

**JOSEPH  
BEUYS**  
WORKS

## Half of life

Friedrich Hölderlin  
1770 – 1843

With its yellow pears  
And wild roses everywhere  
The shore hangs into the lake,  
O gracious swans,  
And drunk with kisses  
You dip your heads  
In the sobering holy water.

Ah, where will I find  
Flowers, come winter,  
And where the sunshine  
And shade of the earth?  
Walls stand cold  
And speechless, in the wind  
The weathervanes clatter

*"My objects are to be seen as stimulants for the transformation of the idea of sculpture ... or of art in general. They should provoke thoughts about what sculpture can be and how the process of sculpting can be extended to the invisible materials used by everyone:*

<b>THINKING FORMS</b>	<i>how we mould our thoughts or</i>
<b>SPOKEN FORMS</b>	<i>how we shape our thoughts into forms or</i>
<b>SOCIAL SCULPTURE</b>	<i>how we mould and shape the world in which we live: Sculpture as an evolutionary process – everyone is an artist."</i> <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Beuys' quote from Caroline Tisdall, Joseph Beuys. Exhibition Catalogue. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1979. New York 1979, p7

With these words the German sculptor Joseph Beuys describes his well known expanded concept of art. Every human being is able to shape the conditions under which they live, every human being is a sculptor of the invisible and is able to change their mindset, attitudes, habits and thoughts. This exhibition indicates how Joseph Beuys tried to sensitise his audience to these invisible forms and shows elements of his long term strategy on his pathway to change the world through art.

In many respects Beuys idea of an expanded concept of art seems to be an answer to Hölderlin's urgent question: where do we find, in the bitterness of midwinter, the warmth that makes us able to survive the circumstances in which we find ourselves?

**Joseph Beuys Works** may give an answer to this question.

## FILMS

### BEUYS 1981

Over ten minutes, Joseph Beuys talks about his concept of art and about his invisible sculpture – his back to the camera; his face to the wall. The film by the German film maker Werner Nekes reflects on Beuys 'Social Sculpture'; filmed as a kinetic sculpture. In 1981 this film won the German film critics award 'Best short film in Germany'.

*Film by Werner Nekes and Dore O.  
with English subtitles.  
1981, 16 mm, colour, 11 Min.*

### Eurasienstab, Fluxorum organum opus 39 1968

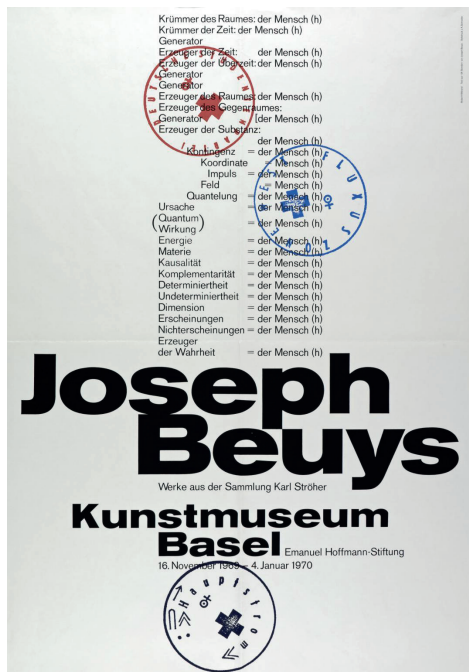
This film is part of the Beuys performance which took place 1968 in Antwerp at the Wide White Space gallery entitled "Eurasienstab" (Eurasian Staff). It shows the first of five sections of the performance with manipulated tape recordings of a composition by Henning Christiansen (Fluxorum organum opus 39). The film maker Paul de Fru commented on the film as follows: "My task was to make a summary of about 20 minutes (of the whole performance) and yet hold everything important in the film. I had to be very careful and plan exactly, and Beuys later said: ' This film is a Beuys ' [...] I myself have decided that only the 1st set and a little from the 2nd set of "fluxorum organum" should be used for the film."

