

BE BEUYS

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMM



Group 1: How to explain pictures to a dead hare (1965)

A. Watch the video excerpt of Beuys performance and discuss the questions.

Important: You have 5 minutes for this part. Once you're done, go to the next page.



Click [here](#) to see the video.

Alternative: Open the QR-Code:

SCAN ME



1. What do you see in the video?
2. What is Beuys wearing? What materials/objects can you identify?
3. What is Beuys doing with the hare?

B. Find out more about the performance.

Important: You have 4 minutes for this part. Once you're done, go to the next page.

The object: The center piece of the performance was a dead hare. Together with the dead hare, Beuys walked through an exhibition and showed/explained different works of art to the dead hare.



The audience was not allowed inside the gallery. They could only watch from the outside through a shop window.



The materials: Beuys' head was covered with honey and gold leaf.



Discuss:

What may have been the meaning behind the different components?



C. Find out more about the symbolism and meaning behind the performance.

Important: You have 6 minutes for this part. After this, the group exercise stops.

The hare: Beuys often used materials/objects of highly symbolic and mythic value. The hare, for instance, is central to many myths and religions. Interestingly, though the hare in the performance was dead, Beuys viewed the animal as a symbol of rebirth.



The honey: Beuys wanted to symbolize that just like bees produce honey instinctively, humans produce thoughts and ideas. Beuys also wanted to emphasize unique qualities of bees: their focus on community, solidarity and brotherhood.



The gold: The gold symbolized the sun and most importantly also the connection to earth.



Background information: Beuys did not just see himself as an artist, but also as an activist and educator. To him, art had the ability to heal society and restore important social functions.



Discuss:

1. Art is always open to interpretation. What do you think the performance was about?
2. How do you feel about this performance? Why?

interested / curious / surprised / unsettled / shocked ...



SOURCES

How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare. (2021, July 16). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved September 29, 2021, from

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/How_to_Explain_Pictures_to_a_Dead_Hare

Takac, B. (2020, January 28). Joseph Beuys and How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare. *Widewalls*. Retrieved September 29, 2021, from

<https://www.widewalls.ch/magazine/how-to-explain-pictures-to-a-dead-hare-joseph-beuys>

Video 4 Joseph Beuys How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare 1965[Video file]. (2015, December 28). Retrieved September 29, 2021, from

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3L5gIMHZ7_8

Why Joseph Beuys and his dead hare live on. (n.d.). *Phaidon*. Retrieved September 29, 2021, from

<https://www.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2014/march/03/why-joseph-beuys-and-his-dead-hare-live-on/>