

**RARE PRESENTATION OF MORE THAN 500 JOSEPH BEUYS MULTIPLES  
ON VIEW AT LACMA**



Joseph Beuys, *La Rivoluzione Siamo Noi, (We are the Revolution)*

"I'm interested in the distribution...of editions because I'm interested in spreading ideas."—Joseph Beuys

Los Angeles—The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) presents *Joseph Beuys: The Multiples*, the first west coast presentation of The Broad Art Foundation's nearly 600 Beuys works. The multiples, produced between 1968 and 1986, will be on view from September 19, 2009 through June, 2010 on the third floor of the Broad Contemporary Art Museum (BCAM) as part of the ongoing loan program established between The Broad Art Foundation and LACMA in 2008.

Joseph Beuys (1921–1986) is perhaps the most influential postwar European artist; his sensibility challenged American domination of the art world in the 1950s and 60s with art that confronted recent German history. Beuys remains even today a complicated figure whose life and art are inextricably entwined. Like Marcel Duchamp and Andy Warhol, he fabricated an extensive personal myth essential to understanding his work. Only after

his death has scholarship been able to approach his work with the distance that allows for fresh interpretation.

Stephanie Barron, senior curator of modern art at LACMA, notes, "This presentation offers a chance to dig into the enigmatic work of this major postwar German artist, whose personal mythology, relationship with the traumatic German past, and engagement with contemporary social and political issues can often be hard for Americans to understand. Perhaps following closely on the presentation of our recent exhibition, *Art of Two Germanys/Cold War Cultures*, the context for this work can be better understood."

At the heart of Beuys's practice was a particularly European form of multiples in which two- and three-dimensional objects are issued in editions. Marcel Duchamp pioneered the concept when in the 1930s he began producing *Boîte-en-valise* (box in a suitcase), a portable miniaturized compendium of sixty-nine of his most well-known works. In the 1960s he authorized the fabrication of an edition of his 1910s "readymades," thereby making them more widely available and abolishing the idea of the "original" work of art. In myriad formats, Beuys's multiples were intended to be widely circulated and cheap to acquire. Ranging from small-editioned objects to mass-produced political flyers and postcards, in materials as different as felt, wood, found objects like water bottles and tin cans, instruments, records, film, video, and audio tapes related to performances, these 572 works, rich with allusions to his biography and personal iconography, provide a complete picture of his diverse oeuvre.

A member of the Hitler Youth, at age 19 Beuys enlisted in the German Luftwaffe (Air Force), became a British prisoner of war, and returned in 1946 to a defeated and humiliated Germany. In the years following the war, West Germans generally had a difficult time confronting the legacy of National Socialism and the Holocaust. The root of much of Beuys's work is "the wound," which he described as a way of confronting his past and the taboo of the Nazi regime, and recognizing the necessity to mourn. Later, during the 1960s and in an era of anti-Vietnam War protests, marches for disarmament, and idealism, Beuys advocated individual creativity and

environmental responsibility. Beginning in the 1960s, his numerous "actions," performances that elicited audience participation, shared a reliance upon ritual and symbolism. His ambitious environments, large-scale installations based upon elements from his personal history, were dramatic and haunting.

This rotation of the near-complete set of Beuys's multiples from the collection of The Broad Art Foundation is organized thematically within six rooms: Myth; Fluxus and Performance; Environmentalism; Teaching and the F.I.U.; Beuys and America, the Readymade, Publicity; and Political Activism and the Holocaust. It is particularly appropriate that works by Warhol (1928-1987) and Jeff Koons (1955-) are also on view on the same floor as *Joseph Beuys: The Multiples*. All three artists rely on popularly based imagery, explore the nature of the art object, and share a near cult status. A reading and video gallery will offer the opportunity for visitors to view films on each artist and consult a range of published material.

**About LACMA**

Since its inception in 1965, LACMA has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography—and represent Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today, the museum features particularly strong collections of Asian, Latin American, European, and American art, as well as a new contemporary museum on its campus, BCAM. With this expanded space for contemporary art, innovative collaborations with artists, and an ongoing transformation project, LACMA is creating a truly modern lens through which to view its rich encyclopedic collection.

**General Information:** LACMA is located at 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036. For more information about LACMA and its programming, call 323 857-6000 or visit lacma.org.

**Museum Hours and Admission:** Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, noon-8 pm; Friday, noon-9 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 11 am-8 pm; closed Wednesday. Adults \$12; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+ \$8; children 17 and under are admitted free. Admission (except to specially ticketed exhibitions) is free the second Tuesday of every month and on Target Free Holiday Mondays. After 5 pm, every day the museum is open, LACMA's "Pay What You Wish" program encourages visitors to support the museum with an admission fee of their choosing.

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Joseph Beuys, *La Rivoluzione Siamo Noi (We are the Revolution)*, 1972, The Broad Art Foundation, © Joseph Beuys Estate/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG BILD-KUNST

**Press Contact:** For additional information, contact LACMA Communications at press@lacma.org or 323 857-6522.

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