people from the field, which provides an indication of the current existence and requirements of public art. In the third chapter of this thesis I investigate the artistic manifest of the artist Joseph Kosuth himself, in order to indicate what vision this artwork relies on. What kind of response should this artwork evoke? Can we figure out the reasons for this specific

quote being placed at this particular place? In the fourth chapter, I dive deeper into the artwork by means of a hermeneutic analysis. This way, the operation of the work itself is mapped. What does the artwork do? And although it originated in 1996, can it still be of (different) value today? The fifth, final chapter of this examination indicates how the artworks has an impact on the passengers within the Central Station, and how they experience it differently. This chapter relies on field research by means of interviews. Combined, these five parts provide an complete clarification of the existence, effect and role of *Play of Advice*. This can be used to indicate the significance of public (text and light) works within our contemporary society.

The claim I want to ensure before starting this investigation is that this artwork is not just there. There is a whole story behind this yellow light, and something *really* takes place. Since the work already has some influence on the short moment you will recognize its existence, the work literally happens, and you are part of it whether you want to or not.





**PLACEMENT//**

**REALIZATION**

Conventie, een soort herinnering, is het grootste beletsel om  
te genieten van leven en kunst.

PIET MONDRIAAN



Tomteas Business Service

KOFFIE  
CAPPUCCINO  
HOT CHOCOLATE  
OM HEE TE NEMEN



T R A V A U X  
[ P U B L I S ]  
P U B L I C S

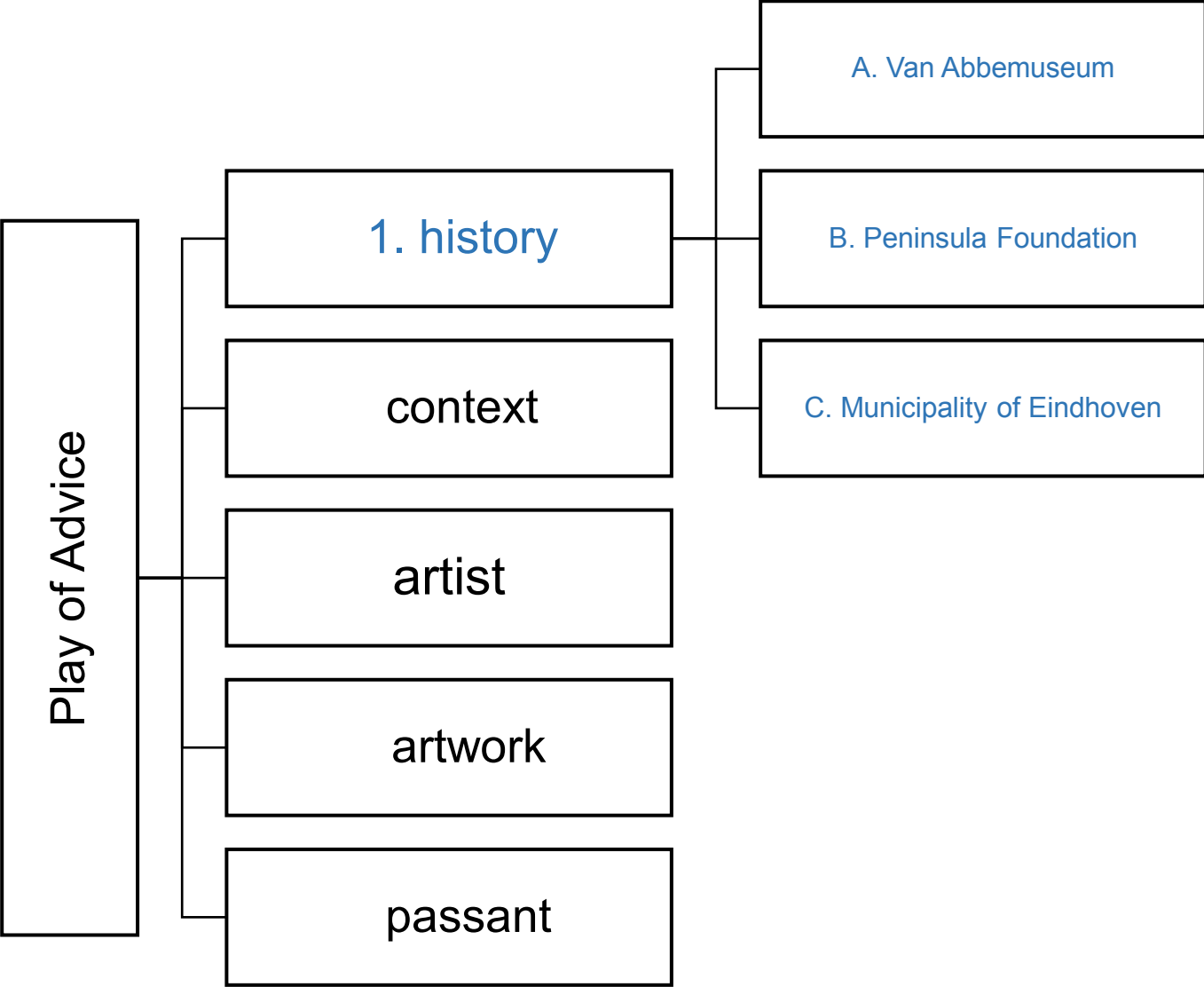
ROBERT BARRY SIMON BENSON THOMAS A CLARK DOMIEN COPPELMANS RICHARD DEVEREUX  
IAN HAMILTON FINLAY HARISH FULTON DOUGLAS GORDON JENNY HOLZER ANNE MARIE JUCNET  
JOSEPH KOSUTH THOMAS LOCHER RICHARD LONG ROSANGELA KENNO HANS WAANDERS  
LAWRENCE WEINER RÉNY ZAUGG

1

TEKSTWERKEN IN DE OPENBARE RUIJTE EN PORTFOLIO  
PENINSULA & VAN ABBERUSEUM  
EINDHOVEN - HOLLAND



YOU'RE CURRENTLY IN THE **FIRST PART** OF THIS THESIS:



## PART 1: HISTORY

In order to find out how the realization of this artwork is conducted, this chapter gives an description of the origin of the artwork *Play of Advice* (1996/-). What is it? Where is it located? How was it realized? Why was it realized? And who joined this collaboration? In this chapter the main motives of the different parties that joined this collaboration are central. This chapter does not start theoretical but empirical, since the history of the artwork relies on the different intentions of the collaborating parties. The process prior to the realization and implementation of the work of art is, therefore, illustrated within a 'wandering' style in seeking answers, whereby the data in this chapter are collected by means of conversations, direct perceptions and through collected documents. The process to identify the nature of this artwork starts with a visit to the central art museum in Eindhoven, the Van Abbemuseum, which has a large archive of data in their open accessible library.

### ***Travaux Publics [ Publics Works ] 8.12.1996-9.2.1997: An Introduction***

(1A + 1B)

When entering the museum, the first steps in the process to full disclosure of the work have been made. The librarian has laid out the required material for my search. Their documented archive, consisting of a small green book, a grey map, and a bundled stack of paperwork, makes clear that *Play of Advice* emerged within the group exhibition *Travaux Publics [ Public Works ]* from 1996, in a collaboration between the Peninsula foundation and the Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven. The Peninsula foundation organized both contemporary art exhibitions and published multiple artist's books and portfolio's since 1986. This combination was a distinctive quality in nature, since there were a lot of artistic initiatives during these days. Yet, the foundation fell apart because of the different approaches to art and the

artistry<sup>2</sup>. Although the foundation no longer exists, it has a rich past. With a long history of prints, exhibitions and artistic collaborations, Peninsula finally started a huge international project called *Dear Stieglitz* in 1994. *Dear Stieglitz* presented an selection of well-known (inter)national artists, among which Marina Abramović, Roni Horn, and Richard Long, who all used the medium of photography within their work. The final publication showed a huge versatility and different interpretations concerning the use of photography. Even more noticeable was that a lot of participating artists made use of text within these 'photographic' works. This was the basis of their later exhibition *Travaux Publics [ Public Works ]* (1996) which consisted of both textual works in the public space and a portfolio. The seventeen

---

<sup>2</sup> Personal conversation with Peninsula's member Alewijns on the 1th of April '17, and with Foolen on the 3th of April '17

artists of *Travaux Publics* were mostly selected out of the conceptual art collection of the Van Abbemuseum, which already had presented a variety of conceptual art exhibitions in the earlier years. In close consultation Peninsula and Van Abbe finally came to a decision. With the support of several parties, among which the Mondrian Foundation, the New Brabant Art Foundation, the municipality Eindhoven, and the NS (Dutch Railway Station), the exhibition was executed in the wide range of Eindhoven's public space, where the term 'public' has to be understood comprehensively. For example, a front page in the newspaper was also included, as well as a driving bus. The seventeen artists used the medium of text to translate their idea into a more visual imagery, as conceptual artists often did and still do.

The first page of the book *Travaux Publics* illustrates Peninsula's vision underlying this exposition even better by a small text work titled *Art as idea*, made by Kosuth in 1968. The work exists as the dictionary definition of the concept 'red' in order to grasp a descriptive essence of the meaning of the concept itself. In line, the book *Travaux Publics [ Public Works ]* (1996) clarifies the existence of textual works when placing them in their long history: a history that consists of a changing dialogue between words and images; as gently touched within *Art as idea*. To paraphrase their story briefly: in the classical conception of words and image, poetry and painting, these were severely separated from one another; in which painting had a modest advantage. In the Italian Renaissance artists reflected on the newly discovered beauty ideas from ancient Rome. Text was purely the medium

for identifying the figures or the name of the artist who painted to painting. These clear boundaries were abandoned during the twentieth century, by artists like the French poet Stéphane Mallarmé who published the poem *Un coup de dé jamais n'abolira le hasard* in 1897. In this poem the visual imagery of the text started to play a central role in the total experience of the artwork itself. In the famous work by Marcel Duchamp - well known for his ready-mades - words and images became increasingly separated from the original context. And within the artistic movement *Dada* (1916) a whole different nature of combining text and images was born out of their famous sound poems. It is clear that within a time period of twenty years, the distinct dichotomy between words and images in art was outdated. "As an independent element, text had entered the painting and in René Magritte's *La trahison des images*, of 1929, the word even attacks the image with the remark [of Magritte]: *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, making it extremely suspicious"<sup>3</sup> (Foolen & Teeuwen, 1996, p. 10-13).

Since there were a lot of artistic reactions originating out of this new correlation between text and images, instead of one specific expression, *Travaux Publics [ Public Works ]* had the communal goal to show these different means of dealing with texts as essentially important mediums in (conceptual) art. This clarifies that Peninsula perceived value in the various conversions with the medium text within artistic expressions, whereby they wanted to highlight this importance and subsistence of text as a medium. The effect of texts in public space is further explored in the fourth chapter of

---

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this examination, some of the outlined quotes have been translated from Dutch to English personally

this thesis. There were several reasons for presenting these textual works literally in the public space of Eindhoven. Most important is what Luc Lambrecht, member of Peninsula, defines as the problematic nature of art itself: the goal to reach a wider audience. According to Lambrecht (in Foolen & Teeuwen, 1996) the discourse of public art is problematic since a gap arose between the public works and the accessibility of the common public. The consequence from this existing gap is that public art has become a figurative imagery, made from sustainable materials in order to satisfy the unanimous taste. As Lambrecht mentions, when the artwork is not able to give meaning to the ordinary citizens, it becomes something just for the interested art tourist. Then, the position of the artwork changes into something that is only accessible for art lovers/knowers (the 'art tourists' as described by Lambrecht) whereby the tension between autonomy and engagement, between inside and outside, becomes evident more than ever. This demonstrates that Peninsula wanted to break down the safe walls of the museum (read: art world) and to reach the common crowd, by means of public art that was able to really stimulate a new kind of experience / artistic intervention within this public space: without becoming entertainment. Through their textual intervention, a dialogue between the spectator and the work could be realized, as one of the different ways to make art more accessible. That Peninsula had the goal to reach these citizens is, of course, a statement on its own. With this exhibition, they offered a visual answer and proposal in order to convert the desire to put the materiality of art on a slope, into a form that one purely reads; a conceptual work. *Travaux* -

P. 29, 30 & 31: Fig 5, 6, and 7 give an impression of this artwork. 5. A zoomed-in image of the neon-maker who installed the artwork on the wall of the concourse in Eindhoven during 1996. 6. A page in the publication *Travaux Publics* consisting of the first zoomed-in image and an artistic manifest both, written by Joseph Kosuth himself (which he released for this particular exhibition). 7. The result of the work during 1996. 4. A photograph of the station concourse in 1996.



JOSEPH KOSUTH



A COMMENT ON INTENTIONS

ART CAN MANIFEST ITSELF IN ALL OF THE WAYS IN WHICH HUMAN INTENTION CAN MANIFEST ITSELF. THE TASK FOR ARTISTS IS TO PUT INTO PLAY WORKS OF ART UNFETTERED BY THE LIMITED KINDS OF MEANINGS WHICH OBJECTS PERMIT, AND SUCCEED IN HAVING THEM BECOME NOT THE AUTONOMOUS TEXTS OF STRUCTURALISM, BUT THE PRODUCTION OF ARTISTS AS AUTHORS WITHIN A DISCOURSE, ONE CONCRETIZED THROUGH SUBJECTIVE COMMITMENT AND COMPRISED OF THE MAKING PROCESS. IT IS THE HISTORICALLY DEFINED AGENCY OF THE ARTIST WORKING WITHIN A PRACTICE THAT SEES ITSELF AS SUCH A PROCESS, THAT AN ARTIST'S WORK BECOMES BELIEVABLE AS ART WITHIN SOCIETY. TO DO THAT, WORK MUST SATISFY DEEPER STRUCTURES OF OUR CULTURE THAN THAT SURFACE WHICH READS IN THE MARKET AS TRADITION AND CONTINUITY. THE MORE ENRICHED OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THAT "TEXT" OF ART BECOMES, SO DOES OUR UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURE. A FOCUS ON MEANING, BY NECESSITY, HAS FOCUSED OUR CONCERNS ON A VARIETY OF ISSUES AROUND LANGUAGE AND CONTEXT. THESE ISSUES PERTAIN TO THE RECEPTION AND PRODUCTION OF WORKS OF ART THEMSELVES. THAT ASPECT OF THE QUESTIONING PROCESS SOME NOW CALL "INSTITUTIONAL CRITIQUE" BEGAN HERE, ALSO, AND IT ORIGINATED WITH CONCEPTUAL ART'S EARLIEST WORKS.

THE RELEVANCE OF THIS TO THE QUESTION OF INTENTION IS IN WHAT IT IMPLIES: THE DISAPPEARANCE, PERHAPS WITH FINALITY, OF THE THRESHOLD BETWEEN WHAT HAD BEEN THE ART OBJECT (THAT WHICH IS NOW SIMPLY ART) AND THE INTENTIONS OF ITS MAKER. INDEED, THERE CAN NO LONGER REALLY BE A SEPARATION BETWEEN THE WORK AND THE INTENTION OF THE ARTIST: THE WORK OF ART, IN THIS CASE, IS MANIFESTED INTENTION. ULTIMATELY, WE MIGHT WANT TO ASK, OF COURSE, IF INTENTION IS THE TEXT ITSELF, OR THE PRODUCTION OF THE SCREEN UPON WHICH THE GREATER SOCIAL TEXT APPEARS - EVEN IF THE FRAGMENTS AND OVERLAPS ARE OF MANY PROJECTIONS: RACE, CREED, GENDER?

Anne Marie Jugnot  
« A Tot mezelf  
1996

JOSEPH KOSUTH



Conventie, een soort herinnering, is het grootste beletsel om te genieten van leven en kunst.

PIET MONDRIAAN

Joseph Koutch  
Play of Advice  
1996

*Publics* thus relied on the usual relationship with public art. As Lambrechts states, with this exhibition the urban city life of Eindhoven was adversely affected for a while, whereby one was recalled on his existence in the rhythm of everyday life. As he continues these introductory words; even though art cannot change the world and the artists do not have the (political) power to do so, art is able to interrupt the standardized society. "The artist explores the limits of conscience and pounds away at repressed aspects which frustrate human creativity. [...] This is an 'exhibition' for the wanderer: the passer-by is catered for unasked" (Lambrecht, in Foolen & Teeuwen, 1996, p. 17-18). In order to really intervene both the mind of the public and the ordinary flow of everyday life, *Travaux Publics* directly entered the urban city of Eindhoven. The initiators of the project certainly had a clear vision towards public art, as well as the role of textual works within the urban environment, and the power of the artwork as an important - but independent - object in the social context. The functioning of the public space and the existence of art within this public space are more profoundly analysed in the second chapter of this thesis, but it is important to indicate what the vision behind this exhibition has been.

In addition to the argument above, *Travaux Publics* was also an opportunity to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Peninsula, the sixtieth of the Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven) and the two hundred-year-existence of the Province of North Brabant ('s-Hertogenbosch). The municipality pledged to agree with the incorporation of several buildings and places in the city centre where the artworks could be shown, whereby they would only temporarily occupy these places. Still, the works received a lot of attention from the local

newspaper *Eindhovens Dagblad* during 1996. In an article on 05.12.1996 the *ED* described Eindhoven as an 'open air museum' since the inhabitants and visitors were surrounded by art when moving themselves from one place to another. For instance in the shopping window of De Bijenkorf, on the door of the town hall, the central station, and the bridge of Stratumseind (a neighbourhood within the city centre). From these central positions, the works literally intervened the urban space of Eindhoven. As the *Eindhovens Dagblad* mentioned on 19.11.1996, Kosuth's work functioned as a moment of stillness in this hurried space of the station. However, the editors of the newspaper wondered whether the passant, while walking or running with his head bowed, will actually see the work. (S)he will probably elude, and besides; the text from this 'quote-artist' is not easy to read at all (*Eindhovens Dagblad*, 1996). Yet, Peninsula's member Alewijns, made clear that these words needed to function as the interface between a meditative calmness and the hectic environment of the station. He sets forth that when the passant reads this words, (s)he is not allowed to escape this moment of stillness. It is, therefore, literally a confrontation with 'the self' in a specific context, whereby the choice for this station concourse gave rise to the idea behind the work of Kosuth itself (*Eindhovens Dagblad*, 1996). Still, the newspaper placed some question marks by the notion whether the text would linger when the passant reached the train, a few minutes later, and if (s)he was thereby still able to recognise some truth in the quick experience (s)he had a few minutes before. These different approaches towards art in the public space will be examined in detail in the second and fifth chapter of this thesis.



### The Origin of the Artwork (1A+1B+1C)

Prior to the actual realization of the work many fax contact took place to bridge the gap between Belgium, the Netherlands and the United States, where the members of the cooperating parties lived and worked. The first fax traces back to 27.11.1995. In this fax, Peninsula described the aim of both this public exhibition and portfolio. The reaction of former director of the Van Abbemuseum and important frontman during the time of this exhibition, Jan Debbaut<sup>4</sup>, illustrates his shared approach towards the aim of this exhibition. In addition, a grant application written by Peninsula's chairman, Smulders, has led to further continuation, considering the money needed for this purpose. As Smulders illustrates, *Travaux Publics* should give citizens and visitors an overview of the use of text as autonomous imagery in contemporary art; for the first time in history. This makes clear that Peninsula approached the texts by means of their autonomous character. The three addressed potential sponsors by Smulders - the NBKS (Nieuwe Brabantse Kunst Stichting), the Mondrian Foundation, and the municipality of Eindhoven - answered this request with a shared positive response. As the NBKS makes clear in their fax from 27.10.95; the use of text within *Travaux Publics* almost seemed sober, whereby its public behaviour was able to avoid the turning point to become public spectacle. According to the NBKS, this lack of spectacle was *Travaux Publics'* eccentric strength. With their support of 30.000 fl., supplemented with the 10.000 fl. of the

municipality Eindhoven, and the 71.000 fl. by the Mondrian Foundation, Peninsula's goal was certainly converted to these three parties.

In addition, the invited artists had a generally positive response too, whereby Kosuth's particular participation can be attributed to the long tradition he and Debbaut already shared. To give a brief summary of this relationship, Kosuth and Debbaut met each other in Ghent (Belgium) where Kosuth became part of Debbaut's collection at the Van Abbemuseum during later years<sup>5</sup>. Since Kosuth's work was already recognized in Eindhoven, it can be stated that Kosuth's invitation to *Travaux Publics* seems a logical decision. However, the further collaboration with Kosuth did not prove to be an easy one. Where earlier Peninsula's member Alewijns always imagined Kosuth as a romantic man, he was anything but<sup>6</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> P. 34: Fig 8.

<sup>5</sup> Personal conversation with Debbaut on the 21th of April '17

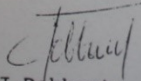
<sup>6</sup> Personal conversation with Alewijns

Eindhoven, 14 december 1995

To whom it may concern

Peninsula is a well-known Foundation for contemporary art in Eindhoven, Holland, and a publisher of artist's portfolio's and editions. The Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum has purchased several of these portfolio's for its collection, among others Dear Stieglitz, published in 1994. This portfolio contains contributions of thirteen contemporary artists using photography in their work, which led to the intension to produce a portfolio which concentrates on textworks. This again gave rise to execute these works in the urban public space of Eindhoven. I would like to support Peninsula's request to you to participate in this project they plan to organize in the summer of 1996. Further information you will find in their letter.

Yours sincerely,

  
J. Debbaut,  
director.

#### TRAVAUX PUBLICS

In 1994 heeft Peninsula de portfolio Dear Stieglitz, uitgegeven. De opzet representatieve en internationale groep van dertien beeldend kunstenaars gebruik maakt van fotografie. Wat verder opviel was dat in tien van de Dertien leidde tot het voornemen om in een volgende uitgave de tekst als

Teksten hebben door de eeuwen heen een onmiskenbare plaats gehad van tekst is in de kunst van de twintigste eeuw uitgesproken gewoonten op zichzelf staand karakter. Deze ontwikkeling nam een aanvang van Guillaume Apollinaire en werd in deze eeuw allereerst voortgezet door een dichter als Paul van Oostaijen. Weer later door Dada-kunstenaars behorende Theo van Doesburg. Hendrik Werkman leverde in de jaren dertig de ontwikkeling van het gebruik van letters en teksten in de beeldende kunst. De opkomst van de popart een specifiek soort van tekst in de kunst: de tekst.

In de jaren zestig was er de opkomst van de visuele en concrete kunst. Het oepriep een minstens zo groot belang kreeg als de betekenis van kunstenaars van Fluxus op een sterk door Dada beïnvloede manier en posters.

Het meest perfecte evenwicht tussen beeld en woord werd bereikt door en met name door Lawrence Weiner, Bruce Nauman en Jenny Hamilton Finlay, Hamish Fulton en Richard Long. Deze laatste de portfolio Dear Stieglitz, . Vroeg jaren tachtig manifesteerden de schilderkunst.

De jongste generatie kunstenaars bedient zich op dit moment van Douglas Gordon, Hans Waanders.

Aanvankelijk was het de bedoeling een portfolio vergezeld te worden van de gedachte dat dit project uitermate geschikt is voor Travaux Publics. Daarnaast bestaat Peninsula in 1996 tien jaar en vier maanden. Dat zijn twee mooie gelegenheden om in de stad Eindhoven te werken.

De voorlopige lijst van deelnemende kunstenaars ziet er nu uit met Lawrence Weiner, Hamish Fulton, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Bruce Nauman, Jenny Holzer, Roni Horn, Douglas Gordon en Thomas Schütte. Het lijkt ons dat om praktische redenen het aantal deelnemers ten minste vijf het minimum.

#### Data:

uitnodigingsbrief kunstenaars 15.12.1995  
definitieve plannen 1.2.1996  
productie catalogus en portfolio februari-mei 1996  
uitvoering werken april-mei 1996  
tentoonstelling open 15 juni t/m 1 oktober 1996

*I met Alewijns, one of Peninsula's members, on the 1th of April '17. As he explains in our conversation: "Kosuth acted as the prototype American businessman." After Kosuth arrived in Eindhoven at 18.05.1996 at 11:59 AM, he took full lead. "Before visiting the public space, he wanted to eat breakfast at the local Chinese restaurant", Alewijns argues. This narration is shared by former member Foolen, whom I met on the 3th of April '17. As they both tell: after they (Alewijns, Foolen, Kosuth and Padt) finished their Chinese meal in Eindhoven, they visited a fourteenth century wall next to the Pauluskerk. This location was selected by Peninsula as a potential location for Kosuth's work. However, Kosuth remained firm in his first submission. Foolen: "He wanted to place his work at the concourse of the station, where the work still remains." This makes clear that the choice for this public location is purely based on Kosuth's personal conviction.*

#### **NOTE 1.**

Alewijns still lives in the building where the former Peninsula foundation was situated, and he still works as an independent artist. After I arrive at the property, I enter a very small corridor, which opens into a wider living room which is completely surrounded and crammed with both two- and three dimensional art objects, plants, stuffed animals, and a few pieces of furniture. After Alewijns makes a cup of thee, we take place on one of his couches, where two recent prints are lying on the table in front of us. He starts telling about the beginning of the collaboration, that goes back to the time he and Foolen were students at the former art academy in 's Hertogenbosch (North Brabant). The first publication they realized was a collected document of prints from former students and teachers. Quickly, Peninsula became a household name in the art world, because of their national and international focus. The reason why the foundation ultimately fell apart was because of their different perspectives, dealings and approaches of art and the accompanying artistic life. ///

While having a conversation in his white, open living room, Foolen explains that the art policy of Eindhoven has certainly changed over the years. He argues that the municipality of Eindhoven has developed a more straightforward vision towards public art. This is due to the fact that many great works within the city are no longer visible since they are not properly maintained. The one artwork is hidden behind a newly built wall, the other artwork is simply taken away without explanation. The municipal public art policy is further investigated in chapter two. ///

It can be argued that his determination has a positive result since the work got a permanent character within the public space of Eindhoven, even though the exhibition was temporary in nature. Although a lot of textual works from *Travaux Publics* have faded away into the urban environment of Eindhoven, the bright shining letters of Mondrian's mind are still visible within the station concourse. Whether this is due to the fact that it is made of neon

tubes, which are very expensive, can be argued since a lot of painted text works are overpainted, or overbuilt, or merged in time. Below, the fax overview of the collaboration between Kosuth (and his assistant René Padt), Foolen, Debbaut, and a few other participants illustrates how this realization came about<sup>7</sup>:

- 31.01.96:** Padt asks for more information about the project since Kosuth's schedule is very busy during Spring '96
- 09.05.96:** Kosuth and Padt will visit Eindhoven at 18.05.1996 around 12:00 AM, to get an impression of the public space in which his work will be presented
- 17.05.96:** Tomorrow (18<sup>th</sup> of May '96) Kosuth and Padt will arrive in Eindhoven at 11:59 AM<sup>8</sup>
- 21.05.96:** The choice for a specific location is made: the central station concourse at the centre side. The idea for the yellow neon tubes has arisen from the earlier exhibition titled *Kein Ding, Kein Ich, Kein Form, Kein Grandsalts (Sich Sicher)* in Elsingem (1992). For this exhibition, Kosuth realized an artwork on the central station of Stuttgart. Kosuth always uses a specific quote from an author, artists or philosopher of the country in which the work will be presented. However, the Dutch quote is yet to be determined
- 03.06.96:** Positive news from the NS. They would like to place Kosuth's work permanently at the central station. In addition, Padt is looking for a Dutch translation of a certain text from Max Havelaar's *Multatuli*. Still, nothing concrete has been found. Kosuth surely wants to use a quote from a Dutch person
- 11.05.96:** Kosuth makes clear that he wants to receive fifty percent of the purchase when the work will be placed permanently
- 21.05.96:** Dutch quote still not found
- 21.08.96:** The exact sizes of the wall is asked. Quote is in development
- 23.09.96:** The aim is to realize the text halfway October, placed by a neon maker

---

<sup>7</sup> Original faxes can be requested personally

<sup>8</sup> P. 39

- 04.10.96:** Five quotes from Piet Mondrian are sent to Peninsula, derived from Mondrian's American period. The quotes are, therefore, in English. They need to be translated to Dutch, since it is an important part of the content of Kosuth's work in general
- 29.10.96:** Kosuth is prepared to share extra production costs of the work when being placed permanently
- 16.10.96:** New quote from Mondrian is sent. Kosuth wants to place the quote in 1 ½ sentence at the wall
- 21.10.96:** Another quote from Mondrian is sent. In addition, the colour of the yellow neon tubed needs to be the exact yellow as used by Piet Mondrian; since his quote will be used. Kosuth asks for two samples of the neon, one with paint and one with powder, in order to see what works best
- 25.10.96:** The quote is finished and installation instructions are shared
- 25.10.96:** Frans van der Wiel, the Dutch translator of the text, sends the following translation: "Conventie, een soort herinnering, grootste beletsel om te genieten van leven en kunst"
- 01.11.96:** Instructions for lay-out for the print of the work are sent. The title of the work is translated into *Spel van Advies* or *Spel van het Advies*, but is still open for other opportunities from Dutch titles
- 05.11.96:** Kosuth is wondering about the continuation of the exact installation of the neon work
- 19.11.96:** Padt is wondering himself how this installation continues
- 11.11.96:** Kosuth sent text for publication (book)<sup>9</sup>
- 26.11.96:** Kosuth sends a fax about the neon-colour problem; wants to call (problem not further explained)
- 26.11.96:** The work is reviewed in newspapers already
- 18.02.97:** Neon company Van Gennip Industries<sup>10</sup> makes clear that one-year warranty has been provided on the posted neon letters at the central station. With the permanent purchase, this warranty is of course transferred to the purchaser's own maintenance
- 08.04.97:** Padt and Kosuth are happy about installation work
- 22.04.97:** Peninsula gives Kosuth indication about the question of the purchase which is sent to sponsors, in order to make the purchase possible. Normally the work costs a quarter of a million, for Eindhoven a significantly low amount, whereby they argue that the work would be an added value to the public space of the city itself.
- 25.04.97:** Fax sent in a collaboration between Debbaut and Peninsula in order to ask Padt and Kosuth how they want to make arrangements regarding the purchase of work. They would like to receive a precise price indication, assuming that it is 80,000 fl. including production costs and taxes.

---

<sup>9</sup> P. 100

<sup>10</sup> P. 42

- 29.04.97:** Kosuth is very disappointed about the discussion of the purchase of the work. He wants to receive 50.000 dollar exclusive production costs. When he does not get the money, he wants to transfer the work back to his studio
- 18.07.98:** It becomes evident that this purchase has not been made possible and that the work still has no owner two years after completion. It is up to the artist how he sees the future of work, but getting money seems more complicated than imagined before<sup>11</sup>

///

(1A) The realization of the work was not carried out without any difficulties, as the above fax history clearly sketches. The realization was partly a technical process, whereby the artistic process beyond the actual artwork (read: content, context, costs) relies on many choices by Kosuth himself. In addition, the final cooperation around the work crashed on the different approaches towards the right price tag. The silence that followed lasted for two years, whereby the artwork had no owner<sup>12</sup>. The lack of clarity about the final payment resulted in Kosuth's tread to remove the work from the concourse back to his atelier in order to sell it on the art market, as seen above in the final faxes. However, since the work was realized for this specific place in Eindhoven, that should be a disappointing end.

---

<sup>11</sup> P. 160

<sup>12</sup> Personal conversations with Foolen, Alewijns and Debbaut

05 17/1996 08:25 31206276451

JESSICA PADT

PAGE 01

Fax  
Ans  
71  
754  
T-

FAX  
TO: PENINSULA  
F.a.v. PETER FOOLEN  
FROM: RENÉE PADT (KOSUTH STUDIO)  
DATE: MAY 17, 1996

Beste Peter,  
Morgen, zaterdag 18 mei, komen Joseph en ik  
aan in Eindhoven om 11.59, met trein uit  
Amsterdam. Beind je het goed out op te halen  
op het station? Het is misschien het handigst in  
de stationsrestaurant of te spreken (als die er is),  
teunty jij een beter idee hebt. Laat je me weten  
of dit zo okay is? Je kunt mij bereiken in  
Amsterdam op TL/Faxnr. 020-6278451.

Vriendelijke groeten,  
Renée

06/03/96 12:36 FAX 212 941 7130

JOSEPH KOSUTH

Joseph Kosuth, New York Studio. fax (212) 941 7130

FAX  
TO: Peninsula  
attention of Peter Foolen  
FROM: Renée Padt  
DATE: June 3, 1996

Hallo Peter,  
Dank je voor je beide faxen. Ik ben sinds gisteren  
je nog niet eerder geantwoord heb. Goed nieuws  
gerealiseerd kan gaan worden. En het zou fantastisch  
kan worden!

Ik heb gezocht naar in het Engels vertaalde N  
Havelaar van Multaruli gevonden, maar verd  
te vinden. Ik heb geen idee of Joseph het wil  
namen bij de bespreking volgende week. He  
tekst van een Nederlandse auteur/filosoof w  
het land waarin hij een project doet.

Ik ben benieuwd hoe het gesprek met de  
horen?

Hartelijke groeten, ook van Joseph,

Renée

Conventie, een soort herinnering, is het grootste beletsel om te genieten van leven en kunst.

PIET MONDRIAAN

ALL: 62 pt

→ small caps  
QUARK DOCUMENT  
Breedte: 50 cm.  
Lengte: 40 cm.

Roman steempel  
Garamond  
↔ tracking 35

△ 10pt

010 293,4787

0031402453491

17-10-1995 17:10:09

FROM JOSEPH KOSUTH 3292334787

TC

0031402453491

P. 02

delijk genoeg zijn en dat  
n het Advies???, of nog

TOTAL P. 02



Joseph Kosuth  
Middelstraat, 6  
40, Gept, Belgium  
233.48.49 / Fax 233.47.82

VOOR WYSTALLATIE NOG OVERLEG !!!

22 meter

8,9 meter

Conventie, een soort herinnering, is het grootste bevelsel om te genieten van leven en kunst.

PIET MONDRIAN

FOR JOSEPH KOSUTH  
NEW YORK STUDIO

RENEE RAOT

hoe niet dit er uit in welke lichtheid??

