



March 3, 2021

Belvedere 21

Arsenalstraße 1
1030 Vienna

Opening hours:

Tuesday to Sunday,
11 am to 6 pm
Monday only open on holidays only

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belvedere.at/en/press

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Portrait of Joseph Beuys (1921-1986), Paris, 1985, Photo: Laurence Sudre / Bridgeman Images

JOSEPH BEUYS

THINK. ACT. CONVEY.

March 4 to June 13, 2021

Beuys in Vienna: a trenchant monographic show will mark the centenary of Joseph Beuys's birth in May of this year. The exceptional artist fundamentally changed art after 1945 and developed the definition of the expanded concept of art. In this comprehensive exhibition, the Belvedere 21 is showing major works by Joseph Beuys and revealing his connections with Vienna.

CEO Stella Rollig: *"Exhibiting Joseph Beuys also provides an opportunity to critically analyze the traditional role of the museum and one's own work there. Beuys's ecological understanding, the aspect of participation, and the aim to address an unlimited audience are all very topical and of existential importance for the museum as an institution, both now and in the future."*

Throughout his life, Joseph Beuys's credo was to see art as working on society, a task that was everyone's responsibility. People should be involved in the process of improving society in and through his art. Beuys's statement "Everyone is an artist" exemplifies his expanded concept of art and idea of social sculpture. Beuys's principle was that art should have an impact on a social, political, spiritual, and scientific level and hence be an integral part of our thoughts and actions. Participating in documenta for five years in a row, as well as boasting numerous international monographic and thematic exhibitions, made Joseph Beuys one of the most influential, highly paid, but also most talked about artists of the second half of the twentieth century.

The show demonstrates the connection between Beuys's creative output and Vienna, and with sixty-four artworks and 123 exhibits, multiples, and documentaries it provides a comprehensive insight into his life's work. Alongside early works on film and documents from the 1960s, the exhibition presents installations, including *Stag Monuments* (1958/82), *Honey Pump at the Workplace* (1977), and the *Basic Room Wet Laundry*. The latter was realized at the Galerie nächst St. Stephan in Vienna in 1979 and arose as a criticism of the Museum moderner Kunst being housed in the ornate Baroque Gartenpalais Liechtenstein in Vienna, which Beuys considered an entirely inappropriate venue.

Beuys's environments are at times reminiscent of laboratory situations. The artist was interested in the natural sciences from an early age, especially physics, chemistry, zoology, and the overall relationship between all living things. As such, he found inspiration in natural religions or in the animal kingdom, among other places, as exemplified by the hares or stags of early drawings, performative acts with a ritual character, and actions.

As early as 1966, Monsignor Otto Mauer, the head of the Galerie nächst St. Stephan, and Oswald Oberhuber exhibited drawings by Joseph Beuys in Vienna for the first time. One year later, Beuys presented his action *EURASIA STAFF 82 min fluxorum organum* in the Viennese gallery together with the Danish Fluxus composer Henning Christiansen. A performance that he himself considered to be one of his most important and that was tantamount to an artistic eruption in the city of the Viennese Actionists. The copper "Eurasia staff," similar to a shepherd's crook, was intended to transmit spiritual power. The creative process behind the action referenced the Iron Curtain's separation of Europe at the time and was dedicated to uniting the East and the West.

Due to its geographic location and Austria's neutrality, Vienna was politically symbolic for Joseph Beuys. He stayed in the city on several occasions and participated in exhibitions, actions, and talks here; his time as a visiting professor at the University of Applied Arts is legendary. For Beuys, art was closely connected with concepts of politics and education. As a professor at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf, he was involved in student politics in the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1979 election, he ran for a seat in the European Parliament for the Greens, in 1980 for the German Bundestag. In Vienna, too, Beuys made appearances in a political setting, discussing with the politicians Josef Cap (SPÖ) and Erhard Busek (ÖVP) at the University of Applied Arts in 1983 and meeting former Federal Chancellor Bruno Kreisky (SPÖ) that same year.

Joseph Beuys's political engagement also encompassed an ecological dimension. For documenta 7 in 1982, Beuys developed a participative outdoor work, which would leave a permanent mark on the cityscape of Kassel and perfectly illustrates his expanded concept of art: *7000 Oaks—City Afforestation instead of City Administration* was the subtitle of this process-like action. Only in 1987, one and a half years after Beuys's death, was the last tree planted in Kassel. The success of the initially highly controversial project lay in the participation of citizens in designing the urban landscape and in the associated responsibility, involvement, and promotion of an environmental consciousness. Very progressive for its time, protecting the environment and encouraging sustainability remain extremely topical today. The spectacular tree-planting action even reached Vienna in 1983. In honor of Joseph Beuys, a common oak will be planted in the Sculpture Garden of the Belvedere 21 the context of the press conference on March 3, 2021.

