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MODERN ART



ECA/NGS Symposium

An Expanded Concept of Art: New Perspectives on Joseph Beuys



Joseph Beuys and Henning Christiansen performing the 'Celtic (Kinloch Rannoch) Scottish Symphony' at Edinburgh College of Art, 1970

Saturday 15th October 2016 [13:00 – 20:00]
Main Lecture Theatre, Edinburgh College of Art Main Building, 74 Lauriston Place

This academic symposium, which will present new perspectives on Joseph Beuys and his works, celebrates both Beuys exhibitions currently on show at Modern Two, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. These exhibitions are *Richard Demarco and Joseph Beuys: A Unique Partnership* and *ARTIST ROOMS: Joseph Beuys - A Language of Drawing*, the latter curated by Anthony d'Offay and Keith Hartley.

A towering and highly influential figure of twentieth-century art, Beuys died thirty years ago in 1986, but his legacy remains very strong. It is most fitting that this symposium will take place in the Main Building of Edinburgh College of Art. This was the venue for Richard Demarco's ground-breaking *Strategy: Get Arts* in 1970, which involved artists such as Beuys, Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke, Daniel Spoerri, Blinky Palermo, Günther Uecker and others, a major exhibition of contemporary German art. Demarco therefore brought Beuys to Britain for the first time and the artist would return to Edinburgh on a number of occasions at Demarco's invitation. And when Anthony d'Offay, who also studied art in Edinburgh and who remains closely connected with the city, opened an important exhibition space for contemporary art on the first floor at 23 Dering Street in London in 1980, he started that programme with an exhibition by Beuys, the first of many exhibitions he devoted to him. The artist is therefore of utmost importance to both Demarco and d'Offay, and of great significance to the history of Edinburgh College of Art, Summerhall, and the Edinburgh Festival.

Programme

[13.00-13.20] Welcome address by Keith Hartley (Chief Curator and Deputy Director of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art) and symposium organiser Dr Christian Weikop (Senior Lecturer and Chancellor's Fellow in History of Art, ECA, University of Edinburgh)

[13.20] Time and Again: Joseph Beuys and the Celtic World.

Dr Victoria Walters (University of the West of England, Bristol)

In this talk, I will discuss what the Celtic world meant for Joseph Beuys and how this engagement found expression in his work. Referring to several works by the artist, including the action *Celtic (Kinloch Rannoch) Scottish Symphony* (1970) performed with composer Henning Christiansen at the exhibition 'Strategy: Get Arts', I will explore the artist's engagement with place and his understanding that the connected mythic traditions of the past offer people a vital and enlivening stimulus in the present. I will discuss the link Beuys made between the Celtic world and a particular spiritual tradition connecting inner and outer landscapes and the degree to which the artist's practice reflected an engagement with the legacy of Christ and the early Celtic church. More broadly, I will focus on Beuys' active work in directing human imaginative capacities towards an urgent artistic project relating to the creative ability of every human being.

[14.00] The Great Reason of the Body – Joseph Beuys, Friedrich Nietzsche and the Art of Performance.

Dr. Kirsten Claudia Voigt (Kunsthalle Karlsruhe)

Thinking, speaking, acting, forming the social organism are sculptural processes, but also the body as physiological *conditio sine qua non* of the will and the self was a kind of sculpture for Joseph Beuys. In the drawings and in his performances he shows the body being molded by life and illness, and he demonstrates the need of certain exercise and self-control, his will to grow, to accumulate energy and the vulnerability of the body.

"Undoubtedly Friedrich Nietzsche can be called a forefather of the performative turn." (Erika Fischer-Lichte) Probably not only in his early years Beuys read Friedrich Nietzsche, who is not only a pioneer of performance art but also of embodied thinking. Nietzsche developed the idea of the "great reason of the body" and announced that the genealogy of his philosophy developed "under the guideline of the body". The idea of a body-independent soul or of such a spirit, he regarded as a cardinal philosophical, religious and moral theological error. Nearly 100 years later, Beuys formulated his famous multiple dictum: "I think anyway with the knee" as a formula for an embodied mind in motion and wholeness.

[14.40] Monads and Nomads: Joseph Beuys and Fluxus.

Dr Peter van der Meijden (University of Copenhagen)

According to Joseph Beuys, only one of the two works he performed during the Fluxus Festival in Düsseldorf in February 1963, his debut as a performance artist, was a Fluxus piece. The other piece, *Siberian Symphony Part 1*, he said, contained all the characteristics that would later become essential for his work and emerged from a broader understanding of what Fluxus might be. Although he may only have performed one Fluxus piece, however, Beuys continued to use the word "Fluxus" throughout the 1960s and identified himself as "Fluxus West" until well into the 1970s. Taking French philosopher Gilles Deleuze's concepts of the monad and the nomadic War Machine as its point of departure, this paper takes a

closer look at the relationship between Beuys and Fluxus and especially at the differences between Beuys's and Fluxus's understanding of the essence and function of the artwork.