*Film by Paul de Fru, Joseph Beuys and Henning Christiansen  
Soundtrack by Henning Christiansen Fluxorum organum opus 39  
February 1968, b/w, 22 min 9 sec*

### Soziale Plastik (Social Sculpture) 1969/1988

This film from 1969 by the German film maker Lutz Mommartz shows Joseph Beuys presenting himself to an anonymous audience in the cinema; he watches them from the screen. Here Joseph Beuys accepts the challenge to face the audience without speaking, so the film has no soundtrack. It was presented to the public in 1988 - after the death of Joseph Beuys and comes, one might say, from the beyond.

*Silent film by Lutz Mommartz  
1969/1988, b/w , 11 min 31 sec, 16mm*



*Catalogue*  
**Kunstmuseum Basel**  
 Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung  
*Joseph Beuys - Works from the Ströher Collection*  
 November 16th 1969 – January 4th 1970.

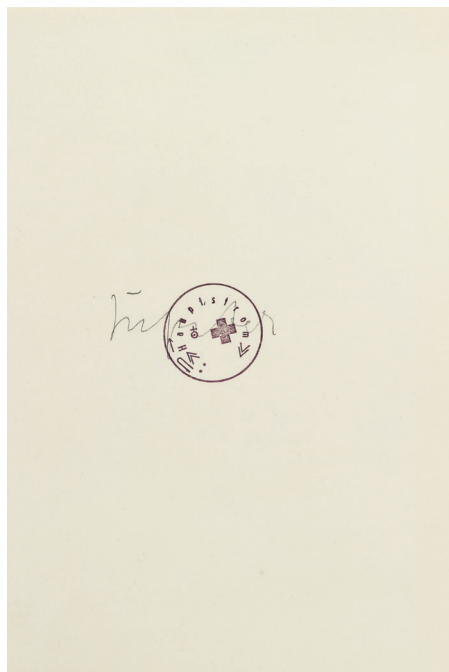
## VITRINE

**h=Mensch (h=human being) 1965/1969**

This is the cover of the first major Beuys exhibition in Basel, Switzerland in 1969 and shows part of the score of a Beuys happening in 1965 at Wuppertal, Germany. Beuys announces that the human being is “the creator of: Time and ‘Overtime’, Space and Counter-space; of Substance, Origin, Energy and Matter; of Epiphany and Non-Epiphany.”

*The last line states that the human being is the “creator of truth”.*

Like many of his works Beuys uses the mainstream-stamp (Hauptstrom) to show that this work is part of a long-term strategy to introduce the idea of Social Sculpture in which every human being is an artist and able to participate in shaping the conditions under which they want to live.

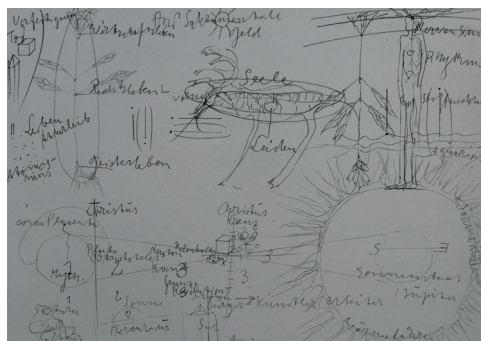


*Joseph Beuys, Hauptstrom Jupiter (mainstream Jupiter) 1974*  
 Stamp and pencil  
 Private collection.

## VITRINE

**Hauptstrom Jupiter (Mainstream Jupiter) 1974**

*Joseph Beuys used the “Hauptstrom” (mainstream) stamp from the mid-60s to focus on his idea of an expanded concept of art and to characterize works which are related to this idea. The term Jupiter here does not relate to the Jupiter planet or the ancient Roman god but to Joseph Beuys’ idea of a growing human consciousness and awareness of building a new society as a Social Sculpture. Rudolf Steiner (a major Beuys influence) speaks of ‘Jupiter Evolution’ as the evolutionary epoch to follow ‘Earth Evolution’ at the end of which the earth as we know it has become spiritualised.*