"With his work, Joseph Beuys wanted to convey how a path could lead from thoughts to actions. Beuys advocated a radicality in thinking, for which he was often misunderstood. With his actions, he attempted to trigger actions that would give rise to something new, something better. The topicality of his work is endless," according to Curator Harald Krejci.

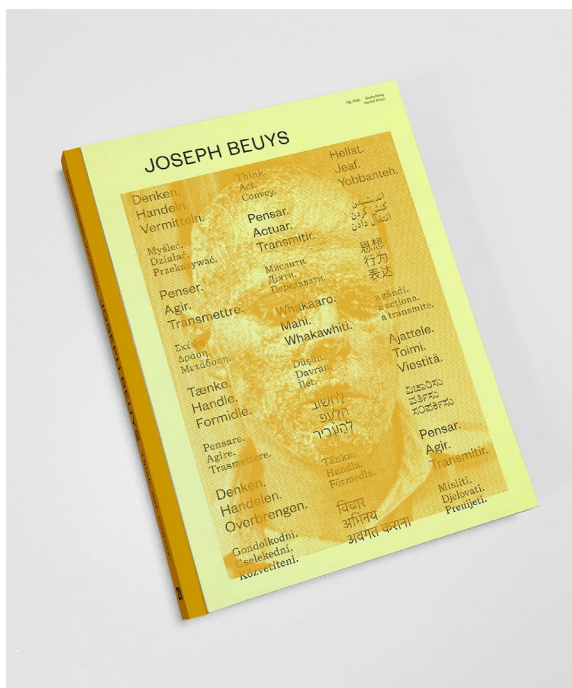
BIOGRAPHY

* Krefeld (D) 1921, † Düsseldorf (D) 1986

- 1921 Joseph Beuys grows up in Kleve and goes to school there.
- 1941 He registers as a volunteer in the German Air Force. Beuys's crash in the Crimea in 1944 triggers his narrative of a Tartar legend on which he bases the use of fat and felt in his art.
- 1946 Begins his studies at the Düsseldorf Art Academy, which he ends in 1951 as master student of Ewald Mataré.
- 1959 Marries Eva-Maria Wurmbach, art teacher and daughter of the zoologist Hermann Wurmbach.
- 1961 Appointment as professor at the Düsseldorf Art Academy. Construction begins on the Berlin Wall, marking the first phase of the Cold War.
- 1963 In the context of Fluxus events, Beuys performs, among others, *Sibirische Symphonie 1. Satz (Siberian Symphony, First Movement)*.
- 1964 Participates in the documenta III in Kassel and in the FLUXUS Festival in Aachen. Realizes numerous actions in Wuppertal, Düsseldorf, and Berlin.
- 1966 Exhibition of drawings at the Galerie nächst St. Stephan in Vienna.
- 1967 Co-founder of the *Erste Deutsche Studentenpartei (First German Student Party)*. Performance of the highly acclaimed action *EURASIENSTAB 82 min fluxorum organum* in Vienna.
- 1971 Second exhibition in Vienna. Oswald Wiener invites Beuys to Vienna once again.
- 1972 *Permanente Diskussion (Permanent discussion)* during the documenta 5 in Kassel. Occupation of the administrative offices of the Düsseldorf Art Academy for equal educational opportunities. Beuys is dismissed without notice.
- 1974 *I like America And America Likes Me* action with a coyote in the René Block Gallery in New York.
- 1976 Beuys runs as a candidate for the German Bundestag. He represents Germany at the Venice Biennale. Galerie Gras in Vienna exhibits the portfolio *Spur I (Trace I)* and the film *Der Tisch (The Table)*.
- 1977 100-day action *Honigpumpe am Arbeitsplatz (Honey Pump at the Workplace)* with the Free International University as part of documenta 6 in Kassel.
- 1978 Exhibition of multiples in the Neue Galerie Joanneum in Graz.
- 1979 Beuys declines the professorship at the Academy of Applied Arts in Vienna. Exhibition with *Basisraum Nasse Wäsche (Basic Room Wet Laundry)* and lecture at the Galerie nächst St. Stephan. Participation in the Secession exhibition *Expansion*. Solo exhibition at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Beuys runs as a candidate for the European Parliament.
- 1980 March 12th: lecture at the Academy of Applied Arts in Vienna. He represents Germany at the Venice Biennale.