SIZES IN METERS

Joseph Kosuth  
Middelstraat, 6  
4000, Gept, Belgium  
(3) 233.48.49 / Fax 233.47.82

ROMAN STempel GARATOND

Width:	8.9 meter
height of capital:	30 cm
ptsize:	25
tracking:	25

REAL SCALE (= ENLARGE X 50)

Final Presentation Endloven



BINNEN- & BUITENREKLAME- GOUDENRIJDERHOF 8, POSTBUS 444, 5550 AK VALKENSWAARD  
TEL. 040-2014848 FAX 040-2045415

Galerie Peninsula  
T.a.v. P. Foolen  
Gestelsestraat 44c  
5615 LG Eindhoven

Tel./Fax 040 - 2453491

Datum: 18-02-1997

Betreft: Garantie neon.

Geachte Hr. Foolen,

Zoals afgesproken met Dhr. J. van den Dungen voor de garantie van de geleverde neon, die gemonteerd is op het centraal station te Eindhoven.  
Op de neon verlichting zit 1 jaar garantie, op de montage gelden onze leveringsvoorwaarden zoals deze gedeponeerd zijn bij de Kamer van Koophandel te Eindhoven.

Wij vertrouwen erop U hiermee voldoende ingelicht te hebben.

Hoogachtend  
J. Thomassen.

PENINSULA GESTELSE STRAAT 44C  
5615 L9 EINDHOVEN HOLLAND  
T/F +31.40. 2453491

To: JOSEPH KOSUTH, ROME, ITALY  
Eindhoven, 18.7.1998

Dear Joseph,

My apologies for the delay in replying to your recent phone message. Life here is very hectic. Re your work at the Eindhoven Station: it shows to be extremely difficult to raise the money for the neon work. However we do not despair completely and we are still exploring possibilities.

So we request as yet your patience, unless you yourself decide to remove your work and offer it to the art market as you wrote in your letter of March 5th.

However we believe that a solution in which the work remains in Eindhoven, would be preferable to all. We will keep you informed on progress but don't expect more news till after the holidays.

With kind regards,  
Peter Fuxlen

Alene groepsterkensky  
→ DEH

sgucht - miljoen  
vedr lawrence voice  
was te leer

dat werk gehalt?  
men dat mit meen

abbaant bellen (Belg:i)

7-7139 phone 219-8981

h gesproken en hem  
verk wordt in het  
een 50% korting  
werk van die

het werk aan te  
(als voorschot  
van het

veten wat

*On the 21th of April '17 I have a Skype conversation with former director Jan Debbaut at 12:00 PM. As Debbaut explains, the permanent purchase of Play of Advice would contribute positively to the artistic climate in Eindhoven; since it was able to stimulate citizens to visit the real museum<sup>13</sup>. Debaut: "I have always noticed that the Van Abbemuseum was world famous in contemporary art, and that it was found to be important. It was a pilot museum." However, the museum was hardly visible or presented in Eindhoven itself, as Debbaut continues his story. According to him, this is due to the fact Eindhoven was - and still is - not an art city. It is a real workplace, well-known for Phillips and Daf. Therefore, his goal to reach a wider audience was hard. Yet, he continued to persevere, whereby he had the intention to realize an art route within the public space of the city centre, in order to make clear that there really existed important art within this urban environment. This way, the public art route would lead people to the museum itself, as Debbaut set forth. Kosuth's artwork at the central station was therefore a very favourable coincidence. When entering the station, as a tourist, resident, or visitor, one could immediately notice that there was art present in this city. The public plans of Debbaut and Peninsula suddenly connected.*

## **NOTE 2.**

Since Debaut has a major role as the former director of the participating museum, he can tell me more about the friction sketched above. First, Debbaut returns to the beginning. As the central municipal museum in Eindhoven, they always supported the Peninsula foundation by exhibiting and selling their graphic publications in their museum store. In addition, as seen before, a lot of artists for *Travaux Publics* came from the art collection of the museum itself; among which Joseph Kosuth. Here it is important to mention that Kosuth and Debbaut had known each other very well for a long time. In Debbaut's time as an art history student in Ghent (Belgium), Kosuth was soon discovered by Belgian art collectors; since Belgium was the leading country in this conceptual art development. As a consequence, Debbaut and Kosuth came to the same, artistic environment. When Debbaut started to work at the ICC (International Cultural Center) in Antwerp (the forerunner of the current Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp), several exhibitions already included works by Joseph Kosuth. In his first period in Eindhoven at the Van Abbemuseum, Debbaut started as the assistant of the former director Foeks. When Foeks organized an exhibition of Joseph Kosuth's conceptual work, Debbaut fully prepared the execution of this exhibition. The professional relationship between Kosuth and Debbaut had therefore already been built a long time ago.

///

---

<sup>13</sup> Personal conversation with Debbaut

*(1A + 1C) As Debbaut explains, the exact decision of the purchase of the work can be traced back to a meeting in Athens. Since Greece had no museum for contemporary art, and would love to have a museum similar to the Van Abbemuseum in their country, the Van Abbemuseum organized an exhibition in the giant halls of the Academy of Fine Arts in the port of Athens to present their collection. They invited a lot of people from Eindhoven, among which the mayor, a member of the city council, and the director, as well as sponsors and members from Philips and Daf. During this celebration, Debbaut and Kosuth met each other while having a few drinks. "I remember I've asked him to offer the work for a friend's price", Debbaut continues. Though the Van Abbemuseum itself was not the initiator of the project, it really wanted to purchase the work for their aim to realize an art route in the public space of Eindhoven. The Van Abbemuseum was a municipal service during that days (today it's more self-sufficient) whereby Debbaut was the head of this department. For him, the value of the work remains both in its contribution to the Van Abbemuseum itself, and its direct relation with the city.*

In order to handle the situation with care and to not disturb the relationship with the artist Joseph Kosuth himself, the municipality purchased the work two years after the exhibition (Korfker, personal conversation, 2017<sup>14</sup>). This

purchase was predominantly made based on two main reasons. 1. To avoid a claim from the artist<sup>15</sup>. And 2. Because of its great value to the artistic climate within the city itself<sup>16</sup>. Since the Dutch Railways had rejected the request to take over the work, both in ownership and maintenance, it became property of the city of Eindhoven (Oosterkamp, personal conversation, 2017<sup>17</sup>). The municipality Eindhoven offered Kosuth a bargain / purchase negotiation during the time the work had no owner and finally offered the work its permanent existence, decided by the municipality in close consultation with Debbaut and the former director of the Dutch Railways (Ter Steege, personal conversation, 2017<sup>18</sup>). Despite all the current renovations in the station hall, the work is still on show and it is intended to stay. It is now listed under number 2913 in the database of the municipality of Eindhoven of works of art in public space. The administrative and technical management and maintenance of the works of art in public space is subcontracted to the municipality to De Kunstwacht in Delft<sup>19</sup>. Generally, the work has gained its status over the years; by hanging there, being expanded as an icon of Eindhoven. The identification between the work of art and the place relies on Kosuth's personal convictions, but this has been elevated by means of its permanent status, whereby one can identify the station with this text today. This was not the intention, but its additional effect.

---

<sup>14</sup> Mail contact Lawra Korfker, Policy developer Municipality Eindhoven, the 19<sup>th</sup> April '17

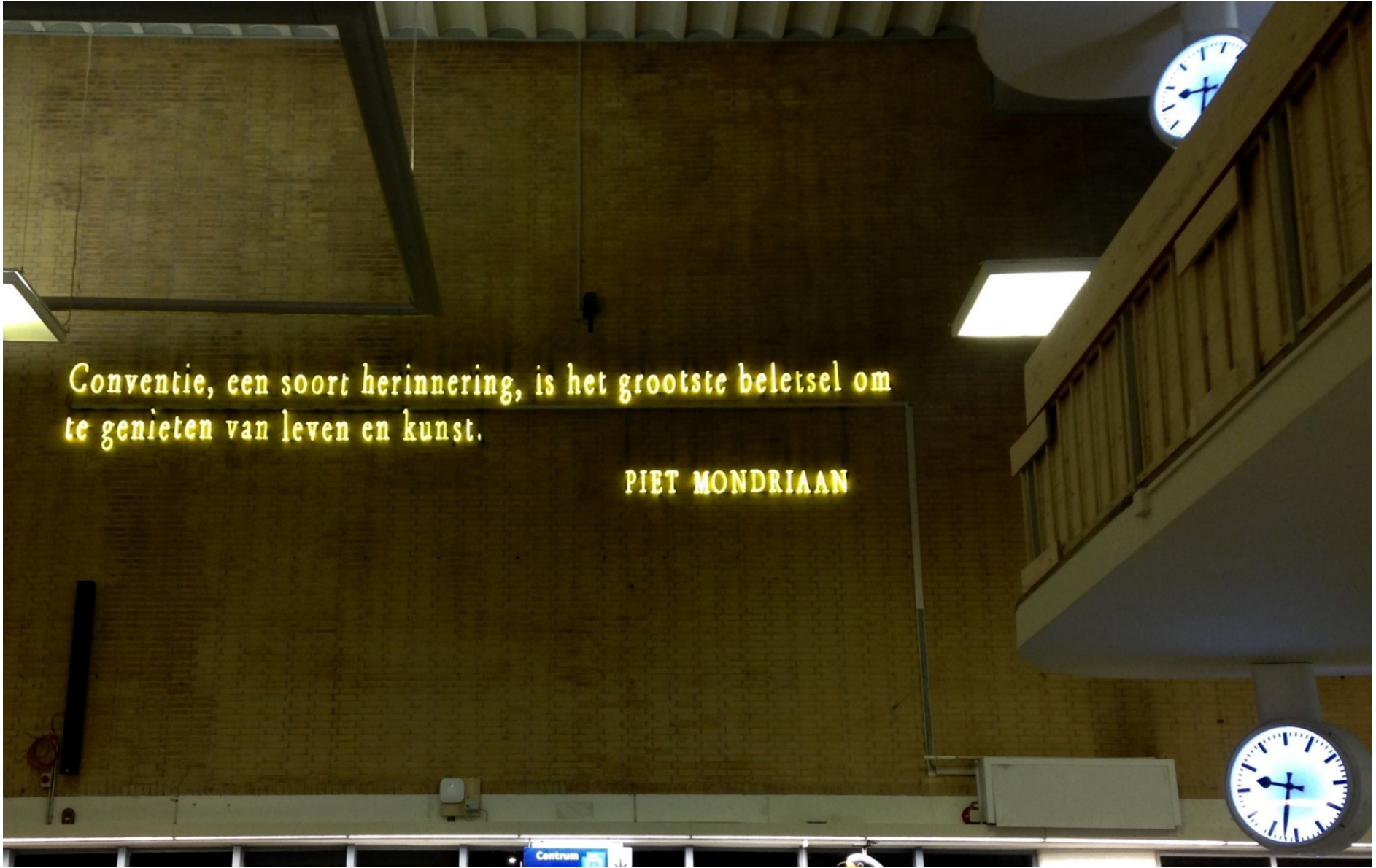
<sup>15</sup> Idem.

<sup>16</sup> Personal conversation with Debbaut

<sup>17</sup> Mail contact Annebeth Oosterkamp, Station Manager Eindhoven, the 24<sup>th</sup> April '17

<sup>18</sup> Mail contact Rob ter Steege, Strategy Department Municipality Eindhoven, the 19<sup>th</sup> of April '17

<sup>19</sup> Mail contact Frank Lubbers, Modern Art Museum Specialist, the 1<sup>th</sup> of May '17



## Conclusion

In this first part of my thesis I aimed to find out how the realization of this artwork came to be. The many sources and different conversations consulted for this chapter have given an indication of the different motives hidden behind the work. It is revealed that *Play of Advice* is really conducted for the city Eindhoven by Kosuth, realized within the group exhibition *Travaux Publics* from 1996. The aim from this public exhibition was to confront the ordinary citizens with text as autonomous medium in art. Through this exhibition the artists could give attention to the importance of this medium within visual arts. The considerations for the text, the design and the placement of this work relies in the artistic spirit of the artist himself. The height is completely devised and the yellow had to be Mondrian's exact colour. Although the group exhibition was temporary, the position of this work in particular has changed into an icon of Eindhoven throughout the years, which attaches great importance to the municipality. The work of art has thus become significant by hanging there and growing into a central figure. In addition, the artwork was an added value to the Van Abbemuseum, since it would contribute to the art route. It can also be established that within

the artificial climate there was freedom for artistic initiatives such as *Travaux Publics* at the time of placement. Yet, the value remains unchanged forever. Due to the fact that it was a temporary exhibition and the existence of the artwork could not be guaranteed, the purchase of *Play of Advice* caused a lot of problems. The municipality eventually stepped up for the two reasons: the value of the work for the city and the proper treatment of the artist. Still, good maintenance is not always guaranteed for public artworks. Some of them are removed, overpainted, simply destroyed, or are not being preserved accordingly. Hence, there are many hidden artworks in the city of great artists that are no longer visible to the public. It can be asked whether this is a bad thing, considering that a city that develops and cannot consolidate everything. The next chapter, therefore, dives deeper into the contemporary existence of art within the public space. What is the contemporary existence of *Play of Advice* in a dynamic place like a railway station? How does the current cultural policy influence what we see? And does an artist still have so much space to experiment today?



Woonstichting 'thuis

GILDEBUURT

Technische  
Universiteit  
Eindhoven

LIMBEEK

TU-TERREIN

FELLENOORD

Eindhoven

Effenaar

VILLAPARK

PHILIPSDORP

Muziekgebouw  
Frits Philips

STRATUMSEIND

Oud-Strijp

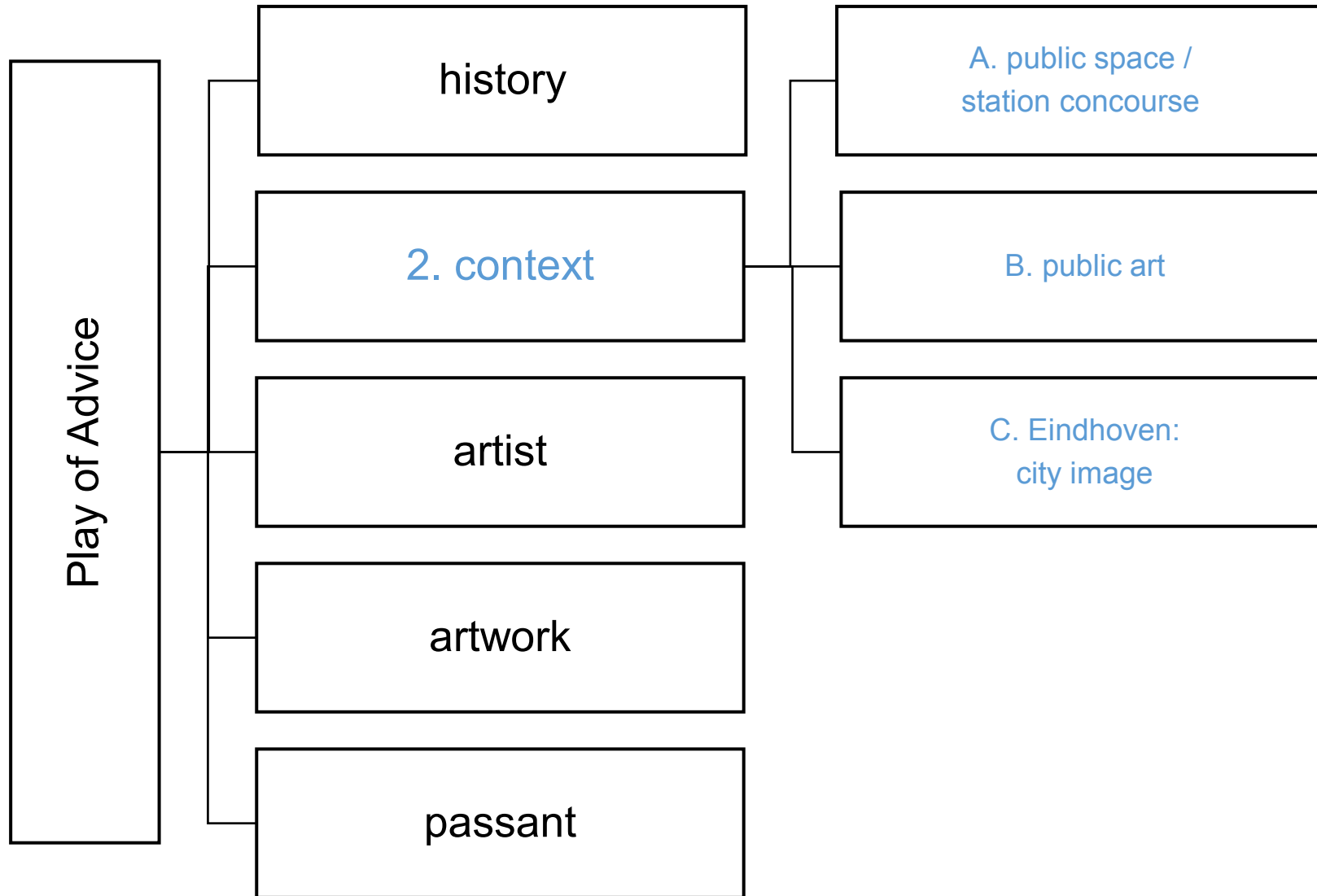
BERGEN

IRISBUURT





YOU'RE CURRENTLY IN THE [SECOND PART](#) OF THIS THESIS:



## PART 2: CONTEXT

Art in public spaces does not suddenly exist. The placement of a public artwork happens due to various reasons, such as the municipal public art policy, the (autonomy of the) maker, and the city's image. This part<sup>20</sup> therefore investigates the relationship between *Play of Advice* and its context: the railway station in Eindhoven. The chapter is divided into two sections: public space and public art.

In the first section, I focus on the definition, origin and development of the public space. What is its function? And what is the human position within this space? Then I focus in particular on what happens in a Central Station as a prominent building within the city. Based on both different theories and collective documents, Eindhoven's public space - and specifically the Central Station as context of *Play of Advice* - are analysed.

In the second section the current discourse with art in public space is investigated through different approaches. What is the meaning of public art in contemporary society? What social, political and economic factors should be taken into account? And how do these artworks represent our current society and the times we live in? Outlining the current existence of public art in the Netherlands, the artistic climate in Eindhoven is analysed. I start with the municipal policy work based on both written sources and interviews. By providing insight into the development of the policy work, the current requirements of public art are revealed. What does this development tell us, and what does the policy look like nowadays? Since the recent reconstruction of Eindhoven Central Station includes a new public artwork, made by the Dutch artist Daan Roosegaarde, these current decisions are briefly investigated too. Is there a difference between the realization of *Play of Advice* in 1996 and the work by Roosegaarde in 2017?

Bringing these two sections together, the existence of *Play of Advice* can be investigated: what does its current existence entail nowadays? And what role does it play within this specific space? The consulted written sources and interviews will provide critical insight into the functioning of these different phenomena.

---

<sup>20</sup> To distinguish conversations from theories, these conversations have a [blue page](#)

## SECTION 1: THE PUBLIC SPACE

### Introduction: defining 'public'

In order to give a clear description of the public space, I return to Jurgen Habermas' *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1991, German original published in 1962) as an important source for the origin, development, and workable definition of the concept. Habermas makes clear that events or occasions are *public* when they belong to all, without being accessible for a particular people. An important part of this theory is that public spaces are not 'domains' that just 'happen' to us. We, the citizens, literally form the public space while existing in it. It is, therefore, a realm that exists *by* the public. In this public space we can meet, have conversations, and drink a cup of coffee. We can express our opinions, we can walk, we can literally *be* (Habermas, 1991). This idea relies on the Greek *agora*, a concept which is clearly described in the examination *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (2003) written by Don Mitchell. As Mitchell paraphrases Hartley to explain this *agora*: [it is] "the place of citizenship, an open space where public affairs and legal disputes were conducted..." (Hartley, 1992, p. 29, in Mitchell, 2003, p. 131). In the realm of the *agora*, one's actions, words, and produce were central. Being a meeting place, the *agora* was open for everyone, also for strangers (Mitchell, 2003). Within their examination *The Space of Play* (2008) De Cauter and Dehaene define the *agora* as the place where political conversations happened. This clarifies that Habermas' approach of the public space

(2A)

echoes on this public openness. However, when it comes to public opinions towards politics, Habermas' famous concept of the *public sphere* enters the page. With this concept, Habermas did not refer to the common public space in which people cross one another. Instead, the public sphere was a *private* realm in which one could discuss politics and society *publically* together. As Habermas states, [the public sphere is] "a domain of our social life where such a thing as public opinion can be formed [where] citizens... deal with matters of general interest without being subject to coercion" (Habermas, 1997, p. 105). It does therefore not include the openness of the *agora*, and does not constitute the same as 'public space' neither. The public sphere was an independent reaction to the feudal system that existed before (in which the free farmers and ordinary citizens had no voice), where it stood for the realm in which free public discussions could take place. This way the public sphere treated those people equally. More specific, it was a privatized sphere, but for public well-being, with the aim to achieve consensus.

Habermas developed his concept of public sphere within the bourgeois society of early modern Europe, as the ideal suite for a genuine democracy. In *Interrupting the City. Artistic Constitutions of the Public Sphere* (2015) Bax, Gielen, and Ieven mention that Habermas' approach "would argue that this opens up an alternative site for politics", (Bax. et al., 2015, p. 15).

These private discussions happened in public places like, for instance, Habermas' well-known example of the eighteenth-century coffee houses (Habermas, 1991). So what should we do with this understanding? And how is the contemporary public sphere organized?

The ever-changing concept of the public sphere is crucial to the understanding of the contemporary discussion on public space. As Bax et al. (2015) argue "Habermas has acknowledged that the emancipatory potential of the public sphere, the freedom to speak one's mind and to discuss publicly one's ideas and beliefs [...] has not been realized" (Bax et al., 2015, p. 15). This is due to developments that affected the critical debate among citizens and the independency of the public sphere itself, such as the rise of mass media and increasing control by both political and commercial parties. This (affected) public sphere is visible in two different domains of public life. 1. In the virtual public space of the media, such as television and the internet. 2. In the physical public space, like the shopping mall or the local park (Bax. et al., 2015). Before diving deeper into this development, it is important to realize that the public sphere and public space are not the same. As Mitchell states: "In this struggle for inclusion, the distinctions between the public sphere and public space assume considerable importance" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 133). The public space is an "actual site, a place, a ground within and from which political activity flows" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 135), where the public sphere is the more metaphorical realm in which one can freely discuss his/ her opinions. According to Bax et al. (2015) the

public sphere is influenced by social, political and economic forces that clash in a continuous struggle. These struggles mainly emanate from emotions and feelings, from hope and fear, instead of rational and proper debates. Think for instance about the many talk shows and reality series on television. Public debates are, consequently, "spectacles, performances and aesthetic (and most certainly rhetorical) interventions" (Bax et al., 2015, p. 14) to watch, something that also changed the physical public space of the city.

Before expounding even further, I would like to briefly recall what we can really understand by public space, since *Play of Advice* finds its existence there. The report<sup>21</sup> written by the Dutch ministry of VROM, is very helpful by giving an impression of the discourse of the public space in the Netherlands. This report maps the public space as an open and equal domain, continuing on the principle of equality by Habermas. As the VROM (2009) assumes, the public space is not merely public (in the hands of the government) nor private (owned by private parties). It is both at the same time, like for instance the mentioned coffee houses that are based on private initiatives but increasingly public to enter. In addition, the open meeting places, such as indoor shopping malls and railway stations, are considered to be public space too. The most important condition for the public space is its diversity - many people come together within this domain -, and the notion of 'the other' - since it is the area where the physical encounter with unfamiliar views takes place. In addition, the public space acts by its unpredictability (VROM, 2009). As the rapport illustrates, a well-functioning-

---

<sup>21</sup> *Publieke ruimte. Naar een nieuwe balans tussen beeld, belang en beheer* (2009)

and well-managed public space provides both a basis for the trust of citizens in the government and their self-reliance. However, the conditions under which people feel comfortable in public spaces have changed over recent decades as already seen in the approaches mentioned above.

### **Contemporary changes in public space (2A)**

As Bax. et al. (2015) point out, changes are visible within both the virtual and physical public space. Considering this thesis is about the operation of art in the physical public space of the station, it will focus on the latter. VROM (2009) identifies two potential problematic changes within the public urban city space (the space which behaves literally in the centre of life, not at the outskirts). The first dates back to 1990, when the urban space became more focused on events, terraces and shopping malls. From then on, the public space turned into a recreational entertainment area, based on leisure and pleasure, which dominates the inner cities. This way there is hardly any space left for other functions. Because every public space in the city presents itself in a similar way (think for instance about the many common shops like H&M and Burger King) there is an increasing loss of distinctive identity. The public space has, therefore, become a monofunctional area, wherein its everyday meeting- and development function will be compromised (VROM, 2009). It is therefore important to recognize and demonstrate the value of the characteristics of the specific city.

A second development in the public space that can potentially be problematic is the diminishing degree of *accessibility* and *openness*.

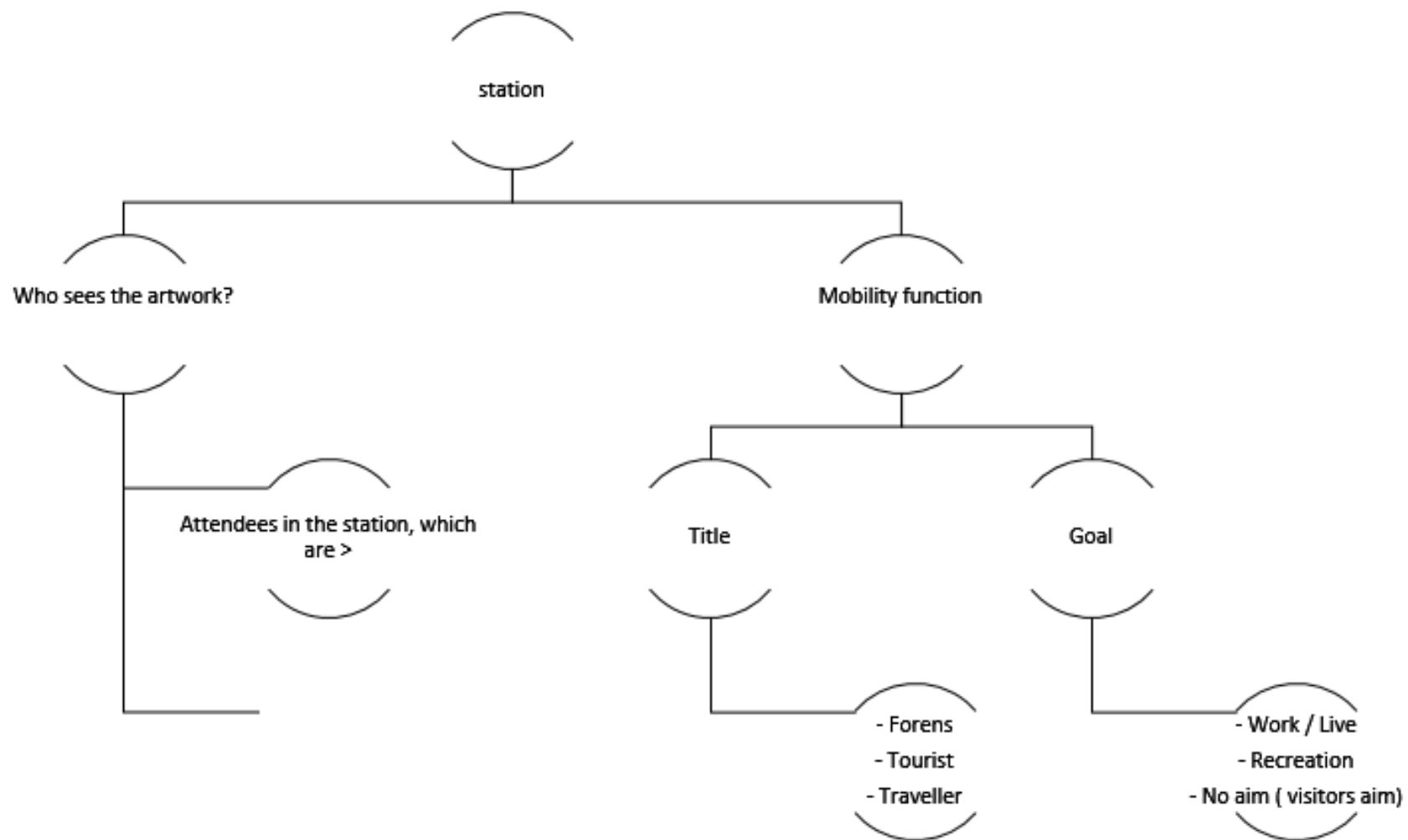
Monitoring in public space, for example, becomes more important. As the ministry of VROM (2009) points out, the need for security measures increases, which leads to camera surveillance and stricter regulation. The increased consumption function only reinforces this need for security. However, while being monitored, it can be questioned to what extent this public space is still really open and/ or free. Can one still be oneself in this public city, and does this space still exist equally to everyone? While being a public space that functions by its value to be literally *used*, this public space ideally needs to exist as an equal domain for many dialogues between those who know each other and those who do not. However, as Mitchell (2014) argues, both the parks and streets, the Greek *agora* and Habermas' eighteenth-century coffee houses, were, and still are, not really open for unmediated interactions at all. His main reason being that the public space is a realm for competing ideologies. At the one hand there is the ideology that the public space is something that demands a certain disorder and unpredictability ('scary' substantial interactions). On the other hand, the public space needs order and rationality, as recent democratic theory assumes. This second approach is visible in the current discourse of the public space, which can be traced back to the 1980s: as a time in which both crime and the fear of crime increased, and gentrification reopened inner cities for bourgeois settlement (Mitchell, 2014). Hence, order and control became very important factors who made sure that the public space as a *safe area* was born. As Mitchell (2003) mentions, this need for control ensures that unwanted behaviour in the public space is reduced -

(allowing homeless people less space). With this the 'accessibility' of the public space becomes a significant concept. It is questionable whether the contemporary public space is still public to/ at all. According to Mitchell (2008) the separation between public and private space is not that sharp anymore, a vision shared by Richard Sennet in his examination *The Fall of Public Man* (1974).

Sennet sees public life ideally as a domain in which we can meet the other without being bound by class and / or status. A domain that no longer exists, since the focus on the 'ego' does not leave us in public thinking: people feel anonymous in public space, with the consequence that the public space became a place to move through, not to *be* in. According to Sennet, when intimate (private) contact increases, for instance on social media, your sociability decreases. Privatization thus means, among others, that people start to withdraw from the public domain. Sennet proposes, as a solution, that we again have to learn to deal with that strange 'other' (Sennet, in Thomas, 2010). The fading boundaries between private and public in the public space are strengthened by the rise of the privately owned public spaces (POPS), as described in the article *The privatisation of cities' public spaces is escalating. It is time to take a stand* (2015) written by Bradley Garret. These POPS are spaces in the open air that are likely to be public but they are, in fact, not. Think for instance about the public parks that you can enter with a ticket. These are actually semi-public spaces that are controlled and monitored. People need a reason or money to be in that place, and are expected to behave a certain way. Garret illustrates his point

with the example of Foucault's idea of Panopticon. When one knows someone else is watching him (surveillance), he *plays* spontaneously, *plays* - therefore - a role, and "becomes the principle of his own subjection" (Foucault, in Garrett, 2015). This way we could never proclaim the same energy as an ideal public space. Garret (2015) poses the right question by asking what happens when these 'privatized islands of freedom' dissociate themselves from the rest of society. So what can we do about this? Garret (2015) provides a possible answer: we need to map what we have, and make clear what is public, what is not, and why it is important to maintain, before losing it. Otherwise, the equality principle of free political conversation within public spaces, without excluding someone and pressuring another, that Habermas (1991) wishes for, can get lost.

Hence, the next section of this chapter maps the public space of the railway station; given its prominent public mobility function in a city. Considering that public spaces differ from one another (VROM, 2009), what kind of public space is this station nowadays? And is the railway station also slowly becoming more privatized? Answering these questions will take this examination one step closer to the analysis of the Central Station concourse as the vehicle of the artwork *Play of Advice*.



### NOTE 3.

I always have the feeling, when I enter a station, that I reach a whole new space. The space is often great, open, and crowded with audiences. But there are not always others to relate to. When traveling, for instance, with the last train from North to South, the silence is already reversed. However, the lights in the central passage do not dim: they are often bright, tending to blue, showing all stains and whims without excuse. Although small stations feel different than major stations, they share the common aim to transport passengers from A to B. But what else does a station perform? How do we actually behave here, as human beings? ///

### A Hub of Mobility: A Closer Look at the Railway Station

(2A) When reading the report *Vision on the Environment of Track & Contribution* (2012) by Spoorbeeld (from Bureau Spoorbouwmeester), the position of the central railway station is defined in-between the private and public space. The station, therefore, literally behaves on the earlier described interface, since it is a publicly accessible place but owned by private parties. In the essay *The Station as Public Space* (2012) Ivan Nio argues that the urban openness, unpredictability and diversity in everyday life can be found both in parks and streets, but also within the station. However, in this approach, the station exist as a more semi-public pace. To illustrate Nio paraphrases Boomkens (1998), who earlier described the semi-public space as an environment where the individual and community certainly connect: for instance in the café, library and the station. This approach makes clear that the Central Station is a décor in which different social worlds, spheres and activities directly overlap.

Before focusing on the contemporary identity of the Central Station, I will start at the beginning: the origin of railways. The NS (n.d.) describes that the first railways were initiated by local private parties up until 1860. Later on, the railway system was used to connect cities and villages in the whole country. At that time, the Dutch Railways (NS) were founded. With these developments, the railway stations became unique city markers. Because of the multitude of construction, a standardized design was used that categorized five types, from class 1 for provincial cities to the simplest class 5 for the villages. These early stations were, therefore, designed hierarchically, whereby the magnitude of the station stood for the importance



of the place. As the NS mentions (n.d.), this was based on the utilitarian worldview of that time, ruling until 1900. From then on, each station got a personal design and the class division was abolished (NS, n.d.). Still, the significance of the station and rail environment for the city (and the landscape) has been huge from the beginning when the station square connected the station and the city: the square as the gateway to the outside world (Sporbeeld, 2012).