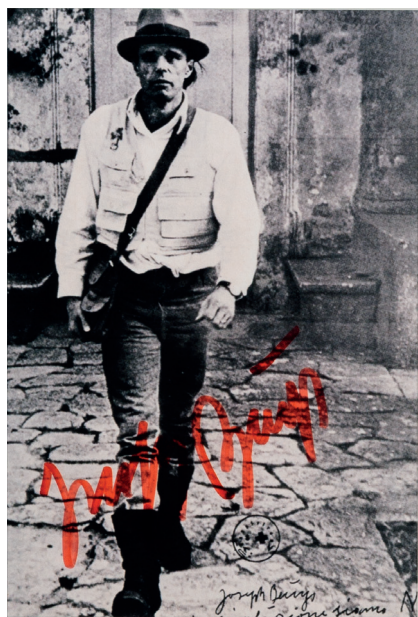
*Publisher: F.I.U Verlag*

*Joseph Beuys: "Evolution" Marked pencil drawing  
Ed. Volker Harlan, print after a drawing from 1974*

## **VITRINE**

### **Untitled (Evolution) 1974**

This drawing can be seen as the sum of Beuys' worldview and a detailed explanation and exploration of the invisible sculpture. It is a kind of phenomenology of mind and consciousness on the one hand and an image of evolution in general. Beuys used it in several forms: as a blackboard drawing and lecture-action, as a multiplied piece of art and as a poster-reproduction of a blackboard drawing in "New York Subway Poster 1983". (In the Collection of the National Gallery of Victoria).



*Offset on light cardboard.*

*Unlimited Edition, Signed in Red*

*Publisher: Edition Staeck, Heidelberg.*

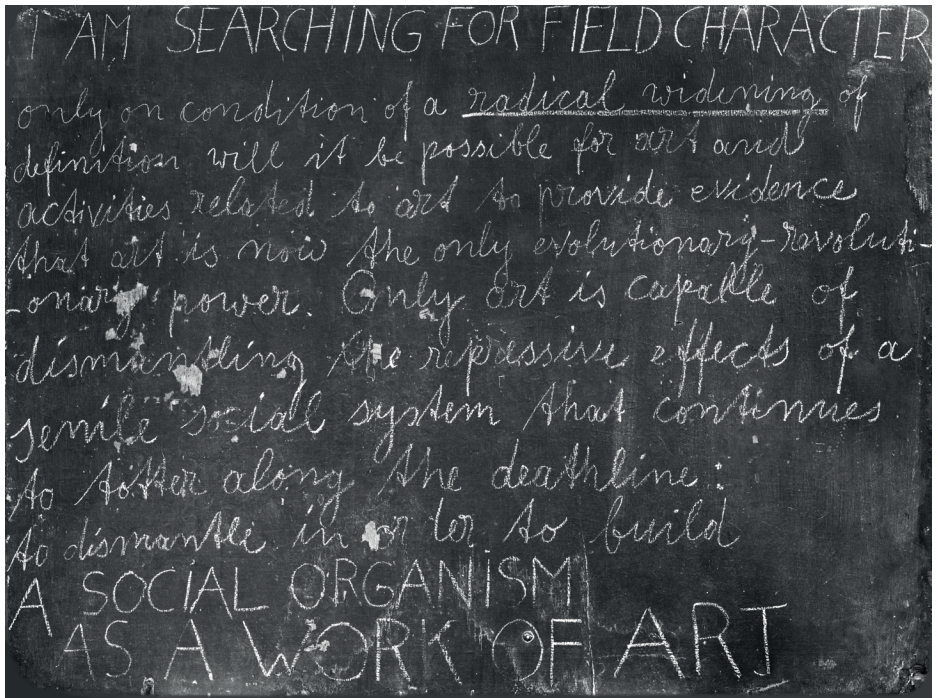
*Size: 14.8 x 10.5 cm*

*Private Collection, Melbourne*

## **VITRINE**

### **La rivoluzione siamo Noi 1972**

In the early 1970's Joseph Beuys together with the German Nobel laureate Heinrich Böll founded the Committee for a Free University and was working with the Organisation for Direct Democracy through Referendum. Both of these institutions had a strong focus on self-determination. The Italian title of the postcards translates, as 'We are the Revolution'. Beuys here plays with a specific image of the Italian anarchist tradition and turns it into an image for political action through self determination: He is ready for action and is encouraging us to join him on his pathway to more democracy, free education and a new economic order. This work is only shown as a postcard, the original is nearly two metres tall so the artist steps life-size out of the image.