- 1982 The long-term project *7000 Eichen (7000 Oaks)* begins at documenta 7 in Kassel.
- 1983 Meeting between Beuys and Bruno Kreisky in Vienna. Tree plantings, a panel discussion, and participation in the ORF shows *Club 2* and *Café Central* take place.
- 1985 Participation in a copy-art project started in Vienna by conceptual artist Ueli Fuchser; taking part are also Andy Warhol in New York and Kaii Higashiyama in Tokyo.
- 1986 On January 23, Joseph Beuys dies of heart failure in Düsseldorf. *De sculptura* exhibition by Harald Szeemann takes place in Vienna's former Messepalast with the work *Grand* (1980–81). The 7,000th oak tree is planted the following year in Kassel.

CATALOGUE



Joseph Beuys. Denken. Handeln. Vermitteln. / Think. Act. Convey.

Editors: Stella Rollig, Harald Krejci

Authors: Theo Altenberg, Harald Krejci, Doris

Leutgeb, Lisa Moravec, Ana Petrović, Stella Rollig

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Create your own Joseph Beuys book: a hand-operated printing press is available in the exhibition space so that you can print your own cover!

EXHIBITION PROGRAM

IN PLANNING

Subject to the current valid regulations.

Information at www.belvedere.at/programm.

Joseph Beuys recognized that one must not only create art but also educate people about art. For this reason, the exhibition offers a lively forum consisting of TALKS, WORKSHOPS, and LECTURES. The HONEY YELLOW PLATFORM makes it possible for visitors to see and experience Beuys's idea of social sculpture.

THE OPEN OFFICE

Every Wednesday from 11 am to 3 pm

"I'm leaving art," said Beuys, to work as a politician and activist. The Belvedere 21 shows that one can also join art: Curator Harald Krejci and his colleagues will be hosting an open office in the exhibition every week and will be available for any discussion.

CONSULTATION HOURS

Education should ...? Saturday, April 17 | 11.30 am

Democracy must ...? Saturday, May 1 | 11.30 am

Museums can ...? Saturday, May 15 | 11.30 am

Art may ...? Saturday, May 29 | 11.30 am

With Eva Mühlbacher and Katja Stecher (Belvedere Art Education)

During the consultation hours, we will have an open ear for your concerns: Beuys's creative work is our starting point for a discussion of contemporary topics around art and society.

LECTURES

Joseph Beuys and the Idea of Social Sculpture

Rainer Rappmann, Friday, April 30 | 4.30 pm

Joseph Beuys and the Art of Art Education

Prof. Dr. Carl-Peter Buschkühle, Friday, May 7 | 4.30 pm

Economic Values, Money Cycles, and Capital

Gerhard Schuster, Thursday, May 20 | 5 pm

Migration as a Quest for Identity

Prof. Dr. Belachew Gebrewold, Saturday, May 29 | 3 pm

Joseph Beuys strove for societal change. Are his art and his statements still relevant in this age of a pandemic, climate change, and vulnerable democracies? The speakers question the validity of Beuys's theories.

WORKSHOPS

Intervention and Filmscreening

CineCollective, Thursday, April 15 | 6 pm

Analogue Film Practice

filmkoop wien, Saturday, April 24 | 3 pm

Friedl Kubelka School of Independent Film

Thursday, June 10 | 6 pm

These three events are dedicated to democratic work and collective action, as well as non-commercial work with film.

FORUM

People, Animals, Plants - The Coexistence of Species

Friday, May 21 | 17 Uhr

Initiated by Gabriele Sturm (artist)

The forum connects artists who work at the intersection of art and ecology and everyone who is interested in the issue.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition title	<i>Joseph Beuys. Think. Act. Convey.</i>
Curator	Harald Krejci
Works	64 works by Joseph Beuys, including three spatial installations In addition, 123 exhibits including photographic and documentation material from diverse archives as well as 8 films
Dates	March 4 to June 13, 2021
Location	Belvedere 21 Arsenalstraße 1, 1030 Vienna
Opening hours	Tuesday to Sunday 11 am - 6 pm Monday only open on holidays.
Tickets	Regular 9 € Discounted 7 € Annual pass Belvedere 39 € Children and youth under 19 free
Web	belvedere.at facebook.com/belvedere21 twitter.com/belvedere21 instagram.com/belvedere21wien #JosephBeuys

The press release as well as high resolution press photos are available at belvedere.at/en/press for download.