15.20-16.00 BREAK FOR TEA AND COFFEE

[16.00] Blood and Braunkreuz: Beuys and Abstract Expressionism.

Andrew Symons (PhD Candidate, ECA/NGS, University of Edinburgh)

The ARTIST ROOMS collection has several large, monochrome, non-figurative works on paper by Beuys, such as the *Brown Environments*, 1964. In this paper, I will position Beuys' non-figurative art of the 1960s within the post-war debates in Europe and America on the roles of Abstraction and Abstract Expressionism. Having identified several clearly non-figurative works by Beuys, I will ask why in later interviews he claimed that his works were 'not abstract'.

[16.40] Ahead of his Time: Joseph Beuys - A Pragmatic Mastermind and Political Visionary.

Dr Wolfgang Zumdick (Oxford Brookes University)

This lecture will highlight the meaning of Joseph Beuys' work not only in the field of socially-engaged art practice, but also in the field of contemporary politics such as new forms of education, the basic income framework, or the movement for improved democracy. At the same time I will show that Beuys' influence cannot be reduced to his impact on twentieth-century art movements alone, but must be seen as a broader philosophical approach to rethink societies of the late twentieth-century in a pragmatic and visionary way.

[17.20] *La rivoluzione siamo noi*: Beuys' Legacy in Current Artist-led University Projects.

Prof. Dr. Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes (University of Amsterdam)

Tate Modern has the same Beuys work displayed twice, in different exhibition contexts. This is his *La rivoluzione siamo noi*, 1971. There are certainly good reasons for this, namely the presence of this multiple in the ARTIST ROOMS collection. Nevertheless, I would like to take this multiplication of the same work in MADRE, Naples, (as well as its appropriation by Elaine Sturtevant) as starting points for an investigation of Beuys' artistic and educational revolution at the Dusseldorf Academy. Beuys' legacy in recent para- and anti-academies from Occupy to Ahmet Ogut's *Silent University* needs to be probed, as Beuys' name is not often invoked. One exception is the still extant FIU in Amsterdam, carried on by his students. It has retained tentative links there with recent university protests at the UvA. What is Beuys contributing to artist-led university projects today? Are we Beuys' revolution?

18.00-20.00 ECA Sculpture Court: Drinks reception and guided tours

There will be a drinks reception in the evening from 18:00-20:00 with optional 15-minute guided tours of some of the rooms where the 'Strategy: Get Arts' exhibition and performances were held in 1970. Tours by artist Alex Hamilton, who was a student helper at the exhibition. There will also be a slide show, a film and sound recordings of Beuys's 1970 actions in Edinburgh.

Organised by the Edinburgh College of Art in association with the National Galleries of Scotland, Gallery of Modern Art and supported by the Goethe-Institut, Glasgow.

Book your place through Eventbrite All are welcome to this free but ticketed event.

This event is organised to coincide with exhibitions on Joseph Beuys in Edinburgh in this, the thirtieth anniversary year of his death, such as:

- ARTIST ROOMS: Joseph Beuys - A Language of Drawing at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art
- Richard Demarco and Joseph Beuys: A Unique Partnership at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art
- Joseph Beuys x 1000 at Summerhall

Further Information on the Six Speakers

(in the order of talks given):