*Directive Forces for a New Society.*

*Blackboard 20, 1974 -1977*

*Photo: Roman März (04.07.16)*

*Copyright: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Nationalgalerie.*

*Reproduced with the kind permission of Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Nationalgalerie*

*Size: 90 x 121 cm*

## WALLS

### I am searching for field character 1974

This is a facsimile of one of one hundred blackboards of the installation *Richtkräfte* exhibited at the National Gallery of Victoria in 2007. Originally *Richtkräfte* was created during the exhibition *Art into Society, Society into Art* at the Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA), London in 1974. The main part of the exhibition was Beuys discussing his ideas about the 'invisible sculpture' with the audience. The text reads: "I AM SEARCHING FOR FIELD CHARACTER only on condition of a radical widening of definition will it be possible for art and activities related to art to provide evidence that art is now the only evolutionary-revolutionary power. Only art is capable of dismantling the repressive effects of a senile social system that continues to totter along the deadline: to dismantle in order to build A SOCIAL ORGANISM AS A WORK OF ART"



Ja, es gibt eine Parallellität,  
 und ich habe mich auf Joyce bezogen,  
 weil wir meinten, daß diese Dinge,  
 die von Beckett verstanden,  
 in unser Bewußtsein gehören,  
 daß man sie hervorheben müsse, denn hinter alle  
 dieses Anspruchs kann man gar nicht bleiben.  
 Aber wenn man so etwas will, dann muß  
 man natürlich auch dafür sorgen,  
 daß diese Dinge leben  
 und wirklich etwas von ihnen ausstrahlt.  
 Man darf sich nicht nur geringsten auf formale  
 und stilistische Kriterien verlassen,  
 sondern nur auf das Lebensprinzip der Sache  
 als lebendigen Stoff.

Wenn es nicht in den lebendigen Stoff geht,  
 zerfällt sie das Ding selbst.

~~Alle diese können wie im Mittelpunkt stehen.~~

Ich will damit nur sagen,  
 daß dieses selbstverändernde Prinzip  
 als Impediment,  
 als Stoff,  
 man kann auch sagen  
 als dynamische Metapher,  
 für mich entscheidend gewesen ist.

Joseph Beuys 1979

Copy 82/100

Offset and silkscreen on cardstock  
 Edition 100, signed and numbered.  
 Publisher: Edition Staeck, Heidelberg.  
 Size: 29.7 x 21 cm  
 Collection: RMIT University.

#### Joyce mit Schlitten (Joyce with sled) 1985

This work was originally issued as a multiple in 1984 as "James Joyce" but re-issued by Beuys one year later, the year before his death, incorporating the sled image as "Joyce mit Schlitten".

The text was part of an interview between Joseph Beuys, Heiner Bastian and Jeannot Simmen in 1979. Beuys took the entire quote from the interview without changes and wrote this multiple by hand.

This was an important work for Beuys who spent many hours finding the right length (shape) of line with verse. Eva Beuys called it "...a written image" and Johannes Cladders, a German curator from Mönchengladbach, who talked to Beuys about this work, said that "it was a kind of resume of his life". The work speaks to what Beuys called 'new organs of perception' and working with living (but invisible) substances.

### **From Eurasian Staff, 1973**

Photograph taken by Ute Klophaus during 'Eurasianstab' action at Wide White Space Gallery, Antwerp, 9th February 1968.

"The work depicts Beuys pressing the contents of a margarine container into the space behind his knee. While performing this gesture, he has placed his right foot, to which he has strapped a piece of iron, on top of a piece of felt on the floor beside him. Printed humbly on newsprint, the image shows the cylindrical clump of margarine dripping from the rear of Beuys's knee, his hand slapped forcefully against his thigh. The deep flexion in his knee joint serves to dramatize the contact between the layers of felt and iron beneath his foot, intensifying their connection to one another. Together, these gestures encapsulate two related themes in Beuys's art: his interest in intuitive experience as an alternative to rational thought, and his wish to bring about a balanced relationship between a range of opposing entities and energies.

