

Photo Opp: Thursday 28 July, 11:30h
Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (Modern Two),
73 Belford Road, Edinburgh, EH4 3DS.



For further information and images
please contact the National Galleries
of Scotland's press office on:

0131 624 6247
6325/6332/6314

or

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*Richard Demarco (left) and
Joseph Beuys at Edinburgh
College of Art during the
installation of Strategy Get Arts,
August 1970.
Courtesy of the Demarco
European Art Foundation 2016
© George Oliver*

RICHARD DEMARCO & JOSEPH BEUYS: A UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP

30 July – 16 October 2016
Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (Modern Two)
73 Belford Road, Edinburgh, EH4 3DS
Admission free | 0131 624 6200
#ScotModern

The extraordinary collaboration between avant-garde gallerist Richard Demarco (b. 1930) and the innovative and inspirational German post-war artist Joseph Beuys (1921-86) will be explored in an unprecedented and comprehensive new display at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (SNGMA).

Richard Demarco and Joseph Beuys: A Unique Partnership will examine the works, lectures and the unique styles of performances called 'actions' (which the artist invented) that Demarco commissioned from Beuys, from 1970 until the latter's death in 1986.



Photography, film and original correspondence drawn from the Demarco Archive, acquired by the Gallery in the mid-1990s, will illuminate how Beuys' relationships with both Scotland and Demarco proved to be a huge influence on the German artist's work.

Film footage of Beuys' performances on Rannoch Moor and in Edinburgh's Forresthill Poorhouse will bring an important aspect of Scotland's art history back to life. The display will also focus on the ground-breaking *Strategy: Get Arts* exhibition that Demarco organised at the Edinburgh College of Art in 1970.

Richard Demarco recognized the visionary quality of Beuys' work and visited him in the Oberkassel district of Düsseldorf in January 1970. Determined to focus Beuys' attention on Scotland, he presented him with a set of postcards. Beuys responded with the Shakespearean line, "I see the land of Macbeth, so when shall we two meet again, in thunder, lightning or in rain?"

Later that year, they reunited in Edinburgh and Demarco led him northwards along the ancient track he calls 'The Road to Meikle Seggie', Demarco's invented description of a physical or metaphysical journey. This initial experience of the Scottish landscape inspired Beuys and laid the foundation for their remarkable sixteen year-long artistic relationship.

In 1970, Beuys exhibited three works in the *Strategy: Get Arts* exhibition. The show also included exciting new work from artists with links with the Düsseldorf Art Academy, including pieces by Gerhard Richter, Blinky Palermo and Günther Uecker.

However, it was Beuys' works which stood out and captured the public's imagination, namely his now-iconic sculpture *The Pack* (1969). The work consisted of a VW bus, out of the back of which poured rows of sledges, each equipped with a survivor pack of a roll of felt, a torch and a lump of fat. Beuys' sculpture *Sled* (1969), which recreates one of the sledges used in the original piece, will be on display.

After Beuys had worked with neo-dada Fluxus artists in the Rhineland, Beuys developed his unique style of performance which he called 'actions' in the early 1960s. The Fluxus artists had

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attempted to break down the barriers between the arts and between art and life, by mixing together visual art, with music, acting, sound and installations of real objects. Beuys took this a step further and created a sort of performance dominated by his mesmeric personality and ability to make the spaces he performed in sacred.

The 1970 show also included one of the 'actions', *Celtic (Kinloch Rannoch) Scottish Symphony*, created with the composer Henning Christiansen. Filmed footage and a striking display of photographs taken of the event will be on show alongside a replica of Christiansen's instrument, *Green Violin* (1974).

The Keiller Library's supplementary display contains an assortment of photographs, news cuttings, scrapbooks, ephemera and original correspondence, all pertaining to the 1970 art college exhibition. Original correspondence between Demarco and Beuys, as well as artists featuring in the 1970 exhibit such as Richter and Uecker, will illuminate the type of relationship Demarco had with these artists, and the respect they held for him.

Beuys was invited back by Demarco on numerous occasions to perform 'actions' including *Three Pots for the Poorhouse* (1974), captured on film and through photographic images in a dilapidated Edinburgh Poorhouse. Both media are shown alongside the 'action-object' made at the time, comprised of two blackboards with chalk drawings and three cast-iron pots linked by a cord.

Thanks to Demarco's invitations, Beuys also taught, gave lectures, and made works in Edinburgh, most notably *A New Beginning is in the Offing* (1981). A powerful image of Beuys emerging from the old Poorhouse doors during the Black and White Oil Conference in 1974 shows the significance of the doors which became the work. This work was later installed at Inverleith House in 1981, at which point Beuys added a red light bulb under the doors.

This example is one of the many ways in which Demarco's influence impacted on Beuys' work, and encouraged him to explore the importance of the Celtic world, not only in Scotland but in Ireland and elsewhere in Europe.

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A Unique Partnership coincides with Modern Two's new major summer exhibition *ARTIST ROOMS: Joseph Beuys – A Language of Drawing*, which for the first time brings together the extraordinary group of over 110 Beuys drawings held in the ARTIST ROOMS collection.

Part of the Edinburgh Art Festival (28 July—28 August 2016)

Simon Groom, Director of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, said: *“This comprehensive display is a wonderful complement to the Gallery’s exhibition of extraordinary drawings by Joseph Beuys, “ARTIST ROOMS: A Language of Drawing”. On the 30th anniversary of Beuys’ death, the original photographs, letters, and unique documentation shed new light on Beuys’s activity in Scotland, the significance of his relationship with Demarco, and the artworks it directly inspired.”*

–ENDS–

NOTES TO EDITORS

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