Around WW II, the track became the centre of urban development, which played a central role in the life of the citizen: "There even was a new type of human being: the commuter" (Sporbeeld, 2012, p. 61). The commuter was, and still is, someone who lives in a different place from where (s)he works and travels by train on a daily basis. Hence, the station became this lively central place where traffic flows and people came together. More recently, the railways became even more necessary due to globalization and fading borders between countries. Nowadays, the railway station is being used by many people, among which the mentioned commuter, but also by the tourist and the traveller (people from the surrounding areas who use to passage to walk from one side of the city to the other, but also shoppers and occasional visitors). Sporbeeld (2012) argues that the station's public "are social beings who use all their senses: they want to hear, see, feel, smell, taste" (Sporbeeld, 2012, p. 87). Because of the great diversity among people within the station, the environment needs to be approached from all these different perspectives. Where for instance the traveller will enter a whole new world when leaving the train and entering the city, the commuter will experience this place different since the continuity of this public experience

is paramount. The environment therefore involves a wide range of known and unknown users, whereby the station must respond to both / all (Sporbeeld, 2012). In the fifth chapter of this thesis the perception, experience and existence of the passant are central.

Generally, most of the people quickly pass through the station with a clear goal in mind ('I need to get the train', 'I have five minutes to buy something to drink'). Still, situations occur when there is plenty of time and space to rest and to literally *be* ('My train has a delay, I have to wait half an hour'). Although every station somehow looks the same - as the current city problem already mentioned - the station certainly needs to identify with its own city on some level, so that one can identify with the city identity. Everyone will experience the station, just like an artwork, in its own way; but that does not mean that the station cannot carry a general vision that matches the city identity and that reaches this general public (Sporbeeld, 2012). Furthermore, Nio (2012) argues that since the station exists as a lively theatre, the 'other' can be seen. This way the station is a place to interact with other ethnicities, classes and lifestyles. Within this direct confrontation with 'the other', the station offers the opportunity to forget about stereotypes and stigmas, to be surprised and to reflect. Nio (2012) paraphrases Richard Sennet (1974) to explain the need for this common accessibility; also for the less desirable users like homeless people. As already seen, this point of view is shared in both Mitchell's and Garret's approaches, namely that there lies strength in the equal accessibility of the central stations.

## The Changing Nature of the Central Station (2A)

We have seen that the public space is changing because of different developments. These developments can be seen in the public space of the railway station (as privately managed public space that is characterized as the heart of the city, a meeting place with strangers, and as an area where one should feel comfortable and can cross the city) too. Nio (2012) points out that the station's publicness is certainly affected by the earlier described developments of homogenization and privatization. Think for instance about AH To Go and AKO, which are present at almost every railway station. But also by the need for this control and surveillance. Nio (2012) mentions, therefore, that "the social consequences of the bankruptcy of public space can be significant. Increasing surveillance and privatization of public space are accompanied by the displacement, marginalization and even the exclusion of certain groups; one thinks of street newspaper vendors, (hanging) young people and homeless people" (Nio, 2012, p. 11). He mentions the recent technological innovation of the OV chip card as a common problem, since one has to pass through / check-in these gates in order to reach the actual station passage (register travel / buying behaviour). Hence, the station is slowly becoming accessible only for a specific group of people, since deviant behaviour is no longer allowed. Consequently, these closed stations are no longer democratic. As Nio continues: "The need for security and the desire of

travellers to secure and being able to travel without restriction, makes the station by definition another kind of public space than the street" (Nio, 2012, p. 12). Spoorbeeld (2012) adds that this development is not always an easy one, since many buildings and public areas are not suited for OV chip cards and gates. Possibly, the whole experience of the station might shift since these new developments appear to contradict to the earlier requirement that a station passage should be open and borderless. In the document *Meer rendement van spoor en stations voor de stad meer rendement van spoor en stations voor de stad* Modder et al. (2015) claim that the station environments should function as the new meeting places of the city whereby they can contribute to the synergy between rail and city, something that should reflect the twenty-first century worldview. They state that with the current development in trade, technology, services, tourism, knowledge, innovation and culture, new urban features are needed. These features are: proximity, interaction, attractive meeting places and fast moving options (Modder et. a., 2015). Nio (2012) argues that there is no problem when the OV-gates stay open. Alternatively, making these gates accessible only with a valid card will result in the weakening of the public space. Then, access becomes a privilege, instead of a right. It is therefore important that the station building, programming, design and management should be aimed at enhancing public accessibility (Nio, 2012).

#### NOTE 4.

To give a brief explaining towards the use of this OV chip card: it consists of a balance (amount of money) or subscription; whether or not compensated by your work or study. By checking in, you can travel by train, and after checking out, a balance sheet is made of how much you have travelled and how much the trip has cost. Until recently, the station passage was -whether you wanted to travel or not (maybe you just wanted to go in to a shop, walk to someone or simply look at the architecture)- free to enter. However, today there are some stationary passages that can only be accessed with the OV chip card, whether you want to travel or not. In other words, the space can only be accessed when you have enough money on your card, which allows you to register for this space. If you have not travelled, but for example, have been to the supermarket in the station hall, no money will be charged to your card. However, you need the money on the card to be able to access the space. On the NS website, the NS (n.d.) indicates that these passengers can purchase a special card that allows them to pass the hall for free for a maximum of 60 minutes after the check-in. Even those who want to do some shopping can put 10,00 euro on their OV card for 60 minutes and then check out again. In the meantime, no money will be deducted from the card. The station is thus transformed into a space that can be accessed for a maximum of one hour, for which a registration with your access card is required. ///

In the end, Mitchell's theory actually seems to be implemented: the public station space is no longer accessible to everyone equally, while slowly making classifications between people. For example, the older people who want to pick up their grandchild but cannot enter the station because they do not have an OV chip card, or those who cannot check in for they do not have enough credit on their card and are forced to walk around the station. Besides, adults without OV chip card will avoid the station as a meeting place, since the park or library is now more public (Nio, 2012). This has major consequences for the nature of the station itself, which was known as a public space for encounters and diversity. The NS explains that this has been introduced because of security measures: "In order to improve the safety of the stations, more and more gates are being put into service", (NS, n.d.), mirroring the current surveillance society. Now this has become clear, we can take a deeper look at the public space in Eindhoven, including the station.

TRAVAUX  
[ PUBLICS ]  
PUBLICS

ZIII ZRII

*Travaux Publics [ Public Works ]* is een tentoonstelling van tekstwerken in de openbare ruimte in Eindhoven. Onder dezelfde titel geeft Peninsula tevens een portfolio uit met een werk op papier van alle kunstenaars. De portfolio is tijdens de tentoonstelling in het Van Abbemuseum te zien. In de catalogus staan zowel de werken in de openbare ruimte als de bijdragen aan de portfolio afgebeeld.

Van Abbemuseum Vonderweg 1 telefoon: 040-2755275 dagelijks open 11-17 uur maandag gesloten

Catalogus *Travaux Publics [ Public Works ]* 80 p. gebonden ISBN 90-74806-09-0 f 29,50

Portfolio *Travaux Publics [ Public Works ]* 17 genummerde en gesigneerde werken op papier, titel- en colofonblad, oplage: 40 exemplaren f 1950,-

Voor nadere informatie: Stichting Peninsula Gestelsestraat 44c 5615 LG Eindhoven telefoon: 040-2453491

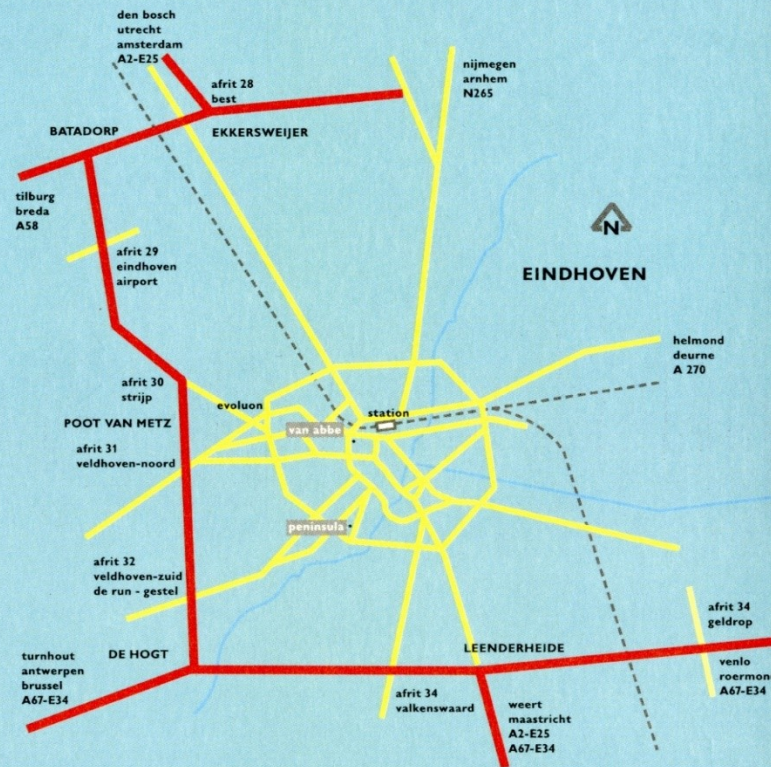
*Travaux Publics [ Public Works ]* is an exhibition of text-works in public spaces, in Eindhoven, Holland. Peninsula also publishes a portfolio, with the same title, containing a work on paper by each artist. During the exhibition, these works will be on show at the Van Abbemuseum. A catalogue of the public works and prints will be published.

Van Abbemuseum Vonderweg 1 phone: +31(0)40-2755275 opened daily 11am -17 pm closed on Mondays

Catalogue *Travaux Publics [ Public Works ]* 80 p. hardcover ISBN 90-74806-09-0 f 29,50

Portfolio *Travaux Publics [ Public Works ]* 17 numbered and signed works on paper, title page and colophon, edition of 40 copies f 1950,-

For further information: Peninsula Foundation Gestelsestraat 44c 5615 LG Eindhoven phone: +31(0)40-2453491



*Travaux Publics [ Public Works ]* werd mogelijk gemaakt door was realized with the support of

Mondriaan Stichting - Nieuwe Brabantse Kunst Stichting - Gemeente Eindhoven - Brabant Pers - Nederlandse Spoorwegen - Armada/Intercolor - Van den Eynde

## **Analysis: (the Public Space in) Eindhoven & its Central Station**

### 1. The City of Eindhoven

Even though Eindhoven originated in 1232 (being just a small town at that time), Eindhoven stands out to be a young city. The city went through fast urbanization since the beginning of the twentieth century, being the hometown of technological companies such as Philips and DAF. For several decades, factories were built and since Philips and DAF attracted a lot of new workers tens of thousands houses were constructed. As a result, an industrial city arose, with a city centre, shops, cafes, schools and so on. Today, the city of Eindhoven has 200.000+ inhabitants and is known as the city of light. And even though Philips does not dominate the city as much as it used to do (many divisions of the company have moved elsewhere), Eindhoven still is a city with a wide variety of creative and innovative companies. It distinguishes itself as the city of technology, knowledge and design. In a collaboration with the city of Helmond nearby, it presents itself as the Brainport region, as the smartest region in the world (Gemeente Eindhoven, 2016). The city's DNA / image can be found in its cultural events, too. For instance in the annual 'Lichtjesroute', an illuminated journey through the city organised by citizens themselves which dates back to the end of WW II. Eindhoven also organises the more recent festive activity 'Glow', an international light festival which attracts about 700,000 visitors a year (Gemeente Eindhoven, 2016). Eindhoven participates with both the inhabitants of the city and visitors in a public tour of light through the city, year after year.

### 2. The Public Space of Eindhoven

Eindhoven has around 20 million m<sup>2</sup> of public space. The municipality states that the public space is the area within the settlements of the municipality of Eindhoven with a public function, of which the Municipality of Eindhoven has ownership and / or management. The public space is accessible, available and useful for everybody (Gemeente Eindhoven, 2006). These spaces are designed for people to linger and meet one another, and to perform as an open, lively campus. As the municipality mentions: "We want interactions between people and between people and public space. [...] We also discover experimental and unexpected combinations between art, technology, architecture and design in the street image" (Gemeente Eindhoven, 2016, p. 42). The public space in Eindhoven is therefore designed to radiate the principles mentioned above (knowledge, technology and design). For instance by frequently using light applications that can be seen in multiple places in Eindhoven's public city space, among which the Central Station. This effect and existence will be discussed in detail in the next section of this chapter. Eindhoven wants to create a contemporary atmosphere with the aim of connecting the city's spatial image with the desire to become the leading technology city in Europe. These light applications, among others, as creative and technological advances, express the city's image within the fast, chaotic everyday life (it could function as a resting point for both the citizens and visitors) (Gemeente Eindhoven, 2011).

In the municipal policy paper *Bewegen tussen duurzaamheid en trends* (2011), which focuses on a sustainable public space in the centre of Eindhoven, it is stated that Eindhoven focuses on the future, rather than the past. As is described: “A city is always on its way to tomorrow”, (Gemeente Eindhoven, 2011). In the report *Internationale hotspot. En de weg daarnaar toe* (2016), published by the municipality of Eindhoven, this ‘tomorrow’ is further illustrated by indicating what the city should look like anno 2025. In this report it is argued that, above all, the public city space should not exclude anyone. An open climate with freedom and space for input is key: “Cities of the future build bridges instead of walls. [...] ‘Doing’ open is no longer enough. Actually being open and acting are a must” (Gemeente Eindhoven, 2016, p. 17). This explains that the public space in Eindhoven has to breathe openness in order to make the public feel comfortable when being in public.

### 3. The Public Space of the Eindhoven Central Station

Even though the first railway station of Eindhoven was built as early as 1866, the current station originates from 1956. Located right in the city’s centre, it was designed as a ‘radio’ by architect Koen van der Gaast, similar to the ones that Philips produced at that time (Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, n.d.). As CRIMSON (2010) puts forth, the station was originally designed in the city’s reconstruction period after WWII whereby the building itself would witness the beginning of a new vision on station architecture that radiated dynamics. Eindhoven Central Station was, therefore, the first of a

series of modernist stations; the pioneer of a new vision. Although the nature of the public was not the starting point, this building had to show the character of the Eindhovenians: daring, vital, and decent (Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, n.d.). This was something Van der Gaast has attempted to realize by using smooth, modern materials that were time-consuming and radiated the atmosphere (Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, n.d.). Currently, the Central Station is under reconstruction since it will not be able to handle the expected number of 115,000 travellers a day in 2020 (ProRail, n.d.). The plan for reconstruction was launched in 2013. Given the fact the station was considered a national monument, ornaments had to be restored in their original state. So despite Eindhoven presenting itself as the city of the Future, the current station managed to capture its original characteristics by reconstructing existing elements, such as the artwork in the station’s floor and the lighting. In the municipal vision document for the reconstruction of the station (2016) it is further described that the new station must depict the city’s DNA and has to stimulate a ‘wow’ effect with the passant. In addition, it should become a so-called ‘third place’ (a public place between home and the office) as part of a “sublime designed public space where accommodation is central”, (Gemeente Eindhoven, 2016, para. 4). To achieve this, a new thirty-five-meter tunnel is built in the passage of the Central Station, providing many facilities such as stores and coffee shops, which would strengthen this connection between the station and the city. Because this central passage exists as a travel domain that is characterized -

by convenience and efficiency, the document states that it is important to stimulate a proper station experience in the new design: based on the experience of dynamics and movement (Trusted document with reference to the Briefing Art Station Eindhoven, 2013). Therefore, this domain must ensure that travellers feel welcome when they leave, enter, or switch trains. According to the document, it “focuses on functionality but has comfortable seating so that it also gets a public meaning” (Trusted document with reference to the Briefing Art Station Eindhoven, 2013). This way, the iconic building would become an eye-catcher of the city (Gemeente Eindhoven, 2016).

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

When investigating the public space of the Central Station in Eindhoven an important question to ask is to what extent this public space really remains public. Is the increasing degree of control (by giving access to a specific group of people) also visible here and if so, what impact does this have on the station? Ideally, the public space should be open to anyone. As shown, the citizens would have a voice without being subjected to coercion (Habermas, 1991). However, it was revealed earlier that the public space - including the railway station - has changed. For instance by closing the gates where people check in- and out, which affects the degree of accessibility of this space, and immediately changes the existence of human-beings within this space. And what about the distinctiveness of the Central Station in Eindhoven? Is the homogenization of public spaces visible here too? Because the design of the stations is aimed at commercial purposes, the risk that the station in Eindhoven will look just as every other station increases. When we compare the municipal assumptions towards the public space with the visible changes within the public space as described within the theories, a contradiction arises. Eindhoven aims for a clean, open public space for all and belonging to all. However, when the municipality aims to offer their citizens the opportunity to participate in the achievement of the public space, closing the gates of the station passageway (this happens in Eindhoven too) seems to be a major loss to the importance they attach to openness. Especially when arguing that where the human nature in the earlier design by Van der Gaast was not the starting point, this certainly is important for the recent approach towards the entire city space. What

happens now the accessibility and openness of the station passage, a connection between two parts of the city, is reduced? In view of ProRail's decision to close the gates, the municipality ought to carefully think about the impact and significance this has for the city identity. Since the Central Station is called the eye-catcher of the city and this development means a lot for the experience of new visitors in the city, the municipality should consult closely with ProRail to discuss the possible consequences. Therefore, it can be concluded that the tension in the public space mentioned above is also visible in Eindhoven, which does not correspond with the openness the city wants to radiate. Fortunately, the passage does not purely focus on the many eating, drinking, and other shops, but

distinguishes itself strongly from other railway stations by radiating Eindhoven's identity. This is further elaborated and described in the next section of this chapter. The main question here is what the role of art within this semi-public space can be. What does it achieve? And does the meaning of art change with the changing space of the station? With Eindhoven's forward-looking attitude, focussing on 'tomorrow', it is interesting to see why the '96 work of art remained. Eindhoven seems to seek a balance between consolidating what you have and innovating for the future. How does this influence the current artworks within the public space? We start to focus on public works of art; something which is able to illustrate this tension in a more tangible manner.



“I’m searching for a language. People speak many different languages: there’s the one they use with children, another one for love. There’s the language we use to talk to ourselves, for our internal monologues. On the street, at work, while travelling – everywhere you go, you’ll hear something different, and it’s not just the words, there’s something else, too. There’s even a difference between the way people speak in the morning and how they speak at night.”

- *Second-Hand Time*, Svetlana Alexievic

Onderdeel van tentoonstelling 'Travaux Publics'

## 'Verstilling' door neon-citaat in stationshal Eindhoven

EINDHOVEN - 'Conventie, een soort herinnering, is het grootste beletsel om te genieten van leven en kunst'. De passant die met gebogen hoofd door de stationshal van Eindhoven naar de uitgang rent, zal de 'neon woorden' van Piet Mondriaan wellicht ontgaan.

Ook is het geen gemakkelijke tekst die de Amerikaanse citaatkunstenaar Joseph Kosuth heeft uitgekozen. „Maar de woorden vormen een meditatief contrast met de hectische drukte van het station. Als je de moeite neemt om de woorden te lezen, dan ontkomt je niet aan een moment van verstillings”, verwacht Pieter Alewijns, beeldend kunstenaar en initiatiefnemer van 'Travaux Publics'.

### Tentoonstelling

Onder deze naam vindt vanaf 7 december een grote tentoonstelling plaats van tekstwerken in de openbare ruimten in Eindhoven. Gale-

rie Peninsula in Eindhoven is de initiatiefnemer van de expositie.

Het neon-object van de Amerikaanse 'citaatkunstenaar' Joseph Kosuth is een van de kunstwerken waarmee de organisatoren van de tentoonstelling meer aandacht willen schenken aan taal in de moderne kunst.

„De stationshal kwam vanwege de karakteristieke plek en de grote aantallen mensen die er dagelijks passeren, voor de tekstkunstenaar het meest in aanmerking voor plaatsing”, aldus Alewijns. Het kunstwerk is een van de duurste van de tentoonstelling. „Neon is al een prijzig materiaal en dat geldt vooral voor deze typische Mondriaankleur geel.”

Het kunstenaarsinitiatief heeft inmiddels al teksten geplaatst op bruggen boven de Dommel, een etalage van de Bijenkorf, een muur van het tijdelijke huisvesting van het Van Abbemuseum en de glazen pui van het Stadskantoor.



• De tekst in de stationshal.

ED 19/11/96

## SECTION 2: PUBLIC ART

### Introduction (2B)

In today's neoliberal Western society the cult of the individual is dominant (Gielen, 2015). By privatizing public space and controlling openness (Sennet, Mitchell, Garret), it is questionable whether we can still wander and be surprised in public, since we walk *through* instead of *be in* (Sennet, 1974). Do we still feel connected with this space, and with each other? And is there a possibility that art can mean something for the public within this space? First the concept of 'public art' should be clarified. In the examination *Just Art for a Just City: Public Art and Social Inclusion in Urban Regeneration* (2005) Sharp et al. mention that; "Public art is not simply art placed outside" (Sharp et al., 2005, p. 1003). Instead, its presence has to be able to engage the public within the public space. It has to create 'new spaces' in which the public can identify themselves. This public comprises the entire population, since the artwork is visible to all. As Dunmall quotes Nantes' artist director Blaise within his article *The resurrection of Nantes: how free public art brought the city back to life* (2016): "If you make people pay for culture, or only offer it in enclosed spaces like theatres or museums, you will only ever reach a small percentage of the population." Public art can thus reach a large audience and is a valuable addition to the joy of living in the city.

When diving deeper into public art's meaningful existence in order to expose the current structures as described above (for example, the homogenization / commercialisation of public space based on commercial and economic interests), the previously mentioned theory by Bax. et al. (2015), with regard to the influence of political and economic forces in the public sphere, offers valuable insights. They demonstrate that in order for art to contribute to the public sphere, by means of influencing the ongoing existing structures in society and interrupting it where possible, it literally has to send, place and activate its message in the public space. This can be achieved both *digitally* (social media) and *materially* (city square) (Bax. et al., 2015). To arrest the flow of these powerful forces ruling today, artistic interventions are able to offer commentary or critique by expressing alternative scenario's (what life could look like, enriching a new opportunity) or by representing this reality through a materialized work (function as a mirror). Although this is far from easy, and certainly not valid for all public artworks, some are able to contribute to the day-to-day governing structures when moving itself into the public space, in order "to arrest the flow or circulation that the city consists of" (Bax et al., 2015, p. 22). Which artworks are capable of doing so are discussed later on in this chapter.

In the essay *Performing the Common City. On the Crossroads of Art, Politics and Public Life* (in Bax. et al., 2015) Pascal Gielen indicates, building on Sennet's theory, that the current functional and ordered city space banishes politics from the streets, since this space no longer allows people to be confronted with, or to meet the other; the unknown; the alien. Contemporary public space is a space in which it has become normal to pass these others and to ignore them. As Gielen claims, public art is, therefore, valuable since it is able to express, shape and articulate opinions, beliefs, and ideas. Doing so, it takes one out of its comfort zone. "By making them see, smell, feel and fear that everything that *is* can also always be something different, artists, in other words, can time and again *make* the public space anew" (Gielen, in Bax. et al., 2015, p. 278). This approach is shared by both Heinich (1998), Bax. et al. (2015), Vega (2013) and Sharp et al. (2005). Sharp et al. (2013) paraphrases Hall and Robertson by describing that public art encourages to show contradictory voices that represent the diversity among people within the space (Hall and Robertson, in Sharp et al., 2005, p. 19). Thus, through public art the public can take a new, critical perspective. As Bax. et al. (2015) mention, the public artwork offers the public the opportunity to see differently, since it can make things visible that would otherwise have remained invisible (Bax. et al., 2015, p. 20). Heinich (1998) complement this approach by arguing that; "More than any other object, art enables us to rethink, sometimes to abandon or to reverse tradition" (Heinich, 1998, p. 8), and Vega (2013) emphasizes that art can pull people out of the existing frameworks in order to take a possible new position.

Within the examination *Imaging the City: The Difference that Art Makes* (2013) Vega emphasizes the importance of the city centre as the space in which these interventions needs to take place, since the city explores the confusions of life itself and imagines inequality. The closed-off station, for example, underpins this theory by not allowing certain groups when closing the gates. Hence, art is able to (re)present this current systems as well as the (inter)actions between the people who are living there: "they co-produce an urban imagery of public subjectivity, of bodily comportment in public and of the meaning of public and private worlds" (Vega, 2013, p. 53). Vega recalls Sennet to explain that the way in which we present ourselves in public space immediately colours the existence of this public space.

As Sennet (1974) already claimed: the way we no longer feel connected as a public becomes certainly evident in this physical domain. Therefore, we have to change the understanding of our own body again. This is something that art is capable of (Vega, 2013). However, it is questionable whether there is still place for doing something that really interrupts and/or intervenes, since the current public artworks often arise for political, social, or economic purposes (Gielen, 2013; Van Winkel, 1999). These artworks can be used - being deployed by civil society organizations or governments - as a model for solving social problems in neighbourhoods (Gielen, 2013). Here, the following questions appear: is public art still able to actually interrupt the neoliberal mind- set, at least for a while? Or does the content of art need to detach itself (to be complete autonomous) from reality, as ultimate criticism?

## Public Art: Between Freedom and Control (2B)

Given art is a human expression there is no unilateral answer to the question above, but it is interesting to compare different approaches in order to give an impression of how public art gets its appearance nowadays. In his book *Repressief liberalisme* (2013) Gielen insists that art outside the safe walls of the museum is preoccupied with many opinions, appreciations and critiques, even without social activist content. For instance, an aesthetically pleasing artwork can also trigger fuss, for example when it literally interrupts the road. Furthermore, all artworks (both in- and outside the museum) contribute to our society, even the most abstract works, that are mostly understood by an elite club of art lovers. But there are also art forms that address the audience in a more direct manner: the social-political engaged artworks, as previously described in the introduction of this thesis. However, as Gielen argues, this message is often in service of the aesthetical form of the artwork itself. In other words, it is hidden in a 'package', and so the artistic goal still prevails, instead of being fully committed to the social cause: "His childish touch must keep him in the art world" (Gielen, 2013, p. 137). This is what distinguishes the 'socially involved' artist from the activist.

Gielen shares this perspective with three other Dutch art critics: Maarten Doorman, Camiel van Winkel, and Hans den Hartog Jager. Den Hartog Jager claims in his essay *Geëngageerde kunstenaars: de wereld luistert niet* (2014), published in the Dutch newspaper *NRC*, that these socially involved artworks are predominantly predictable and are no longer meaningful in the actual social debate. The artist's artistic involvement

is true, but the artwork itself has no influence. He relates this to the fact that dominant opinion asserts that the message of the work is always in service of the art itself. Consequently, people cease to listen. Den Hartog Jager wonders: "If you really want to be engaged, why do you make art and do not become an actor or politician?" (Den Hartog Jager, 2014, para. 2). These socially engaged artworks do not really seem to be involved in society. "Engaged art is just painfully predictable, especially ideologically: always, always, she's 'left'. Against the ruling power, for the individual. [...] Against the market, 'neoliberalism' and capitalism. For refugees and stateless persons. [...] In short, society-related art is not so far left, it's left in a naive, cliché, simple way" (Den Hartog Jager, 2014, para. 2). In order to truly engage without hiding in the safe art world - which makes engaged art into something very introvert - he argues that the financial cuts on the art sector positively forced the artist to critically redefine his- or her own position. He continues by professing that it is no surprise that politicians and subsidizers have been trying to pollute artistic autonomy in recent years (Den Hartog Jager, 2014). There is still space for artist's to seek for their position and to experiment again, but that does not last forever.

In his book *De Navel van Daphne* (2016) Doorman continues to focus on the question whether contemporary art still makes sense, since it does not seem to have any real influence in the world anymore. He draws the distinction between art and life to this engaged art, that stands out in predictions.

Consequently, Doorman decides that autonomous art may be stronger than socio-political- engaged artworks, just because it is ground breaking and interest-free. Van Winkel shares this approach in his paper *Wat er is misgegaan* (2011), in which he argues that socially relevant art affected the position of art within society and that autonomous art could be a solution (Doorman, 2016; Van Winkel, 2011). Here, it is important to mention that autonomy means that the assessment criteria of some art must be determined within the art world, instead of outside the world of art (Gielen & Van Winkel, 2012). According to Doorman (2016) autonomous art is able to influence the moral debate when being visible in public space. However, autonomous artworks often remain between the safe walls of the museum. It is therefore possible to ask, as has been done before, whether there is still room for autonomy in public space, given the objectives that it all ought to meet, and the criticism that is against this. According to Doorman, today's autonomy could develop up to two extremes: the *l'art pour l' art* as a delusion, and / or making the engaged commitment of the artist more honest (not isolated in the world of art) (Doorman, 2016). Either way, the enterprising artist of today is working at the expense of his autonomy. And with all these requirements, the artwork should refrain from becoming entertainment, decoration or design, which is the urgency of art in general (Doorman, 2016). However, the current government policy has already created a difficult friction, which puts pressure on the position of art.

We are dealing with an economy of culture, as Halbe Zijlstra - Secretary of State for Education, Culture and Science - states. In his policy paper, Zijlstra writes that a change is needed in cultural policy because society has also

changed. He believes that the government finances and subsidizes art too much, which hinders artists in becoming independent entrepreneurs (Zijlstra, 2011). Jet Bussemaker, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, however, does not agree. She states that without this support, art cannot sustain itself. In other words, without governmental support culture has insufficient capacity to survive. She does admit that the value of culture is certainly hidden too much from the general public. Accordingly, art's cooperation with the local governments is under review (Bussemaker, 2013). In order to solve the problem, Bussemaker focuses on the social value of art; to look for a relationship between art and the world (Abels, 2013). As she states, the range of art is still too small, and so is the involvement of the ordinary citizen (Bussemaker, 2015). It may be clear that these new standards expect a certain position from the artist.

In *De hybride kunstenaar. De organisatie van de artistieke praktijk in het postindustriële tijdperk* Gielen and van Winkel (2012) argue that the contemporary artist often has to combine his/her artistic practice with other jobs or applied assignments to be able to make a living. This 'social hybridity' that the artist has to deal with blends different 'worlds' with each other. By working, for example, on commission in public space, autonomy has faded; both in the head of the artist and in the head of the environment. This means that there is no more pure autonomy or pure function. Gielen and van Winkel (2012) mention Joep van Lieshout as an example of an artist who, besides autonomous works, designs furniture and works on architectural blast, under the motto:

"It does not matter if you call it art or not." The risk is that the comprehensiveness of the artistic ideas is affected by political and economic pressure. In the neoliberal political climate the free or autonomous space of inspiration is worrying, because it is slowly fading away. The increasing number of working on commission dilutes the artistic principles and the time for their own professional practice decreases: autonomy slowly diminishes. The artistic criteria of what is good and what is bad shift from within the world of art (autonomy) to outside the world of art, while this space that enables autonomous thinking is essential. In addition, the question of socially involved art imposed by the government is also problematic, given the approaches mentioned above that this art is not as involved anymore - it does not really concern itself with the citizen, but retires to the world of art (Doorman, 2016; Den Hartog Jager, 2014). Den Hartog Jager (2014) argues that the reducing subsidies - as Zijlstra aimed for - could ensure that engaged artists start to look critically at how engaged they really are, what they want and can precisely do. With these socio-cultural benefits more social community art projects arose within the Netherlands. Gielen (2013) argues that in the Netherlands many of these community art projects are financed by the government. Artists are, for example, encouraged by policy makers to improve social life in a disadvantaged neighbourhood. This gives people the opportunity to identify with the neighbourhood or city, as was the case in the public art project *Kunst in de buurt* (Art in the Neighbourhood); in which the inhabitants had a great voice in the choice of works of art in their own district. According to this quest the artwork must at least 'cheer up' the public place, often accomplished in order form, which should not undermine the identity of the district / city / neighbourhood. Instead, these

work have to accommodate these requirements properly. "Through concertation, the possible art wrinkles between artist and community are already smoothed" (Gielen, 2013, p. 146). When the project finally focuses on the problematic negligence of the housing association rather than on the citizens in that neighbourhood its social-engagement transforms into political-engagement: and the project immediately is brought to a halt (Gielen, 2013).

Is there another possibility for public art to be really disruptive? Or does it only need to confirm, to obey? In *Outside art and insider artist: public reactions to contemporary public art* (n.d.) Heinrich states that the artwork often has to defend itself against the reproach that, for example, a child could do the same. When art in public space is considered to be meaningful the work is not seen as a waste of money (Heinich, n.d.). This results, among others, in the establishment of art with regard to spatial quality, city branding, economic activities and social cohesion in and around the city (Boomgaard, n.d.). This makes clear that the artist is evolving into an entrepreneur, responding to the social issues of policy makers. In order to avoid taking over the work of the social service provider, the community project should, according to Gielen, not answer these questions based on neoliberal logic, and it should also not be used merely as a padding of social holes to nourish the neoliberal policy even more (Gielen, 2013). Avoiding this, art considered to be a valuable force in a time that targets the individual, to stimulate new encounters with that 'strange other'. But then, again, the artist as an artist has to stay ahead of the crowd (Gielen, 2013). This leads to the following question: if public art arises from a question, an commission, or a wish, how

to actually deal with the professional context in/for which the artist often works today, without joining the neoliberal system? Can art still be true to the artists own intrinsic convictions (without being completely autonomous) and at the same time handle all those demands with care? To make it more specific, is it possible to find a balance between requirements and free will?



