

**STUDIES***in*  
**PHOTOGRAPHY**

**Strategy: Get Arts**

**35 Artists**

**Who Broke the Rules**

Christian Weikop







# **Strategy: Get Arts**

## **35 Artists**

## **Who Broke the Rules**

Christian Weikop



Published in partnership with Edinburgh University Press.

[www.edinburghuniversitypress.com](http://www.edinburghuniversitypress.com)

*Studies in Photography* is the trading name of

The Scottish Society for the History of Photography

A Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Registered in Scotland with the Office of the Scottish Charities Registrar

SC033988

[www.studiesinphotography.com](http://www.studiesinphotography.com)

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-8383822-0-9 (hardback)

ISBN 978-1-8383822-1-6 (webready PDF)

ISBN 978-1-8383822-2-3 (epub)

© 2021 The copyright of the work published in this book  
rests with the authors.

Series Editor

Alexander Hamilton

Author and Guest Editor

Christian Weikop

Image Research and Image Captions

Christian Weikop

Design

Ian McIlroy

Proofreading and copy editing

Robin Connelly

The publisher has no responsibility for the persistence  
or accuracy of URLs for any external or third-party internet websites  
referred to in this book, and does not guarantee that any content  
on such websites, is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Printed and Bound

Bell & Bain Limited, Glasgow

J Thomson Colour Printers, Glasgow

The paper used in this publication  
is recyclable. It is made from low chlorine pulps  
produced in a low energy, low emission manner  
from renewable forests.



Opposite:  
Stefan Wewerka's  
bentwood chairs  
installation on the  
main staircase of  
ECA Main Building (1970).  
Photo © George Oliver.  
Courtesy of  
Jennifer Gough-Cooper.  
© DACS 2021.



# Contents

13	<b>Foreword</b> Keith Hartley
16	<b>Foreword</b> Juan Cruz
21	<b>Preface</b> Alexander Hamilton
22	<b>Introduction</b> Christian Weikop
30	<b>Richard Demarco</b> and the Formation of <i>Strategy: Get Arts</i> Christian Weikop
40	<b>Düsseldorf in Edinburgh:</b> The Importance of the Germans Christian Weikop Appendix A. Jürgen Harten on <i>Strategy: Get Arts</i>
56	<b>SGA's 'Shock of the New':</b> Art Education, Joseph Beuys, and Jon Schueler Christian Weikop
80	<b><i>Strategy: Get Arts</i></b> and Broadcast Media Christian Weikop
84	<b>Photography at and in <i>Strategy: Get Arts</i></b> Karen Barber
88	<b>A Turning Point</b> Jennifer Gough-Cooper
93	<b>Gallery Assistants – SGA</b> Alexander Hamilton
101	<b>The Artists</b> Christian Weikop H.P. Alvermann, Bernd and Hilla Becher, Joseph Beuys, Claus Böhmler, George Brecht, Peter Brüning, Henning Christiansen, Friedhelm Döhl, Robert Filliou, Karl Gerstner, Gotthard Graubner, Erwin Heerich, Dorothy Iannone, Mauricio Kagel, Konrad Klapheck, Imi Knoebel, Christof Kohlhöfer, Ferdinand Kriwet, Adolf Luther, Heinz Mack, Lutz Mommartz, Tony Morgan, Blinky Palermo, Sigmar Polke, Erich Reusch, Gerhard Richter, Klaus Rinke, Dieter Roth, Reiner Ruthenbeck, Daniel Spoerri, André Thomkins, Günther Uecker, Franz Erhard Walther, Günter Weseler, Stefan Wewerka
202	<b><i>Sound in Space</i></b> Christian Weikop
204	<b>David Tremlett</b> <i>16 Industrial Scarecrows</i> Christian Weikop
206	<b><i>Palermo Restore Rewind</i></b> Andrew Patrizio
210	<b>Exhibiting an Exhibition:</b> <i>Strategy: Get Arts</i> in the Richard Demarco Archive Kirstie Meehan
214	<b>Douglas and Matilda Hall</b> Edited transcript of interview by Ted Fisher, Christian Weikop and Alexander Hamilton
218	<b>Contributors</b>
220	<b>Further Reading</b>
222	<b>Index</b>



## SGA's 'Shock of the New':

### Art Education, Joseph Beuys, and Jon Schueler

Christian Weikop

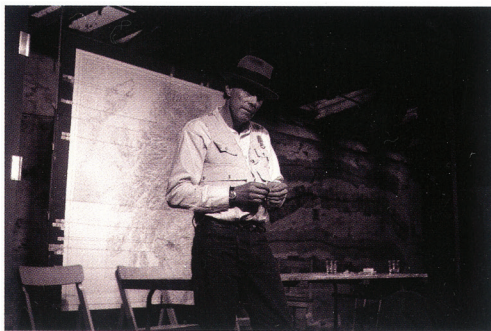
In Spring 2019, the Tate published an essay, among a cluster of papers on Joseph Beuys that I had guest edited, in which I considered *Strategy: Get Arts* (SGA).<sup>1</sup> The starting point for this essay was to follow up on Cordelia Oliver's observation in her *Guardian* review of 24 August 1970, entitled 'Dada for the 'seventies'', that it was the most significant exhibition on German art to be shown in the UK since 1938, a point also made in the original SGA catalogue designed by John Martin. As well as discussing Oliver's review in a wider historical context, I examined many other press clippings in the Richard Demarco Archive at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. It was 'bread and butter' art historical research, analysing the many vivid statements on this pivotal Festival exhibition, penned by various art critics. More difficult to ascertain, however, is the impact that *Strategy: Get Arts* had on artists and the institutions of art after September 1970. One thing for sure is that it made Demarco, the instigator of SGA, reflect on his own position as a gallerist, and the legitimacy of the 'white cube' gallery space as a suitable place to 'show' new tendencies in contemporary art. In October 1970, Demarco stated: 'I must be the first to learn the lesson of the German show. I question everything now. I question the Demarco Gallery.'<sup>2</sup>

The limitations of Demarco's Melville Crescent gallery for work that was not painting, would lead him to develop the experimental 'Edinburgh Arts' summer schools from 1972 onwards. He did this in collaboration with Edinburgh University's Schools of Scottish and Celtic Studies and that of Extra-Mural Studies, which encompassed installation, performance and theatre, workshops and lectures, in various non-gallery spaces. This was, in Demarco's mind, an extension of the art studios of both Edinburgh College of Art and the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, conceptually and physically expressing the legacy of his earlier SGA project. With 'Edinburgh Arts', Demarco stated that he wanted to transform the enterprise of the Richard Demarco Gallery to a school in the 'Bauhausian spirit of Black Mountain College'.<sup>3</sup> Stand out moments included the performances to be seen at 'Edinburgh Arts 73', with Tadeusz Kantor's production of *Lovelies and Dowdies* (with Beuys's participation) in the semi-derelict Forrest Hill Poorhouse, and Marina Abramović's *Rhythm 10*, watched closely by Beuys, at Melville College. Abramović's early risky performance (her first), based on a drinking game played by Slavic peasants, involved twenty knives, which may have brought to mind, for those who saw it, Günther Uecker's *Corridor of Knives* at SGA three years earlier, although Abramović put her own body in direct danger in her work.