1. **Dr Victoria Walters** is a Researcher in Visual Culture currently working as an Associate Lecturer in Visual Culture at UWE Bristol and developing a studio practice. She holds a doctorate from the University of Ulster on the practice of German 20th Century artist Joseph Beuys. She is a member of the Land2 and Mapping Spectral Traces networks and of SIEF (the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore), contributing to one of the society's working groups, Place Wisdom. Victoria's publications include *Joseph Beuys and the Celtic Wor(l)d: a language of healing* (Lit Verlag, 2012) and the journal article *Working "in the Opposite Direction": Joseph Beuys in the Field*, published in the *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* (2010). She co-edited *Beuysian Legacies in Ireland and Beyond: Art, Culture and Politics* with Professor Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes (Lit Verlag, 2011). Her research interests include the work of Joseph Beuys, theories of language, the relationship between art and anthropology and art and ecology.
2. **Dr Kirsten Claudia Voigt** studied art history, philosophy and literature and has worked since 1980 as an art critic, journalist, lecturer and curator. She works at the Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe and at the Department for History of Art at KIT (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology). She has curated various exhibitions including shows on Joseph Beuys, Tony Cragg, Hans Schimansky and Georg Baselitz. Since 2013 she has been a fellow of the Gerda Henkel Foundation with a research project on Joseph Beuys and Friedrich Nietzsche. Her book *Friedrich Nietzsche und Joseph Beuys: Das autopoietische Subjekt* has just been published by Schirmer Mosel.
3. **Dr Peter van der Meijden** is a Dutch art historian, currently living and working in Copenhagen. He holds a doctorate from the University of Copenhagen on Fluxus in Germany, Denmark and Holland and is currently working as a Project Researcher at the National Gallery of Denmark and as an Associate Lecturer at the University of Copenhagen, where he teaches courses in gallery studies and cultural heritage. Besides his activities as a lecturer, researcher and publicist, he is also active as a curator, having co-curated the travelling exhibition *The Lunatics Are on the Loose! European Fluxus Festivals 1962-1978* (2012-present) and the exhibition *Keep Art Flat: Mail Art and the Political 1970s* (currently on display at Kunsthall Charlottenborg in Copenhagen). Peter van der Meijden's research interests are the art of the 1960s and 1970s (Fluxus, happenings, performance art, conceptual art, Mail Art), avant-

garde art (especially Dada), contemporary art and gallery studies. He has recently finished a postdoctoral research project on immaterial art and exhibition practice and is currently engaged in a research project on the Danish artist and art enabler Knud Pedersen, funded by the Novo Nordisk Foundation, and a research project on the Japanese artists Yoshio Nakajima's and Yutaka Matsuzawa's contacts with the Dutch art scene, funded by the Mondrian Foundation.

4. **Andrew Symons** is a PhD candidate (2015-1018) on a Collaborative Doctoral Partnership between the Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh, and the Gallery of Modern Art, National Galleries of Scotland. He obtained his BA in Humanities with History of Art from the Open University in 2013 and his MA in History of Art from the Courtauld Institute, University of London in 2014. For his PhD, as well as writing a thesis, he is cataloguing 124 drawings, collages and relief works by Joseph Beuys in the ARTIST ROOMS collection, which is owned by Tate and National Galleries of Scotland.
5. **Dr. Wolfgang Zumdick** is an author, philosopher, curator and Joseph Beuys-Social Sculpture specialist, working internationally. He has curated several Joseph Beuys and social sculpture exhibitions and is author of numerous publications on the history of philosophy and on 20th century art and philosophy. From 1991-1993 he was scholarship holder at Evangelisches Studienwerk, Haus Villigst and from 1996-1998 together with the Californian concept-Artist Allen Ruppersberg and the Büchner-Price Laureate Felicitas Hoppe scholarship holder at the Laurenz Haus Foundation, Basel. He has been guest lecturer at numerous universities including: University of Basel; RMIT, Melbourne; and Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences, Bonn. Wolfgang is Trustee for the Heinrich Böll Foundation, Berlin and jury member of the Joseph Beuys Research Prize (Joseph Beuys Preis für Forschung), Museum Schloss Moyland. He is Senior Lecturer in Social Sculpture at Oxford Brookes University, in Oxford, England.
6. **Prof Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes** is Professor and Chair of Modern and Contemporary Art History at the University of Amsterdam. Until 2014 she worked as Professor of Iconology at the University of Ulster, Belfast. From 2007 to 2011 she was Head of the Research Graduate School there, leading particularly the PhD with Practice programme. She studied at the Universities of Heidelberg, London and Cologne, where she gained her PhD in 2000. It was researched with a James Joyce Foundation Scholarship in Zurich and followed by an Irish Research Council Post-Doctoral Fellowship at UCD.

Her research focuses on word and image studies, particularly the visual legacies of (Irish) writers (Joyce, Beckett, Sebald), also considering performance, the historiography of art (Warburg, Giedion-Welcker) and curation (particularly literary art exhibitions). Rooted in Joseph Beuys studies, she has an interest in sculpture, performance, social practices, as well as post-War art histories. Her publications include the books *Post-War Germany and 'Objective Chance': W.G. Sebald, Joseph Beuys and Tacita Dean* (Steidl 2008, 2011), *James Joyce als Inspirationsquelle für Joseph Beuys* (Olms 2001), and *Joyce in Art* (Lilliput 2004). This book accompanied her large, international exhibition on the theme, Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin. She has curated for: Goethe Institut, Dublin; Tolstoy Estate, Russia; MoA, Seoul National University, Korea; Golden Thread Gallery, Belfast; LCGA, Limerick; CCI, Paris; Maagdenhuis, University of Amsterdam / VanAbbemuseum, Eindhoven.