*Even though this question can be answered from many different perspectives, a possible solution is given by Sandra Smets, art editor at the Dutch newspaper NRC, whom I met on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May at Café Engels in Rotterdam. Before I spoke with Smets, my belief had been that within the current cultural policy the freedom of the artwork is affected. This because the artist's hybridization decreased the artist's independent time and space to think and be. Smets, however, has brought a new perspective to this question. As she claims, the acquired freedom and autonomy from years ago - in the time period Play of Advice was realized – does not longer exist. That this autonomy can be still the best solution, as stated by Doorman, is not realistic according to Smets. Because art exists in a different way. Smets claims that this autonomy should not be placed on a pedestal as often happens. The artist does not have to escape those issues, but must be able to meet all these requirements and to integrate them all into one and the same public artwork. By doing so, the artist always needs to relate to different environmental factors, such as the traffic, public and context. If the artist can realize a good piece of art in the public space, taking into account the many previously mentioned factors and requirements, it can be very strong. She attributes this to the increased pressure on the public space in which everyone wants to do something and want to be visible. However, since the art world itself has changed, the self-evidence of the existence of art also no longer exists, and art must mainly defend itself (like Heinrich already pointed out). Art, therefore, is often the fool: because it is 'something else' and has no clear function. With this, public art has to deal with many demands today, which can greatly affect the work, but at the same time art cannot exist without demands anymore. Since art is nothing efficient and*

*has no direct utility, it certainly plays a role in society, taking into account the following issues.*

*First, the public artwork needs to be able to provide an experience for everyone. It has to do 'something'. To fulfil its role in public, the artwork and the environment should function in service of one another, and the artist has to take into account the different ways people view the work. The passant who sees the artwork in a single second must form an opinion quickly, it needs to arouse a short attraction. Next, the artworks does not have to intrude or shout. Because of public art's competition with everything else in this public space, the artist often tries to exaggerate. Nevertheless, the power of the artwork isn't to shout or scream, but to 'go underneath'. To illustrate, Smets offers the example of a video installation of a poppy blowing in the wind. According to her, the contrast of the poppy with the chaos of the street ensures that this video installation works well. When it is able to provide a moment of stillness in that hurried city space, it can also cause an important intervention as it brings coherence.*

*To illustrate Smets' approach, I return to the situation at Eindhoven Central Station. In the passage of the station an applied artwork of the Dutch artist Daan Roosegaarde will be realized in the next couple of months. In this case, the question seems whether applied art can be called art, given that the application is a function and art in nature has no function. To what extent is the applied work an artwork? Or does it, perhaps, become design? The professional context in which Roosegaarde's -*

*new artwork has been realized does not have to negate the work, according to Smets. However, this may also have a negative effect: when the artwork has to meet too many requirements, it can affect both the content and imagery of the work. Smets gives the example of the flickering light cloud, an artwork by John Kermerling at Rotterdam Central Station (where we are looking at from our table in the cafe), which she does not consider a good artwork; since it is completely lost as a work of art. The cloud had to be a meeting point, it had to be something light, it had to be noticeable: too many requirements to stay afloat.*

*At the Eindhoven Central Station, there will be two prominent artworks by Kosuth and Roosegaarde next to each other, both light applications in public space, being an urban visual language (Smets, personal conversation, 2017). As Smets suggests, the execution of the work, as a light application, should be more than a PR stunt for Philips: when it does not, it will become design. It is, therefore, extremely important that the artwork has a deeper content. According to Smets, light can deliver the important signal that removes the efficient life of daytime rhythm when the evening progresses (when everyone is finished doing their jobs, goes home or goes out, the work of art remains on his luminous source and it gets its strength by manifesting in such an 'free' moment in life). The question whether this linear expansion*

*of light works impedes substantive innovation is thus answered: no. However, its content or existence should have to be meaningful, otherwise it is indeed used to "refresh without looking why. [Something that is] technological innovation", she says. It is therefore important that the work of art bears several layers of meaning. Smets: "a good piece of art in public space speaks to different layers of people. Someone who just walks there, a child, or whatever. Of course, most people do not have anything with art, you also have to take some notes of that. And if the work continues to buckle the moment you dive deeper into its existence, so when there are significant layers of meaning within the work, that artworks are the best." (Smets, personal conversation, 2017).*

*In the end, it is important that the artwork does not become design, which can be avoided by keeping up with the artistic idea and the artist's own relationship with the environment. This makes the difficult position of public art, when closely linked to the city's image - in this case, Eindhoven's light as a metaphor of the city - more than visible. If the work is too well integrated into the city and / or place, it can also become lost being-an-artwork. It is, therefore, important that art in public space is inextricably linked to roadmaps, shops and retailers, and that it must feel self-evident, Smets states.*

It can be concluded that there are different approaches towards public art. The answers to the question whether there is space for autonomy in public art, and whether this is important, vary considerably. How and if autonomous art can still have position in the world remains a question. According to Doorman, the work needs to be autonomous - not to be realized in service nor commission - while being part of the world outside the museum at the same time. However, according to Smets, this does not seem to be realistic anymore given the time we live in, which is managed by clients and contracts. Here, Gielen adds that, also within employment situations, there is still some space for the intrinsic ideas of the artists, but that these ideas are quickly embedded in controversy from the neoliberal mind-set. For example, by acting as a social solution without political damage. Whether these public artworks can be called autonomous does not seem to be of much importance. More important seems to be that these artworks need to stay functionless and keep the artist him/herself (his/her idea) as the starting point, in order to distinguish itself from becoming design. With too many demands, the work becomes almost content-less, and the artistic capacity is lost. In other words, when art gets a fully applied function that exceeds the content of the work, the independency of the work is certainly affected. To conclude, what does public art really need to include?

#### NOTE 5.

I have a friend who lives in Rotterdam. She tells me about a well-known Rotterdam artist, Sil Krol. Krol regularly arranges his art in public space without the permission of third parties. In essence, this art is created 'illegally'. A time ago, an artwork (not by Krol) was removed from its pedestal in the public space of Rotterdam. The CBK Rotterdam (Centre Fine Arts), contacted Krol about the possibilities of occupying that pedestal. Not much later, the pedestal was in fact occupied by one of Krol's works of art. This example makes clear that artworks in the public space can also be realized in a different way than in a professional context by commission, which provides some room for play. However, how artworks in public space exist and how much freedom is spent depends on the city. Whether this could happen in Eindhoven or not; a public intervention without taking into account approval and application can thus be another opportunity to generate a work from one's own intrinsic drive and idea. At least for a while.

///

### **Public Art: A Dropdown List of Requirements (determined by the art critics)**

1. The public artwork must be layered (as in the museum). It should not become superficial. When you move deeper into it, it has to call on something new, but at a glimpse something must be visible (Smets, personal conversation, 2017)
2. It must have a message: offer criticism or commentary. This can be done in two ways: by providing an alternative scenario (future outline), or reflecting the reality as it is (Bax. et al., 2015)
3. It must encourage new perspectives. It must therefore not be affirmative. One has to be taken out of its comfort zone (Bax. et al., 2015; Gielen, 2015; Heinich, 1998; Sharp et al., 2005; Vega, 2013,)
4. It must be versatile, able to appeal to a broad group: the fast viewer, the quiet walker, the child, etc. (Smets, personal conversation, 2017)
5. It must expose structures to make things visible that would otherwise not stand out (Bax. et al., 2015; Vega, 2013)
6. It should not follow neo-liberal thinking: it must not have a purely social target for solving social problems. It must, therefore, remain essentially useless (Gielen, 2013)
7. It should not become design (fully applied) (Smets, personal conversation, 2017)
8. It must take the environment fully into account, it has to feel/be logical (Smets, personal conversation, 2017)
9. It has to create 'new spaces' in public space within which the public can identify themselves (Sharp, 2005)
10. It must continue to be distinguished as a work of art, not fully consumed by the public space (Smets, personal conversation, 2017)

### **Analysis: Eindhoven, the municipal art policy work since 1950**

(2A + 2B + 2C) Now that it has become clear what public art is, how it behaves under pressure, and what it should include in our current society, we start focusing on the public art climate in Eindhoven. What kind of position does public art hold in Eindhoven, seen over the years? There were a lot of problems surrounding the actual purchase of *Play of Advice*, as described in the first chapter of this thesis. It is worth diving deeper into the cultural policy of Eindhoven with respect to public art from 1996 onwards. How to make an appropriate decision for a public artwork? Why has it been so difficult? What kind of art is allowed here? (How) did this cultural art policy change over the past years? Do we see traces of the autonomy problems within Eindhoven's public space?

The most recent edition of the *Beeldenboek Eindhoven* (Image Book Eindhoven) written by Lambert and Thoben (2003)<sup>22</sup> demonstrates that Eindhoven's policy certainly has a dynamic past, whereby the public artworks should reflect the city's self-awareness, its pride on what this city really is and has, the desire to keep this history alive, and at the same time continually shift its boundaries while not taking anything for granted. In general, Eindhoven experiences the power of public art in the vitality it offers the city; especially when the number of these artworks increases (Van der Spek, in Lambert & Thoben. 2003). In this book it is mentioned that the general history of public art in Eindhoven can be traced back to 1950. The first artworks are mostly made of stone and bronze. During this early period,

---

<sup>22</sup> Shows an overview of the public works of art in Eindhoven as recorded in the municipal archive

the municipality set up a foundation for 'artistic decoration of squares, parks, and plantations', with the aim to confront the inhabitants with/ let enjoy fine arts, but also to increase the position of the artists themselves. Slowly, the municipality of Eindhoven began to maintain a specific art policy.

Since 1950 different materials for public art were being used, whereby - within the last decades - the conceptual art is more strongly represented in this public context. Between 1960 and 1980 the cultural policy in Eindhoven was further developed during which the Kunststichting Eindhoven (Art Foundation Eindhoven) was founded in 1963 in order to advise the municipal council and carry out executive duties. Because the social position of the visual artist was often problematic, it got attention through the commission by both Beeldende Kunst and Stadsbeeld<sup>23</sup> (Fine Arts and Cityscape). The idea that art was able to improve the quality of living, work, and the environment, continued to grow. Lectures at the Academy of Fine Arts Arnhem - given by Berend Hendriks and Peter Struycken - at the end of the sixties, made clear that public art was not a beautification. Instead, it was seen a significant contribution to the viability of an environment. This should take into account the function of the space to which the visualization applies. In addition, visual arts must establish a relationship with the user of this space.

<sup>23</sup> These committees offered, among others, places where artists could work and live

Between 1980 and 2000, the commission Stadsbeeld (Cityscape) placed some small public artworks in different places of the city. During this time there were also a lot of bottom up initiatives from artists that determined the art climate in Eindhoven, such as Peninsula. Peninsula's *Travaux Publics* was the frontrunner of conceptual textual works in the public space. Until 1960, conceptual textual works purely existed within the framework of the museum. Peninsula changed this unwritten rule. Text in the public space provides a suggestive layer that allows the viewer to create an image and idea by his/her own mind (Lambert & Thoben, 2003). Artists joined hands to make things happen. But not only artists, also the municipality involved ordinary inhabitants in the realization of this public art. In 1997 the project *Kunst in de buurt* (Art in the Neighbourhood) was carried out, in which eight impulse districts and six neighbourhoods within the city of Eindhoven participated in the decision for artworks in their 'living spaces': art to stimulate greater social cohesion within the neighbourhood. This project has called for much discussion\*, but it has proven that the involvement of people from the neighbourhood in the city is relatively high (Lambert & Thoben, 2003).

The commission Stadsbeeld held a plea to be involved in the shaping of the city image. Yet, their advisory task was limited to clearly recognizable elements of visual arts in the cityscape. However, in 1991, a new interpretation of the function emerged; which created a more active art policy. In these years, many changes took place in the visual climate, drawing art closer to life itself: the modern autonomous position was thus diminished. *Travaux Publics* showed one of these possibilities of letting art

#### NOTE 6.

\*As Van Stiphout explains during our conversation at the 13th of April 17: "Where we, as the initiative behind this project, wanted to give a certain statement that public art is much more than a statue, the neighbourhoods really wanted that statue. A statue that, for example, honoured a central figure of the city." This way, the citizens felt connected with the artwork. Van Stiphout makes clear that when the artwork is not meaningful to the citizens' lives, they will approach the work as a waste of money. Van Stiphout: "This puts the municipality in a difficult position." ///

engage with the public itself. And from then on, the artist was able to make a significant contribution to the optimal spatial experience of the urban area, giving this artist all the space and freedom he or she needed. The artist's view extended to various disciplines, including other forms of (new) media. The use of light as autonomous application in the public space of Eindhoven was relatively new, but increased within the next years. The idea that light can contribute to the optimal perception of the urban environment, which is an atmosphere of determination, has been developed by Har Holldans in the 'Lichtplan Eindhoven' (Eindhoven Light Plan) (Lambert & Thoben, 2003). Since Eindhoven's cultural policy has space for both traditional artworks and innovative ideas, placing an image in the public space is a matter of careful consideration (Lambert & Thoben, 2003). However, it should be mentioned that many artworks, also within *Travaux Publics*, have disappeared due to careless maintenance and management. Therefore, it is important to consider them carefully, "both from the municipality, companies, individuals and/or churches" (Lambert & Thoben, 2003, p. 27). Since demolition and redevelopment often happen, 'the past makes room for the future', and the inheritance of the art objects that existed before can therefore contribute to the awareness of making the right choices in today's society (Lambert & Thoben, 2003).

### **Analysis: Eindhoven, the municipal policy work today**

*(2A + 2B + 2C) These closing words of the Beeldenboek seem promising. However, when I have a conversation with Marianne Vaessens (Policy Officer Foundation Culture Eindhoven) on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March, it becomes clear that this cultural policy, as described in 2003, seems to deviate from the current one. The municipality of Eindhoven had an active role in placing and developing new works of art in public space before, but it has changed into a more consolidating policy over the years. Vaessens: "The municipality of Eindhoven is not a public art entrepreneur anymore, since this must be initiated from bottom-up initiatives. For example, if inhabitants want to put an image of Frits Philips (an important figure in the city's history) in their neighbourhood, they have to come up with it themselves." We saw this before in the example of the project Kunst in de buurt mentioned earlier, when the citizens showed their preference for symbolic statues. In my conversation with Vaessens a dichotomy in this art policy is clearly outlined. On the one hand, there seems to exist an increased focus on art relating to the social domain, whereby public art must be of interest to all kinds of target groups. On the other hand, the value of art must remain in the essence of the artwork itself. Vaessens: "The content of the work must not be guided by this social focus only. This dichotomy is shared by Van Stiphout (quoted above in note 6). He also makes a distinction between two mutually distinguished approaches towards the current treatise of public art. According to Van Stiphout, there is (1) the approach of the average citizen's, who find it a waste of money when public artworks do not*

*have any (accessible) meaning for the common crowd to identify with, and there is (2) the autonomous mind of the artist and/or the art 'elite' itself, who are longing for very specific art which is most of the time too difficult to be located in public.*

*As already shown, Play of Advice was placed during 1996 while relying only on the artist's conviction. However, it has developed into a piece of cultural heritage while belonging to its context of the railway station in such a way that one cannot imagine the artwork somewhere else. One could argue whether this could still happen in this current cultural policy climate, since the (aspects of) current artworks are predetermined. Within the redevelopment of the station passage, where Play of Advice will be accompanied by a thirty nine meter long light wall made by Daan Roosegaarde within the next coming months, the tension towards public art seems to be even more complex. Van Stiphout: "This is due to the fact that the authorities, such as the municipality, are leading, which has led to the position that public art is in a certain way no longer autonomous." This is because public art is often used in an applied form today; without in fact being. There exists, therefore, a tension between applied and autonomous art. As Van Stiphout and Debbaut both mention, public art can be really fundamental, "but its position seems to be devaluated. When every roundabout has an artwork, as the many coloured abstract artworks -*



#### NOTE 7.

In the conversation Van Stiphout tells me more about the creation of the artwork *The Flying Pins*, the well-known yellow cones in Eindhoven at the Technical University. Rik: "The cones, that's actually a public secret, that's actually a second thought, because Claes Oldenburg actually designed that one for the Central Park in New York. So if you're really looking for where does that idea come from, That's what it's all about, and he has just done it, it's been made before, not literally allowed to produce, but the artwork already existed, and the head of the Kennedy Avenue, at the station, that was also the reason. It has cost us millions, and it does not say much about Eindhoven. It's nice that we have a Claes Oldenburg here and that you can show it, and now it's pictures are on the postcards of Eindhoven." This makes it clear that an artwork that was not initially made for the city, from a clear reference to the image, can still grow into a city symbol that people can embrace. ///

*already have shown, there will be no street that exist without having one. Here public art loses its value", Debbaut Says.*<sup>24</sup> "You see this in the places where we use it: on roundabouts, or places where we do not know what else to install there anymore," Van Stiphout complements. According to both, when art is visible on a roundabout, a real interaction with the place is omitted, since it does not enter a relation or dialogue with this context. It is, therefore, necessary that artists will become more directly involved in what happens, to really connect with the public place, without losing their artistic autonomy and knowledge. Otherwise "it is used as something aesthetic, as a decoration", Van Stiphout argues. As he continues: "The main problem is that the work is predefined to a high extent. The public place where the artist needs to relate to is an ordinary place in a building, whereby his artistic freedom is limited." The increased need for controlling public space is clearly visible here, given the fact that the artwork must fit into a predefined framework.

*(2A + 2B + 2C) In the reconstruction of the central station of Eindhoven, Roosegaarde's artwork also needed to be fit in the city's image, "where technology, design and knowledge are connected together under the metaphor of light," as Verbocht explains. The design for this new artwork was an interactive light wall built in the old passage of the central hall. "And the strength of the work should rely on the fact Eindhoven does not only makes clear choices, but is supported by specific examples. The art application at the station has to exhale this," Verbocht continues her story*<sup>25</sup>.

---

<sup>24</sup> Conversation with Debbaut

<sup>25</sup> Conversation Verbocht on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 17

*Part of the creation was to present the station as a travel domain. Verbocht: "If you look at the central concepts like travel, identity of the station, network, and movement, but also light as a theme, space as a network, empathy as a brand of Eindhoven, you have the most important assumptions that were guiding our decision." At this point, Van Stiphout contemplates: "In this current discourse of public art the brand name of the artist played a more important role. Many artists and designers contribute to the marketing of the city."*

*Daan Roosegaarde at the central station of Eindhoven is, therefore, a good case for portraying the current discourse of art in the public space. Being a well-known artist, Roosegaarde "might have a lot of freedom, but that it must be an interactive light artwork in a façade, was already confirmed," Van Stiphout argues. To realise an artwork that is meaningful to the common crowd, but on the other hand remains independent / intrinsic in its content and context, seems to be a difficult task. It is the challenge to find a solution in the middle, as the conversations above have illustrated. And Although Kosuth's text is not directly accessible to all, "its power lies in the fact it is placed within a special location, while being a text, where it really feels connected," Van Stiphout concludes<sup>26</sup>. This way, the artwork seems to be more autonomous than the current light wall, since Kosuth had more freedom in his realization process than Roosegaarde during 2016/17. Although Roosegaarde could deal with these requirements while maintaining his own technological applications (being a business artist),*

*artists should get more space and time to respond from their own knowledge in today's policy (Van Stiphout, personal conversation, 2017). As he concludes, we need to start thinking again what public art really should be nowadays.*

---

<sup>26</sup> Conversation Van Stiphout on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 17

**NOTE 8.**

I visit Marjolijn van der Meijden at the CBK Rotterdam on the 3th of May 2017, 10:00 AM on the recommendation of Van Stiphout, since Rotterdam is used as an exemplary city in terms of its public art discourse - they approach it very deeply and from above. It has been clearly stated in this chapter that art in public space is inextricably linked to the city's image and the cultural policy. In my conversation with Van der Meijden it becomes clear that especially the way in which public art is concerned is the current task. Because Rotterdam was bombed during WW II, like Eindhoven, it hardly had anything to rebuild: the modern city has been revived, which gave the opportunity to restart. The artist received, therefore, the task of giving colour to the city, such as post-war images and murals, to commemorate the war in a different way than by crosses. Artworks that people really love until now, because it implies meaning.

In Rotterdam, the word 'together' is central. There is no ruling "high art elite", since it is not a city known for its museums (like Amsterdam). It existed, and still exists, in an open playing field, which is the common reason why a lot of artists move to Rotterdam: they can have a lot of input, possibilities and space. In addition, every citizen has the opportunity to lift something from the ground, providing that they finance it themselves. Therefore, the art-flow is too large. Van der Meijden: "When I started to work here, I saw some works of art in the city, then you had some kind of flirt between the different disciplines. That is quite normal, but then you still had art, design and fashion. Design was not yet a 'Blokker'-like word, it was another promise. [...] At one point, more space was made to mix those disciplines, and artists were very different, less autonomous, more outward, with a vision that was very social, like Daan pretends." Therefore, the position of the artworks changed over time. Where the monumental artworks mentioned above could be placed in public space during that early days, today that's hardly possible: the idea behind the work has to be built from the outset, to eventually come true. Like Eindhoven, Rotterdam also sees the possibilities for the city, and the contribution of the public. When the public want something, they must come up with a plan. The fulfilment of this space therefore occurs, inter alia, to the needs of the public. In addition, the work will never again exist forever: the public space is always dynamic, and the artwork literally behaves into that dynamic. That means that it presumably will disappear in the future. ///

These conversations clarify that the current public art discourse can no longer depend on the artists' autonomy, because public space has been put under pressure. In a world full of images, full of advertising, full of colours and sounds, everyone wants to be visible and be seen: both in the physical and in the digital world. That Eindhoven uses the public space to put the city on the map and expresses itself through art, sounds logical. However, when considering Eindhoven's discourse with public art based on the theories mentioned above, significant tensions emerge. Those theories concluded that public art can play an important role in society because it can confuse people, let them stand still, and let them take a different perspective. When a public artwork is well placed, it can even contribute to the public debate: because it sends a message to the world and provides for the necessary intervention. Precisely because the current public space is under pressure and the human position in this space loses equal accessibility, art can help us look around, to the other, the stranger, to what is not known. But it can also take us out of our safe, confined comfort bubble in order to show us what we already know, but perhaps do not see. But the theories also showed that there must be space and possibilities for artists to do so. As shown, the current dealings with art leads to artists to yield under pressure because of the many demands on artistic practises. This may be part of the current time, but with too much requirements, the strength of the work can be affected.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

In Eindhoven's case, with emphasis on the station, contemporary public art has a different role in a difficult situation. Within Eindhoven's Central Station, Kosuth's artwork from 1996 and Roosegaarde's artwork from 2017 are located a few meters apart, which is helpful to outline the current tension between autonomy and engagement, between in- and outside, between art and design. As previously described, Kosuth's work was placed in 1996 from Kosuth's own intrinsic motivation to place the work right there, which will be examined more detailed in the next chapter of this thesis. Kosuth's work seems to have an autonomous value since the possible function of the work for the city was -and still is- no longer considered or questioned. Hence, after all these years, *Play of Advice* still depends on its status. This happens more often, as also became evident in the example of *The Flying Pins*, where the public does not know the deeper meaning but still assigns a value; because it "belongs to Eindhoven". Where many assign value to images of post-war monuments or icons, because they can identify with it, it becomes clear that other artworks can thus also provide a status over time. For instance, in the current reconstruction of Eindhoven's Central Station, *Play or Advice* has been retained. The problem outlined by Vaessens, that the public wants to be able to identify with the work, is not necessarily a leading factor. Over time, an artwork can become a symbol for the city, even when it is a yellow pin.

In addition, the way *Play of Advice* was realized in '96 would fit well in Doorman's ideal picture, since the artist remains true to him/herself and

goes beyond the walls of the art world with a message that is not semi-committed but truly meaningful to the world it is located in (the message of this work is further analysed in the next chapter). However, as Smets put forth, these types of public artworks cannot be realized anymore, given the changing policy. The autonomy of the artist in public space has been reduced, because the question comes no longer from *within* the art world, but from *outside*, as described by Gielen and van Winkel (2012). This is also the case in Eindhoven, where the art project of Daan Roosegaarde is not led from within the arts but from outside. Creating art for public space is a difficult task, since there are many different factors to take into consideration, and many people have a different opinion about the work, such as the general public and the art expert. In addition, the requirements for the artwork are also imposed outside the art world nowadays: a difficult contemporary scenario, because it can undermine the artist's voice. Various indicating factors have emerged from the theory, to which a public artwork should be complied anno 2017, drawn from the art world itself. This list is able to test whether contemporary, commissioned artworks still meets these requirements. The operation of *Play of Advice* will be 'tested' by this list in the fourth part of this chapter.

What I can say already is that the way in which Roosegaarde's artwork was realized evidently outlines the current public art discourse, which is often generated in a professional context. Since requirements for the light wall were clearly established, the work should be able to fulfil a function (city image, city branding) that is immediately visible in the work itself. This may very well have a generally positive impact on Eindhoven. When the one-

sided appearance of many public spaces, including stations, is raised, it can be said that the restructured station in Eindhoven really values the city's own image. The new artwork by Roosegaarde, visible across the horizontal axis of the passage, immediately welcomes the traveller with the identity Eindhoven stands for, a textbook example of city-branding. However, even though Roosegaarde can meet this demand with his business-like art approach up to a certain extent, we may wonder whether this is his best work. Does executing clear requirements mean, therefore, that the content of the work transforms into an aesthetic identity confirmation? Where is the artist in this story? Does he/she still matter? Another difficult point is that the work can also be too well-integrated into the environment, so that it is almost impossible to distinguish it as art, as stated by Smets. This may apply to Roosegaarde's work in Eindhoven. Is the artwork still recognized as art? Perhaps it does not really matter for the city of Eindhoven when this work is approached as design, and neither for Roosegaarde. However, for the position and dealing with art in the public space, it really does. This can even cause a tension between the social relevance of the quotation by Kosuth and its possible new function as design.

As the city of light, Eindhoven widely experiments and innovates with light applications, as confirmation of the city's image. This confirmation appears to be the starting point for city-branding, since the artwork puts the city on the map by attaching the name to it. Despite the fact that Roosegaarde often generates applied works, an artwork always has a message. The role of art is thus seen from a different perspective than from the belief in the intrinsic power of art. Given the fact autonomy still existed in 1996, but that we

couldn't maintain it, we need to reconsider what public art really means, as already argued by Van Stiphout. At this moment, both in Eindhoven and Rotterdam, two progressive, modern and dynamic cities, public art has the function to shape and express the power, the identity and story of the city. It is important that the work of art relates to the space, since this space narrates its past right into the present day. As already seen, there are different perspectives towards the current policy, but in the content of the public work itself there is a common aim that art needs to stimulate a dialogue with the passant and the context without being purely esthetical decoration. In order to maintain this aim, the content of the work as proclaimed by the artist must be taken seriously.

For Eindhoven, it is advisable to keep up with the friction between art and design. As demonstrated, the work of art changes to design when the artist no longer plays a leading role, when being purely the performer playing its part. Because Eindhoven stands out to be a design city, many of the environmental interventions are processed from an professional context, by commissions. However, this should not be confused with art: given art is essentially function-less. Currently, there is little room for art because the city strongly emphasizes its image as frontrunner in technology, knowledge and light is. But when all artworks in public space fit under Eindhoven's metaphor of light and innovation, this can also result in a repetition of the same, instead of realising something really new and disruptive. Besides, there is an exciting chance that the works by Kosuth and Roosegaarde will compete with one another; given that the overall medium is light. This may also effect the initial meaning of *Play of Advice* as an artwork. Due to

increased focus on applied work and light applications in public space, the significance of light became more monotonous and can be interpreted as another designative application on the street. This multitude can affect the strength of Kosuth's work, given that it will be approached more as a city mark than as an autonomous work of art.

Hence, innovation seems to be the current decisive factor, but with limited space. In the end, when the value of the artist's intrinsic mind is no longer a priority, but innovation is achieved by design, it can be wondered if art still needs to be placed in Eindhoven; and whether this is still important to the city. If not, Eindhoven can deny art and confirm design. If so, the listed requirement for public art arisen from the theory can help to handle the status quo with care.

## Conclusion

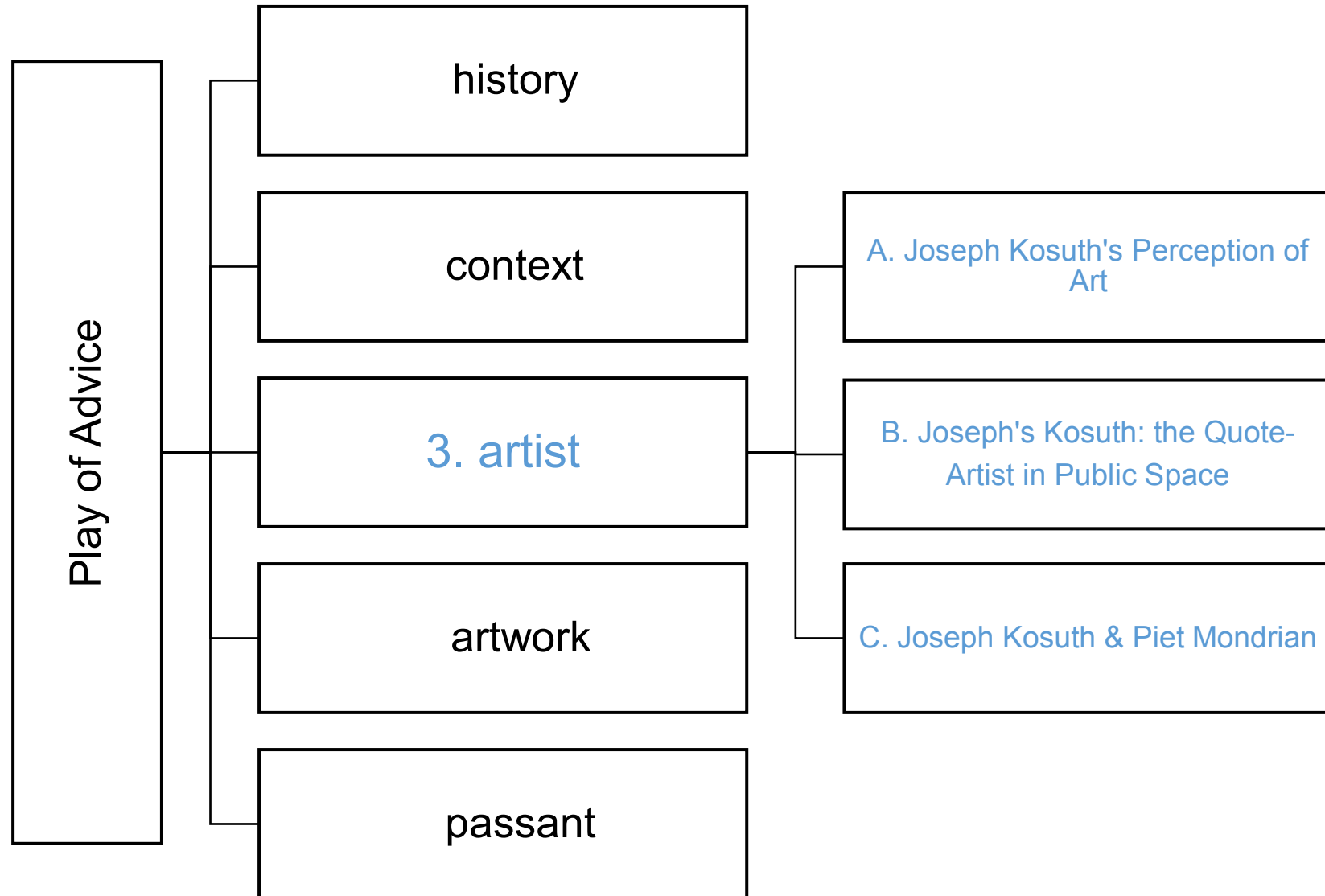
In this chapter, I illustrated the functioning of the 'public context' in which *Play of Advice* exists, and what the position of the artwork is within this place. Both the conversations and collective documents provided critical approaches towards the current existence of public art. It is established that the public space is under a significant amount of pressure nowadays. Its 'function' to be an equal domain for starting conversations and meeting the other, as stated by different theories, is mainly regulated by control and surveillance. Therefore, it has changed in its core. Even though Eindhoven aims to be open to public participation and involvement in public space, the Central Station, as eye-catcher of the city, is changing too with the influence of the closed gates. Originally, the station should function as a decor of different social worlds and activities between people at the same time: a domain of vitality and diversity, vitality and meetings. However, this very important meeting place it is not maintained. Despite the fact that most of the passengers in the station are walking fast and have a specific goal in mind, they are catching glimpses of everything around, so the station should breathe a pleasant atmosphere. Today it is no longer accessible to all. The 'rare other' has thus become a specific group. The bubble remains (in the fifth chapter of this thesis, different experiences of the people in the station will be discussed in detail), which has a major effect on the extent to which Eindhoven is intended to be 'public'. The station passage always has affiliations with the city, which is commonly recognized as something valuable. When closing the passageway this will become (partly) lost.

The position of the work of art has also changed by these developments. As revealed, the position of art in public space can expose these structures, including the mentioned inequality and the political and economic forces. But this proves to be a difficult task, and precisely these forces change its shape. At the very moment art is subordinated to the question of civil society, government, and third parties. It must fit in the governing policy often realized on commissions. The born hybrid artist must be able to deal with these environmental factors and the stipulated requirements, whilst also remaining stubborn with his own artistic character. When he or she is absent, the work changes into the answer on an applied quest, whereby it balances on the verge of becoming design. This current relationship with art is not surprising, as it is inextricably linked to the neoliberal society in which we live, focused on the individual. With Roosegaarde as an eye-catcher for the city, and the light wall as a form of city branding, a recent approach and vision of art is shown. The space of freedom has given up place, has become smaller, and it seems to be up to the city to depend on how the artist should handle this. In Eindhoven, the design of the city seems to be thus strong that other art is more difficult to justify. If Eindhoven wishes to maintain art in public space, without it becoming purely design, the freedom and independence that Kosuth had in 1996 needs to be kept in mind, given that the artist should remain present in order not to harm the content of the artwork, and to not become biased.





YOU'RE CURRENTLY IN THE **THIRD PART** OF THIS THESIS:



## PART 3: THE ARTIST

In spite of the fact that works of art are increasingly realised on a commission, *Play of Advice* was founded in 1996 from the artist's conviction. This third chapter aims to find out what the meaning of *Play of Advice* is for both the context and the passant within this context, as seen from Kosuth's eyes. What does he want to achieve with his work? What kind of reaction should his work evoke? Can it be established what the message of this site-specific work means for/ within this context? To figure this out I will undertake three different analytical steps:

1. I close-read the well-known essay *Art after Philosophy*, from 1969. Here, Kosuth conveys a modernistic approach relying on the avant-gardist idea of autonomy. This essay is widely understood as an artistic manifesto that is published in three parts in *Studio International*, vol. 178 in Londen (1969), and will provide insight into his own artistic vision and ideology behind the work.
2. I focus on Kosuth's reasoning for presenting quotations in public spaces by means of two interviews. The first one is published in the Dutch newspaper *Trouw* in 1998, the second one exists as explanatory text for the exhibition *A Play: The Herald Tribune, Kafka and a Quote* (1992), written by Associate Curator Phyllis Rosenzweig. This way, Kosuth's motives behind the context for his work are portrayed.
3. I take a closer look at Kosuth's contribution for *Travaux Publics* in specific, which consists of two works: A). The text Kosuth wrote for Peninsula's portfolio *Travaux Publics [ Public Works ]*, which I interpret based on the earlier results of this chapter. B). The artwork *Play of Advice* at Eindhoven Central Station, whereby I study various qualitative sources in which Kosuth pronounces the various choices this artwork includes, consisting of: the choice for a quote from Mondrian, the choice for the Central Station concourse, and the choice for the primary yellow neon tubes.