Right:  
Joseph Beuys at  
Forrest Hill, Edinburgh,  
during the *Black and  
White Oil Conference*  
at Forrest Hill Poorhouse.  
Edinburgh Arts 1974.  
Photo  
© Archiv Robert Lebeck.  
Demarco Digital Archive.



Right:  
Joseph Beuys lecture  
event at the *Black and  
White Oil Conference*  
at Forrest Hill Poorhouse,  
Edinburgh.  
Edinburgh Arts 1974.  
Photo © Richard Demarco.  
Demarco Digital Archive.



Beuys delivered his *Twelve-Hour Lecture: A Homage to Anacharsis Cloots* at Melville College in 1973, but the following year he would utilise Kantor's favoured Forrest Hill venue for his 'action' *Three Pots for the Poorhouse* (June 1974) and the *Black and White Oil Conference* (August 1974), the latter also involving the architect, inventor, and theorist, Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983). At the *Black and White Oil Conference*, which questioned the future of North Sea oil, Beuys talked of 'The Energy Plan of the Western Man', using blackboards in open discussion with audiences. Reflecting on that 1974 event in 2021, Beuys's ideas now come across as more relevant than ever. He was an exceptionally prescient artist and radical ecologist, anticipating many of the urgent concerns of the current climate crisis and the devastating impact of the burning of fossil fuels. Beuys's involvement in this 1974 Edinburgh conference should be seen in the wider context of his co-founding of the German Green Party in 1979 and his forest 'actions', starting with his protection of the Grafenberger Wald outside Düsseldorf in December 1971 and culminating in his visionary *documenta VII* project, *7000 Oaks—City Forestation instead of City Administration* (1982–87).



SGA's 'Shock of the New':

Art Education, Joseph Beuys, and Jon Schueler  
Christian Weikop

### SGA's 'Shock of the New': Skirmishes in Art Education

Beyond Edinburgh, it seems that *Strategy: Get Arts* did indeed function as a model for later exhibitions, such as the Tate Gallery's *Seven Exhibitions* (February 24–March 23, 1972), which further ushered in the arrival of conceptual art in Britain. The seven overlapping exhibitions were organised by Michael Compton, the Tate's first Keeper of Exhibitions and Education, and included work by Keith Arnatt, Hamish Fulton, Bob Law, Bruce McLean, Michael Craig-Martin, David Tremlett, and Beuys. Craig-Martin had exhibited at the Demarco Gallery in January 1971, and Tremlett had earlier installed *16 Industrial Scarecrows* on the rooftop of Goldberg's Store in association with the Demarco Gallery during SGA. Beuys was of course central to the success of the ECA exhibition in 1970, and at the Tate's *Seven Exhibitions* in 1972, he presented *Information Action*, a public lecture on direct democracy. Compton knew all about *Strategy: Get Arts* and had even discussed it with the pop artist, Richard Hamilton, in May 1970 (see my essay in this publication on Richard Demarco). For the first time, Tate really embraced the idea of an 'expanded concept of art', and the 'Introductory Note' in the unusual exhibition catalogue, stated:

We believe that the artists who are showing in this group of exhibitions are taking advantage of this widening of the available media [...] All these *strategies* have in common that they are lineally derived from the living tradition of art so must be experienced within that context.<sup>4</sup>

The ICA London exhibition *Art into Society – Society into Art: Seven German Artists*, staged in the autumn of 1974, curated by Norman Rosenthal and Christos M. Joachimides, also owed something to SGA. This exhibition was partially based on *Kunst im Politischen Kampf* (Art in the Political Struggle), which had taken place a year earlier at the Kunstverein Hannover, again curated by Joachimides, but SGA was a reference point too. Regarding the title of the ICA exhibition, the curators even deployed the palindromic device of *Strategy: Get Arts*. As was the case with many of the SGA artists, the seven artists at ICA were all socially and politically engaged, although only one artist, Beuys, featured in both ECA and ICA exhibitions. Hans Haacke was on an earlier rota for SGA at ECA in 1970, but at some point fell off the list, while he did feature in the ICA exhibition. There are photographs of *Art into Society – Society into Art* that show Beuys in front of a blackboard on which he has written 'SCOTLAND' in large letters, indicating that he was attempting to bring some Celtic spirit to the English metropolis, or signalling that SGA and his experiences in Scotland in the previous four years, had been a milestone in his own artistic development.<sup>5</sup>



But in the wake of *SGA* what about the possibility of a change of pedagogical ideas and practice within ECA itself? The creative upheaval imposed upon the art college by the Düsseldorf artists was summed up by artist Marilyn Smith, who argued that ECA was

... an ideal arena for challenging established authority. Artists, students, administrators and public all had to make decisions and take sides. [...] Initial skirmishes between the German artists and the Scottish establishment ensured that serious attention would be focused on the subsequent conflict of art ideologies.<sup>6</sup>

According to Alexander Hamilton, the art establishment would attempt to dig its heels in at ECA and sought to eradicate the memory of *SGA*.<sup>7</sup> Exorcising Düsseldorf demons, a strict separation of artistic disciplines was maintained, as opposed to any further exploration of blurring boundaries between different artistic disciplines, which both the Düsseldorf curator, Jürgen Harten, and Demarco had insisted was so vital. At ECA, this process of entrenchment involved continuing to address the legacy of painting practices stemming from the '1922 Group' / 'Edinburgh School', formed essentially from alumni of ECA. A protégé system prevailed, and a persistent emphasis in Edinburgh on the primacy of easel painting led to a certain insularity and scepticism with respect to the possibilities of an 'expanded concept of art', as demonstrated by the practice of Beuys et al. Up until *SGA* was staged, there was a frustrating sense of ECA being behind the curve of new multi-disciplinary artistic developments and the emergence of conceptual art, when as a capital city art college, it really should have been at the cutting edge.

