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Over 500 Joseph Beuys Multiples Go on Rare View in NYC

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March 13, 2015



'Joseph Beuys: Multiples from the Reinhard Schlegel Collection' at Mitchell-Innes & Nash, with "Sled" (1969) in the foreground (all photos by the author for Hyperallergic)

From the 1960s until his death in 1986, German artist [Joseph Beuys](#) produced some 557 multiples — small-scale portable and affordable pieces that captured an element of his practice. *Joseph Beuys: Multiples from the Reinhard Schlegel Collection*, opening today at the Chelsea gallery Mitchell-Innes & Nash, includes over 500 such works by Beuys, the largest exhibition of his multiples yet shown in New York.

Curated by leading Beuys scholar Professor Dr. Eugen Blume, head of the [Hamburger Bahnhof](#) in Berlin, the exhibition has sculptural works mostly arranged in wood and glass cases, while prints, photographs, and other two-dimensional pieces hang salon-style on the gallery walls.

The pieces come from the collection of Reinhard Schlegel. Among them is Beuys's famed 1970 "Filzanzug (Felt Suit)," based on the artist's own clothes. The suit is linked to an often factually questioned story that's nonetheless essential to Beuys's mythology,

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about being rescued and swaddled in felt and animal fat by Tatar nomads in 1944, after being shot down at the Crimean Front. One of Beuys's last multiples, "Capri Battery" (1985), examines the link between humans and nature by connecting a yellow lightbulb to a lemon, which must periodically be refreshed by its owner.



Installation view with Joseph Beuys's "Felt Suit" (1970) above at Mitchell-Innes & Nash

In his essay "Joseph Beuys: Multiple Message," in a publication accompanying the exhibition, Blume writes: He worked on these objects, editions, prints and texts with great care giving them the same special aura inherent in his major works. He wanted to give a complete account of his immense output, while at the same time accepting the legitimacy of single editions which were, however, ultimately conceived to form a unified group, in his works a "Block."

If you're ambitious and have the money, that "Block" is available for sale as a whole set. As Beuys once affirmed: "If you have all my multiples, then you have me completely."



Installation view of Joseph Beuys's "Capri Battery" (1985) at Mitchell-Innes & Nash

[Joseph Beuys: Multiples from the Reinhard Schlegel Collection](#) is on view at Mitchell-Innes & Nash (534 W 26th Street, Chelsea, Manhattan) through April 18.