Together, these three steps provide insight into Kosuth's motives behind this work.

#### NOTE 9.

Kosuth has been central in my own thinking for a long time. In the beginning of this year I started my paper about his work *One and Three Chairs*, entitled *The Understanding of an Object – Defining ‘Chair’ to a Mars man*, with the following words

In life, we relate ourselves to everything and to everyone around us. My view is different than yours. Besides, our view is constantly changing, it depends on space and time. When you go out tonight- have some drinks with friends- and you’ll look again tomorrow morning, you will think: ‘How could I see the world in a completely different way than yesterday?’ View depends on everything. On the time, on the light, on your state of mind, your perspective. During the final year at the art academy I asked myself if, and to what extent, we are able to read and touch the colour of the sky. If we can grasp the moment of observation, to bring it closer. And how we have to deal with various reproduction layers to conduct the most objective reflection of the ‘real’. In essence, this isn’t possible. Reality can’t be caught. In the end of my art project, that’s what I concluded. However, my work did offer insight in how we -as human beings- aren’t possible to grasp the moment. That we’re not able to reproduce it into an objective copy, to make it ours. Because in the end, the moment itself is already gone. And thereby, the copy isn’t real (anymore). With that answer I was satisfied. (Voetman, 2016)

In several diary fragments of my time at the art academy I repeatedly wrote about my ambition to capture reality as objectively as possible in an artwork: something that is impossible, given that the artwork always exists as a reproduction-of-reality. In addition, we will always be guided by our feeling, emotion, judgment, and interpretation. This way, we look from our own frame, and we will never be able to fully understand the other. Art itself cannot be understood objectively, and does not exist objectively. What it *can* do, is mirror these barriers of emotion, sentiment, judgment and interpretation. When the artwork is based on an object / phenomenon / case that exist in reality, outside the context of art (such as a chair, such as the air, such as water), it can reproduce it where possible, in order to let us understand. Without the artwork, that chair stays a chair, and the water stays water. The work of art therefore asks the question: how (consciously) do we consider it? Where can we join our minds and where not? Since everyone reads and interprets in a different way, art can purely provide a handbook for *how* we can look and understand.

And this is exactly what Kosuth tries to stimulate. ///

- Before paraphrasing Kosuth's essay it is helpful to briefly contextualise Kosuth's artistry in time. Van den Braembussche provides a clear sketch within his examination *Denken over kunst* (2012). As Van den Braembussche describes, Kosuth's artistry can be approached as a response to the leading artists in the time he started his public career in 1967; among which Pollock, De Kooning and Rothko. According to Kosuth, these artists had no control over the interpretation of their work, what was left to well-known art critics such as Clement Greenberg. Kosuth strongly opposed this view since he claimed that the artist himself had to bear the moral responsibility for his/her work. This way, the artist had to become the forerunner of his own work, by critically looking at his/ her own artworks. As Van den Braembussche states, the artwork exists for Kosuth as soon as it enters the mind of the artist. The final realization reflects the intention (the idea) of the artist himself. It is therefore mainly the reflection of the artist on the work of art without giving way to the interpretation of the other. In essence, the artwork, based on Wittgenstein's approach to analytical philosophy, is the idea itself (Van den Braembussche, 2012, p. 71-78).

### Step 1: A Close Reading of Kosuth's Artists Manifesto

(3A) In *Art After Philosophy and After* (1991) Joseph Kosuth (1945) casts a critical look at the Formalist art that existed before the rise of Marcel Duchamp, as briefly discussed in chapter one. This previous, Formalist art (read: paintings and sculptures) was self-confirming rather than self-questioning. Kosuth's believed that art must critically look at its own position being an artwork, otherwise it becomes 'mindless' art. Since these Formalistic works of art did not add new knowledge about art at all, and reinforced the passionate belief in themselves even more, this art was nothing but conforming. To illustrate, these a priori concepts of painting made the painting itself a priori: impossible to question in nature, because it already was an established given.

Fortunately, Duchamp - being the pioneer of conceptual art - developed a new radical 'language' through the use of unusual materials and methods expressed through his well-known ready-mades (artwork consisting of everyday object or everyday text). According to Kosuth, all art after Duchamp spoke - and is still speaking - this conceptual language to a greater or lesser extent. To illustrate the tone of this conceptual language Kosuth quotes different conceptual artists at the beginning of his manifesto, among which Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, Ad Reinhardt and the philosopher Wittgenstein; who he greatly adores since Wittgenstein studied the function of language as medium for knowledge and communication. As Sol LeWitt wrote (1967): "The idea becomes a machine that makes art," or Ad Reinhardt (1963): "The one thing to say about art is that it is one thing. Art is art-as-art and everything else is everything else. Art as art is nothing but

art. Art is not what is not art." Kosuth clearly finds himself in these quotes, being a great conceptual artist himself.

Overall, Kosuth's artistry attempts to disconnect art from aesthetics. Where the status of aesthetics was linked to beauty and taste by philosophers, to the personal and subjective, aesthetics and art began to interfere. However, Kosuth aimed to disconnect this intertwinement; 'since conceptual art has nothing to do with aesthetics'. As he states, with the advent of the developed language by Duchamp (ready-mades), each object could become - without being or becoming aesthetical - an art object when being presented in an artistic context. By doing so, the content of the conceptual work - the idea - always refers to this context. Hence, Kosuth's perception attempt to grasp the core of the idea of art. Being an advocate of the analytical artist, he preferred science, logic and mathematics rather than philosophical judgments. The fact that Kosuth highlights scientific philosophers such as Freud, Hegel, Lyotard and, as previously written, Wittgenstein, underpins this preference. Yet, in this view, the artist is not the same as the scientist. Where science is something useful, art certainly is not: it exist for its own sake, relying on the modernist avant-garde concept of autonomy.

In line with this attitude, Kosuth's understanding of the value behind the work can be logically outlined. He sketches for instance the value of Cubism, which does not rely on visual qualities (such as the use of certain colours and shapes), but on the idea behind the work. These colours and shapes are merely the language of the artwork, and in no way its meaning. The

visual aspects are therefore only needed to indicate the idea. This final artwork is the presentation of the artist's intention (the idea itself), whereby the *art becomes the definition of art*. Art functions, therefore, as proposition when presented within this context of art, being the comment on art itself. Within his own 'idea' Kosuth explores how we experience, respond and understand both language and objects. Because reality is determined by our own perspective, art has the task to re-indicate this too. When the artwork is used - for instance - as an object above the dining table (read: outside the art context) it is unrelated to the idea. This is because its placement has nothing to do with the idea of the artist, and its possible aesthetic decoration above this table is - above all - irrelevant to art (Kosuth, 1991).

Looking closer at his own work, Kosuth defines his work *Leaning Glass* (1965) as the first 'conceptual' artwork he made, explaining that

It consists of any five foot square of glass to be leaned against any wall. I was shortly after this that I got interested in water because of its formless, colorless quality. I used water in every way I could imagine –blocks of ice, radiator stream, maps with areas of water used in a system, picture postcard collections of bodies of water, and so on until 1966 when I had a photostat made of the dictionary definition of the word water, which for me at that time was a way of just presenting the *idea* of water. (Kosuth, 1991, p. 30)

With these words Kosuth illustrates the process underlying the ultimate finding of the core understanding of the 'idea' of the abstraction 'Water',

which later extends to abstractions of abstractions such as 'Meaning'. He used the dictionary definition of an understanding once before, in order to address the idea 'chair'. This famous work, called *One and Three Chairs*, consists of a tripartite communication of the idea of a chair: the physical chair, a black and white photograph of this chair, and the linguistic definition of chair from the dictionary. This work, thus, allows the viewer to discover the concept (idea) of the chair itself, raising huge concepts and pronunciations, that go back to the nature of art itself. One year later, Kosuth participated in The Museum of Normal Art -a museum for and from artists that lasted a few months- where he presented his work *15 People Present Their Favorite Book*. As he explains, this work was a secret 'one-man-show' for which he induced quotations off other contributors of the Museum of Normal Art, among which a quote from himself. All these quotations were artistic statements of their conceptual works (Kosuth, 1991). In line with this idea, the use of conceptual quotes has been implemented even in public space; as central in the next section of this chapter.

### 3.A. Joseph Kosuth's Perception of Art

Reading this manifesto makes clear that Kosuth's conceptual art scrutinises the (earlier) existence of art. Where Kosuth disconnects art from aesthetics, the 'idea of....' certainly connects to the identification and understanding of both language and objects. In his conceptual ideology, Kosuth translates an idea into a linguistic 'form'. This 'form' seems to be legible for anyone, since we are all people with certain ideas of 'understanding', and - of course - understand in a certain way (for instance: everybody constitutes an understanding of the object 'chair'). The 'guidance' Kosuth's conceptual art

offers may, therefore, contribute to reducing the subjective interpretations as encouraged by, for instance, Pollock's intrinsic expressions. Pollock's work are certainly more secluded than Kosuth's art, since his work can cause many possible interpretations and different feelings with its spectator. In conceptual art, on the contrary, the open space for complete different interpretation is captured. For example, while looking closer to the artwork *One and Three Chairs*, we can wander in the artist's footsteps, climb into his mind, while asking ourselves whether the tripartite image captures 'chair', and/or whether it is impossible to capture 'the idea chair' anyway: which is exactly what Kosuth wants to achieve.

The next question to ask is, what the position of conceptual art within public everyday life can be; considering the work mainly exists to criticise and scrutinise art itself. *Play of Advice*, as one of the site-specific works Kosuth has generated since 1990, exists in the public space. This is the place where the artwork directly relates to life, and where the non-art public can approach the artwork as well. What is Kosuth's philosophy for presenting his work on the corner of the street, high up against the wall, actually *being* in society; while proclaiming a message to art? How does the public artwork remain the 'idea' without becoming the aesthetically object above the dining table?

## **Step 2: Linguistic Interventions in Public Space**

(3B) Although there is not much written about Kosuth's underlying idea of his public quotations, there have been some interviews in which he discusses his main motives. In the conversations between Rosenzweig and Kosuth in July and August 1992, it becomes clear that Kosuth approaches 'context' as something that organises *what* and *how* we see. The existence of an artwork depends on the atmosphere of that context, as for instance architecture is inevitable and neutralizing for the environment, or the museum always providing a context of 'accurate research'. The context, therefore, plays a major role in Kosuth's artistry. It is the 'material' in which he works, that 'frames' the world without being completely neutral (there are, for instance, (political) structures visible within this context) (Kosuth, in Rosenzweig, 1992). Furthermore, the meaning of art in that context depends on the context itself. For Kosuth, the context of his work must be a context of 'significance'. "While such work can be anywhere and use anything, its morality is provided by the artist who takes responsibility for the meaning that is made" (Kosuth, in Rosenzweig, 1992, para. 2).

The interview between Kosuth and Bosma (1998) focuses specifically on Kosuth's generated public works for the university buildings of Oudemanhuispoort and the Binnegasthuis in Amsterdam, titled *Located Text*. This article clarifies how Kosuth deals with the context-as-material. The first thing that is discussed, are the used quotes *within* this context. For *Located Text* Kosuth used quotes by Dutch thinkers and scientists who were

associated with the University of Amsterdam (previously called Athenaeum Illustre), such as Norbert Elias and Paul Scholten (Bosma, 1998). Since he commonly generates quotes from thinkers of the country in which he works (and in the common language of that country), his work is fully intertwined within the context itself. However, the work can easily become lost in this context at the same time, since the quotes do not shout or scream. This gives them a 'sober' character, which is precisely Kosuth's intention. As he explains, when the work is recognizable as an artwork, it takes back to traditional ideas about art, whereby it can become a decorative piece: something he really wants to undermine (Kosuth, in Bosma, 1998). This makes clear that Kosuth doesn't want to appeal to society, but positions himself rather in the service of the context; where the work should react consciously.

Although the work does not stand out and still exists as a reference to art, his public quotations have a necessary level of accessibility (Kosuth, in Bosma, 1998). However, since we all live on different 'islands', speaking different forms of language, the passant with artistic knowledge can certainly find more meaning in the work. Yet, also the non-art expert should be able to experience something in the public quotation too (Kosuth, in Bosma, 1998). Kosuth does not prescribe how we should read the work, precisely because the passive culture industry (popular / mass culture) decides too much how we should think and look (Kosuth, in Bosma, 1998). Kosuth, therefore,

centralises the required evidence of the spectator itself within his work. While existing as linguistic moments in public space, the quotes proclaim an artistic 'voice' to the passant (Kosuth, in Bosma, 1998). In order to make this quote 'fit' in the location, the font style of the quote is an important part of these site-specific quotations. The font style: his vehicle to present the idea, as a sign-language that reflects the time and the context in which the work exist. The font Helvetica, for example, reflected the sixties: being a cool and radical letter. Since this font was becoming more commercialised over the years, its meaning changed (Kosuth, in Bosma, 1998). Kosuth, therefore, started to use other fonts over time. The work for the university was, logically, presented in a 'serious' and 'conservative' font, where Kosuth referred to the progressive thinking of the university itself. In addition, the use of neon would call a rather 'vulgar' association that would not correspond to the university at all (Kosuth, in Bosma, 1998). Given that *Located Text* has been performed two years after *Travaux Publics*, it is remarkable that this 'vulgar' neon indeed belonged, among others, to Eindhoven. The operation of this neon is discussed later in this chapter.

### *3.B. Joseph Kosuth: the Quote-Artist in Public Space*

The way Kosuth consciously chose a quote from a thinker, writer or artist, that belongs to that particular place in public, requires a font corresponding to the atmosphere of that place. This illustrates that Kosuth's site-specific work does not only concern art being art as art, but takes the context into -



account as well. Since the context influences the work, and the public within that context will be influenced by the work too, the work enters a dialogue with them. It can be said that Kosuth's public work goes beyond 'the idea' that art purely exist in / gets its meaning from the context of art. In addition, being an international American artist, it seems that Kosuth wants to return something locally to that place of existence: to stay as close to that place (its essence) as possible. Therefore, the work needs to be something that belongs there; both in content (the quote) and execution (the font, the style of the quote). This explains why Kosuth only uses quotes from people who have a direct relationship to the country/ city in which he works. By doing so, Kosuth certainly continuously identifies both the person who wrote the quote and the public space the work needs to relate to.

It can be said that Kosuth has generated the work *Play of Advice* in the same manner. He used a quote from Mondrian, as a Dutch artist, whereby the quote needed to be realised in 'Mondrian's-yellow'. This makes clear that Kosuth, on the one hand, stands up modestly for the place and the client when he tries to grab the core of the place. On the other hand, however, Kosuth knows very well what he wants and what needs to be done in order to reach the best linguist translation (conceptual artwork) as possible. Here, Kosuth seems to wonder about questions such as: what is this for kind of place, how do I mirror the 'idea' of this context, and how do I get to the core?

To dive deeper into Kosuth's ideology behind the placement of the *Play of Advice*, I will interpret both his submitted textual contribution to the portfolio as published by Peninsula, and the quote as placed at the Central Station itself.

### Step 3, section 1: Interpreting *A Comment on Intentions*

(3A) The text, *A Comment on Intentions*, was submitted for the portfolio publication *Travaux Publics [Public Works]*, at 11.11.96 and is published at page 55 of the publication by Peninsula. This text describes Kosuth's vision and belongs to his contribution to the overall exhibition *Travaux Publics* (printed and physical). In this first part of the third step, I interpret this text based on the above results. The text is as follows:

Line:

- |       |  |         |  |
|-------|--|---------|--|
| 1).   | Art can manifest itself in all of the ways in which human intentions can manifest itself.  | 7-8).   | A focus on meaning, by necessity, has focused our concerns on a variety of issues around language and context.   |
| 1-4). | The task for the artist is to put into play works of art unfettered by the limited kinds of meaning which objects permit (2), and succeed in having them become not the autonomous text of structuralism, but the production of artists as authors within a discourse (3), once concretized through subjective commitment and comprised of the making process (4). | 8-9).   | These issues pertain to the reception and production of works of art themselves.   |
| 4-5). | It is the historically defined agency of the artist working within a practice that sees itself as such a process, that an artist's work becomes believable as art within society.  | 9-10).  | That aspect of the questioning process some now call 'institutional critique' began here, also, and it originated with conceptual art's earlier works.   |
| 6-7). | To do that, work must satisfy deeper structures of our culture than that surface which reads in the market as tradition and continuity.  |         | WHITESPACE   |
| 7).   | The more enriched our understanding of that 'text' of art becomes, so does our understanding of culture.   | 11-12). | The relevance of this to the question of intention is in what it implies: the disappearance, perhaps with finality, of the threshold between what had been the art object (that which is now simply art) and the intention of its maker. |

- 12-14). Indeed, there can no longer really be a separation between work and the intention of the artist: the work of art, in this case, is manifested intention.
- 14-16). Ultimately, we might want to ask, of course, if intention is the text itself, or the reproduction of the screen upon which the greater social text appears –even if the fragments and overlaps are of many projections: race, creed, gender?

#### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? (Interpretation)

In the text above it is stated again that the artist should question the limited right of existence of (Formalist) art, by focusing on the meaning of art itself and to deeply investigate it. The idea, hiding in the mind of the artist, can be translated into a conceptual form when (s)he approaches art as a process, not as a fixed entity. When taking into account societal structures and patterns of culture, art can be really fundamental to society (at this point, this text for Peninsula's portfolio goes a step further than the manifesto *Art after Philosophy* as paraphrased above, given that the work responds to all these matters). Here, art dives deeper than the superficial art market narrates (popular culture sends a certain direction to look at) which distracts our culture. Just like institutional criticism, conceptual artworks are in a position to question and to re-contextualise. Still, Kosuth has some doubts about the final existence of the artwork. Is the final artwork the text itself - being art as definition of art -, or should we consider the final work as the text that directly reflects the culture and social processes within its context? Is the meaning

of the work of art intrinsically present in the work of art itself? Does the artwork get its meaning from the dialogue with the spectator? These are questions Kosuth seems to struggle with, considering that artworks refer to art, but also have a major social, political and cultural relevance. In that sense, his work is also societally engaged, besides its highly modern, autonomous existence.

In general, Kosuth's work act as a mirror of human intent, since it is able to reveal our approach towards both language and objects. His task as an artist is, therefore, to dive into time and culture, and to deduce our assumptions: both inside and outside the art context: to open one's limited view.

11-11-96 22:49

Galerie Markthalle//

Peter,

Here you are. I hope that it goes through this time. My phone/fax in Stuttgart is:0049-711-640 92 63. I'm only there in the mornings and early evenings. My office tel. at the Kunstakademie is:25 75 179. Best, JK

A COMMENT ON INTENTIONS

Art can manifest itself in all of the ways in which human intention can manifest itself. The task for artists is to put into play works of art unfettered by the limited kinds of meanings which objects permit, and succeed in having them become not the autonomous texts of structuralism, but the production of artists as authors within a discourse, one concretized through subjective commitment and comprised of the making process. It is the historically defined agency of the artist working within a practice that sees itself as such a process, that an artist's work becomes believable as art within society. To do that, work must satisfy deeper structures of our culture than that surface which reads in the market as tradition and continuity. The more enriched our understanding of that 'text' of art becomes, so does our understanding of culture. A focus on meaning, by necessity, has focused our concerns on a variety of issues around language and context. These issues pertain to the reception and production of works of art themselves. That aspect of the questioning process some now call 'institutional critique' began here, also, and it originated with conceptual art's earliest works.

The relevance of this to the question of intention is in what it implies: the disappearance, perhaps with finality, of the threshold between what had been the art object (that which is now simply art) and the intentions of its maker. Indeed, there can no longer really be a separation between the work and the intention of the artist: the work of art, in this case, is manifested intention. Ultimately, we might want to ask, of course, if intention is the text itself, or the production of the screen upon which the greater social text appears--even if the fragments and overlaps are of many projections: race, creed, gender? JOSEPH KOSUTH

12:02 FAX

Joseph Kosuth, New York Studio: fax (212) 941-7139

FAX

TO:

FROM:

DATE:

Peninsula  
attention of Peter Foolen  
Renée Padt  
November 26, 1996

Hallo Peter,

Ik hoorde van Joseph dat hij de stickers heeft ontvangen. Hij is gesigneerd. Het eventuele emboss probleem is daarmee opgelost dat het werk al de krant had gestaan! Zou je mij een invitatie kunnen beloven enkele mensen op de hoogte te stellen.

Verder, stuur je Joseph nog de proeven van de foto en de die wordt gemaakt? We hadden afgesproken dat je dat zou doen te zijn.

Laat je me het weten?

Groeten,

P.01

0031402453491

PETER - does this look like it  
would work, Kit?

Best, -).

PHOTO of  
WORK BEING  
INSTALLED

TO A COMMENT ON INTENTIONS

FROM JOSEPH KOSUTH 3292334787

15:52

1996-11-01

TEXT

TEXT

53491

P.01

vangen.  
bij Yvon  
es dat ik  
faxen?  
ic daar te

**Step 3, section 2: An Interpretation of Mondrian's quotation at Eindhoven Central Station (seen through the eyes of Kosuth)**

(3C) "Conventie, een soort herinnering, is het grootse beletsel om te genieten van leven en kunst." - Piet Mondrian

For his work in Eindhoven, Kosuth posed several requirements: 1). The artwork had to be a text of a Dutch thinker. 2). It had to be realized in neon. 3). It had to be shown at the Central Station Eindhoven. 4). It had to be realized within the primary yellow of Mondrian 5). The English text of Mondrian had to be translated into Dutch.

The artwork that finally came to be came closest to what Kosuth aimed for. To indicate his underlying motives for this artwork, this last part of the third chapter focuses on the following elements:

1. (Determining the quote) The choice for the quote from Mondrian
2. (Determining the place) The choice for the place in the Central Station
3. (Determining the form) The choice for the primary yellow neon tubes

These components are investigated through selected qualitative sources that provide information on these specific principles, which will be connected to the results findings above.

1. The choice for a quote from Mondrian

In 1980, after the *One and Three* - series, Kosuth has started to use quotes from other writers, thinkers, artists, and poets, from the country in which he temporarily works. Initially, these quotes largely have something to say about art itself. First, Kosuth used quotes from Wittgenstein and Freud for the exhibitions *The Play of the Unsayable: Wittgenstein and the Art of the 20th Century* (1989) in Vienna and Brussels, and *The Play of the Unmentionable* (1991) in the Brooklyn Museum (Rosenzweig, 1992). In the upcoming years, the use of quotes became highly embedded in Kosuth's artistry; both in- and outside the art context.

For Kosuth's public work in Eindhoven, a Dutch thinker (artist, etcetera etcetera) had to be cited. In the fax correspondence, listed in chapter one, it is illustrated that prior to the final choice for Mondrian's quote many other considerations - including both other Dutch thinkers and other quotes from Mondrian himself - were examined<sup>27</sup>. The underlying reason for Kosuth's final decision is not further explained in the documented material from Peninsula nor is it described by Kosuth himself. Nevertheless, visible connections can be drawn between Kosuth's choices for certain thinkers. For example, as shown in his manifesto, he quotes many conceptual artists and philosophers with a scientific approach to illustrate his own artistic conception. Kosuth explains his use of theoretical and philosophical texts as

---

<sup>27</sup> At the next two pages, this process underlying the final choice becomes visible

Slechts het bewustzijn van de realiteit kan leiden tot een beter leven.  
Bewustzijn is het resultaat van cultuur.

PIET MONDRIAAN

*Piet*

Tom Lambert  
Fax 0039-142718747

Aam: KOSTWTH  
Joseph Padt  
Renee  
Flom: Pemin Sula, Sin  
Fax: +31 40 245  
ik heb je nog  
met gort,  
Peter Fortle

et zet instructies!  
bij gezet, ik hoop dat ze begrijpen  
schaal, over de instructies voor de plaatsing  
contact hebben. De rekening laat niet geheel dus  
it zien. Maar dat kan in een later stadium, neem ik a  
nummer 020-6278451 (TELEFAX).  
einde voor beiden,

1.  
We can do one of two things: make a work of art, or make an esthetic object. Both are subject to the same laws. But the outcome is altogether different. Let us leave aside the question whether "art" is still necessary. Our goal is the creation of a useful and esthetic environment.

All that is necessary to life is good. And what is good is beautiful.

2  
There is no such thing as National Tradition. And if it exists, than it is a [residue] of the Past not valid now. Human Culture is International, over the Whole World. Only it appears in different forms.

3  
Perhaps they are going too fast, but the whole world is going fast now. It is only important whether one is on the right or the wrong way.

4  
The real value of Modern Art is only the result of the culture of the Past and not its manner of expression. This result is International because Art's Content is everywhere the same. This content is the only true Tradition.

5  
Just as art did not achieve simplicity until it became satiated with frivolous forms, so humanity will not achieve simplicity until it knows excess.

1.  
Wij kunnen twee dingen doen: een kunstwerk maken of een esthetisch voorwerp. Beide zijn onderworpen aan dezelfde wetten. Maar het resultaat is volkomen verschillend. Het gaat niet om de vraag of "kunst" nog noodzakelijk is. Ons doel is het scheppen van een nuttige en esthetische omgeving.

Alles wat noodzakelijk is voor het leven is goed. En wat goed is, is mooi.

2  
Er is niet zoiets als een Eene Nationale Traditie. En als het al bestaat dan is het een [overblijfsel] van het Verleden dat niet meer geldig is. De Menselijke Cultuur is Internationaal, over de Hele Wereld. Het verschijnt slechts in verschillende vormen.

3  
Misschien gaan ze te snel, maar de hele wereld gaat tegenwoordig snel. Het gaat er slechts om of je de goede of de verkeerde kant opgaat.

4  
De werkelijke waarde van de Moderne Kunst is slechts het resultaat van de cultuur van het Verleden en niet zijn manier van uitdrukken. Dit resultaat is Internationaal omdat de Inhoud van de Kunst overal hetzelfde is. Deze inhoud is de enige ware Traditie.

5  
Evenmin als de kunst eenvoud bereikte voordat zij verzadigd raakte met wuften vormen, zo zal de mensheid geen eenvoud bereiken voordat zij overdaad kent.

We can do one of two things: make a work of art, or make an esthetic object. Both are subject to the same laws. But the outcome is altogether different. Let us leave aside the question whether "art" is still necessary. Our goal is the creation of a useful and esthetic environment.

I  
Wij kunnen twee dingen doen: een kunstwerk maken of een esthetisch voorwerp. Beide zijn onderworpen aan dezelfde wetten. Maar het resultaat is volkomen verschillend. Het gaat niet om de vraag of "kunst" nog noodzakelijk is. Ons doel is het scheppen van een nuttige en esthetische omgeving.

II  
Wij kunnen twee dingen doen: we maken een kunstwerk of we maken een esthetisch voorwerp. In beide gevallen gelden dezelfde wetten. Beide zijn onderworpen aan dezelfde wetten. Maar het resultaat is totaal verschillend. Het gaat ons niet om de vraag of "kunst" nog steeds noodzakelijk is. Ons doel is het scheppen van een bruikbare en esthetische omgeving.

EINDE

TO RENEE PADT & JOSEPH KOSUTH

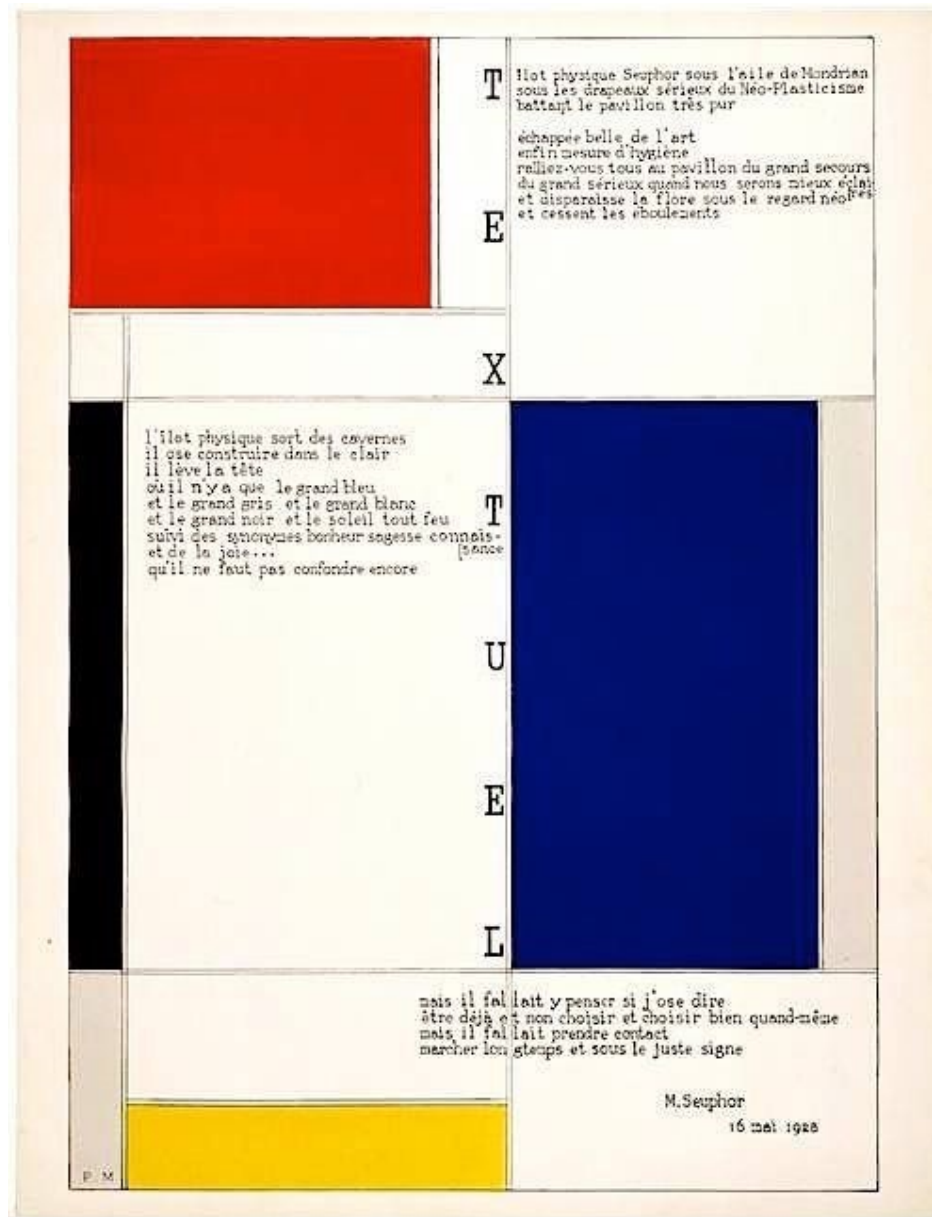
BEST WISMET, PETER FOOLEN  
I'LL CONTACT YOU ON MONDAY!

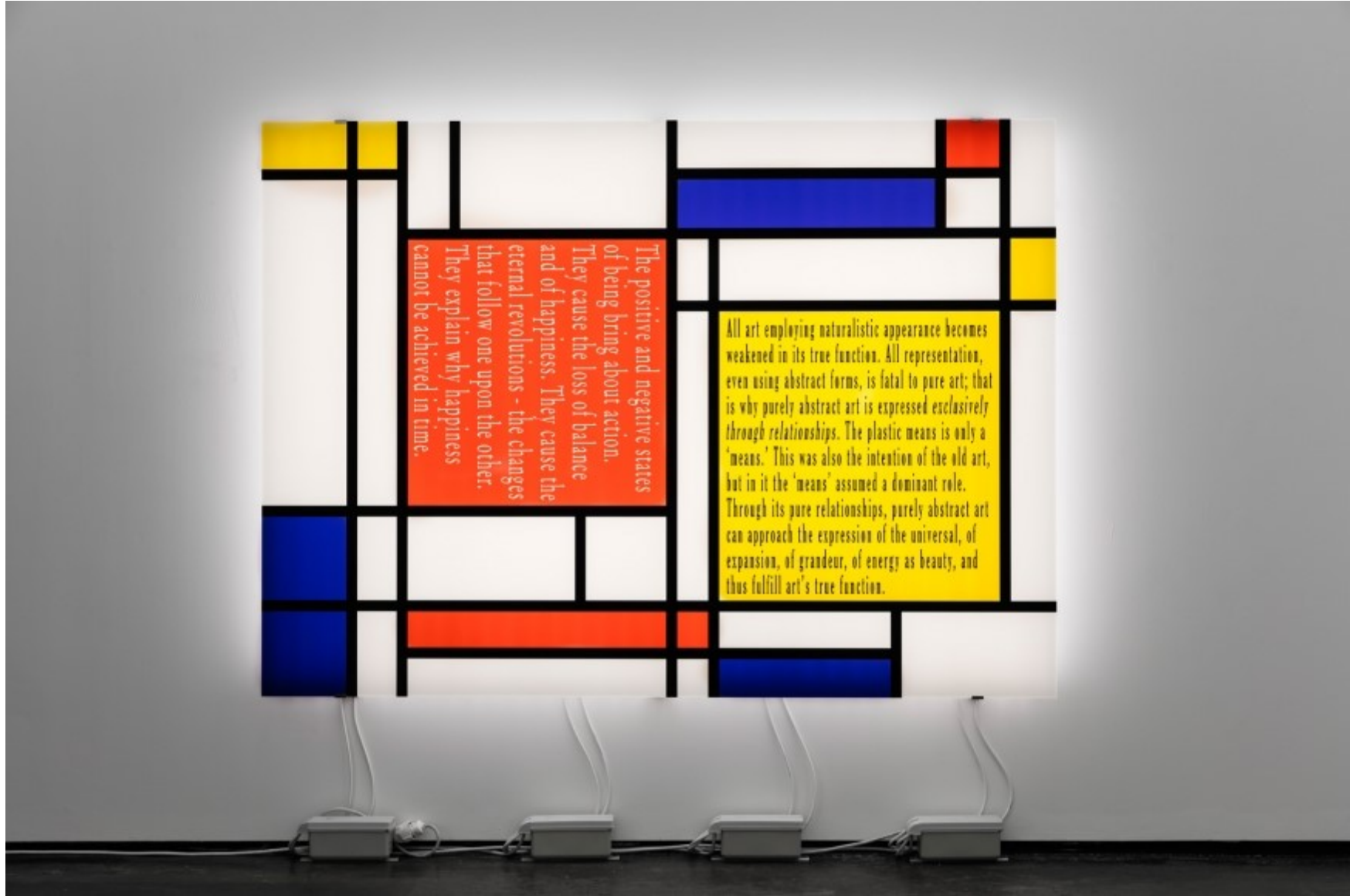


a philosophical comfort zone that reflects better the complexities that I must approach. [...] the nature of my work has necessitated input from a vast variety of sources, since every invitation, commission and so forth very often provides a new cultural and historical context that I must research and work with. It's quite a continuing education! [...] [arts] role in forming our consciousness, how it does it, gives it a political content without having a specific political agenda, which by now has become an agent of disbelief in any case. [...] one cannot separate the 'philosophical analysis' from the work itself. The philosophical question is in the work; it manifests it. [...] I also almost never use a quotation by someone living. If they are dead the meaning is more fixed and part of a specific and somewhat contained package of those meanings generated in that life. If they are alive, and I've made a kind of monument to them, they could later become a mass murderer [...] and those later, additional meanings would be attacked to my work. (Kosuth, 2009, p. 19-34)

This makes clear that the use of quotes has a rudely didactic function, due to the fact that they can teach some 'knowledge' that includes a 'core understanding, which will, in a certain way, never change (by the thinker him/herself). To dive deeper into Kosuth's final decision for a quote from Mondrian, I need to refer to the earlier application of Mondrian's imagery in Kosuth's art; which was already established prior to the group exhibition *Travaux Publics*.