The parochialism of the Scottish art scene had been an issue for some time. Reflecting on the importance of the 1938/9 exhibition *Twentieth-Century German Art* at the New Burlington Galleries, London, which then travelled to the McLellan Galleries in Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, Cordelia Oliver wrote that Glasgow painters had been 'jolted out of complacency ... by the large exhibition of the work of the large Nazi-proscribed German painters – Klee, Kokoschka, Nolde, Marc ...',<sup>8</sup> an exhibition that had had the close involvement of Herbert Read, one-time Watson Gordon Professor of Fine Art at Edinburgh University. By comparison, some thirty-one years later with *SGA*, Demarco stated the following with respect to bringing artists over from Düsseldorf: 'I want to throw the Scots artists in at the deep end. I mean, I want to continually throw the British artists in at the deep end.'<sup>9</sup>

Oliver had compared *SGA* to the much earlier McLellan Galleries exhibition, and argued that 'this one too will have its effect on those who are fortunate enough to experience it'.<sup>10</sup> But in 1970, while certain individual artists were impressed by *SGA*, the faculty at ECA were apparently not 'jolted out of complacency' like their Glaswegian predecessors, and did not feel compelled to change their system of teaching or artistic priorities in response to *SGA*'s 'shock of the new'. This might be evidenced by the fact that for the next Edinburgh International Festival in 1971, marking its twenty-fifth anniversary, ECA staged a display of work by former students, titled *The Edinburgh School, 1946-1971*. In some respects this was

## SGA's 'Shock of the New':

Art Education, Joseph Beuys, and Jon Schueler

Christian Weikop

a conscious reply to SGA and the 'Düsseldorf School', but it was a safer proposition, and one mostly ignored by the press. According to the artist Kenneth Dingwall, while this exhibition did provide a 'relatively rare platform' for some younger non-RSA members, it 'certainly did not reflect the adventure of SGA.'<sup>11</sup> By the time *The Edinburgh School* exhibition opened, Blinky Palermo's wall painting intervention above the main stairway for SGA, as well as his trademark *Blaues Dreieck* (Blue Triangle), stencilled at the centre point above the entrance to the Sculpture Court from the Entrance Hall,<sup>12</sup> had long since been painted out by order of the College authorities, who were effectively reclaiming ECA for 'Scottish' art.

In October 1970, weeks after SGA had finished, Demarco lamented that the exhibition took place outside of semester time, implying that there would have been more pressure to bear for institutional change had a larger student population been present. Demarco stated:

I was very sad that the students from all the four Scottish art colleges couldn't see it [...] I was sad also that the students from all the other colleges in Britain couldn't see it. In a way, the exhibition wasn't an exhibition, it was a form of art education. It was a comment on art education.<sup>13</sup>

And yet, art students today, students highly familiar with 'intermedia' and 'multisensory' practices, of immersive environments, installations, performance, and participatory art, will appreciate how this exhibition, or 'non-exhibition' as Demarco often referred to it, represented a singular moment, when the very idea of medium 'specialisation' in a college environment, really started to be challenged. SGA was so ahead of its time that some of the lessons to be learnt from it were only understood and developed one generation later within ECA, rather than in the immediate aftermath.

Alexander Hamilton has suggested in his short essay for this publication, 'Gallery Assistants – SGA', that Robin Philipson, Head of the Drawing and Painting Department at ECA from 1960 to 1982, did at least try to engage with the activities and ethos of the exhibition. Philipson had been a supporter of the Demarco Gallery since its opening in Melville Crescent in 1966, and as the art historian Elizabeth Cumming has observed, his work was included in the Gallery's inaugural show.<sup>14</sup> In 1970, in the lead-up to SGA, he helped Demarco identify suitable exhibiting spaces within the college, and he witnessed Beuys's performance of *Celtic (Kinloch Rannoch) Scottish Symphony*. Philipson would have been curious to see the work of these



Düsseldorf-based artists as he was interested in modern German art, particularly of the pre-war period, and his own style had been influenced by the Expressionist style of Oskar Kokoschka, especially his painting *Zráni*, which had been acquired by the National Galleries of Scotland in 1942. Philipson was also indebted to the 'Edinburgh School' and American Abstract Expressionism.

After SGA, Philipson endeavoured to bring in new speakers and perspectives, and even oversaw a 'happening' in Cramond, but ultimately any impetus from the Düsseldorf exhibition petered out, partly due to the lack of enthusiasm or interest from other art college tutors. Whilst he was certainly not the most radical figure, and was in many ways central to the Edinburgh art establishment, as exemplified by his presidency of the Royal Scottish Academy from 1973, Philipson did understand the need for modernising the ECA curriculum. After SGA, he favoured 'an inter-School approach', putting forward fresh ideas which did not always go down well with other members of staff, who stubbornly wanted to remain in their departmental silos.<sup>15</sup>

Philipson's attempts to come to terms with SGA stood in marked contrast to the position of J.R. Brown, Secretary and Treasurer for Edinburgh College of Art, who was mostly obstructive. For instance, Brown did not want to permit Beuys's VW camper van into the building for the exhibition. In discussion with Giles Sutherland, Cordelia Oliver recounted how he stood at the entrance and said, 'No motor cars, no automobiles in this building!'<sup>16</sup> In response SGA organiser, Jennifer Gough-Cooper, claimed, 'It's a work of art!' But Brown retorted, 'It doesn't matter, it can't go in the building.'<sup>17</sup> Gough-Cooper also recalled the problems with Brown when Oliver arrived from Glasgow to see the artists preparing their installations, at which point he came storming into ECA shouting. Gough-Cooper has stated:

He was out of his mind with rage because of what was being put into the art college. [...] He left, there was nothing he could do, the Demarco Gallery had an agreement that they could use a certain number of rooms. He must have been so angry at not seeing any traditional sculpture and painting.<sup>18</sup>

In many respects, Brown embodied the traditionalism of the Edinburgh 'art world' at that time, which asides from placing an emphasis on easel painting ('la belle peinture'), was bound up with connoisseurship and ideas of good taste and decorum, particularly as expressed by the time-honoured artistic study of plaster casts of Antique sculpture. Walking between the giant order Doric columns supporting the portico of ECA's main entrance, a student would have had the impression of a temple devoted to neoclassical principles and pedagogy, a feeling only heightened inside the building by the presence of the Parthenon casts, a gift from Lord Elgin to Edinburgh in 1827. This is why Palermo's wall intervention, comprising a horizontal band of primary colours that ran around the architrave, was so effective at providing a visual contrast to all the interior neoclassical 'whiteness'.

## SGA's 'Shock of the New':

Art Education, Joseph Beuys, and Jon Schueler

Christian Weikop

Brown's negative response to SGA, one shared by some other ECA staff, might also be understood in the wider context of what had taken place in art schools across the UK in the previous two years. In late May 1968, an anti-authoritarian student movement was galvanised by the occupation of Hornsey College of Art (HCA) in North London. Initially, this concerned local student grievances regarding the control of union funds, but was in part triggered by the 'to-the-barricades' tensions in Paris earlier that month, which featured prominently in the British press, when more than twenty thousand students, teachers, and supporters (many guided by ideas developed by the Situationist International) marched to protest over the police invasion of the Sorbonne, after student occupations at that institution and at Nanterre campus of the University of Paris. A clash led to broken-up paving stones being thrown by students and tear gas being deployed by the police. The occupation of HCA was not violent in this way, but the demands of the occupiers escalated to a radical reform of the college structure, including potentially a dissolution of authoritarian distinctions between teacher and student. Demands for a major and consultative review of the art and design curriculum, and a string of diktats attacking the government's education policy, were issued.

