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David Ebony's Top 10 New York Gallery Shows for November



Installation view, Joseph Kosuth, "Agnosia, an Illuminated Ontology," 2015. Photo: Courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery.

1. Joseph Kosuth at Sean Kelly, through December 19.

Among the most cerebral of artists, conceptualist maestro Joseph Kosuth is best known for austere installations using appropriated images and texts referencing philosophy, psychoanalysis, and cultural theory, often incorporating glowing neon lettering. In this stunning show, "Agnosia, an Illuminated Ontology," the New York- and London-based artist covers all the walls, and even the ceiling with vibrant and colorful neon pieces that he created over a period of more than fifty years.

As an encapsulated retrospective, the show is a bit overwhelming at first. The gallery, however, provides a hand-out map to help viewers navigate the dense and intense installation, with commentary about each work. Among the exhibition's highlights are several early efforts of the 1960s, such as Five Fives (to Donald Judd) (1965), a minimalist composition consisting of five rows of numbers—from five to 25—spelled out in glowing cobalt neon. The 2009 Paradox of Content series is more baroque in feel, with swirling graphics and cursive lettering in orange neon channeling the works of Nietzsche and Darwin.