Mondrian's abstract imagery has earned a central place in Kosuth's series called *Mondrian's Work*, a series that seems to refer to Mondrian's artwork *Tableau-poème : textuel*, 1928. This artwork consists of a flat division with primary colours incorporating a text by Michel Seuphor. In a similar way, Kosuth included Mondrian's imagery (both his text and abstract visual language) in this series. When considering Kosuth's decision for Mondrian - being the biggest Dutch preceptor of abstract art and frontrunner of the early 1900s art movement De Stijl (The Style) (Voetman, 2017) - this possible option was, thus, already confirmed. Based on the two sections of this chapter above, the reason for this final quote (which offered the title *Play of Advice*) initially seems to be based on the meaning that Mondrian makes a progressive statement about art, which is something Kosuth intends too. Although Kosuth has not written an explanation for this work, Mondrian's progressive vision - that questioned and pushed the limits of art - seems to correspond with Kosuth's vision of what art should be. In other words, both Kosuth and Mondrian were in favour of this progress that art must always be progressive and questionable, just like this quote aims to touch upon. In addition, Mondrian's quote seems to pronounce something about art, which could mean that the quote - given its content is about the impediment of conventions - connects through the eyes of Kosuth with his own view towards Formalist art. In the first place, it seems that this work wants to *show* art's assumptions and conformations ('conventions'), whereby Mondrian's quote functions as the bearer of Kosuth's moralistic message.





The positive and negative states  
of being bring about action.  
They cause the loss of balance  
and of happiness. They cause the  
eternal revolutions - the changes  
that follow one upon the other.  
They explain why happiness  
cannot be achieved in time.

All art employing naturalistic appearance becomes  
weakened in its true function. All representation,  
even using abstract forms, is fatal to pure art; that  
is why purely abstract art is expressed *exclusively*  
*through relationships*. The plastic means is only a  
'means.' This was also the intention of the old art,  
but in it the 'means' assumed a dominant role.  
Through its pure relationships, purely abstract art  
can approach the expression of the universal, of  
expansion, of grandeur, of energy as beauty, and  
thus fulfill art's true function.

## 2. The choice for the place in the Central Station

(3B) Besides the artwork's reference to art, it also seems to be inextricably guided by the context in which it takes place. Since a public work should take into account all contextual factors (culture, time, environment, atmosphere, the public) the work actually arises from the context itself, the public within that context, and the spirit of time as reflected in the context.

As Kosuth mentions

my notion of context wasn't a limited one, I meant the architectural context quite obviously, and also the historical and cultural context, but also the psychological as well. Really, *all* those aspects that come into play in the production of meaning were contained in the word 'context'. [...] those other elements –the associations, cultural and historical, of a particular text, the psychology of a particular type font, the lighting of a room, the height of a ceiling, and so on– that all participate in the construction of the meaning of that work. (Kosuth, 2009, p. 23-25)

It can be said that *Play of Advice* (the quote, placement, use of neon) directly reflects the existence of the Central Station itself. As Kosuth claims, as an artist, he has the task to dive in our culture and spirit, to capture our assumptions and approach towards language and objects, and to show structures that cannot be disclosed immediately (where it goes beyond philosophy) (Kosuth, in Rosenzweig, 1992). Although it cannot be stated with certainty since there is no explanation of this particular artwork, *Play of Advice* seems to refer to our cultural conventions, that show /

represent / question themselves *through* this artwork. Since the context in which Kosuth work exists needs to be a rich and significant one, the station itself certainly appears to have meaning in Kosuth's approach. This might be attributed to the many contextual factors that become visible at this dynamic spot; something which Kosuth intends to show.

If we return to Kosuth's notion that public art includes a certain stillness and should not necessarily stand out as a work of art, *Play of Advice* can be interpreted as a rapid interruption of the conventional stream in the station, whereby the artwork certainly should not have to impose anything upon the passant/ public. The work of art is, therefore, a kind of coincidence. Because the work is fully infiltrated in the 'being' of the place, the passant is directly part of its meaning, possibly without being aware of it. When, for instance, a bench was placed in front of the artwork in the Central Station concourse, or it was placed on the wall of a café, the work could get a lifted décor: something that it should have exalted as an artwork. For Kosuth, this is not the case. Instead, the work of art exist as an extremely subtle intervention that seems to undermine societies 'fixed look', in order to indicate our culture and time. Whether the message itself should be received directly is the following question, as discussed in the next chapter of this thesis.

In addition, since *Play of Advice* asks the observant viewer to look / catch a glimpse of its existence, it can be said that Kosuth wanted to create a moment for discussion, for reflection, and for a standstill (maybe not physical but certainly mental). This possible interpretation is described by Van den

Braembussche, who makes a connection between Kosuth's quotes and Baudelair's poem *A une passante*. Here, Baudelair wrote about the short moment a man capturing a 'glimpse' or 'flash' of passion from a woman (Van den Braembussche, 2012). According to Van den Braembussche, Kosuth's quotes can be seen as these short passionate interruptions. When walking through the station, the passant needs to relate him/herself to the moment when (s)he catches a glimpse of the yellow neon tubes. Since the earlier proposed 'romantic' wall next to the Paulus church was immediately replaced by Kosuth's personal choice for the wall in the station concourse, this place can possibly be interpreted as the first glimpse Kosuth himself has caught from the city after arriving by train; as a place where the rhythm of everyday is shown, as a significant place for and within a city.

### 3. The choice for neon tubes

*Play of Advice* is not the only artwork in which Kosuth applied neon; he frequently uses this medium, both in- and outside the art context ("I've done large neon public works all over the world" (Kosuth, 2009, p. 23)). Neon, as 'vulgar' imagery, seems to refer to a certain everydayness, since today's society is full-loaded with entertainment, mass- and popular culture (Kosuth, in Bosma, 1998), whereby culture is "being ground down by the powers that speak through market forces, with the result that choices become fewer and dumber" (Kosuth, 2009, p. 21). Neon is, therefore, able to reflect these specific cultural properties of the location where the artwork will be placed (Prinzhorn, in Kosuth, 2009, p. 15-17). "Neon [works] are [...] not permanent at all, they burn out, they break easily, the idea is that it is a type of public writing that becomes replaced... also they have a popular shadow to them,

or popular culture..." (Kosuth, in PMSA, 2017, para. 1). This demonstrates that neon indicates transience, and that it mirrors today's (popular; mass-, commercial- entertainment) culture. Neon, as form of 'public writing', reflects the image / is the language of the (postmodern) twenty-first century city.

Taking a closer look at *Play of Advice*, the neon had to be realised in Mondrian's-yellow, something Kosuth wanted to be test by both powder and paint sample in order to realise the best replica: to reach the highest Mondrian grade possible as translated into his idea of art. It may even be said that the samples had to be tested in order to maintain the colour of the work onwards (as best as possible). At the same time, neon indicates temporality, which shows that the moment does not exist forever: it can pass-by. Thus, Kosuth shows that the work is dependent on the time that is dynamic (as well as culture) and that it is questionable to what extent an artwork can reach the 'core' idea: given it (life, time, culture, understanding) is always changing. The neon (as well as the artwork *an sich*) can, at the one hand, be seen as an attempt to capture the preservation of Mondrian's imagery, but at the same it can be approached as a reference to the temporality of things. Ultimately, Kosuth's works acts in-between fixation and change, between knowing and ignorance, which is clearly illustrated in the following text fragment written by Martin Prinzhorn, as published within Kosuth's text *The Language of Equilibrium* (2009);

No two people in the world have identical languages, which already implies that language is subject to change. This change is generally acknowledged to be constant and gradual. [...] On the one hand, the systems is thus always moving and never stable, while on the other hand, however, it seems that a certain stability or tendency towards stability is one of its fundamental properties. The tension between these two characteristics is one of the basic features of linguistic concepts (Prinzhorn, in Kosuth, 2009, p. 15-17)

**NOTE 10.**

We always take in the world in a certain way. However, the world around us has not been fixed. We always look through certain 'glasses'. In life, we relate to all around us. I see (you) differently than you see (yourself).

Kosuth makes us aware of our own relationship with / understanding of both language and objects. By centralising a chair and giving a triple definition in communication layers, our own relationship with / understanding of 'chair' becomes clear; without providing an answer to this 'chair'. The work is therefore a visual reflection of our own thinking: by centralizing something we already know, but we do not knowingly associate with. Kosuth's artworks tells us no truth, but are necessary to understand our own mind.

I think it is important to question the possible objective of the essence of anything, since it is a universal task to relate these matters. In this reality, we know our own meanings, from the tradition and the framework that give value. Art, therefore, centralises how we think, how things work, and how we (can) understand. ///

## Conclusion

Looking at *Play of Advice* through Kosuth's eyes, this chapter has revealed that the work can be seen as a struggle, as a game, as an attempt to continue where human consciousness usually stops. The artwork is a quest for a maximum translation of both the context (Central Station) and the artist (Mondrian): it returns something locally to the place by mirroring that place in its essence. The work preserves what *is*, but at the same time it reflects on (cultural, time bound) developments; which shows that everything is in motion. The artwork is meant to mirror human consciousness, and has a didactic function. It shows structures that cannot be explained, but which must be experienced in their own awareness. The effort attempts to reproduce this awareness / culture, to let us understand our own understanding of 'things' or to justify our non-understanding of things. In spite of the fact that Kosuth's words initially turn the criticism into art itself - based on his criticism towards Formalist art - the work can be approached more broadly, related to life outside the art context (culture and time), whereby our whole memory (culture) determines a framework to approach the world.

In general, *Play of Advice* is an analytical proposition about both time, culture, objects, and language. It is, however, not about its colour (yellow), font (realised in neon), and text (Mondrian) itself. Instead, these components purely contribute to the meaning of 'the idea', which is hiding inside the work, while being originated in the head of Kosuth himself. However, this colour, font and text are certainly necessary in order to catch the best visual form

to translate this conceptual idea as possible. Everything in *Play of Advice* acts, therefore, in service of that idea. On the one hand, the neon reflects the popular mass culture, as the 'vulgar' font belonging to the station -being a place where this culture is visible- and on the other hand it shows this cultural temporality, which is subject to change. The artwork is a message to the conventions of time: the popular culture allows us to look superficial, and art continues to depend on self-confirmation. The work has a progressive attitude: it refers to the need for renewal, as a desire for dynamics; something that can be narrated at the railway station. The work lets us reconsider the culture and the setting in which we are located, and whether this exist as we think to understand. How do we really understand what happens (here) (within this object, moment, culture, time, mind) and are we able to really understand what happens (here) (within this context, within our culture, within this moment, within our mind)? The work, thus, directly queries of this total thesis.

“An artwork is able to build bridges that reach beyond the enclosures and space in which it originated.”

- *A Bouquet of the Later Writings,*  
Hans-Georg Gadamer



**RECEIVER//**

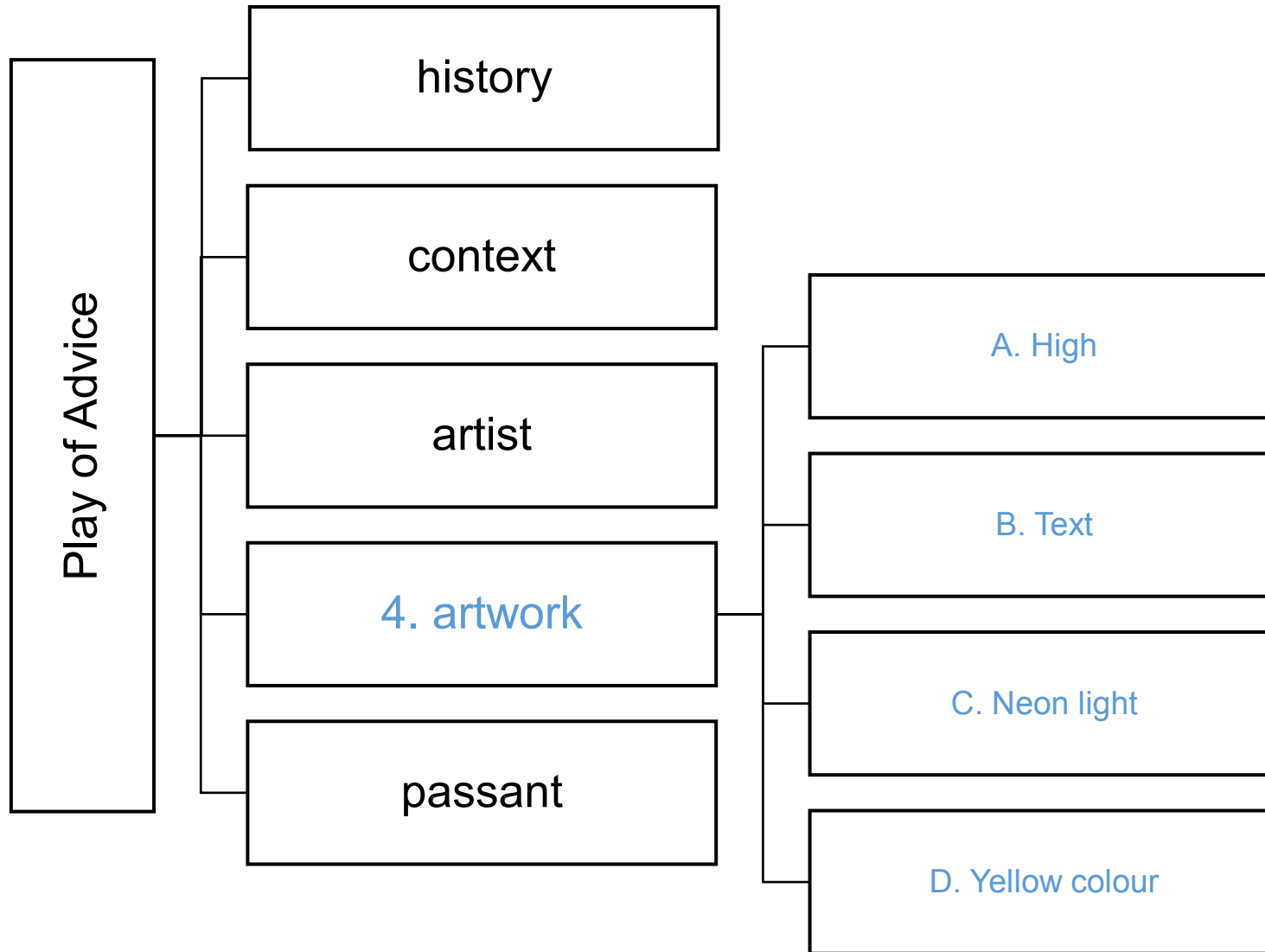
**EXPERIENCE**

capital size: appr. 26.5 cm

real size:  $\times 50 = 9.5 \text{ m}$

neon: yellow

YOU'RE CURRENTLY IN THE [FOURTH PART](#) OF THIS THESIS:



## PART 4: THE ARTWORK

With the current developments in public space (station environment) and cultural art policy, *Play of Advice* has a different presence and status than in 1996. At that time, the use of text in public space was something new, and the public space was less limited. However, the artwork is still there, and so far there is no reason to remove it out of the station concourse: the artwork has gained an autonomous status value over time. Now it has become clear how and why *Play of Advice* has been realised, this chapter wonders about the current existence and position of the work, and the experience it possibly causes.

Since there is no research that has been conducted on the experience of this artwork, and since there exists no archive that documents the experience of the work in 1996, the first part of this chapter concerns a hermeneutical interpretation focusing on the single components of the artwork itself, consisting of: (1) its body of text (2) the placement high in the corner of the wall, (3) its (neon) light, and (4) its yellow colour. This chapter, therefore, starts with a short introduction in hermeneutics, after which an interpretation of the artwork can be made using both personal empirical observations and qualitative sources to guide this story.

In order to be able to say something about the existence of this work in today's society, the list of requirements in Chapter 2 is leading the final analysis within the second part of this chapter. With this list, the analysis is based on assumptions as compiled from the art sector itself. In the following chapter (5), however, the perspective of the passant is further discussed too, in order to look at the work from a broader context than the arts itself. Since this artwork comes from a very different time and perspective, this chapter aims to indicate the current existence and position of this artwork and whether there still happens *something* in its dialogue with both the context and the passant.

## Introduction: A Short Look at Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is the doctrine of interpretation, but also the interpretation itself. Hermeneutic analysis allows a cultural phenomenon (artwork, text, film) to be explained by incorporating all the individual phenomena that belong to it. It is therefore a matter of dealing with the individual components that express and explain the 'whole', known as the 'hermeneutic circle'. The interpretation of a part of the whole (the object, the artwork, the text) therefore contributes to the comprehension of the object itself. However, hermeneutics itself has been interpreted in different ways. Where some believe that the interpreters own properties / features play a role in the hermeneutic interpretation, others argue that this subjectivity should not be central. And where hermeneutics originally dealt with the methodological question 'how to conduct a *science* of interpretation?', Gadamer and Heidegger have taken it to its next step. Through their philosophy, hermeneutics was developed as a phenomenological method (lived experience, mental consideration), by asserting that the interpreter itself enters a conversation / dialogue with the object. However, due to the historical determination of the interpreter, a complete understanding of the object is impossible. Given that our actions and thoughts have already been determined through history, our 'horizon' is not 'empty': we already have 'a priori' knowledge, judgments, and traditions, to interpret something in a certain way (Van Bork et al., 2011).

In his *Truth and Method* (1960) Gadamer mentions that - while looking at an artwork - there is always something (truth) beyond our own control (method).

In other words, the dialogue goes beyond recognising what is already familiar to us, whereby our understanding of the work will be elevated. Still, it is impossible to put aside our own (pre) judgments when we interpret (Dortmans, 2000). Because every interpretation is therefore a subjective reaction to the experience of the interpreter, Gadamer developed the concept of 'play'. This concept includes both the game itself and the act of playing the game. When we know how to play and reflect on the game, we can come closer to the essence of the object (artwork). According to Gadamer, this work must be seen separately from the author of the work (author, artist) (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016). Thus, the two horizons (the work itself and the interpreter) come together, and a dialogue starts. In a later work, *The Relevance of the Beautiful* (1986), Gadamer continues his theory by implying that the work represents something from reality, outside the work itself. This reality is formed *in* the work, and can be interpreted by the interpreter when (s)he enters the (autonomous) dimension of time hiding in the work (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016). The better we learn to listen to the artwork, to see, feel, and taste it, the more we can come to the universal understanding of it, in order to understand it as it speaks to us (Gadamer, 1986). When reconsidering our own prejudices and tradition (horizon) and open up other perspectives, try to look beyond our own perspective, the past (tradition, horizon) and the present (opening up for new perspectives / experiences) can melt together, as a 'fusion of horizons', whereby the distances may be bridged. An integration takes place that changes both the viewer and the work. Here, the Hegelian dialectics reflects. As manifested by Hegel: through all that we have learned, we learn

to understand ourselves, the other, and the object. This way, we can get closer to the ultimate understanding (of for instance the concept 'chair') (Vande Veire, 2002). In line with Hegel's approach, Gadamer uses a dialectical approach of understanding. Yet, in Gadamer's ontological perspective, the true concept can never really be known, because there is no such thing as neutral understanding. We are never unprejudiced as human beings. The fusion of horizons, however, certainly brings new insights, but previous ones are lost at the same time: a new kind of meaning emerges. In this way, hermeneutics is an endless process of understanding, experiencing, and broadening our own horizon.

To sum up. (1) Art is able to teach us how the world functions, since meaning and reality come together *in* the work. (2) Art must be approached separate from the author/ artist, since the work literally speaks like a work, and not as the carrier of the artist's message. (3) The interpretation of an artwork is always subjective: there is no ultimate interpretation. (4) The artwork consist of parts of the whole that can come together within the fusion of horizons, when we open up our mind for other perspectives. (5) The artwork does not exist without its dialogue with the interpreters (us). The work can only exist when it leaves a gap that needs to be filled in by us. Without us, the artwork does not do much. The work of art must, therefore, encourage participation.

### ***Play of Advice: Interpreting 4 Parts of Its Whole***

Now it has become clear that the meaning/understanding of the work of art consists of parts of the whole, and vice versa, it is important to decompose the sensory perception of the various parts of *Play of Advice* in order to play the game. However, it is also important to report that this interpretation relies on my horizon, which has further formed during this research and has given the artwork a new meaning, with which the previous interpretation has been elevated and also became lost. Within this examination, the artwork is, above all, placed in context of time. Today's position differs from the time in which it was realized, since interpretation is always subject to change, depending on place and time.

In order to interpret the possible contemporary effect of the work within the Central Station, I focus on the individual components of the work, consisting of: (1) the text (2) the height (3) the (neon) light, and (4) its yellow colour. In addition to the fact that the meaning of these elements has changed during this research (I learned more about the operation of light, I now know that the openness of the Central Station is under pressure), I consider these elements to be largely symbolic (the height) and theoretical (the effect of light) in nature. Therefore, I elevate my own horizon to possible new meanings, through the philosophical approaches of others. In the section below, I describe this dialectical trip; both how it has been formed so far, and how new approaches towards these phenomena take a new step. This goes on continuously, since these theories are complementary to my hermeneutic interpretation of the artwork and cannot be seen separate from it. Therefore, these different methods are discussed interchangeably.

#### **NOTE 11.**

Before I started this research, I already knew of the existence of *Play of Advice*, but very unconsciously. For instance, I cannot remember when I noticed the words for the first time. Prior to this research, I wasn't aware of the yellow words: I only *knew* of their existence. The crazy thing in this exceptional case is that the name of the artist *behind* the work made the work attach my attention first and foremost. Kosuth, as essence-seeker, life-enricher, and definition-indicator, plays a kind of mathematical game with arts. This was enough to immerse myself for months in his particular public artwork in Eindhoven, considering the many issues it touches upon. During these months, my relationship with the artwork *Play of Advice* has changed. The work of art became the bearer of many recent tensions and valuations, and the current position of the work became clearer to me. Due to the increased pressure on the public space - for instance by the frequent use of texts, advertisements, billboards, and design - it still can be asked, however, whether the artwork is actually visible in contemporary chaos of everyday life, and how it could survive. ///

SIZES IN METERS

P. 01  
Joseph Kosuth  
Mangedestraat, 6  
9000, Ghent, Belgium  
(9) 233.48.49 / Fax 233.47.82

ROMAN STempel GARANTOND

Width:	8.9 meter
height of capital:	30 cm
ptsize:	25
tracking:	35
Hor. scale:	55 %

} REAL SCALE (= ENLARGE X 50)  
 } → zelfde als voorgend op de diskette

final Peter van  
Eindhoven

0031402453491

TO

FROM JOSEPH KOSUTH 3292334787

25-OCT-1996 15:37

17.9 cm text box

Conventie, een soort herinnering, is het grootste beletsel om te genieten van leven en kunst.

PIET MONDRIAAN

(small caps, 25%)

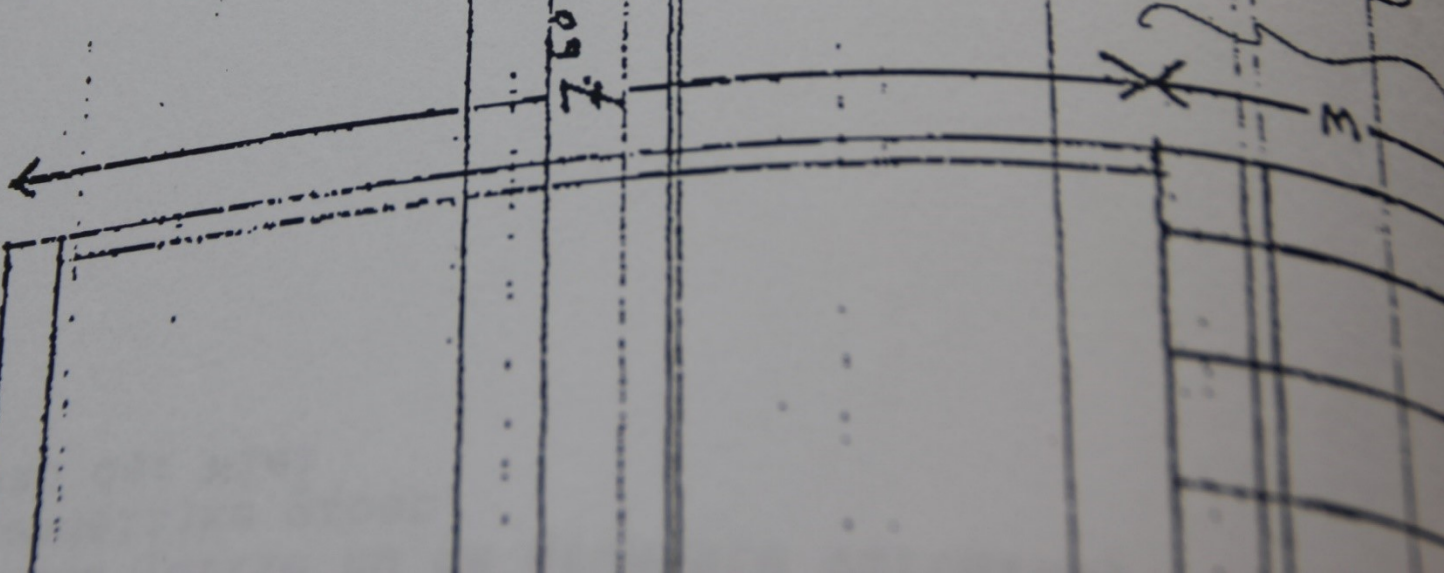


TOTAL P. 02

FOR JOSEPH KOLNIN  
NEW YORK STUDIO

RENEE PAOT

how much  
did it cost  
in whole  
with build?



VOOR INSTALLATIE NOG OVERLEG !!!

EX 233.47.82

22 meter

8.9 meter

Conventie, een soort herinnering, is het grootste beletsel om te genieten van leven en kunst.

PIET MONDRIAN

**Text (part one)** “Conventie, een soort herinnering, is het grootste beletsel om te genieten van leven en kunst.”

*Play of Advice* consists of a high text line placed in the middle / left corner of the wall in the concourse of Eindhoven Central Station, centre side. The text is made in neon, carried out in ‘Mondrian’s-yellow’, and consists of a quote from Mondrian himself. This text was translated from English into Dutch by the Dutch translator Frans van der Wiel. The words are divided into one and a half sentences, and the work is therefore 8.9 meters wide. The work is inserted in the *Beeldenboek Eindhoven*, under the number 518C, with the caption: Neon letters on brick wall, 150 x 890 cm, and is registered under the number 2913 in the public art database of the municipality Eindhoven.

(4A) As mentioned before, *Play of Advice* has been generated for the group exhibition *Travaux Publics* in 1996 concerning text works in the public city space of Eindhoven. *Travaux Publics* pursued the aim to present the use of text as an autonomous medium, and especially by its versatility, to a wider audience than purely the ones interested in art. Because the exhibition was not intended as a spectacle event, but interrupted the city streets in its sobriety, the focus remained on the text itself. Text can reach the general public, as urban imagery, and it has something universal in its character. Kosuth's contribution to the station has been the most costly of the entire exhibition *Travaux Publics*, and has a central spot where many people pass-by every day. However, this is not a unique example anno 2017: since the

public space recently received a lot of texts and light application. Selie (2015) describes that there is no need to buy a book of poems anymore since poems are commonly readable in public nowadays: "There is hardly any city in the Netherlands where there are no dashes on facades and quays, monuments and sidewalks. The average Dutchman, whether he appreciates it or not, is thus confronted with poetry on the way to work or supermarket" (Selie, 2015, para. 1). As previously described, public art is often used as a social binder for solving social problems. The contemporary use of text in public space has a largely commercial purpose, and/or is relying on a social ideal (Selie, 2015). Selie paraphrases Heijne to make clear that the multiple use of text in the public space is not necessary, since it is questionable whether it is really able to enter human's mind (Heijne, 2002, in Selie, 2015). Reading a text requires attention and time: something that is difficult to raise in public space (Selie, 2015). It can be questioned, therefore, whether the text at the Central Station is *actually* read by the passant. However, the use of the concept 'confrontation' indicates an accidental encounter, as something / someone you meet unexpectedly. It can also be questioned, therefore, whether this text *should be read*, in order to confront, to reach, and to pursue beyond the solution for social cohesion. Is the placement of this neon text at a central location also able to exert any other effect than purely transfer Mondrian's complex words?

First of all, the words of *Play of Advice* can be interpreted as a contrast to the hectic environment: it's a stable point in the madding crowd. The work

offers an intermittent glimpse, captured by the passant - as previously emphasised by Van den Braembussche in his comparison between Kosuth's quotes and Baudelair's poem - which is further described in Ronald Barthes' *Camera Lucida* (1980). Although Barthes wrote his book about photography, and despite the fact that *Play of Advice* does not exist as a picture - but as a text line - his description of 'Punctum' is a striking remark for describing the volatile effect of the work on the passant. Barthes claims that an image does not only gain its value by the means of its function as a reminder / recognition of the interpreter. Instead, the image must involve two other factors too: punctum and studium. Either way, you must be struck (punctum), which will disturb your focus (studium). When applying this theory on the short moment of confrontation with *Play of Advice*, it can be seen as a moment that interrupts your rhythm by something that touches your attention, as "a certain shock" (Barthes, 1980, p. 41). The effect is unsolicited, unexpected, and involves a certain feeling. As Barthes points out, you can only reflect on this experience afterwards, when the image is no longer visible, and the moment already exist as a memory. "Yet once there is a punctum, a blind field is created (is divined)" (Barthes, 1980, p. 57). This makes clear that the short confrontation with the work exists as an immediate distance, which keeps in our minds after a while. In *The sublime and avant garde* (1991) Lyotard uses Newman's 'Now' (as described in the essay *The Sublime is Now* from 1948) in order to describe the importance of this immediateness.

Newman's 'Now' is something unknown to the consciousness of man: it confuses our consciousness and allows us to stagnate, it is the unrecovered

experience that occurs immediately. In this moment, one does not *experience* something happening, but *undergoes* something happening. This makes clear that when the passant enters or behaves within the station, and looks upwards, an immediate confrontation happens with the yellow neon tubes high against the wall. According to Lyotard (1979) this interrupting experience is very valuable, since we have to understand that we cannot control everything. The desire for modern unity, certainty, and the 'truth', has disappeared in the postmodern era (characterized by its wide focus on technology, computerization and information). We have to let go this desire. In other words, in our current postmodern information society, the modern, single explanation for reality (as Hegel said that past, present and future would eventually coincide to make the mind free), has made room for the world of several languages and different stories.

Lyotard describes that all the time we are indicating *what's happening* (to us, with us, around us), we might forget that *something happens*. In other words, before we can ask ourselves '*what is happening?*' something *has to happen first*. This happening is subject of the question *what happens*, because of humans thinking and reasoning (we think to know what is happening by trusting the rules we make). However, this let us forget that, perhaps, something *is not happening anymore*. Lyotard (1991) claims that each time in life something it not predetermined to us, as Newman's Now, there is the possibility that *nothing can happen* either. This feeling, the feeling of *nothing*, we generally associate with fear: just as waiting in the station has a mainly negative connotation. This nothingness exist, therefore, as a time in which nothing really happens: there is a 'gap' in which we may

fall, as a failure in time. As a result, Lyotard breaks the conventional consensus through this event of 'nothing', which cannot be known or calculated, and is therefore very valuable. This gap, the gap of nothing, one could undergo while experiencing *Play of Advice*; since the artwork literally happens as a short moment in which the logic rhythm of time makes place for something *unknown*.

The term 'terror', as described by Burke (1757) should be brought up at this point; since it exists as a threat of fear that something ceases to happen. One is confronted with something, and that something could possibly do something to him / her. However, when this threat is fading away, the feeling of pleasure and lust takes over. This merger of feelings of both fear and lust (and/or pleasure) forms the notion of the 'sublime'. The sublime: as something big and powerful, which makes you feel speechless and is disturbing, in which *something* happens. You see something, and it immediately disappears (Lyotard, 1991). After it's out of your sight, you start to doubt. What was that, actually? What did I really see? In *Play of Advice*, the confrontation with the high text line of Mondrian must therefore, in line with the above approaches, remain indefinite: as something that confuses humans' mind. When it does so, it is probably able to go beyond control, order, concepts, and frameworks, as conventions of everyday life.

### Height

(4B) A second aspect (part of the whole) to investigate is the physical context of the artwork: the station concourse. This concourse has a square form and open shape. There are a few facilities in this place; these have moved to the

restored passage, because the old concourse must exist in its original state (Theeuwens, 2017). The artwork, thus, hangs in an open sight that exists as the central connection of the station with the inner city of Eindhoven. One must pass through that concourse, pass-by the artwork, in order to leave the station on this side of the building. The very first thing that strikes you when you enter the station and comes into contact with the work of art, might be its height. When you do not look up, you will not see it: the subtlety of the work also shows itself at this physical point. However, when you do look up, you will get in touch with it. Despite the fact that the light of the work is not bright enough to literally illuminate the entire station space, the height of the work certainly has some religious reference: as a greatness in itself. Its high placed bright yellow tubes, as radiated by the words, generates a symbolic gesture.