The sit-in was supported by some sympathetic staff, visiting artists, and cultural figures, such as Nikolaus Pevsner, R. D. Laing, Joan Littlewood, John Latham, Richard Hamilton, Henry Moore (who donated £500 to the cause), and Buckminster Fuller, who would later meet Beuys and Lady Rosebery at the Royal Botanic Garden (famously photographed by Robert Lebeck) during the *Black and White Oil Conference* in 1974. The Hornsey occupation lasted for six weeks, with students taking over the main building of HCA at Crouch End, until the Conservative council regained control of the building by force, expelling student activists and enforcing a six-month lockout with barbed wire and Alsatian dogs. Tom Nairn, then a sociology lecturer at HCA, who had been a former student at ECA and the University of Edinburgh, was dismissed from his post for his involvement in support of the Hornsey students. Over the next eighteen months, the activism evident at HCA rippled out to other art colleges and as far as Edinburgh, although in a rather less radical fashion.

Alexander Hamilton recalls that student action at ECA started in September 1969, with students (himself included) staging a strike and a sit-in, even taking over the ECA Board Room, in a protest over outdated teaching methods. While some staff understood the need for reform but were unsure of the way forward, others were hostile to the idea of change. The student strike fizzled out by the time the January term started, but there was already some lingering resentment about the college 'sit-in' before ECA was chosen as the venue for SGA.



The idea therefore of a college 'take-over' by Düsseldorf artists in the late summer of 1970, was too much of a 'Spirit of 68' style shake-up for some tutors, a spirit encapsulated by the cover photograph to this book, showing Klaus Rinke smashing a chair on the ECA staircase as part of Stefan Wewerka's 'action'. There was likely concern over the potential for another Hornsey-style protest at ECA at the very outset of the new college year in September 1970, a situation that the college authorities wished to avoid.

The Scottish public reaction to SGA was also sometimes hostile for different reasons, judging by the 'Letters to the Editor' pages of various publications, an affront to the moral rectitude of many a good burgher from Edinburgh and beyond. One such letter by J.B. Chambers-Crabtree in *The Scotsman* on 28 August 1970, even considered SGA as 'sick', 'decadent', 'obscene', 'moronic', 'psycho-pathological', 'subjects for study by psychiatrists', and a waste of the 'public purse'. Unwittingly or not, the author reiterated the same arguments that the conservative critic Max Nordau had used in his book *Degeneration* (1892), arguments that were later adopted by the National Socialists in the 1930s in their negative response to Expressionism, the very art celebrated at Glasgow's McLellan Galleries, which the Nazis considered to be 'degenerate' culture.

Intriguingly, there was one response to Chambers-Crabtree's outburst of indignation, a letter published in *The Scotsman* on 9 September 1970, which was almost Dadaist in its parodic tenor, irreverently aping Chambers-Crabtree's prose style in response to SGA:

I suspect that the staff and alumni of the Edinburgh College would wish to be disassociated from the contents and aims of the show. But they should wish to be dissociated from myself, Spiro Agnew, J. Chambers Crabtree, and the rest of mankind [...]

I suspect that there is much in this exhibition favoured by pseudo-intellectuals, hippies and drop-outs of today. But they favour so much that is evident in myself, Spiro Agnew, J. Chambers Crabtree, and the rest of mankind.

I suspect strong pathological overtones, outrageous obscenity and gentle associations with our brothers, the moronic inhabitants of hospitals for the mentally disturbed. But is this not true of myself, Spiro Agnew, J. Chambers-Crabtree, and the rest of mankind?<sup>19</sup>

This continued for seven paragraphs. The sign-off of 'myself, Spiro Agnew, J. Chambers-Crabtree and the rest of mankind' was an absurdist liturgical refrain that mocked the values of 'common decency' demanded by Chambers-Crabtree. The inclusion of the Republican Spiro Agnew, the 39th Vice President of the United States during the presidency of Richard Nixon, known for his anti-liberal, anti-intellectual speeches, and aligned here with the conservative values of Chambers-Crabtree, was a deliberate ploy on the part of the author, who hailed from New York and was a staunch Democrat, namely the artist Jon Schueler (1916-1992).

SGA's 'Shock of the New':

Art Education, Joseph Beuys, and Jon Schueler

Christian Weikop

### Jon Schueler's Encounters with SGA Artists

SGA had an impact on individual artists based in Scotland, on figures such as Hamilton, Elizabeth Ogilvie, Hamish Pringle, Alistair Park, Rory McEwen, Kenneth Dingwall, and Michael Docherty. Even artists who missed SGA soon became aware of its significance. For instance, Glen Onwin RSA, who returned from European travels to undertake postgraduate studies at ECA, felt compelled to acquire the oversized catalogue shortly after the event. Many of the artists who featured in it would have an influence on his own practice, including the Bechers, Polke, Richter, and Beuys, and he subsequently made sure to attend later Beuys events in Edinburgh, on the German artist's multiple returns to the Scottish capital at the invitation of Demarco. SGA also impressed certain international figures, such as the Romanian artists Paul Neagu and Horia Bernea, who can be seen in Demarco's photographs of the audience for Beuys's *Celtic (Kinloch Rannoch) Scottish Symphony*.<sup>20</sup> The artists Li Yuan-chia and Nam June Paik also visited SGA, the latter coming with a number of artists from London, all associated with the spirit of Fluxus.<sup>21</sup>

Jon Schueler, an American artist who had been taught and mentored by Clyfford Still, deserves particular consideration as a case study though, due to the profound impression the exhibition made on him, and the fact that he became close to a number of SGA artists, especially Beuys, with whom he shared a deep love of nature. Schueler wrote: 'When I speak of nature, I'm speaking of the sky, because in many ways the sky became nature to me. And when I think of the sky, I think of the Scottish sky over Mallaig ...'.<sup>22</sup> His references to himself as a nature painter, one inspired by the late works of William Turner, differentiated his practice from other artists associated with Abstract Expressionism, for whom 'nature' was a dirty word. As Jack Baur, the Director of New York's Whitney Museum pointed out in considering Schueler's work on the occasion of a solo exhibition in 1975: '... these are basically abstract pictures, not unrelated to the work of Mark Rothko or some of Clyfford Still's big canvases. They have that kind of largeness, mystery and power.'<sup>23</sup> Schueler wrote to Baur much earlier on in 1957 stating, 'I am interested in reality – in the reality of my vision – not realism on the one hand, nor abstraction on the other.'<sup>24</sup>

