

Joseph Beuys and Europe (Leeds, 20 Jan 18)

Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, Jan 20, 2018

Registration deadline: Jan 20, 2018

Kirstie Gregory

During the 1970s, a number of art critics identified Joseph Beuys (1921-1986) with a European culture rather than a specifically German one. For instance, according to Achille Bonito Oliva, in a book published in English, French, German, and Italian, Beuys was the embodiment of European art: "Joseph Beuys sets out, through art, spiritually to reconstitute man's unity, to give him back energy and the urge to transform his dealings with the world, both political and cultural" (Europe/America: The Different Avant-Gardes, 1976).

Beuys' pioneering involvement with the German Student Party (1967), the Organization for Direct Democracy Through Referendum (1971), the Free International University for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research (1974), and the German Green Party (1980), as well as his close working relationships with artists and cultural figures in various European countries, such as Denmark, Poland, Italy, Ireland and Scotland, all contributed to his reputation as a 'good European'.

Equally, Richard Demarco, born in 1930 into a Scottish-Italian family in the west end of Edinburgh, shared with Beuys this desire to collaborate with European artists, a vision in part formed by his experiences of and involvement with the post-war Edinburgh International Festivals. He worked tirelessly with Beuys and other international figures especially through his foundation of the Richard Demarco Gallery (1966), and later he established the Demarco European Art Foundation (1992).

This workshop therefore sets out to re-examine Beuys' European connections, and to ask in what respects he became engaged with the idea of Europe, particularly in his attraction to its peripheries and mythic histories rather than anything more politically mainstream.

Joseph Beuys and Europe: Crossing Borders, Bridging Histories

10:30am-7pm

Programme:

10.30

Welcome, Dr Jon Wood (Henry Moore Institute)

Introduction, Dr Christian Weikop (Edinburgh College of Art)

11am

Dr Victoria Walters (University of the West of England)

"Always Already on the Way - Joseph Beuys and Eurasia"

11.40

Andrew Symonds (Edinburgh College of Art)

"Beuys in the Rhineland: A Confluence of Creativity in the 1960s and 70s"

12.20

Dr Tara Galliver (independent)

"Art into Society/Society into Art"

1 – 2pm Lunch

2pm

Dr Peter Van der Meijden (University of Copenhagen)

"States of Affairs: Beuys and Denmark"

2.40

Dr Petra Richter (independent)

"Joseph Beuys: an Earthquake in the Heads of Mankind"

3.20

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

"La rivoluzione siamo noi: Beuys' Legacy in Current Artist-led University Projects"

4pm Tea

4.30pm

Professor Richard Demarco (Demarco European Art Foundation) on Beuys in the Celtic World

5.30 – 7pm Wine reception and opportunity to view the exhibition

Tickets: £10, £5 concessions (including lunch and wine reception)

For more information please contact Kirstie Gregory, our Research Coordinator, or book a place online.

Reference:

CONF: Joseph Beuys and Europe (Leeds, 20 Jan 18). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 10, 2018 (accessed Dec 15, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/17027>>.