

# BE BEUYS

## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMM



### The Brand Beuys

**Read your text and discuss it with your group. Take notes.  
Summarize your text for your new group.**

#### Text A: The rescue



Beuys created several myths around his life, the most known was the rescue by Tartar tribesmen.

Beuys volunteered for the army during World War II. In 1944, Beuys was involved in a fatal plane crash in the Ukraine. He was shot down in the mountains and claimed that he was saved by Tartar tribesmen. The tribesman allegedly saved his life by wrapping him in felt and fat to keep him warm. According to Beuys, they cared for him for several days, until a German search troop found him. His story has been disproved. Beuys was involved in a plane crash. His pilot was killed, and Beuys was badly injured. However, he was not rescued by Tartar tribesmen.

The plane crash story became a powerful myth of origin for Beuys in crafting his artistic persona and was part of his branding. The story also had a huge impact on his art: He often used fat and felt for his art projects.

**You can take notes here:**

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#### **Text B: The felt hat**



Beuys was not only known for his groundbreaking art but also for his iconic hat and his fishing vest - both crucial parts of the artist's "uniform" and branding that made him instantly recognizable. Beuys was almost never seen without his hat made of felt, also one of his favorite materials for his art projects. The hat was sometimes considered as the symbolic headgear of a self-appointed shaman. However, other sources explain that the hat was more than a fashion choice or a statement. It also had a protective function for Beuys. In 1944, Beuys was involved in a plane crash in the Ukraine when Beuys volunteered for the German Luftwaffe during World War II. Beuys' plane was shot down and he was seriously injured. Some believe that the felt hat covered and protected Beuys' scars from the plane crash.

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#### **Text C: Beuys as a healer**



Beuys was born on May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1921 in Krefeld, Germany. As a child, he dreamt of becoming a doctor and although he eventually became an artist, he continued to follow his desire to heal and transform – not through medicine, but through his art. Beuys saw himself as an artist, a teacher or a shaman who could help guide society in a new direction. He challenged existing concepts through his performances, his art projects, his words and his carefully chosen materials and objects. Beuys even used natural healing remedies such as beeswax for his artwork to convey his messages. In one of his best-known performances – How to explain Pictures to a Dead Hare – Beuys' choice of the hare was symbolic; the hare is often used in shamanic traditions in rituals of transformation. According to Beuys himself, he was introduced to shamanism after he was rescued by Tatar tribesmen after being involved in a fatal plane crash - a rescue story that was later proved to only be a myth.

**You can take notes here:**

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