Having initially been introduced to Demarco by the Scottish poet Alastair Reid, Schueler arrived in Edinburgh in February 1970 and immediately took a taxi to the Demarco Gallery. The Demarco Gallery functioned as an essential meeting place during the late 1960s and early 1970s, but so too did his own home and the homes of Demarco Gallery friends and patrons. In conversation with Demarco in October 1970, Schueler stated: 'I think I met more



people in the first half an hour that I was in your gallery than I'd met in Edinburgh during the previous 13 years on my various visits'.<sup>25</sup> Several months later, in early May 1970, Demarco would introduce Schueler to Beuys, when for the first time Beuys travelled to Edinburgh from Düsseldorf in order to discuss preparations for *Strategy: Get Arts*. Reflecting on that encounter, Schueler said to Demarco: 'Meeting with Beuys was a tremendously profound experience really, because when you first introduced me to him in the spring, we got along very well. I enjoyed him. I liked him. I felt I'm talking to an artist.'<sup>26</sup> A photograph accessible on the Demarco Digital Archive shows this encounter, with Schueler, Beuys, and the Maltese artists Emvin Cremona, Mary de Piro, Gabriel Caruana, the architect, Richard England, and the curator and museum director James Harithas, all together at the home of Demarco Gallery Board Member and designer of the iconic SGA catalogue, John Martin.<sup>27</sup>



Above:  
Magda Salvesen  
in Mallaig,  
June 1970.  
Photo by Jon Schueler.  
© Jon Schueler Estate.



Right:  
Richard Demarco,  
Jon Schueler  
in his Mallaig studio,  
January 1971.  
Photo © Richard Demarco.  
Demarco Digital Archive.

Schueler would also meet Magda Salvesen early in 1970, some twenty-eight years younger than him, who at that time was working as an exhibition officer for the Scottish Arts Council (which only much later merged with Scottish Screen to form Creative Scotland). Salvesen became Schueler's muse and life partner, and in 1971 she would join him at Romasaig, a one-time schoolhouse and white-harled cottage close to Mallaig in the north-west Highlands, which looked across the Sound of Sleat, a cottage which functioned as his Scottish base and studio. Schueler had first been drawn to Mallaig in 1957, the same year that the legendary gallerist, Leo Castelli, invited him to have the first one-man show at his new gallery in New York. At that time, Schueler was identified as a leading figure of the 'second generation' of New York School artists, and in 1959 he was considered as such by the aforementioned poet, Alastair Reid, in B.H. Friedman's book *School of New York: Some Younger Artists*. Reid described Schueler's paintings as 'intense compressions of vast movement and change, the slow building up of clouds, the filtered image of the sun...'.<sup>28</sup>

## SGA's 'Shock of the New':

Art Education, Joseph Beuys, and Jon Schueler

Christian Weikop

While Schueler was identified as a rising star in the mid to late 1950s, by the end of the decade, Castelli had switched his focus to Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and artists associated with an emerging Pop Art, a movement that Schueler felt was shallow, with little to offer. The 1960s proved to be a difficult decade for him. After discontinuing his collaboration with Castelli in New York, he supported his practice with his teaching at Yale, the Maryland Institute in Baltimore, and other places. As certain personal relationships and professional connections disintegrated in the United States, however, he felt compelled to return to Scotland.

Schueler's departure from the American art scene early in 1970 resonated with Demarco, then Director of the Edinburgh Festival Contemporary Visual Arts programme, because he had just turned down the opportunity to stage a Festival exhibition that would have reasserted the significance of the 'New York School', of which Schueler had been a part. Demarco was attracted to talented artists who somehow existed on the margins of things, either by virtue of their location, particularly those who were based behind the 'Iron Curtain', or were in some form of self-imposed exile, rather like Schueler. This can be related to Demarco's conception of himself as an 'outsider' figure, a feeling that came about from being persecuted as an 'enemy alien' as a boy growing up in Portobello, Edinburgh, after the Italians joined the Axis alliance in 1940.<sup>29</sup> Demarco's interest in the non-mainstream, can be seen in his critical decision to focus on Düsseldorf in 1970, a recognised 'Kunststadt' (art city) in Germany, but not a city that had garnered anywhere near the same kind of 'global' attention as New York at that time, which as Demarco observed, 'was the undisputed source of all power in the world of visual arts.'<sup>30</sup> Yet in 1970, Demarco divulged to Schueler, '... things weren't right in America, there was a lack of spiritual strength, spiritual conviction, in most of what I saw, not just in the work of many of the so-called leading artists but also in the work of many of the so-called leading gallery directors.'<sup>31</sup>

Schueler moved between Mallaig and Edinburgh, initially staying in a West Bow flat, and later on in Salvesen's flat at Drummond Place, New Town, on his return visits to the capital, after he was able to move into Romasaig in Mallaig in June 1970. In conversation with Demarco in October 1970, Schueler told of his earliest experiences of Edinburgh. These reflections are revealing because they comment on the cultural staidness of 'Auld Reekie' in the late 1950s. Besides from the activities of Jim Haynes's Paperback Bookshop and



Gallery (est. 1959), the Traverse Theatre (est. 1963), and the Richard Demarco Gallery (est. 1966), Edinburgh had, by 1970, not changed that much. But in the 1950s, outside of the summer Festival, there were even fewer possibilities in the visual arts. Schueler stated:

When I did come here in 1957, there was nothing for me to think about or look for in Edinburgh as far as an art scene was concerned. I saw two things very, very quickly, within half a day. I saw the Royal Scottish Academy, the dead weight of that thing, just sort of enshrined in some way, just symbolizing boredom. And then I walked into one or two of the small, unpretentious galleries with small unpretentious illustrative work on the walls. And that was pretty much it and there was really no point in me looking any further. I did go around to the art school thinking that if I'd introduce myself, at least I might meet people.<sup>32</sup>

The real attraction of Scotland for Schueler was remote Mallaig and not Edinburgh; it was the possibility of immersion in nature, immersion in the ever-changing northern sky and sea of the West Highland coastline that excited him. Schueler had a Romantic vision of Scotland. His first experience of the country had lasted just a few hours after his B-17 'Flying Fortress', which flew throughout the night 'between layers of storm clouds and tossed all over the sky',<sup>33</sup> touched down in Prestwick in November 1942. He was a navigator during the Second World War, and navigators would take up a position in a small Plexiglas dome in these B-17s, often taking readings from the sun and stars, using these heavenly bodies to guide the bombers from the United States to Britain via Iceland, a route where not many visual landmarks existed. This wartime experience gave Schueler an important point of contact with Beuys, who had served in the German Luftwaffe as a radio operator, and then as a rear gunner in a Ju 87 'Stuka' dive-bomber. Both Schueler and Beuys turned to art in 1945, and for both of them, art became a cathartic means of 'healing the wounds' of conflict. One of Beuys's earliest artworks, *Acer Platanoides* (1945) in the National Galleries of Scotland, is a single Norway maple leaf stuck on to drawing paper and signed 'J Beuys 45'. A regenerative Romantic symbol created at the end of the war, it marks the embarkation of an artistic journey in which he frequently embraced the arboreal. Like Schueler, Beuys was an artist in the Romantic tradition; both artists were drawn to nature; for Schueler it was sky and sea, for Beuys it was the land.