Beuys believed that intuition was a form of experience that, in contrast to brain-centred reason, could arise at any site within the body. It is for this reason that he sometimes remarked 'In any case, I think with my knee'. In applying margarine to his knee in the Eurasia Staff performance, Beuys was symbolically coating it with a substance he regarded as a bearer of spiritual warmth, a form of energy he regarded as the source of creativity and change.

The second act depicted in this multiple also alludes to warm energy, as stored and transmitted in the felt sheet beneath Beuys's foot. These warmth-bearing properties were opposed in Beuys's thinking to the 'cold' and rigid qualities of iron. He also opposed the two materials on a range of other fronts, linking felt, for example, to intuition, and iron to rationality. In view of such contrasts, it is important that in *From Eurasia Staff* they are stacked on top of one another in the form of a cross. Beuys used the cross, among other things, to signify a fusion of opposing qualities within the context of a greater, more balanced whole. Only by reconciling opposites, he believed, could progress and social evolution be accomplished, an aspiration encoded in this charged material encounter."<sup>2</sup>

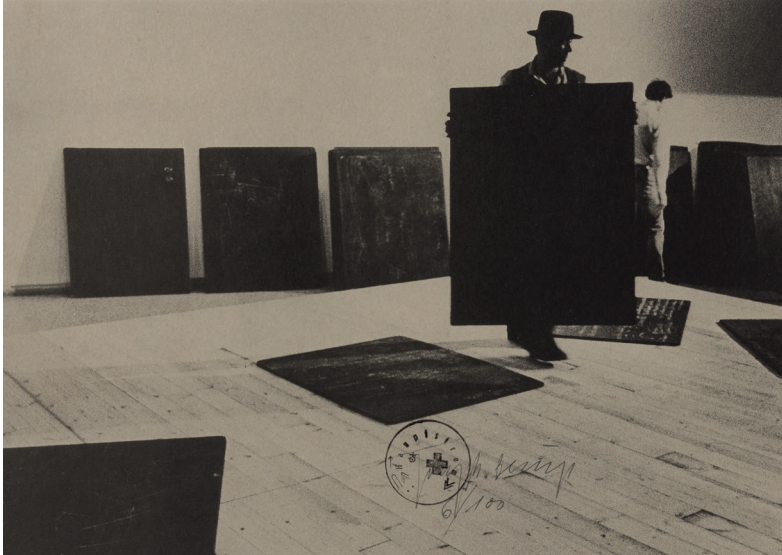
<sup>2</sup>From *Neue Pinakothek Munich Website*:  
<http://pinakothek-beuys-multiples.de/en/product/from-eurasia-staff/>





Silkscreen on newsprint  
Edition: 180 signed and numbered, copies  
1-50 printed in brown, copies 51-180 printed  
in black; signed and numbered; plus 50 copies  
printed in black on white cardstock, with  
grease spot, signed and numbered in Roman  
numerals  
Publisher: Edition Staack, Heidelberg.  
Size: 89 x 63 cm  
Private Collection, Melbourne





*Offset on grey cardstock, stamped Hauptstrom.*

*Edition: 100 signed and numbered.*

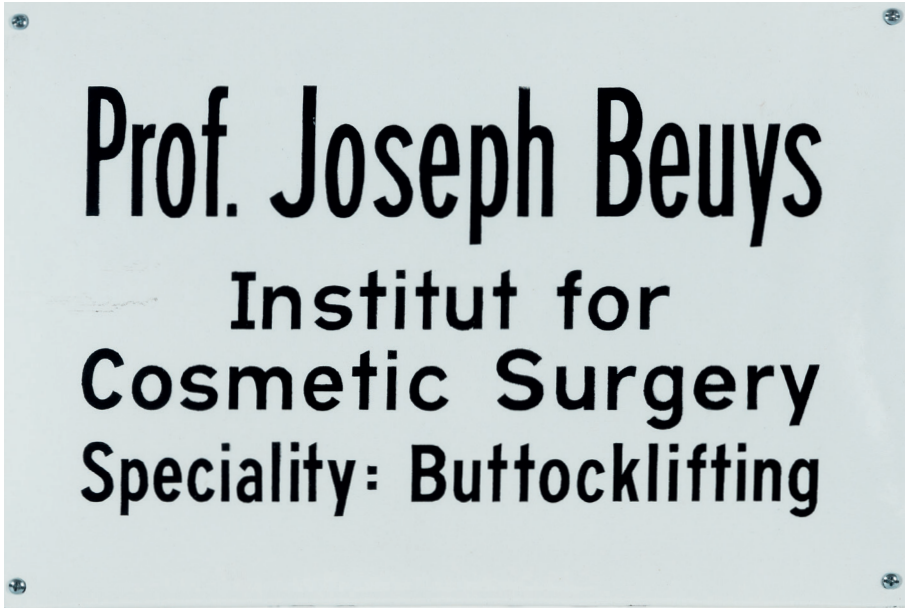
*Publisher: Christos Joachimides, Berlin.*