In art history, the artworks which were placed on a pedestal gained aspiration and had iconic value. However, also in modern art, this iconic 'height' is processed as an image effect, often related to the notion of the sublime and / or the immaterial. For example in the artwork *The Weather Project*, by Olafur Eliasson, and in Malevich's famous *Black Square* (*Zwarte Vierkant*). Eliasson's artwork comprises a grant installation in the Turbine Hall in Tate Modern, London. This work takes over the whole museum space. In *Algemene Kunstgeschiedenis* (2011) Honour and Flemming describe this artwork - 155m long, 35m high and 23m wide - as something that has made the space even bigger. The work exists as a reflective half circle of bright yellow lamps, which was placed high against the back of the hall.



The reflection gives the impression of a bright yellow sun, far above your head. The ceiling was a mirror in which the museum visitors could see themselves; so they were lying in the hall with their back on the ground, staring to that distance. The work was a matter of looking up. In addition, Malevich's *Black Square* is repeatedly displayed at the top of the corner of an exhibition room, where the walls and the ceiling meet. Honour and Flemming show a picture of the work in Petrograd, St. Petersburg. The work is placed in-between twenty-eight other works by Malevich, as the only slant in the corner of the room, and draws attention in a different way than all twenty-eight works around. This artwork was placed in the same way as the Russians placed their Christian icons, as the 'golden corner' of the room. "In the place traditionally reserved to the holiest head" (Van Uitert, 1989).

Hence, artworks that are higher than us, human beings, have something remarkable, something 'great' in their character. Unlike Eliasson's sun, *Play of Advice* does not *literally* take up the entire space of the station concourse. Instead, the words of *Play of Advice* bring about the collision that Burke has overcome; the passant faces this casual encounter, and then has a choice: look longer and read the words ('what's happening?') or just walk along. The fact that the work confuses the passant for a single second, makes the work space filling; on a more psychological level. Still, every passant will experience this artwork in its own way. Since most people walk through the Central Station with a clear goal in mind - which directly adds the special feature of the station in general - this ordinary public is not a conscious art audience, as for instance in the museum. In Lyotard's approach, however, we should commonly strive to get rid of the conventions and frameworks that

form reality, since it is not manageable anyway. Given that our experience in public space has changed, *Play of Advice* exists for the flâneur, for the wanderer within the Central Station, in order to offer an arrangement in the chaos of everyday life. When walking into the concourse, one is stuck by a text line that appears to be outside these conventions (clear framework), as something that Lyotard advocates. The artwork thus speaks to the determined passant, and tells him to let go, to release. The versatility of text, as an important carrier of the conceptual 'idea', can reach this wide audience without insisting. The power of the text relies therefore in its subtle nature, which is able to trigger and encourage a dialogue with the spectator. The experience of the artwork opens up new possibilities: who had not been devised without the artwork.

### **Text (part two)**

(4A) Before continuing to interpret the text itself, it is necessary to briefly abide by the act of interpreting text in general, as described in Ronald Barthes's *The Death of the Author* (1977). Barthes states that the text's message, as conceived by the writer, cannot be traced: we must let go the idea that we can know the 'reality of the text' by deciphering this text. We can only peel the text to a certain extent, whereby the text is experienced during the act of reading itself. This is in line with Gadamer's approach that it is of great significance to separate the work of art from the artist behind the work. The attention thus shifts to the reader as individual human being with personal associations. If we look at the content of the text of *Play of Advice*, it will be read by everyone in a different way, and gets different meanings, since there is no 'true' meaning to discover. Yet, we will briefly

discuss the content of the text line, because it is important to relate the concept of 'convention' to contemporary times.

In its dictionary definition, 'convention' refers to formal rules, methods and the accepted 'standards' of a procedure. In view of *Play of Advice*, in which convention is related to the past (memory), the term thus can be interpreted as the whole of natural arrangements we carry with us (we already have it: it is the past, a memory), after which the text indicates that this is the 'biggest obstacle' to the enjoyment of both life and art. Here, convention sounds predominantly negative, because it bothers us; as a blockade. The meaning of the text therefore seems to correspond to what Lyotard's approach proclaims: compromise the conventions to disrupt them. The work carries a promise in itself. Since *Eindhovens Dagblad* earlier claimed that the text is unable to stay in memory of the passant after arriving at his destination (the train, city, etc.) we can wonder whether the text for this disturbance actually should be read, in order to experience its presence. Perhaps, its sensory disorder is already enough to confront for a while: which takes place in the appearance of both its (neon) light and its primary yellow colour, shining high against the wall.

## Neon

(4C) When you walk into the station concourse, and you catch a glimpse of the work, it comes from the yellow neon light of the words; without reading them in the first place. Neon light itself does not exist as a 'whole'. Instead, it spreads short shocks that alternate at a fast pace (Minneart, 1937). According to Minneart (1937) neon is the most striking light in the big cities.

It is powered by alternating current, displaying 50 changes per second and the luminous intensity is even 100. This means that the luminous flux in all directions gives maximum luminous intensity. However, these flashes of neon are so fast that we will not (soon) see them most of the time. Therefore, we see the light as a whole rather than single flashes. Minneart suggests that we can detect these flashes when we look at a point near the neon tube. When we turn our head back and forth and focus on the light source with attention, the flicker is visible because the light ripples, and the shocks are betrayed by our eyes. When you are sensitive to these incentives, for instance because of epilepsy or migraine, the shocks could disrupt ones condition. Neon light can thus be a breakthrough of the viewing area: similar to the spikes of a wheel of a bicycle, when you concentrate on the spikes, you can distinguish them anyway (Minneart, 1937). Light, thus, can determine our state of mind, whereby the neon flashes can disrupt the road very subtle when we are sensible to it.

As Smets described earlier, light - as medium within arts - is possible to proclaim the 'logic' rhythm of everyday life in an urban visual language. Light continues when our daily conventions, like work and school, fall away (in the evenings), which breaks through this everyday rhythm. Given light applications are increasingly used in the city, in art installations, advertisements and billboards, the presence of *Play of Advice* is even more subtle, and can also be interpreted as an aesthetic urban enchantment. Nevertheless, neon has a strong relationship with postmodern society, which makes the work extremely politically and socially committed.



In *Flickering Light* (2013) Christoph Ribbat describes that neon light represents vibration, but also commerciality. He relates the arts' use of neon to urban decay, to the loss of modernity. Where neon first (1940) stood in for the sparkle of the centre, it now stands for the opposite. Neon became the metaphor for the rusting city. The metaphor for the hustle and bustle, for flickering, motion, taster of cars in a busy city, and the bright light in a tram or toilet. Neon stands for commercial purposes, for the use in displays and advertisements (popular entertainment culture). In the end, neon really features the shift in public space of this age, which has been going back for years. It is both remarkable and logical, since it is more and more infiltrated in daily life. The light of *Play of Advice*, however, does not exist as the white neon in the public toilet. The light is yellow, and corresponds to the yellow glow in the space around. Its light does not shout, it is rather just there, and becomes - as mentioned before - even more subtle due to the frequent presence of light in other parts of the city, which corresponds very well to the urban imagery of the city of Eindhoven itself. The position of the artwork is therefore changing, but is still extremely committed.

#### **Yellow (4D)**

This commitment is because both the past (convention), the present (dialogue), and the future (message) seem to be represented in the work. Although it should be interpreted separately from the artist, it is important to mention that Mondrian sought to create pure relationships: not static but dynamic, not symmetry and balance, but fertile stress, by a sober use of visual resources. Mondrian, despite his strict and sober image suggestions, aimed for the sense of liberation, even for release (Honor & Flemming,

2011). He longed for art of clarity and order, which reflected the objective laws of nature. His art served to reveal the unchangeable realities, behind the ever-changing forms of the subjective appearance (Gombrich, 1996). Mondrian's work can thus be seen as a game with both objective and subjective matters in life.

When contemplating the colour yellow, it can be seen as a symbolic reference to the sun. Like Eliasson's sun, the text is placed high-up, as a message from heaven. Therefore, yellow can be interpreted as the colour of faith, soft- and brightness, and purity (Doran, 2013), and might refer to symbolism, to the ancient arts, to the solid forms (conventions), and the sun god Appolo himself: who stood for the 'reason' (Reints, 2013). This immediately shows a contradiction, since conventions are criticised within the artwork *Play of Advice* itself. Nevertheless, in Mondrian's oeuvre, yellow had no fixed meaning, and neither does it refer directly - among others - to the ancient arts. In his work, he returned to Goethe's colour theory, distinguishing warm (among which yellow) and cold colours. For Goethe, red, blue and yellow are the three primary colours in the most pure condition, which have no tendency to other colours. These three colours are non-mixed, and thus from absolute value (these are also directly associated with Mondrian's paintings (Polman, 2011)). In this theory, yellow is the colour that comes closest to light, as the opposite of blue (the colour closest to the dark) which wants to solve periphery. Generally, *colour* itself represents the battle between darkness and light; wherein the colour yellow is created by seeing light through something dark (like sunlight shining on the earth), when it causes a movement outside (Polman, 2011).

For Goethe, however, every person sees colour through his own perception. This he shares with Ludwig Wittgenstein (1977) who approaches colour as something you have to *feel*. You cannot *think* colours (as well as the sum  $2 \times 2 = 4$  cannot be experienced), but you have to undergo it. Colour is therefore elusive and unapproachable and at the same time extremely commonplace. Goethe's approach relies on the ideal that everything has to do with everything: the creation of life is a whole, in which colour becomes the bearer of a worldview (Polman, 2011). Since yellow is one of the three prominent carriers of Mondrian's utopian and idealistic image of society, we immediately see this connection between colour and a certain approach of the world. Mondrian sought to express harmony by balancing abstract opposing basic forms (Bak, 1994) whereby *Play of Advice*' yellow may be interpreted as a reference to the natural in its most original and essential state. This visualizes a paradox: given the fact that our horizon is never fixed and always continues to evolve, while the work also includes a certain given fundamentality.

In the end, however, the work changes continuously over time and is probably interpreted differently nowadays than it was in 1996, whereby its true meaning and interpretation are never 'fixed'. The meaning / value of the work thus accompanies the changing society, and always remains critical and committed in its message. In any time, this artwork will call and release something different from the interpreter, and relate to other conventions. That is why the work is, and remains (besides autonomous) highly socialised, and will always have a political load: expressed within the perplexity it engenders.

#### NOTE 12.

While wandering in this search, Kosuth's conviction has won my heart more or less. If something is important in / to art, it is the belief in the artist. In his stiffness, his deep-rooted desire to transfer what he thinks / can bring. If that desire, that persuasiveness, fades away, the work becomes just a hollow shell like an object with no 'consciousness' (as became visible in Kosuth's play with the concept of chair in his artwork *One and Three Chairs*).

And so the work of art has increased in its appearance to me, I act more openly to its presence, and allow the work to catch me for a fraction of a second, even in my big hurry to platform 6. The work gives trust, it offers a slight sigh. Without lifting the chair, the chair stays an unobtrusive chair. Without this work, the convention stream will not get a counterpart. ///



## Analysis

In this final part of the fourth chapter the work of art is analysed from the requirements for public art from the mentioned theories as set out in chapter two ('What should the work must do to have some effect in public space?'). By doing so, we can systematically examine what the work is capable of doing for and within today's society.

1. *The public artwork must be layered (as in the museum). It should not become superficial. When you move deeper into it, it has to call something new, but in the quick look something must be visible*

*Play of Advice* consists of different layers that can be 'read' in the work. First of all, it is its receipt in the volatile glimpse that actually incorporates the content of the work. In the materiality of the work (read: height, yellow colour, neon light), the fast passer-by experiences this interruption, perhaps a few seconds adjustment; no longer. However, when you dive deeper into the work, this content, existing as a message, is also read consciously in addition to the first, fast experience. Perhaps as a reference to the situation we are currently in, or to the convention flow just before checking in at the OV gates. But it can also be seen as a reference to what we carry with us, in our hurry, or even to Kosuth's convention of art, for the informed art passant. The work is, therefore, much more than an autonomous work of art. Perhaps, the text is not read consciously, but the glimpse of the light is immediately the power of the content itself.

2. *It must have a message: offer criticism or comment. This can be done in two ways: by providing an alternative scenario (future outline), or reflecting the reality as it is*

*Play of Advice* articulates an extremely politically committed message to society. It does not provide an alternative scenario, nor is it a direct reproduction of reality (it does not visually show itself) but reflects on how we deal with things. Because every time and society knows other conventions, this artwork is timeless in its message. The work interrupts, settles, exists as a moment of short emptiness, as a message we must leave. When we relate this to the results of Chapter two, the privatisation and control of the station, and we assume that the work is still in front of the check-in and checkout gates, it can even be seen as a message against the control of this disclosure.

In contemporary society, there are no fixed conventions anymore, the borders are more fluid, and we have to surrender to this change. On the one hand, you see a postmodern society full of possibilities and openings. On the other hand, a controlled society aimed at excluding certain groups. Because this struggle can be read in the content of the artwork itself, the work has an extremely committed and timeless load. It opens up new possibilities, as a political and philosophical statement in itself: the determined person is addressed to release him/herself from the existing patterns. Without the work of art as a messenger, that experience, that awareness, does not exist: at least not directly at the Central Station. The artwork shows us how it may be.

3. *It must encourage new perspectives. It must therefore not be affirmative. One has to be taken out of its comfort zone*

The work interrupts the regularity of the passenger's gaze / viewing direction. This will be recalled shortly. As mentioned above, the work stimulates to new insights, or at least a new *feeling*. That feeling comes unanswered, unexpectedly, and exists as a confrontation with art. The new perspective is thus (initially without reading the text) a new feeling passing through the passant.

4. *It must be versatile, able to appeal to a broad group: the fast viewer, the quiet walker, the child, etc.*

The layered content of the work is capable of causing an effect in various ways. When you walk slowly through the station and have another half an hour to do *something*, the work will be different from when you have ten seconds to get to the train. It is precisely that layeredness and versatility that makes the work capable of speaking to different groups of people, even to those who do not have much to do with art. The light and the symbolic height of the text are easy and smart triggers for the ordinary eye.

5. *It must expose structures to make things visible that would otherwise not stand out*

Today's society seems to be steadier and more open than before, but it is more limited. The message of *Play of Advice* relates to these limiting conventions, and shows us that we are part of it without even noticing. Given the contemporary image culture, the city has transformed into a huge billboard, and there are many images that trigger our eyes. So our experience of *something* has changed. The artwork has become even more subtle, and this is precisely the power of the work: its ability to offer a layeredness when we open ourselves to it. What the artwork does is showing what we are all doing, it functions to disrupt the human determination.

6. *It should not go with neo-liberal thinking: it must not have a purely social target for solving social problems. It must, therefore, remain essentially useless*

Given that the work was realised in 1996 from the autonomy of the artist, it has not yet come about to solve social issues (such as some community art projects in 2017), but to highlight text as a medium, what was innovative at the time. The artwork simply depends on it, and it has no direct utility: it does not encourage social cohesion on the entire station, but stimulates the individual capacity of the passenger in his subtle nature.

7. *It should not become design (fully applied)*

The work avoids becoming entertainment or design by its strength that relies in the materiality of the work; which goes beyond the text message itself. However, the work can actually be read / experienced differently anno 2017, due to the frequent use of light and text applications in space. In this way, the work can shift more towards design, in the perception of people. However, this does not happen from the work itself, but due to the changes in the public climate of the city, aimed at city branding. The work is, furthermore, a message to these new conventions, which put pressure on the position of art. When Roosegaarde's 93-long wall is presented it will cause frictions between the two works: fertile, or offensive. That is an interesting research area for further investigation (see discussion).

8. *It must take the environment fully into account, it has to feel/be logical*

Kosuth views the work as fully anticipating on the environment and directly exploiting this space. Because this work of art came from the vision of the artist, the work was not realised out of aesthetic or social motives. The work has also become an icon over time, and belongs to that place. But without this background / information, and you see the work for the first time, the work will not feel inappropriate, because light and neon - as a business card of Eindhoven - are very logical at this specific spot.

9. *It has to create 'new spaces' in public space within which the public can identify themselves*

Initially, the work will not immediately provide a space for people to identify with directly, the work is more likely to ponder, or to act as a short surprise. The work can be recalled on its own and its thinking, stimulated by the feeling that the work calls. The work is there for the individual, not for the group.

*10. It must continue to be distinguished as a work of art, not fully expanded in public space*

The work does not shout, does not intrude, is not even visible to many. But it does not disappear into its environment. The work is not an artwork that exists as a billboard and therefore no longer stands out as a work of art. The work continues to be distinguished as an artwork, but in a subtle way, since it not imply anything.

## Conclusion

The key issue in this chapter was the extent to which *Play of Advice* still has the potential to bring something to the passant in today's society, in its dynamic place at the Central Station. Does the artwork still have value, and where does this become visible? On the basis of the list of requirements as compiled from the art theories in Chapter 2, it can be said that *Play of Advice* includes many of these points - seen from the hermeneutical interpretation in the first part of this chapter (based on both empirical observations and supporting theories) -, even in 2017.

Furthermore, this chapter made clear that, according to Lyotard, today's postmodern society - full of images, light, and colours - is able to trigger a 'sublime' experience when questioning *the existing*. Modern security, order, trust, and balance are no longer key in this age. Today's order is divided, which can be experienced in (among others) artworks. When the artwork shows something intangible (the sublime, the non-catchable), it speaks sharply against the organisation and control principles of society. The postmodern society is, therefore, especially characterised as an insecure society, full of possibilities but also question marks. This is exactly the current position and effect of the artwork *Play of Advice*: pushing against the conventions (formerly, but still very present). Through this work, destabilisation can be experienced; which is not imaginable, but rather experienceable. The postmodern sublime ultimately disturbs. However, we can wonder whether we are still looking when so much is happening everywhere, and how much *Play of Advice* is actually noticed by the hurried passant.

Yet, without this work, the short glimpse of interruption does not occur in any sense - within this chaotic environment of the Central Station - at all. This is exactly what the work is capable of; it opens up possibilities that arise from the (subtle) experience of the artwork itself. The work proclaims a message, carries a promise. It does not scream, but goes beyond. The work tells us, as determined persons, that we are deemed to be released. Just by the new changes in the station - the limited publicness through control, and the rooted dogma that this may be 'normal' (as a convention) - the work of art can visualize and criticise the organization of society. The artwork provides a critical look at ourselves and the way we handle our affairs, and breaks the rhythm that seems so normal within our own minds.

We may wonder, however, whether *Play of Advice* brings about a conscious experience to the passant. Whenever you will ask to his/her experience, one may not be able to translate this experience directly into words. The work, however, is exactly about this experience that cannot be contained in words. It certainly wants to tell us something, but we almost cannot read it quietly; we have to experience it. This experience can be very valuable in the world full of logic, facts, and knowledge. In addition, the work of art does not disappear as a billboard in the streets, but at the same time it is not highlighted either. It does not shrink and does not compete with anything else. The high placed yellow light, almost religious and intangible in its character, can be approached as a philosophical statement on its own, since it reverses the order and control systems you are behaving in. That is socio-political at all times.



**(5) AND THEN, THE ARTWORK WAS  
GONE**

*Suddenly, the artwork was no longer there. The yellow neon tubes were no longer visible. On the wall, black prints of the heat of the neon radiation were visible, or perhaps dust, as a trace that something had happened. It has become clear that the artwork has gained autonomous value over time, and that there were no signs that it would be removed; even during the reconstruction of the station. So, why is the artwork gone? Has it been removed temporarily, or permanently? And if it has been removed temporarily, when will it actually shine its light again?*

*Surprised, I contact Peter Foolen, former member of Peninsula. His reaction<sup>28</sup>: "Strange that it is gone. Perhaps, hopefully, it has been removed from the wall due to renovation, and it will be re-installed later. The municipality has bought the work, I think for a good deal, so it will not just disappear." To find answers, I contact Kunstwacht Delft, who carries out the maintenance of the work. Eduard Weijgers, working at Kunstwacht, tells me that Kunstwacht has restored the work for the last time in 2013, but that the maintenance of neon turned out to be a tough and too specific task for the company to conduct. "We have not received any commission from the municipality this time, to do anything about it. If it is gone now, this will be done by order of the municipality of Eindhoven, but by a party other than Kunstwacht,"<sup>29</sup> Weijgers mentions, and he advises me to contact Johan van den Boomen, municipality of Eindhoven. When I contact Van den Boomen by telephone, he argues that this removal has not been conducted by the municipality, but as a request in the project reconstruction of the Central*

*Station; by ProRail and NS. According to van den Boomen, this was not done for renovation of the artwork, but because of safety measures. The work is, therefore, temporarily stored for now, waiting for the moment to shine again. And that may take a while. When it will be back still remains the question. I inform Weijgers with the new information because Kunstwacht is also curious about where the work is household at the moment, since they repeatedly took care of it over the last couple of years. Weijgers: "Okay, thank you. We also keep in mind when it is coming back." To find out more about the moments the artwork was removed and will return, I will contact ProRail myself. In response to my request, I receive a confirmation that my question "where Joseph Kosuth's artwork has remained" has been addressed. I am waiting.*

*When ProRail contacts me on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June '17, I was told that the project is carried out by NS, for two different reasons: the artwork itself is both - in contrast to the earlier information - restored for maintenance (some lamps did no longer work), and is taken away since the wall of the station concourse is also under construction itself. The work of art has, therefore, being cleaned during the reconstruction of the station (Zuidhal). The work of art was taken away at the end of May, and it will return to the same spot in ProRail's estimation by the end of 2017. This renovation is, as shown, not carried out by Delft's Kunstwacht, but by another party. Which party (read: where the artwork is temporarily housed now) becomes clear in a response from ProRail later on, which they received from the NS, who*

---

<sup>28</sup> Mail contact at the 9<sup>th</sup> of June '17

<sup>29</sup> Mail contact at the 9<sup>th</sup> of June '17

*mention that it was demounted by contractor De Bonth van Hulten, and that the artwork will also be restored by them (since the contractor carries out the entire renovation of the Zuidhal of Eindhoven Central Station). The contractor at their turn explains that the maintenance of the work is the task of their electrician, and asks me whether they can remove my phone number after our conversation. The end of the search for the lost artwork is thereby established.*

*An artwork is never forever. Fortunately, Play of Advice will come back at the end of this year.*

#### **NOTE 13.**

They say you only miss what was when it is not there anymore. When I just left the station, these were the first words that came up in my mind. Black sweep on the wall, interrupted by a scaffold. Scrub a few times, rub well, and maybe even plaster here and there, and then it is like it was never there. As if something has never happened. But I know, and many others know with me, what could have been. For us, the daily wanderer, a missing wink over our shoulder. But also for those who never saw it before, who did not catch the light on their retina already.

I have not yet appreciated the artwork in such an extent as now. Precisely because I notice that the light no longer blinks, no longer confuses, and no longer touches one again. The result: an empty wall without text, as an ordinary empty wall. Only when we are shown what is, *what happens*, but in a little different way, it can make us aware how important it is to ask question. To reconsider, to understand; and to repeat this process over and over again. That's yellow, that's the future, that's dreaming and believing. But first of all, a realisation of nothing, of stillness and interaction, must happen. ///

This examination will not be able to get a Chapter 5, given the passant can not be questioned until the end of 2017. Hopefully, in future research, the experience of this work is being measured in depth by means of interviews. Does the artwork actually have its described effect on the hurried passant in the station hall, with its short glimpse of light? Will the daily passenger see the work from a different perspective than the one-day tourist? And what about the children? I hope that more specific answers on these questions will be found some day.



## CONCLUSION

This thesis was an investigation of the value and existence of public art in contemporary society. The starting point was the work of art *Play of Advice* made by the American conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth at the Central Station in Eindhoven. The main question is related to the dialogue between *Play of Advice*, the context, and the passant in this context: what is really happening in this dialogue? With that, what is the value of this public work of art?

This case study used five perspectives: history, context, artist, artwork, and the passant. By examining and focusing on these separate elements of this work of art, partial conclusions could be made from these specific angles. Coherence and synergy between these partial conclusions provided elements for the answer to the main question. The broad design of this research is focused on various issues, such as public space (increasing control of social and physical environment), the value of public art in the city, and the importance of the artists autonomy. Leading was the issue whether there is still space for play /autonomy for the artist in the current public space, and whether this is important to maintain; something that could be tested based on this case study.

The answer to the main question did help to make recommendations for the realisation of art in public space. It could also provide insight in the contemporary (re)appreciation of art in public space. Assuming that art positively contributes both to the public space and the public within the public space, this examination aimed to provide recommendations for a well-functioning public art policy.

## Research findings

Considering the fifth component (passant) partly came to pass, this will be further included in the discussion (see: p. 147). The four other components have led to several research findings. Each of them provided a new step towards answering the main question, while providing insight into the importance and contemporary discourse of public art.

C1. In the first chapter of this examination the motives behind the realisation of the artwork *Play of Advice* were investigated. How did the artwork originate? This chapter made use of the archives of the participants involved in this collaboration and further interviewed those involved. This chapter showed that *Play of Advice* originated from the textual group exhibition *Travaux Publics* [ Public Works ], organised by Peninsula in collaboration with the Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven in 1996. The exhibition aimed at acquainting the ordinary passant with text as independent and versatile medium in the arts; something that was very innovative at the time. Peninsula wanted to break down the 'safe haven' of the art world in order to confront the ordinary public by the subtle intervention of the textual works in public space. Hence, art became more accessible in public space, but it remained autonomous and independent. Within this conceptual group exhibition *Play of Advice* took a prominent role, both because of its high production costs and its prominent location in the Central Station. Although the exhibition was temporary in nature, the work was finally purchased by the municipality of Eindhoven, two years after completion of the project. Striking in this chapter is the high degree of the artist autonomy; given Kosuth had all the freedom to decide both the work and the location of the work from his own, intrinsic beliefs. With the works permanent acquisition, it has become an icon for the city - as a cultural heritage for Eindhoven - and has obtained its autonomous value more and more over time.

C2. The second chapter further investigated the acquired autonomy and its possible end, by examining the contemporary context of the artwork (Eindhoven Central Station). In this way, the public space of *Play of Advice* in 1996 could be compared with 2017. What happens in the dialogue between the context and the artwork, and how has this changed over time? The chapter, based on both literature studies, interviews and municipal documents, has found that the autonomous position that Kosuth had in 1996 is no longer the same nowadays. The current public space is more and more based on controlling and regulating publicness. This changes the public space to its core. Public space is no longer equally accessible to everyone (the public), which makes our experience within the public space different. Given that the city of Eindhoven wants to be 'public' for everyone this contemporary pursuit is under pressure.

Because of the increased pressure on public space the position of public art is now more secluded too. The investigated theories made clear that art definitely can show societal structures - functioning as a mirror or show a new reality - but that space for play is captured. This means that the current artworks are subject to the governing policy and are often realised in a professional context; as applied quests. The artistic criteria are set outside the art world, and today's artists must relate to different environmental factors and issues. As a result, art can be placed on a location without entering into a dialogue with the place itself, to function as a beautification. In addition, artworks in the public space are increasingly placed from a social point of view, and should not be politically coloured. Here the control lining becomes visible again. A third point is that the artwork is increasingly gaining a function value (city image, brand name) that must be visible in the work itself. Consequently, art enters a tension with design. In Eindhoven, the main focus on design in public space is to brand the city (being the city of light, knowledge and design). However, if the city wants to maintain public art without it purely functioning as applied city branding (becoming design), the intrinsic idea of the artist must be taken into account as an important factor in the realisation of an work of art. In spite of the fact that the work always needs to take into account the whole environment and the public as well, in order to really enter into dialogue, it must also remain in good content (do not become superficial) and keep the work functionless in its core. It is the challenge to find a solution in the middle.

C3. After exploring the origin and studying the context of the artwork first, this examination went to look at the artwork *Play of Advice* itself. What do we see, and how does this happen? Before indicating the work, the third chapter discussed Kosuth's artistic ideology in 1996, in order to find out his reasons for this specific work at this public space. The chapter has revealed that Kosuth wants to play a game with existing conventions (both in art and in society), and goes beyond (plays a game with) human consciousness. *Play of Advice* at Eindhoven Central Station, as a valuable place in Kosuth's approach, is an attempt to mirror the place in its core (using neon at the Central Station, using a quote from an important Dutch artist/ thinker). Accordingly, the work inspired our own perspective, bound and determined by our culture. All parts of the work function as visual imageries to represent the conceptual idea, among which its neon tubes - as 'vulgar' imagery - which refer to the postmodern society, and show the temporality of cultural conventions at the same time. One the one hand, *Play of Advice* wants to radiate that the system is never stable and fixed. One the other hand, it shows the (culture of the) place in its core as a fundamental base by purely mirroring its existence, and by asking: are we able to really understand what happens here?

C4. Then, the work itself was analysed in the fourth chapter of this examination, which discussed the effect of the work of art in 2017. This chapter analysed whether this autonomous work of art in today's postmodern society - full of images, stories, information, and lights - can still be of value (and



whether it still may have effect). Is there *anything* happening here today? Although this chapter has made use of a hermeneutic interpretation, whereby the results of this interpretation will possibly be assumed as temporary in nature and can be considered subjective, this interpretation is supported by and established theoretical foundation formulated by thinkers such as Lyotard, Burke, and Goethe. The chapter has stated that the work of art, despite the fact that it originated from another time and perspective, is still of great value in the present time; characterised by its dividedness and insecurity. Because the ordinary passant faces a glimpse of high, yellow neon light, which stagnates his/her rhythm for a while, the artwork is first and foremost a 'spot' of 'empty time' in the convention flow of everyday life. The work can be approached, therefore, as a valuable *experience* in a world full of logic, knowledge, and reasoning, and finds its power in its subtle and interrupting nature without shouting or insisting; like the many billboards in the city around. The work still has an extremely committed and timeless load without reading this directly in the work itself. It actually mirrors the relativity of conventions and tells us to let go: which is an appropriate message in a time full of possibilities and full with new conventions at the same time.

### **What really happens here?**

This examination has shown that the work of art *Play of Advice* by Joseph Kosuth is a timeless, iconic work included in the cultural heritage of Eindhoven. The work represents both a material and a great cultural value. The artwork knows subtly how to cause a short interruption, a moment of silence, for the passants in the station. The work seeks to create an inspiring experience, a short shock of uncertainty or hesitation. During this investigation it became clear that the originally temporary artwork has retained its autonomy and independency over time. Today, it seems almost incredible how much influence and freedom the artist received during those early days. Until now, the work of art reflects the political message of releasing conventions and relativising how “things should be”. Joseph Kosuth thus played a game with the widely accepted views and patterns, that must be discarded in order to enjoy (to be free).

As revealed, art in the public space had more space and opportunities for experimentation, innovation and criticism in the past. Today, public art is more suitable for urban identity and a balance in acceptability. The space for play (experiment, etc.) is more captured, and contemporary public art is more guided by many social and economic requirements. Therefore there is a danger that new public works will get a highly decorative and applied (‘designative’) function, or need to serve a social purpose. The autonomous message of the work thus decreases, and the aesthetics / function value matters to a higher extent. While art should reproduce / show the temporality of perceptions and the changeability of everything. This is something *Play of Advice* does literally. Because *Play of Advice* does not go along with the rhythm of the railway station (a place for movement, fastness, purposes, plans), it manifests itself literally outside these patterns of the context. The work thus conflicts with the actual patterns right there at the central station. It can be argued that the experience *Play of Advice* encourages is able to stay with the passant for a while, as soon as (s)he re-enters the fuss of the station / city. *Play of Advice*, opposing the current discourse, therefore goes beyond beautification and is extremely politically engaged.

Generally, contemporary society is significantly under pressure of more control and regulation, and the public space is no longer equally accessible to and open for everyone. Eindhoven wants to pursue maximum openness, but is also under increasing pressure to give voice to social developments of safety, branding, and design. Recent public works of art are therefore realized less in ‘free commission’, since interests and functions play a larger role. The artist has to take this into account: his/her social criticism is less appreciated. As shown, the temporary work *Play of Advice* was given a permanent role and meaning. However, it is very questionable whether such a ‘free commission’ - in which the artist gets the freedom and space to realise a meaningful work of art in a truly public and accessible environment - can still be provided. This examination shows that it is advisable for city’s policy makers to critically reflect upon the importance and preservation of qualitative, intrinsic works of art in public space (which appears to be of different significance and value at all times). With too many conditions and requirements, the value of both art and the artist in society is visibly affected.

## Discussion

Before I started this research, I carried the deep-rooted question how contemporary artists can generate both socially involved works - able to reach a broad audience and to bring about a real change in society - without losing their own autonomy. In my opinion, works of art generated by clear commissions would damage this autonomy, and the way in which the artwork was generated in 1996 was therefore a kind of idealistic desire to return to. However, this examination has put this thought into broader perspective; considering this autonomy is no longer of this age and does not have to be maintained that way. Especially during the conversation with Sandra Smets I became aware of the notion that commissioned works of art are able to positively stimulate the openness for dialogues on different interesting places when it complies with the entire environment; whether to call this artworks 'partly autonomous', or not. More important seems to be the question on how the artist is able to handle these questions and requirements from his/her own intrinsic motivation with care, and how the client can leave space for the artist within this question. With this concealed autonomy, it is important that the artist's artistic intentions are not particularly damaged, as demonstrated in this examination.

This makes clear that there is a certain point where the many requirements bend to the pure execution of the question, and before that 'determining point' the artists idea will still be visible. Where this point exactly takes place was not the focus of this study. It is therefore interesting to carry out further research to scrutinise this friction and the role of the client for public art, and whether it might be possible to develop a regulation for this (given the relevance of the current tension).

A second point for further research is, of course, the fifth chapter of this thesis; the perspective of the passant (public). Despite the fact that the third chapter of this thesis has shown what the artwork should do, and the fourth chapter is approached from the effect of the work itself, the actual effect of the work is not tested and the different perspectives of the public are therefore left behind. Although the experience of the work is difficult to catch in words, it would be interesting to explain the responses of the passants in order to look at the work from a broader context than the arts itself.