## SGA's 'Shock of the New':

Art Education, Joseph Beuys, and Jon Schueler

Christian Weikop

Below left to right:  
Joseph Beuys on a  
ladder during  
*Celtic (Kinloch Rannoch)*  
*Scottish Symphony*,  
August 1970.  
(Jon Schueler can be  
seen far right).  
Photo © Richard Demarco.  
Demarco Digital Archive.  
© DACS 2021.

Audience for  
Joseph Beuys's  
*Celtic (Kinloch Rannoch)*  
*Scottish Symphony*,  
August 1970.  
Photo © Richard Demarco.  
Demarco Digital Archive.

Joseph Beuys  
removing gelatine during  
*Celtic (Kinloch Rannoch)*  
*Scottish Symphony*,  
August 1970.  
Photo © Richard Demarco.  
Demarco Digital Archive.  
© DACS 2021.

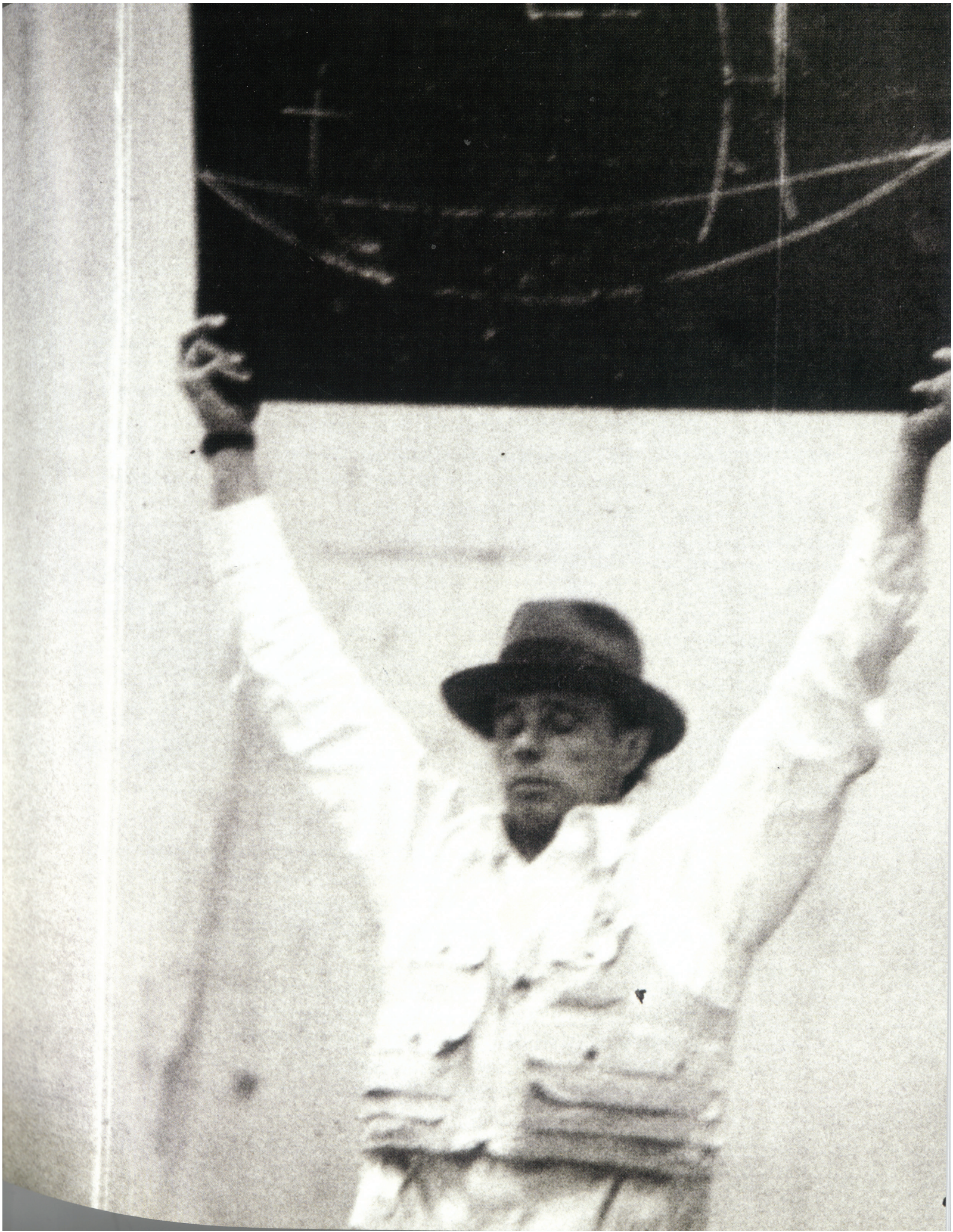
It was an emotional experience for Schueler to meet Beuys and he was fascinated by the performance of *Celtic (Kinloch Rannoch) Scottish Symphony* in ECA, watching for hours on several occasions. Schueler took photographs of the performance, including one of Beuys in a meditative state with a blackboard raised above his head, and Schueler can also be seen in Demarco's photographs of the audience, watching Beuys scale a ladder in order to pluck gelatine globules from the wall and placing them on a silver tray. It was a diverse audience which included the actress Linden Travers and her daughter Sally Holman, the artists Alistair Park, Robin Philipson, Klaus Rinke, Johannes Stüttgen, Marilyn Smith, the photographers Monika Baumgartl, Ute Klopheus, George Oliver, as well as David Baxandall (Director of the National Galleries of Scotland), the composer Harrison Birtwistle, among many others. During this performance, Beuys attached three pieces of paper to the gelatine-covered wall of the ECA life room. On the first piece of paper, it was written, 'Where are the souls of ...?' On the second piece of paper, as Demarco has observed, were the names of artists who were being taken 'seriously into account' by Beuys:

Naturally there was the name Malevich, summing up the Russian avant-garde, Van Gogh, Fra Angelico, Masaccio, and God knows how many others. I was surprised that some of the other names were more from the history of ideas, the history of civilisation. I realised this was a kind of requiem.<sup>34</sup>



Opposite:  
Jon Schueler,  
Joseph Beuys holding  
a blackboard during  
*Celtic (Kinloch Rannoch)*  
*Scottish Symphony*,  
August 1970.  
Photo by Jon Schueler.  
© Jon Schueler Estate.  
Demarco Digital Archive.  
© DACS 2021.