*Size: 30.5 x 43 cm*

*Private Collection, Melbourne.*

### **Installation 1977**

This multiple is an image of Beuys installing Richtkräfte at Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany in 1977. Beuys' Directive forces (Of a new society) (Richtkräfte einer neuen Gesellschaft) 1974-77 from the collection Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, is a seminal installation of 100 blackboard drawings. It was created by Beuys during the exhibition Art into Society, Society into Art at the Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA), London in 1974.



*Sign, baked enamel on convex metal sheet.*

*Edition: 80, signed and numbered*

*Publisher: Edition Staeck, Heidelberg.*

*Size: 20 x 30 cm*

*Private Collection, Melbourne.*

#### **Buttocklifting 1974**

Beuys often made humorous works; in this case reminding us of punk sub-culture from the mid 70's. This sign might be understood as a satirical therapy, as a kind of protest against shallow consumer society & "A vote for the mobilization of intra-psychic forces".



*Part of edition includes an additional Zinc box; stamped Hauptstrom (Mainstream)*

*Edition 200 copies planned, 150 completed signed and numbered*

*Publisher: Edition Tangente, Heidelberg*

*Size: 64 x 31 x 18 cm*

*Private Collection, Melbourne*

## **SCULPTURE**

### **Sulphur-Covered Zinc Box (Plugged Corner) 1970**

Beuys created so called “double objects” during his lifetime. The double object, zinc and sulphur box, carries a third element in one of the boxes: a small triangle of gauze, pressed into one of its corners. Through this the work is strongly related to a medical, clinical or healing context. For Paracelsus, the ancient healer, sulphur represents the burning of the soul. Beuys strongly connects sulphur to the human will-forces.

The gauze is not only a kind of representative of the healing forces of compassion and care, it also stands for the heart forces of the human soul and therefore for empathy and social engagement. The zinc box seems to be an image for what Beuys, in his theory of sculpture, called the human thought forces, our ability to produce rational forms. He often stated that art needs to go beyond those limited forms of understanding and open up to a new kind of thinking: to Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition.

**TEXTS BY DR WOLFGANG ZUMDICK AND MR IAN GEORGE.**

## AFTERWORD:

Joseph Beuys Works is the third part of a series of projects that commenced in 2010 with the Social Sculpture Forum conducted by **Professor Shelley Sacks** and **Dr Wolfgang Zumdick** from the Social Sculpture Research Unit Oxford-Brookes University Oxford at the RMIT School of Art, Melbourne and supported by the generosity of businessman, and Beuys enthusiast **Mr Ian George** Director of Collaborative Enquiry Pty Ltd.

The impetus for my involvement was to assist my students and the RMIT community to re-consider the impact of the work of Joseph Beuys on contemporary socially engaged art practice. The issues raised continue to be relevant, hence the need for this timely and important exhibition.

I thank **Mr Ian George** and **Dr Wolfgang Zumdick** for their knowledge, passion and continuing generosity of spirit, time and resources. I thank **Professor Julian Goddard**, RMIT University, **Dr James Oliver**, University of Melbourne participants **Cross**, Deakin University, **Dr Grace McQuilten**, RMIT University, the School of Art RMIT, the RMIT School of Art Gallery: **Verity Haywood** and **Andrew Tetzlaff**, staff and volunteers, **DyfanDesign** for the graphic design and the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, National galerie for permission to reproduce Directive Forces For A New Society Black Board 20 1974-77.

Professor David Thomas.