In addition, it will be a valuable addition when the experience of *Play of Advice* will be compared with Roosegaarde's 93-meter-long wall. This has not been extensively addressed in this examination either, since this artwork by Roosegaarde is not yet on display. When the two works are visible directly next to one another (an autonomous work from 1996 and an applied work from contemporary requirements (design?)), they may potentially positively affect or potentially adversely affect each other. Possibly, Kosuth's artwork is approached more as a design line, put in new spotlight, or becomes the textual carrier of the long light wall itself; which makes this light wall more legible. What exactly happens here, and what this is saying to us, will be worth further exploration.

TRAVAU  
X  
[ P U B L I C S ]  
P W O R K S  
P U B L I C S

ROBERT BARRY SIMON BENSON THOMAS A CLARK DOMIEN COPPELMANS RICHARD DEVEREUX  
IAN HAMILTON FINLAY HAMISH FULTON DOUGLAS GORDON JENNY HOLZER ANNE MARIE JUGNET  
JOSEPH KOSUTH THOMAS LOCHER RICHARD LONG ROSANGELA RENNO HANS WAANDERS  
LAWRENCE WEINER RÉMY ZAUGG

8 DECEMBER 1996 TM 9 FEBRUARI 1997

OPENING: ZONDAG 8 DECEMBER 14-17 UUR VAN ABTEMUSEUM

TEKSTWERKEN IN DE OPENBARE RUIMTE EN PORTFOLIO  
PENINSULA & VAN ABTEMUSEUM

EINDHOVEN - HOLLAND

TZIII

foto: ruud balk vormgeving: tjeu teeuwen

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abels, R. (2013, December 06). Cultuur heeft weer de warme aandacht.. Retrieved from <http://www.trouw.nl/tr/nl/5009/Archief/article/detail/3457223/2013/06/12/Cultuur-heeft-weer-de-warme-aandacht.dhtml>
- Bak, S. (1994). Visies op Mondriaan. Retrieved from [http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/\\_ons003199401\\_01/\\_ons003199401\\_01\\_0009.php](http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_ons003199401_01/_ons003199401_01_0009.php)
- Barthes, R. (1980). *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. Retrieved from [https://monoskop.org/images/c/c5/Barthes\\_Roland\\_Camera\\_Lucida\\_Reflections\\_on\\_Photography.pdf](https://monoskop.org/images/c/c5/Barthes_Roland_Camera_Lucida_Reflections_on_Photography.pdf)
- Barthes, R. (1977). The Death of the Author. In R. Barthes (Ed.), *Image Music Text* (pp. 142-149). London, Engeland: Fontana Press.
- Bax, S., Gielen, P., & Ieven, B. (2015). *Interrupting the City. Artistic Constitutions of the Public Sphere*. Amsterdam, Nederland: Antennae.
- Boomgaard, J. (n.d.). Het effect van kunst in de openbare ruimte. Retrieved from <http://laps-rietveld.nl/?p=4922>
- Van Bork, G. J., Delabastita, D., Van Gorp, H., Verkruijssse, P. J., & Vis, G. J. (n.d.). Algemeen letterkundig lexicon. Hermeneutiek. Retrieved from [http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/dela012alge01\\_01/dela012alge01\\_01\\_00873.php](http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/dela012alge01_01/dela012alge01_01_00873.php)
- Bosman, A. (1998, September 17). Joseph Kosuth: Wij werken niet voor Walt Disney. Retrieved from <https://www.trouw.nl/home/joseph-kosuth-wij-werken-niet-voor-walt-disney~abdb1022/>
- Van den Braembussche, B. (2012). *Denken over kunst. Inleiding in de kunstfilosofie*. Bussum, Nederland: Uitgeverij Coutinho.
- Bussemaker, J. (2013). *Cultuur beweegt. De betekenis van cultuur in een veranderende samenleving*. Retrieved from <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2013/06/11/cultuur-beweegt-de-betekenis-van-cultuur-in-een-veranderende-samenleving>
- Bussemaker, J. (2015). *Toespraak van minister Bussemaker bij uitreiking Agenda Cultuurbeleid 2017-2020..* Retrieved from <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/toespraken/2015/04/08/reactie-op-cultuuragenda>
- De Caeter, L., & Dehaene, M. (2008). *The space of play. Towards a general theory of heterotopia*. Londen, United Kingdom: Routledge.

- CRIMSON. (2010). *Station Eindhoven Cultuurhistorisch onderzoek en waardestelling van Station Eindhoven*. Retrieved from <https://www.crimsonweb.org/IMG/pdf/StationEindhoven-2010-screen.pdf>
- Doorman, M. (2016). *De Navel van Daphne*. Amsterdam, Nederland: Prometheus/Bert Bakker.
- Doran, S. (2013). *The Culture of Yellow. Or, The Visual Politics of Late Modernity*. London, United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Dortmans, K. (2000). Hans-Georg Gadamer honderd jaar. Retrieved from <https://www.filosofie.nl/nl/nieuws/2500/hans-georg-gadamer-honderd-jaar.html>
- Dunmall, G. (2016, July 12). The resurrection of Nantes: how free public art brought the city back to life. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/jul/12/resurrection-nantes-france-how-free-public-art-brought-city-back-to-life>
- Foolen, P., & Teeuwen, T. (1996). *Travaux Publics [ Public Works ]*. Eindhoven, The Netherlands: Peninsula.
- Gadamer, H. G. (1960). *Truth and Method*. Londen, United Kingdom: Bloomsbury.
- Gadamer, H. G. (1986). *The relevance of the beautiful*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Garret, B. (2015, August 04). The privatisation of cities' public spaces is escalating. It is time to take a stand. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/aug/04/pops-privately-owned-public-space-cities-direct-action>
- Gemeente Eindhoven. (2006). *Visie Openbare Ruimte* (Dienst Stedelijke Ontwikkeling en Beheer, Raadsbesluit). Retrieved from [file:///C:/Users/Liza/Downloads/Visie\\_Openbare\\_Ruimte\\_\\_dec\\_2006.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Liza/Downloads/Visie_Openbare_Ruimte__dec_2006.pdf)
- Gemeente Eindhoven. (2011). *Bewegen tussen duurzaamheid en trends* (Kwaliteitskader Openbare Ruimte Centrum). Retrieved from [http://dearchitect.nl.s3-eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/app/uploads/2017/01/attachment-Bijlage\\_\\_Kwaliteitskader\\_Openbare\\_Ruimte\\_Centrum.pdf](http://dearchitect.nl.s3-eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/app/uploads/2017/01/attachment-Bijlage__Kwaliteitskader_Openbare_Ruimte_Centrum.pdf)
- Gemeente Eindhoven. (2011). *MER Stationsgebied*. Retrieved from [https://www.eindhoven.nl/ruimtelijkeplannen/plannen/NL.IMRO.0772.80215-/NL.IMRO.0772.80215-0301/b\\_NL.IMRO.0772.80215-0301\\_tb2.pdf](https://www.eindhoven.nl/ruimtelijkeplannen/plannen/NL.IMRO.0772.80215-/NL.IMRO.0772.80215-0301/b_NL.IMRO.0772.80215-0301_tb2.pdf)
- Gemeente Eindhoven. (2016). *Inter-nationale hotspot. En de weg daarnaartoe* (Binnenstadsvisie, Eindhoven 2025). Retrieved from <https://eindhoven.raadsinformatie.nl/document/3869603/1>

- Gemeente Eindhoven. (2016). Kader- en ambitiedocument (Eindhoven Stationsomgeving Zuid). Retrieved from [https://eindhoven.raadsinformatie.nl/document/5439524/1/17bst00842\\_-\\_Bijlage\\_3\\_-\\_Kader\\_en\\_ambitiedocument](https://eindhoven.raadsinformatie.nl/document/5439524/1/17bst00842_-_Bijlage_3_-_Kader_en_ambitiedocument)
- Gielen, P. (2013). *Repressief Liberalisme: Opstellen Over Creatieve Arbeid, Politiek en Kunst*. Amsterdam, Nederland: Valiz.
- Gielen, P. (2015). Performing the Common City. In the Crossroads of Art, Politics and Public Life. In S. Bax, B. Leven, & P. Gielen (Eds.), *Interrupting the City. Artistic Constitutions of the Public Sphere* (pp. 273-297). Amsterdam, Nederland: Atnennae.
- Gielen, P., & Van Winkel, C. (2012). *De hybride kunstenaar. De organisatie van de artistieke praktijk in het postindustriële tijdperk*. Retrieved from <https://lectoratenakvstjoost.files.wordpress.com/2010/04/eindrapporthybridiseringnlbe.pdf>
- Gombrich, E. H. (1996). *Eeuwige schoonheid* (16th ed.). Houten, Nederland: Gaade Uitgevers/Unieboek b.v.
- Habermas, J. (1991). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Den Hartog Jager, H. (2014, September 18). Geëngageerde kunstenaars: de wereld luistert niet. Retrieved from <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2014/09/18/geengageerde-kunstenaars-de-wereld-luistert-niet-1419986-a29079>
- Heinich, N. (n.d.). *Outsider art and insider artist: gauging public reactions to contemporary art*. Retrieved from <https://www.sfu.ca/cmns/courses/2011/488/1-Readings/Heinich%20Outside%20art.pdf>
- Heinich, N. (1998). *Ce que l'art fait à la sociologie*. Paris, France: Paris: Éditions de Minuit.
- Honour, H., & Flemming, J. (2011). *Algemene Kunstgeschiedenis: herziene, uitgebreide editie* (15th ed.). Amsterdam, Nederland: Meulenhoff.
- Kosuth, J. (1991). *Art After Philosophy and After*. Retrieved from [https://monoskop.org/images/4/46/Kosuth\\_Joseph\\_1969\\_1991\\_Art\\_After\\_Philosophy.pdf](https://monoskop.org/images/4/46/Kosuth_Joseph_1969_1991_Art_After_Philosophy.pdf)
- Kosuth, J. (2009). *Art After Modernism* (Joseph Kosuth interviewed by Germano Celant in Joseph Kosuth, The Language of Equilibrium, Venice Biennale 52. International Art Exhibition, Electa, Milano). Retrieved from <https://imanefares.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Joseph-Kosuth-web-eng.pdf>
- Lambert, J., & Thoben, P. (2003). *Beeldenboek Eindhoven*. Eindhoven, The Netherlands: Museum Kempenland Eindhoven.

- Lyotard, J. F. (1991). The Sublime and the Avant Garde. In J. F. Lyotard (Ed.), *The Inhuman. Reflections on Time* (pp. 89-108). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press.
- Lyotard, J.F. (1979). *The Postmodern Condition. A Report on Knowledge*. Manchester, United Kingdom: Manchester University Press.
- Minnaert, M. (1937). *De natuurkunde van 't vrije veld. Deel I. Licht en kleur in het landschap*. Retrieved from [http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/minn004natu01\\_01/](http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/minn004natu01_01/)
- Mitchell, D. (2003). *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*. New York, America: Guilford Press.
- Mitchell, D. (2014). *People's Park Again On the End and Ends of Public Space*. Amsterdam, Nederland: University of Amsterdam.
- Modder, J., Van Uum, E., & Van der Bijl, R. (2015). *rendement van spoor en stations voor de stad meer rendement van spoor en stations voor de stad*. Retrieved from [http://kennisdeling.verdus.nl/upload/documents/150213\\_Rapportage%20Meer%20rendement%20van%20spoor%20en%20stations%20voor%20de%20stad%20WEB.pdf](http://kennisdeling.verdus.nl/upload/documents/150213_Rapportage%20Meer%20rendement%20van%20spoor%20en%20stations%20voor%20de%20stad%20WEB.pdf)
- Nio, I. (2012). Het station als publieke ruimte. Retrieved from [http://www.spoorbeeld.nl/sites/default/files/issuu/BSM-20120812-website\\_dig-essay%20Het%20station%20als%20publieke%20ruimte.pdf](http://www.spoorbeeld.nl/sites/default/files/issuu/BSM-20120812-website_dig-essay%20Het%20station%20als%20publieke%20ruimte.pdf)
- NS. (n.d.). Beknopte geschiedenis van de stations. Retrieved from <http://www.nsstations.nl/vastgoed-en-ontwikkeling/geschiedenis-van-stations.html>
- NS. (n.d.). Stations met gesloten poortjes. Retrieved from <http://www.ns.nl/reisinformatie/reizen-met-ov-chipkaart/stations-met-gesloten-poortjes.html>
- PMSA. (2017, February 20). Joseph Kosuth in Conversation. Retrieved from <https://3rd-dimensionpmsa.org.uk/interviews/2017-02-20-joseph-kosuth-in-conversation>
- Polman, M.G. (2011). *De kleuren van het nieuwe bouwen tijdens het interbellum in Nederland Materialisering van een ideaal*. Retrieved from [http://www.joostdevree.nl/bouwkunde2/jpgp/pdf\\_004\\_kleuren\\_nieuwe\\_bouwen\\_interbellum\\_proefschrift\\_maria\\_g\\_polman.pdf](http://www.joostdevree.nl/bouwkunde2/jpgp/pdf_004_kleuren_nieuwe_bouwen_interbellum_proefschrift_maria_g_polman.pdf)
- Prinzhorn, M. (2009). *Concepts as Words, Concepts as Art* (In Joseph Kosuth, The Language of Equilibrium, Venice Biennale 52. International Art Exhibition, Electa, Milano, 2009, p. 15-17). Retrieved from <https://imanefares.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Joseph-Kosuth-web-eng.pdf>
- ProRail. (n.d.). Station Eindhoven. Retrieved from <https://www.prorail.nl/projecten/station-eindhoven>



- Reints, R. (2013, December 24). De overwinning op de zon. Retrieved from <https://www.groene.nl/artikel/de-overwinning-op-de-zon>
- Ribbat, C. (2013). *Flickering Light: A History of Neon*. London, United Kingdom: Reaktion Books
- Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed. (n.d.). *Beschrijving van Station Eindhoven*. Retrieved from <https://monumentenregister.cultureelerfgoed.nl/monuments/530936>
- Rosenzweig, P. (1992). A Play: The Herald Tribune, Kafka and a Quote. Retrieved from <https://hirshhorn.si.edu/dynamic/archives/Works-Joseph-Kosuth-Brochure.pdf>
- Sennet, R. (2003). *The Fall of Public Man*. London, United Kingdom: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Selie, M. (2015, Februari 16). Essay uit de nieuwe Gids: Niet gelukkig, in de Dapperstraat. Retrieved from <https://www.groene.nl/artikel/essay-uit-de-nieuwe-gids-niet-gelukkig-in-de-dapperstraat>
- Sharp, J., Pollock, V., & Paddinson, R. (2005). *Just Art for a Just City: Public Art and Social Inclusion in Urban Regeneration* (Urban Studies, Vol. 42, Nos 5/6, 1001– 1023, May 2005). Retrieved from Just Art for a Just City: Public Art and Social Inclusion in Urban Regeneration
- Spoorbeeld. (2012). Visie op omgeving van spoor & station. Bijdrage aan het Spoorbeeld. Retrieved from [http://www.spoorbeeld.nl/sites/default/files/issuu/Visie%20op%20omgeving%20van%20spoor%20en%20station%20lowres\\_2.pdf](http://www.spoorbeeld.nl/sites/default/files/issuu/Visie%20op%20omgeving%20van%20spoor%20en%20station%20lowres_2.pdf)
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (2016, September 21). Hans-Georg Gadamer. Retrieved June 06, 2017, from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/gadamer/#PhiHer>
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (2016, June 22). Hermeneutics. Retrieved June 06, 2017, from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hermeneutics/>
- Theeuwen, M. (2017, March 6). Oude stationshal Eindhoven in oude luister hersteld. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.nl/eindhoven/oude-stationshal-eindhoven-in-oude-luister-hersteld~a542c2f6/>
- Thomas, C. (2010, December 15). De tirannie van intimiteit. Retrieved from <https://www.groene.nl/artikel/de-tirannie-van-intimiteit>
- Van Uitert, E. (1989). Cultureel leven. Retrieved from [http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/\\_gid001198901\\_01/\\_gid001198901\\_01\\_0058.php](http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_gid001198901_01/_gid001198901_01_0058.php)

- Vega, J. (2013). Imagining the city. The difference that art makes. Contemporary culture. New directions in art and humanities research. In J. Thissen, R. Zwijnenberg, & K. Zijlmans (Eds.), *Contemporary Culture: New Directions in Art and Humanities Research* (pp. 51-61). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press.
- Vande Veire, F. (2002). *Als in een donkere spiegel. De kunst in de moderne filosofie*. Amsterdam, Nederland: SUN.
- Voetman, L. (2017, February 28). Mondrian meets the city: Why we should all visit 'Mondrian to Dutch Design' in The Hague. Retrieved from <https://www.digitmagazine.com/articles/mondrian-meets-city-why-we-should-all-visit-mondrian-dutch-design-hague>
- VROM. (2009). *Publieke ruimte Naar een nieuwe balans tussen beeld, belang en beheer*. Retrieved from <http://www.rli.nl/sites/default/files/publiekeruimte6-2009advies.pdf>
- Van Winkel, C. (1999). *Over kunst en openbaarheid*. Amsterdam, Nederland: SUN.
- Van Winkel, C. (2011, August). Wat is er misgegaan. *Metropolis M*, 2011(4), 29.
- Wittgenstein, L. (2014). *Over kleur*. Amsterdam, Nederland: BOOM.
- Zijlstra, H. (2011). *Meer dan kwaliteit, een nieuwe visie op cultuurbeleid..* Retrieved from <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/beleidsnotas/2011/06/10/meer-dan-kwaliteit-een-nieuw>

## APPENDICES

Sol LeWitt **IRISH**

'Irish' is based on the short lyric poem 'Irisch' by the German poet Paul Celan. The American artist Sol LeWitt has made a series of 15 gouaches on this theme and two of these have been printed on the cover.

'Irish' also includes five different translations of Celan's poem into English by Jerome Rothenberg, Anselm Hollo, Harry Gilonis, Edwin Morgan and Pierre Joris, and one translation into Irish Gaelic by Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill.

'Irish' was edited and designed by Alec Finlay and Tjeu Teeuwen and published by Morning Star Publications – Edinburgh, Scotland; Peninsula – Eindhoven, The Netherlands and Ormeau Baths Gallery – Belfast, Northern Ireland, in an edition of 500 copies.

12 x 18 cm

fl. 20,-

A special edition of 'Irish' also contains seven gouaches by Sol LeWitt printed in offset.

Edition of 100, numbered and signed by the artist.

12 x 18 cm

fl. 150,-

Ian Hamilton Finlay

**BROUNT – AN IDYLL**

Robespierre was much attached to Brout, and constantly played with him. He was the only escort of this tyrant of opinion, who caused the throne to tremble, and all the aristocracy to fly for refuge to other lands.

Alphonse de Lamartine *History Of The Girondists*

This book by Ian Hamilton Finlay with Robin Gillanders contains 8 photographs printed in duotone and an English and Dutch text and was published in an edition of 250 copies.

30 x 21 cm

fl. 125,-

**BLUE FLOWER**

Ian Hamilton Finlay with Cornelia Wieg, 'Blue Flower' was printed in offset in an edition of 250 copies.

42 x 28 cm

fl. 200,-

**THONIER**

Ian Hamilton Finlay with Janet Boulton, 'Thonier' was printed in offset in an edition of 250 copies.

20 x 55 cm

fl. 200,-

Leo Vroegindewij

untitled

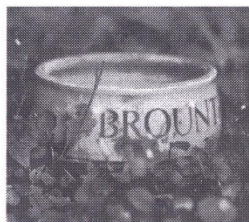
silkscreen

edition of 7

70 x 100 cm

fl. 1000,-

**BROUNT**



Peninsula Foundation  
Gestelsestraat 44c  
5615 LG Eindhoven  
The Netherlands  
t-f +31(0)40-2453491

> Simon Benson *Carne (Vecchio) Cielo (Nuovo)* 1996  
from: *Travaux Publics [Public Works]*

## A Selection of New Editions



**PENINSULA**

Founded by artists in 1986, Peninsula organizes exhibitions of contemporary art. Peninsula is also a publisher and a producer of multiples, artists' books and portfolios. In 1994 Peninsula published the portfolio *Dear Stieglitz*, which showed how a representative and international selection of thirteen artists used photography in their work. Marina Abramović, Vito Acconci, Jean-Marc Bustamante, Thomas Joshua Cooper, Paul van Dijk, Chohreh Feyzjoui, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Hamish Fulton, Jochen Gerz, Krijn Giezen, Roni Horn, Jean Le Gac and Richard Long were invited to participate.

The choice of these specific artists was not at all self-evident. Though the work of each artist can easily be connected to photography, there is no obvious common denominator. It was exactly because of this that a particularly varied whole came about, in which a great number of different artistic attitudes were evident.

It was striking that in nine out of thirteen contributions, text or language had been used (this number includes the photograph of Marina Abramović carving a pentagram in the skin of her belly). This became the motive to plan an edition of a portfolio in which text and language would be the starting point. At first the intention was to publish a portfolio and a catalogue. It then became apparent that a project like this would be very suitable for execution in public spaces: *Travaux Publics [Public Works]*.

The collection of the Van Abbemuseum was an important point of reference in the selection of the artists, which was made in consultation with the Van Abbemuseum, the De Pont Foundation and the Bonnefantenmuseum.

Robert Barry, Simon Benson, Thomas A Clark, Domien Coppelmans, Richard Devereux, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Hamish Fulton, Douglas Gordon, Jenny Holzer, Anne Marie Jugnet, Joseph Kosuth, Thomas Locher, Richard Long, Rosângela Rennó, Hans Waanders, Lawrence Weiner and Rémy Zaugg were invited to participate in *Travaux Publics [Public Works]*.

With this selection, as well as with the *Dear Stieglitz*, portfolio, Peninsula again wants to show new viewpoints, and also differences and similarities in the way the participating artists use text and language in their work. Each artist was asked to make a proposal for a work in public space as well as for a work in the portfolio, which is also titled *Travaux Publics* [Public Works] and was shown at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven during the exhibition.

Together with Morning Star Publications in Edinburgh, Scotland, the portfolio *Evidence* was published. *Evidence* contains three prints in offset and one watercolour by Callum Innes, and poems by John Burnside. With Morning Star Publications and Ormeau Baths Gallery in Dublin, Northern Ireland, Peninsula published *Irish* by Sol LeWitt.

With Ian Hamilton Finlay Peninsula published the book *Brount – An Idyll*, and we are now preparing the edition of two prints by Ian Hamilton Finlay, *Blue Flower*, with Cornelia Wieg and *Thonier*, with Janet Boulton.

Please call us for more information about the Peninsula editions.

Peter Foolen – Pieter Alewijns

November 1997

### *Dear Stieglitz,*

Marina **Abramović**  
 Vito **Acconci**  
 Jean-Marc **Bustamante**  
 Paul **van Dijk**  
 Thomas Joshua **Cooper**  
 Chohreh **Feyzdjou**  
 Ian Hamilton **Finlay**  
 Hamish **Fulton**  
 Jochen **Gerz**  
 Krijn **Giezen**  
 Roni **Horn**  
 Jean **Le Gac**  
 Richard **Long**

PENINSULA



*Dear Stieglitz*, was published in an edition of 41 copies, signed and numbered by the artists, in a handmade portfolio, including a title page and colophon.

Including an essay by Thomas A Clark and a catalogue.

40 x 50 cm

fl. 2.500,-

## Evidence

Callum Innes  
 John Burnside

*Evidence* is a portfolio containing three prints and one watercolour by Callum Innes and poems by John Burnside and was published in an edition of 50 copies, numbered and signed by the poet and artist, with 15 copies *hors de commerce*.

50 x 65 cm

fl. 1.500,-

A companion Folio with three watercolours printed in offset, was published in an edition of 250 numbered copies.

14 x 21 cm

fl. 37,50

MORNING STAR PUBLICATIONS – PENINSULA

# T R A V A U X [ P U B L I C S ] P U B L I C S

ROBERT BARRY SIMON BENSON THOMAS A CLARK  
 DOMIEN COPPELMANS RICHARD DEVEREUX  
 IAN HAMILTON FINLAY HAMISH FULTON DOUGLAS GORDON  
 JENNY HOLZER ANNE MARIE JUGNET JOSEPH KOSUTH  
 THOMAS LOCHER RICHARD LONG ROSÁNGELA RENNÓ  
 HANS WAANDERS LAWRENCE WEINER RÉMY ZAUGG

PENINSULA

EINDHOVEN – HOLLAND

The portfolio *Travaux Publics* [Public Works] was published on the occasion of an exhibition of text-works in public spaces in Eindhoven, organized by Peninsula and the Van Abbemuseum. It is published in an edition of 41 copies, signed and numbered by the artists, in a handmade portfolio, including a title page and colophon.

40 x 50 cm

fl. 1.950,-

In a separate hardcover catalogue the public works and the prints are published.

80 pages, ISBN 90-74806-09-0

21 x 26 cm

fl. 29,50

# Van AbbeMUSEUM <sup>entr'acte</sup>

8 december 1996 tot en met 9 februari 1997

## 'ID'

Een internationale verkenning naar het begrip identiteit in de hedendaagse kunst

An international survey on the notion of identity in contemporary art

Deelnemende kunstenaars / The artists taking part are:

Eija-Liisa Ahtila (FIN), Vanessa Beecroft (I), Willie Doherty (N-IRL), Douglas Gordon (SC), Aernout Mik (NL), Tony Oursler (USA), Sam Samore (USA), Georgina Starr (GB), en Gillian Wearing (GB)

## Travaux Publics

Presentatie van een grafiekmap i.s.m. de stichting Peninsula naar aanleiding van een project van een aantal tijdelijke kunstwerken in Eindhoven

Presentation of a graphics portfolio in conjunction with the Stichting Peninsula to accompany a project involving a number of temporary artworks in Eindhoven.

## Sol LeWitt

Nieuwe uitvoeringen van / New versions of

'Wall Drawing # 480,  
Two asymmetrical pyramids with color ink washes superimposed'  
'Wall Drawing # 256,  
white crayon lines and black pencil grid on black wall'

Port betaald  
Port payé  
Eindhoven  
Pays-Bas

<sup>entr'acte</sup>  
Van AbbeMUSEUM

tijdelijk adres  
temporary address  
Vonderweg 1  
Eindhoven

P.O. Box 235  
5600 AE Eindhoven  
The Netherlands

gemeente Eindhoven

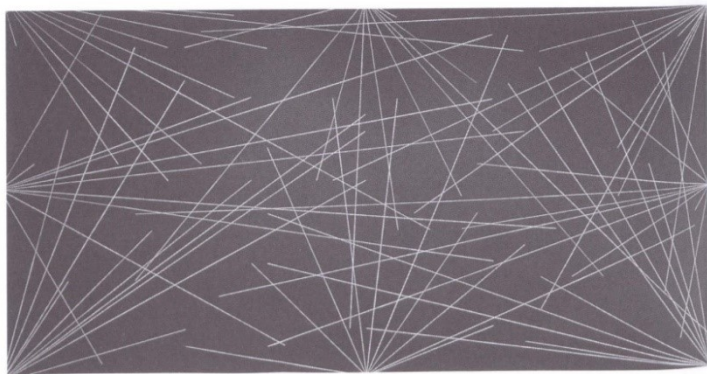


## Travaux Publics

Robert Barry, Simon Benson, Thomas A Clark, Domien Coppelmans, Richard Devereux, IanHamilton Finlay, Hamish Fulton, Douglas Gordon, Jenny Holzer, Anne Marie Jugnet, Joseph Kosuth, Thomas Locher, Richard Long, Rosàngela Rennó, Hans Waanders, Lawrence Weiner, Rémy Zaugg

Onder de naam Travaux Publics vindt in Eindhoven in de openbare ruimte een tentoonstelling plaats van kunstwerken waarin teksten de hoofdrol spelen. In het station, op een brug of een blinde muur, op de meest onverwachte plaatsen kun je teksten in de stad tegenkomen. Deze 'openbare werken', geselecteerd en gerealiseerd door het Eindhovense kunstenaarsinitiatief Peninsula, laten zien wat de invloed is van de omgeving op een tekst. Naast enkele vertegenwoordigers van de 'klassieke' conceptuele kunst zijn ook jongere, minder bekende kunstenaars uitgenodigd die taal als uitgangspunt voor hun werk nemen.

Hoe verschillend kunstenaars met teksten in hun werk omgaan, is ook te zien op de begeleidende tentoonstelling in het Van Abbemuseum. Daar worden werken op papier getoond die, verzameld in een portfolio, uitgegeven zijn in het kader van het project. Deze uitgave is te koop en het project wordt verder begeleid door een rijk geïllustreerde catalogus. (f 29,50)



Sol Lewitt, Walldrawing no. 256, 1975

Under the title 'Travaux Publics' an exhibition of works in which text plays a leading role is being held in public spaces in Eindhoven. You may encounter texts at the station, on a bridge or a blind wall, in the most unexpected places. These 'public works', selected and realized by the Eindhoven artists' initiative Peninsula, show how the surroundings affect a text. In addition to several proponents of 'classical' conceptual art, some younger, less well known artists who take language as their starting point were invited to participate.

The very different ways in which artists treat texts in their work is also evident from the accompanying exhibition at the Van Abbemuseum. It presents works on paper which have been brought together in a portfolio published as part of the project. This portfolio is for sale and the project is also accompanied by a profusely illustrated catalogue. (Dfl. 29.50)

## Twee werken van Sol LeWitt

### Two works by Sol LeWitt

Om het tijdelijke gebouw van het Van Abbemuseum toch een beetje het karakter van het oude museum te geven, is besloten om twee werken van Sol LeWitt opnieuw uit te voeren. Het gaat om 'Wall Drawing no. 480, Two asymmetrical pyramids with color ink washes superimposed' en 'Wall Drawing no. 256, white crayon lines and black pencil grid on black wall'.

#### Conceptueel

Het werk van Sol LeWitt (Hartford USA 1928) wordt gerekend tot de conceptuele kunst, een kunstrichting waar de betekenis meer ligt in de ideeën dan in de materiële uitwerking ervan. Vanaf ca. 1966 kwam de conceptuele kunst tot bloei. In zijn statements van 1967 en 1969 maakt LeWitt duidelijk dat hij het concept als het meest belangrijke aspect van een kunstwerk beschouwt, los van de uitvoering:

'Wanneer een kunstenaar werkt op een conceptuele manier betekent het dat de planning en het nemen van beslissingen voorafgaan aan een (eventuele) uitvoering. Hij kan dat theoretisch doen om iets aan te tonen, of intuïtief, op basis van vrijblijvende mentale processen'.

#### Verskillende werken

LeWitt's muurtekeningen vallen uiteen in verschillende types: tekeningen met zwarte potloodlijnen en later ook kleurige inkt- of krijtlijnen (zoals Wall Drawing No. 256, 1975) en composities met geo- en isometrische vormen (zoals Wall Drawing No. 480, 1986). De tekeningen vullen meestal een muur of beslaan zelfs de gehele ruimte.

#### Weerzien met een paar oude bekenden

De werken, die door twee assistenten nauwgezet volgens het precies geformuleerde concept van de kunstenaar werden uitgevoerd, zullen permanent te zien zijn. Deze 'nieuwe oude werken' geven de vaste bezoeker ongetwijfeld het vertrouwde gevoel weer in het Van Abbemuseum te zijn. Degene die het werk van LeWitt nog nooit gezien heeft, zal verrast zijn door de intensiteit van de kleuren en lijnen en door de ruimtelijke werking.

In order to give the temporary building something of the character of the old Van Abbemuseum it has been decided to execute two works by Sol LeWitt again. They are 'Wall Drawing No. 480, Two asymmetrical pyramids with color ink washes superimposed' and 'Wall Drawing No. 256, white crayon lines and pencil grid on black wall'.

The work of Sol LeWitt (b. Hartford USA, 1928) belongs to the movement known as conceptual art, in which the meaning lies in the ideas rather than in their material realisation. Conceptual art flourished from about 1966. In his statements of 1967 and 1969 LeWitt makes it clear that he sees the concept as the most important aspect of an artwork, irrespective of the execution: 'When an artist works in a conceptual manner, it means that the planning and taking of decisions precedes the realization. He can do so theoretically in order to demonstrate something, or intuitively, on the basis of random mental processes.'

LeWitt's wall drawings can be divided into various types: drawings with black pencil lines and later coloured ink or crayon lines as well (like Wall Drawing No. 256, 1975) and compositions with geometric and isometric forms (like Wall Drawing No. 480, 1986). The drawings generally take up the whole wall or even the whole room.

The works, which were carefully executed by two assistants according to the artist's precisely formulated concept, will be permanently displayed. These 'new old works' will no doubt give the regular visitor the feeling of being back in the familiar Van Abbemuseum again. Anyone who has not seen the work of LeWitt before will be surprised by the intensity of the colours and lines and by the spatial effect.

JOSEPH KOSUTH, GENT STUDIO, fax  
(32-9) 233.47.87 phone 233.48.49

1.III.98

To: PETER FOOLEN AND PETER ALEWIJNS, *PENINSULA*

Gentlemen,

As you know, it has been nearly a year and a half since we installed my work in the Eindhoven trainstation. At that time I offered the work to the City of Eindhoven for an amount which was essentially at cost. The overhead of my studios and staff per month is approximately \$50,000. We spent over two months researching and developing this work, although I was also working on another project. When I offered this work to the City of Eindhoven for the amount of \$50,000 it was primarily the estimate of my costs. Commissions for a work such as this one which I did for Eindhoven would normally bring me around \$200,000. I made this donation of \$150,000, really, because I wanted to be sure that the work would remain permanently at the site it was made for, since it was produced for a temporary exhibition, and, secondarily, I wanted at least the return of my expenses since your budget for the temporary exhibition could not cover them. Also, the Van Abbemuseum has been supportive of my work for most of my career and I was happy to make this present to Eindhoven. Of course, I offered this \$150,000 deduction/donation with the full expectation that in one or two months after my offer you would find the money and this deficit would be quickly cleared away. I am both rather surprised and unhappy that after all of this time the money has still not been found.

Regrettably I will now have to bring this financial search period to a close and give you until May 1, 1998 to accept my offer. It simply does not seem fair that everyday this work is seen by hundreds or even thousands of people and yet the artist has not received one guilder. At some point after this date I will be obliged to remove this work and offer it on the artmarket. It would be a pity since it was made for Eindhoven, but it doesn't seem so far that Eindhoven cares whether it remains there.

Thank you for all of your efforts on behalf of this work,

  
JOSEPH KOSUTH