## SGA's 'Shock of the New':

Art Education, Joseph Beuys, and Jon Schueler

Christian Weikop

Other artist names on the paper included Caspar David Friedrich, Albrecht Dürer, Paul Klee, and William Nicholson. Schueler similarly considered the performance as a requiem, and reflected on the names of friends he had lost in conflict, but also those artists and friends from the 'New York School' who had been lost through suicide, illness, or tragic accident, such as Mark Rothko, Ad Reinhardt, Franz Kline, Barnett Newman, David Smith, and Jackson Pollock. Schueler, who was almost hypnotically caught up in Beuys's performance, stated:

When Josef Beuys was here in Edinburgh I watched him standing before the black, rectangular board (the void? the grave?), his feet fixed apart, one hand hanging at his side, the other gripping the blood-tipped spear, hat firmly to the center of his head, eyes peering past all between him and the distance. I watched him for some time, listening to the music from Christiansen's tapes and the idea formed that this was a requiem, a requiem for all the artists I have known. Artists dead and artists living flashed before my eyes. I scarcely paused, the thought was so like a painting existing to be discovered in its depth: A requiem for others I have known, for Billy Southworth and Jimmy Hudson, for Don Stockton, and for endless names forgotten now of those squadron friends of mine who were shot down, so many. It was a war memory, war in total; I couldn't see all the faces. And then I thought, For all the others, too. My work must be a search and a requiem.<sup>35</sup>

It is intriguing to consider this strong connection between Schueler and Beuys. Schueler even invited Beuys for dinner at Salvesen's New Town flat during the run of SGA. Schueler related the experiences that drew them together in October 1970:

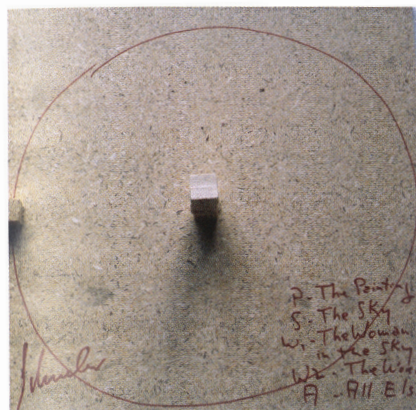
I was overwhelmed that we could bring together our own embattled carcasses as it were, because we both had been fliers in the war and we'd both known each other in essence as the enemy, and that we could come together now and see each other really profoundly through work. And that at the end of that evening, we could embrace. This is a very big, and a very meaningful thing.<sup>36</sup>

It was some almost indefinable energy and spirit about *Strategy: Get Arts* that so impressed Schueler, rather than the artworks and performances he witnessed impacting in some visually discernible way on his own practice, which did not change markedly in consequence. In considering Schueler as a painter, one might speculate that he would have been drawn to the landscape canvases of Gerhard Richter at SGA, but this does not seem to have been the



case. Salvesen has stated that there is a 'slickness' about Richter's work, and a very different 'handling of paint', that would not have interested Schueler.<sup>37</sup> And yet there remains a vestige of the Romantic contemplative sublime about some of Richter's paintings from this period, paintings freighted with the memory of landscape visions by Caspar David Friedrich. It is worth noting, however, that Richter's paintings of landscapes, seascapes, and cloud studies, certainly those created in 1969/1970, some of which were shown at SGA, were not based on direct immediate experience, but rather on a reality mediated by photography, a 'distancing' that was characterised by the German art historian Hubertus Butin as a form of 'un-romantic Romanticism'.<sup>38</sup> In taking this approach, in adopting photo-painting (a second-hand visualisation), Richter arguably dispensed with subjective expression, whereas for Schueler, the expression of individual subjectivity through painterly mark making in response to the changeability of nature was absolutely everything. Schueler would even join local Mallaig fishermen on journeys out to sea, perhaps in part inspired by the story of his artist hero, Turner, who allegedly lashed himself to a ship's mast for four hours in the midst of the storm, to absorb the experience for his art.<sup>39</sup>

Below:  
Jon Schueler's response  
to Robert Filliou's  
*The Vocational Game*  
(detail)  
at *Strategy: Get Arts*,  
August 1970.  
Photo © Richard Demarco.  
Demarco Digital Archive.



The Abstract Expressionist quality of Schueler's work was certainly different to most of the art shown or performed at SGA, collectively defined by Georg Jappe as 'anti-Expressionist', when looking for a common denominator for this 'Düsseldorf school'.<sup>40</sup> Schueler nonetheless tried to engage with what he saw, as evidenced by the fact that he participated in *The Vocational Game* created for SGA by Robert Filliou, his repeated viewings of the performance of Beuys (as well as his appreciation of Beuys's *The Pack*), his respect for the diverse work of other SGA artists, and his aforementioned written defence of the exhibition printed in *The Scotsman*. Schueler, who like Demarco, and indeed Beuys, had some experience of art education, felt that ECA was a most appropriate venue and a wonderful building:

'Big rooms, high ceilings. Yes, space and the warm feeling of an old place.

I like it very much; it beats any new art school ...'<sup>41</sup> And Demarco has stated that the experience of SGA made him rethink the idea of ECA, his alma mater, making him 'see it as if for the first time',<sup>42</sup> a building that through the dynamic exhibition seemed to transcend its function as an art college, and at the same time provided him with the kind of art lesson he had always wanted, but never received as an art student there in the early 1950s. In conversation with Schueler, Demarco also commented on the key strength of SGA:

I think that the most important thing about the German show was that you met the artists. The artists were around, they were seen working. In fact, in some cases, I think the most important experience was talking to the artists, speaking to the artists and many people found that it was possible. We brought over 24 of the artists. And that was quite a number. It's quite a number of artists. We brought over the artists because they were necessary.<sup>43</sup>

## SGA's 'Shock of the New':

Art Education, Joseph Beuys, and Jon Schueler

Christian Weikop

In addition to Beuys, Schueler developed good friendships with other SGA artists, particularly Klaus Rinke and Friedhelm Döhl. Rinke and his partner, the performance artist and photographer, Monika Baumgartl, visited Schueler at Romasaig near Mallaig (3-6 September 1970) during the run of SGA. The photographer Ute Klopheus, known for her documentation of Beuys's performances, who captured *Celtic (Kinloch Rannoch) Scottish Symphony for Interfunktionen 5*, was also invited by Schueler to Mallaig (5-6 September 1970). Schueler's desire to connect with Rinke intrigued Demarco, who tried to establish a link between them, even though their practices were so apparently different:

What happened when you got to know someone like Klaus Rinke? By the way he said that he is a follower of the God Poseidon. Of water. And Joseph Beuys is the follower of the gods of the earth—like most Germans have always been. I mean, what did you find? I mean, he came up to a part of the world which you inhabit which is almost total water, water from the sky? All around you.<sup>44</sup>

Below top:  
Klaus Rinke and  
Monika Baumgartl  
in Mallaig,  
September 1970.  
Photo by Jon Schueler.  
© Jon Schueler Estate.

