



## Press Release/Pressemitteilung

Krefeld, September 9, 2021

### **Beuys & Duchamp. Artists of the Future**

October 8, 2021 – January 16, 2022

**Press conference: October 6, 2021, 11:00 am in the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld**

A special exhibition of the Kunstmuseen Krefeld

Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Joseph-Beuys-Platz 1, 47798 Krefeld

With the first ever juxtaposition of works by Joseph Beuys (1921–1986) and Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968), the Kunstmuseen Krefeld are taking a fresh look at two protagonists of the twentieth century, both of whom radically changed the concept of art. The exhibition is presented in conjunction with the Beuys anniversary year “beuys 2021” and takes as its starting point the question as to what was so important about Duchamp for Beuys, who mentioned no other artist more often in interviews and who seems to have seen him as a challenge for his own concepts. Starting with one of the last room ensembles installed by Beuys himself in the museum in his native city of Krefeld, the exhibition with 150 international loans reveals the cosmos of the two pioneering artists and their dynamic relationship to each other.

### **Duchamp in the Rhineland**

“The project ties in with the history of the Kunstmuseen Krefeld from a current perspective and on the basis of the latest research,” emphasizes Director Katia Baudin. “Both artists are closely linked with our institution. The first solo exhibition of Marcel Duchamp in a German museum took place in Haus Lange in 1965. The Kunstmuseen Krefeld can thus be considered one of the places that contributed to Duchamp’s discovery in Germany in the 1960s.”

During this period, Duchamp became a pioneer of new trends and a source of inspiration for a younger generation of artists in the United States and Europe. With his “ready-mades,” which he began conceiving in 1913, he had elevated serially prefabricated, everyday objects such as bottle dryers, urinals, and coat hooks to artistic objects, thus revolutionizing art and its reception. When Duchamp’s work was almost completed in 1965, Beuys was at the beginning of his intensified work in the public sphere.

Kunstmuseen Krefeld

Kaiser Wilhelm Museum Haus Lange Haus Esters

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### **Affinities, Contrasts, and Tensions**

The legendary action *The Silence of Marcel Duchamp is Overrated* (1964) is one of Beuys's numerous artistic confrontations with the "father figure" Duchamp. The title already speaks of Beuys's ambivalent relationship to Duchamp, the master of staged skepticism and ironic distance. Whereas Duchamp rarely expressed himself publicly and not at all politically, Beuys invoked the power of art to transform society. In addition to the obvious contrasts in their respective works, attitudes, and personalities, the exhibition focuses on the affinities in terms of motifs and artistic strategies. Both understood art as a universal medium. They incorporated everyday objects into their work, dealt with the natural sciences in artistic experimental setups, staged their own person, and liberated artistic means from conventional boundaries and ideas. "Inherent to both works is a radical potential for change. They challenge us to perceive everyday life and the environment differently and, in doing so, to redefine the role of the viewer," explains Magdalena Holzhey, curator of the exhibition.

### **Catalog**

The exhibition is accompanied by a comprehensive catalog in separate German and English editions (each 392 pages, c. 300 illustrations) published by Hatje Cantz, Berlin, edited by Magdalena Holzhey, Katharina Neuburger, and Kornelia Räder with contributions by Katia Baudin, Hans Dickel, Antje von Graevenitz, Gerhard Graulich, Magdalena Holzhey, Susanne M. I. Kaufmann, Dieter Koepplin, Michael Krajewski, Christa-Maria Lerm-Hayes, Gabriele Mackert, Katharina Neuburger, Kornelia Räder, and Leah Sweet. "The exhibition opens new perspectives on well-known collection holdings. This motivated the Ernst von Siemens Kunststiftung to support this ambitious project. With the catalog, which also addresses the question of the topicality and future relevance of the approaches of Duchamp and Beuys, fresh and significant reflections and new perspectives on the art of these two protagonists of modernism become accessible to a broad public," states Martin Hoernes, Secretary General of the Ernst von Siemens Kunststiftung, which, since its founding, has supported more than 1,000 exhibitions of national and international importance.

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### Public Program

The exhibition is accompanied by the broadly conceived public program “Everything Under One Hat,” sponsored by the Art Mentor Foundation Lucerne. In addition to the classic education formats, such as guided tours, workshops, and lectures, interdisciplinary and participatory programs will be offered in which visitors will experiment with the artistic conceptual tools of Beuys and Duchamp. A central component here is the *BeuysLabor*, an interactive installation. There will also be programs for schools and daycare centers, family events, and two action days, during which discussions will take place with scholars and representatives of various disciplines, and artistic questions will be placed in the context of society as a whole. When visiting the museum, visitors can borrow an experimental case for children, as well as an audio guide in which the three curators personally guide them through the exhibition.

The exhibition is curated by Magdalena Holzhey (Kunstmuseen Krefeld) and Kornelia Räder (Duchamp Research Center Schwerin) in collaboration with Katharina Neuburger and with scholarly advice from Antje von Graevenitz, Hans Dickel, and Paul B. Franklin. It is being presented in conjunction with “beuys 2021. 100 years of joseph beuys,” a project of the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia in cooperation with Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf under the direction of Eugen Blume and Catherine Nichols.

### Parallel Opening: *Humans Nature Politics. Joseph Beuys in the Context of the Collection,*

**Haus Lange & Haus Esters, October 8, 2021 – February 13, 2022**

The project will be flanked by a presentation of selected holdings of the Kunstmuseen Krefeld in Haus Lange and Haus Esters, which will follow Beuys’s traces from the 1960s to the present. The presentation at Haus Lange will focus on Beuys’s companions, like-minded protagonists, and students, drawing from the rich holdings from the 1960s and ’70s. At Haus Esters, the focus will be on a younger generation of artists whose works pick up on the impulses, themes, and motifs of Beuys’s work in a variety of ways.

More detailed information on the exhibitions can be found at: [www.kunstmuseenkrefeld.de](http://www.kunstmuseenkrefeld.de)

Kunstmuseen Krefeld

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# KUNSTSTIFTUNG

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**beuys**  
**2021**

### Visit

Kaiser Wilhelm Museum  
Joseph-Beuys-Platz 1  
47798 Krefeld

Haus Lange Haus Esters  
Wilhelmshofallee 91-97  
47800 Krefeld  
Di-So 11-17 Uhr

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