

title: Certificate of Glass (one and three)

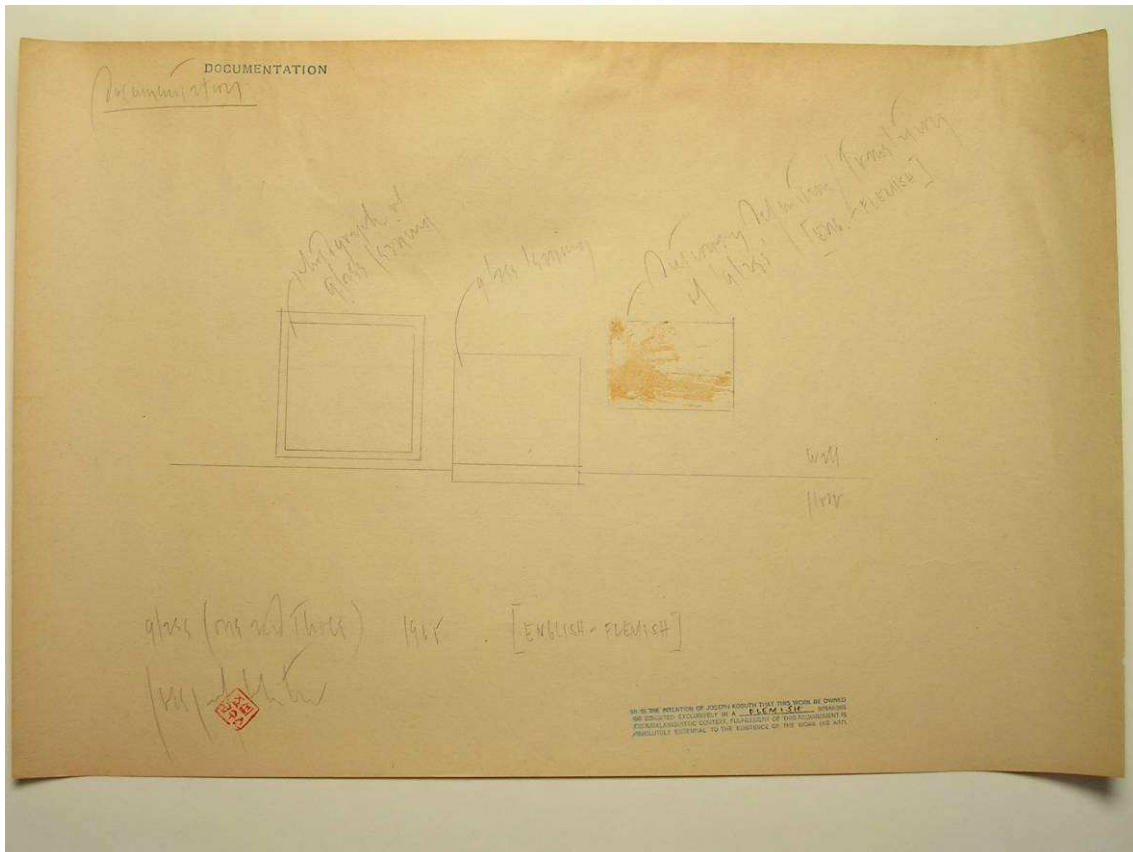
author: Sanneke Stigter

case: Joseph Kosuth, *Glass (one and three)*, 1965

publisher: Kröller-Müller Museum

date: May 5, 2007

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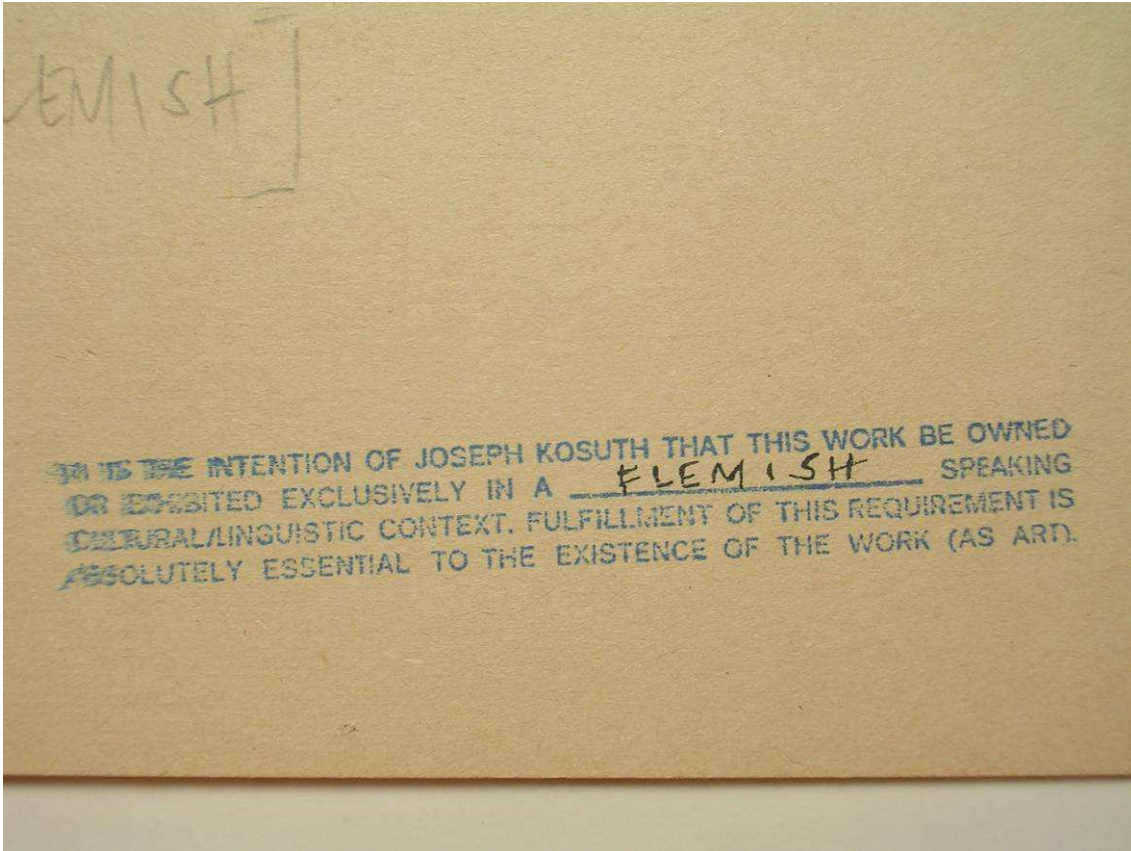


Joseph Kosuth, *Certificate of Glass (one and three)*, 1976
Pencil and ink on paper, 30,3 x 45,5 cm, Kröller-Müller Museum, KM 125.436
photo: Sanneke Stigter / Kröller-Müller Museum, 2004

Certificate of Glass (one and three)

The certificate provides an important guideline of how to install the work. Kosuth had sent this to Fernand Spillemaeckers from gallery MTL, the Belgium partner of Art & Project, who sold the work to Geertjan Visser.

This document describes how to realize the installation. A drawing and some notes show the object, 'glass leaning', and the way this should be depicted in the photograph left of it, 'photograph of glass leaning'. On the right of the object a scrap of paper was glued indicating that a textual definition is to be located to the right of the object. Unfortunately this scrap is no longer adhered to the certificate, but the remnants of glue are still visible. Comparison with certificates from similar works shows how Kosuth visualized the matter 'text' as an abstraction on this 'documentation' as they are often stamped. A scrap of whatever text was used with the sentences in upright position, cut halfway through, adhered in a drawn box on the certificate, indicating the size of the 'dictionary definition/translation of 'glass' [Eng-Flemish]'.

