



## Joseph Beuys: The Reader (MIT Press)

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### Joseph Beuys: The Reader (MIT Press) From The MIT Press

Twentieth-century artist Joseph Beuys (1921-1986) -- legendary and self-mythologizing, enigmatic and controversial -- remains an important influence on artists today. Beuys embraced radically democratic artistic and political ideas, proclaiming "Everyone is an artist," and advocating direct democracy through referenda. He famously worked with such nontraditional materials as felt, fat, and plants and animals both alive and dead. Beuys and his work -- performance art, drawing, painting, sculpture, installation -- received perhaps the most contentious reception of any postwar artist. This reader brings together the crucial writings on Beuys and his work, presenting key essays by prominent artists and critics from North America and Europe. With a foreword by Arthur C. Danto, "Style and Salvation in the Art of Beuys," Benjamin H. D. Buchloh's now classic 1980 essay, "Beuys, Twilight of the Idol," and influential texts by Vera Frenkel, Thierry de Duve, Rosalind Krauss, Peter Bürger, Irit Rogoff, and others, *Joseph Beuys: The Reader* is the most significant gathering of critical texts on this challenging artist that has ever been assembled. It will be essential reading for any student of Beuys and for all those interested in postwar art, the cult of the artist, and art's engagement with politics and society.

**Contributors** Joseph Beuys, Eugen Blume, Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, Peter Bürger, Jean-François Chevrier, Catherine David, Thierry de Duve, Vera Frenkel, Stefan Germer, Rosalind Krauss, Barbara Lange, Dirk Luckow, Claudia Mesch, Viola Michely, Irit Rogoff, Gregory Ulmer, Theodora Vischer, Antje von Graevenitz, Dorothea Zwirner

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

...a welcome attempt to give a broad yet nuanced picture of [Beuys'] work and life...good deal of attention paid to Beuys' objects, writings, and actions...which downplays the biographical while striking a balance with the need to keep his self-promotion firmly in mind. It is this sense of equitability that will make this book required Beuys reading for a long time to come and may even help save him from eventual obscurity.

*(Artforum/Bookforum)*

...presents an informative discourse of Beuysian work and 21st century art by addressing issues such as how the current practice of established codes of meaning and iconography fit Beuys' model. In doing so, this reader successfully meets its main aim, which was to reopen an 'international discussion on Joseph Beuys and his work'.

*(contemporary (U.K.))*

Such a reinvigorated debate seems much needed...The book is well researched and expertly edited, and its compilation clearly springs from the editors' commitment to pointing out Beuys' potential. May it help to keep the legacy of this enigmatic artist alive -- an artist who continues to provoke fascination and bewilderment.

*(Journal of Surrealism and the Americas)*

### About the Author

Claudia Mesch is Assistant Professor at the School of Art, Arizona State University.

Viola Michely is a writer and curator and teaches art and philosophy at the August-Macke School, Bonn.

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