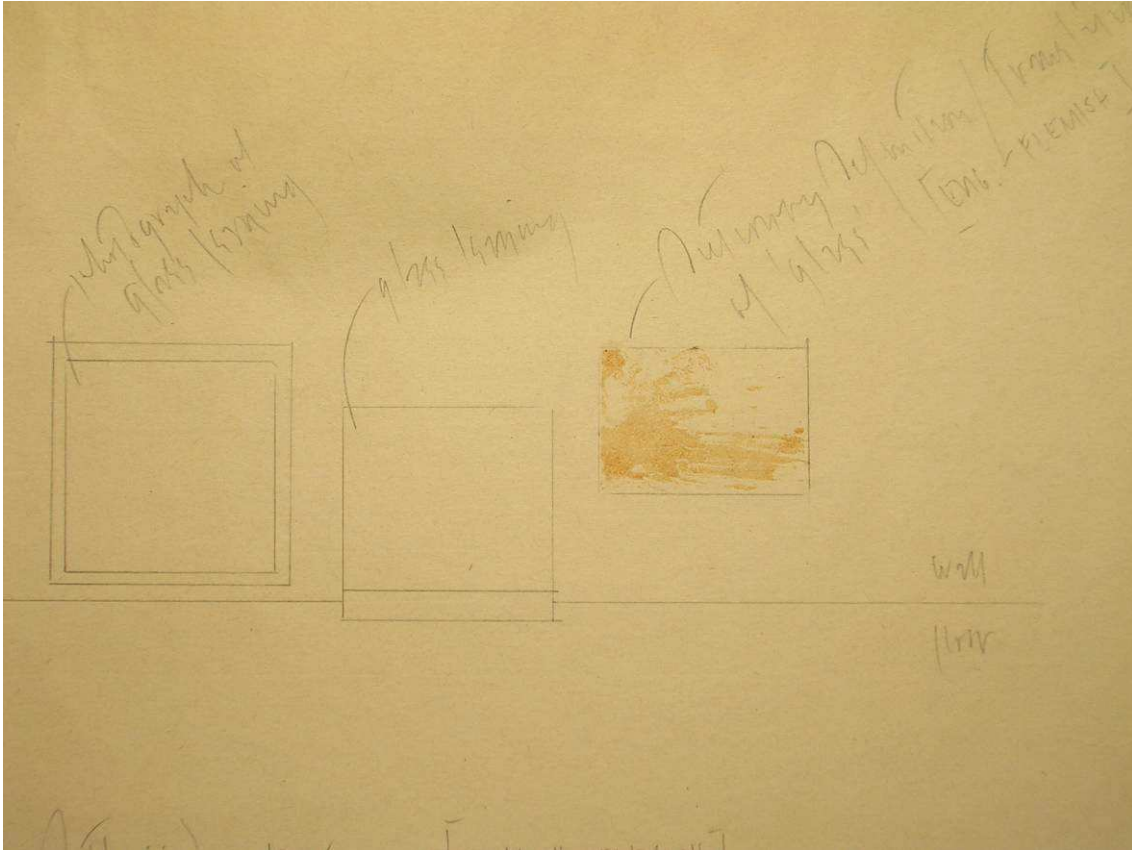


Detail of Joseph Kosuth, *Certificate of Glass (one and three)*, 1976, showing the filled out stamp
Pencil and ink on paper, 30,3 x 45,5 cm, Kröller-Müller Museum, KM 125.436
photo: Sanneke Stigter / Kröller-Müller Museum, 2004

The certificate does not state that the photograph of the glass should be made at the site where the work would be installed. What the certificate does state, from a ready-made stamp, is that: 'It is the intention of Joseph Kosuth that this work be owned or exhibited exclusively in a FLEMISH [filled out by hand] speaking cultural/linguistic context. Fulfilment of this requirement is absolutely essential to the existence of the work (as art).'

This statement is quite specific. Nothing is said about interchanging the dictionary definition, but it is made clear that the work cannot be exhibited outside the area where one speaks Flemish. So what can be concluded from the certificate is that the form of the installation dictates the context rather than the other way around. The depiction probably does not limit the installation possibilities to the site where the photograph is taken, because to prescribe a context that is determined by language implies that there are more options within this set region. The diagram on the certificate shows that the photograph should be a square print and that it should be taken from the front side of the glass plate, but nothing is said about changing the photograph at every other location. The way the pencil lines are drawn, running a little too far at every corner, reveal how Kosuth must have used a ruler. It can be concluded then that exact measurements are an important feature. If the pencil lines of the drawing are measured, it becomes clear that the glass should be depicted life size, because the

object and its depiction are exactly the same size. If one does not look carefully at the sketch, this can be overlooked easily because the difference between the outlines of the depiction of the glass in the photograph and the outlines of the photograph itself measures only about 3 millimetres. Research into similar certificates of other 'object definitions' by Kosuth shows how the prescription of a life size depiction of the object in the photograph is sometimes indicated with an extra note on the drawing.



Detail of drawing on Joseph Kosuth, *Certificate of Glass (one and three)*, 1976
Pencil and ink on paper, 30,3 x 45,5 cm, Kröller-Müller Museum, KM 125.436
photo: Sanneke Stigter / Kröller-Müller Museum, 2004

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