Below bottom:  
Friedhelm and Julia Döhl  
in Mallaig,  
September 1970.  
Photo by Jon Schueler.  
© Jon Schueler Estate.



Schueler responded that it was Rinke's 'great humour' that initially attracted him, but also 'his very true involvement with water' and the 'high seriousness' of his artistic intent. He stated: 'I felt terribly close, curiously, as I heard him talk about water and what water meant to him and how he liked to look at it, how there was a definite poetic compulsion about it.'<sup>45</sup> During their conversation, Schueler and Demarco discussed, not the Rinke water tank installation in SGA, but the MoMA exhibition *Information*, curated by Trinidadian born Kynaston McShine, held in New York between 2 July and 20 September 1970, at the same time as SGA was taking place, in which Rinke exhibited *Operation Poseidon* (1969). This consisted of twelve zinc containers, each filled to capacity with water ladled from the Rhine, along with a printed poster listing the twelve cities from which the water was taken, and a series of twelve photographs documenting the artist's acquisition of the water. Schueler seemed taken with the idea of 'shipping the Rhine' across the Atlantic Ocean to New York.



On the inspiration of SGA more generally, Schueler said directly to Rinke, on Rinke's visit with Baumgartl to the Romasaig cottage in early September 1970:

I'd gotten so upset about New York in a way, that I was less and less interested in even trying to look, you see [...] And there's something about the conversations between Beuys and myself and Christiansen and yourself. There's something about these conversations which meant for the first time in a long time, I want to look again at what some of my contemporaries are doing. And I'm not sure what that is, it could be your personality, or it could be something in the work, or it could be the attitudes about the work, or it could be all three.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to Rinke and Beuys, another SGA artist that Schueler befriended was Friedhelm Döhl. Döhl had worked with Uecker to create *Sound-Scene 1*, shown at SGA in August 1970, which Schueler witnessed. Döhl was an avant-garde composer, and his collaboration with Uecker, a bringing together of music and visual arts, intrigued Schueler. In conversation with Döhl, Schueler tried to relate some of the ideas of Döhl's work to his own practice.<sup>47</sup> Döhl's compositions were often inspired by contact with artists, performers, and authors. He was attracted to Romanticism as an attitude of mind, not something that was limited by time or space, an attitude that he shared with Beuys. Like Rinke and Baumgartl, Döhl travelled to Mallaig with his partner Julia to visit Schueler in September 1970, a journey, in the words of Demarco, 'to a sea girt world where the landmass of Europe ends and the great power of the Atlantic Ocean begins'.<sup>48</sup>

Döhl recalled the Mallaig experience in a letter to violinist Walter Levin, a quote from which appeared in the programme for the first American performance of the *Sound of Sleat, Streichquartet* (1971-72) by the LaSalle Quartet (which Levin founded) in 1982. Döhl wrote:

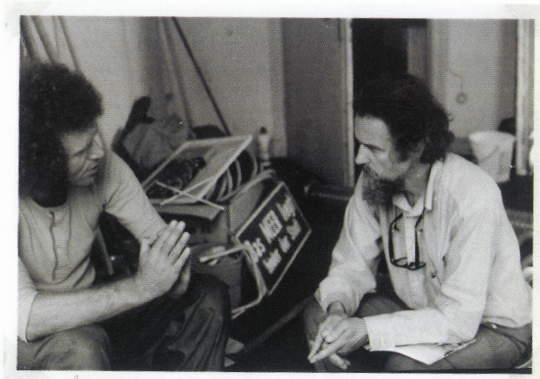
In 1970 after the performance of my 'Sound Scene I' at the Edinburgh Festival, we lived at the house of our painter friend, Jon Schueler, in Mallaig, Scotland 'at the end of the road' with a view onto the horizon – a slim, sometimes hazy line of the Skye Isle with the sea in front, the sky above, all in constant motion and alteration, forever merging into one another – sometimes more, sometimes less – almost mutually dissolving then appearing separately. The water between the observer and the horizon is called the Sound of Sleat – a double meaning inspiring my idea of the string quartet – this body of water merging into the sky and vice-versa with the horizon becoming increasingly blurry.<sup>49</sup>

This composition was another kind of 'sound scene' or 'sound landscape' to the one performed at ECA, and it is important because it reveals the significance of the cultural exchanges that took place at SGA. Many of the SGA artists took as much from the experience of visiting Scotland in the summer of 1970 as those who attended the exhibition were inspired by their example. There was creative reciprocity in this respect and no doubt there are other hidden narratives forming part of this exchange history around the exhibition.

## SGA's 'Shock of the New':

Art Education, Joseph Beuys, and Jon Schueler  
Christian Weikop

Döhl was clearly inspired by the Mallaig setting as well as by the paintings of Schueler. In fact, Schueler's painting *The Sound of Sleat / Red in a Summer Night VII* (1970) was reproduced on the album cover of a Döhl recording - *Friedhelm Döhl Edition Vol.1: Sound of Sleat / Winterreise / Notturmo* (1982).



Above:  
Klaus Rinke and  
Jon Schueler  
in Düsseldorf,  
July 1971.  
Photo by Magda Salvesen.  
© Jon Schueler Estate.

In July 1971, the year after SGA, Schueler and Salvesen visited Döhl in Berlin. They also visited Beuys in Düsseldorf. Beuys picked them up in his distinctive Bentley S1, a car he owned for twenty years from 1966 to 1986, which today may seem at odds with the artist's green credentials. Salvesen recalls that it was a car that 'everybody noticed' as he drove by, stating 'And of course Beuys in his "uniform" of waistcoat and hat and old trousers (Jeans??), even for going out in the evening, made a wonderful contrast at the driver's seat, which I did appreciate!'<sup>50</sup> Schueler and Salvesen also visited Rinke in Düsseldorf, and Salvesen took a number of photographs of both of them deep in conversation.

Earlier that same year, Demarco gave Schueler a solo exhibition of his paintings at the Richard Demarco Gallery (6 February- 6 March 1971). Plans for this exhibition took shape when Demarco visited Schueler in Mallaig in October, 1970, with Demarco making a link between Scheuler's forthcoming show and SGA, which had ended the previous month. He told the artist:

I will be doing something which is part of the German exhibition, part of the experience of the German exhibition. It is part of things, I think, and that's why I'm delighted that certain artists from the German exhibition met you and have become part of your world and respect you and you respect them.<sup>51</sup>

Furthermore, in March 1971, an atmospheric film about Scheuler was made in Mallaig entitled *Jon Schueler: An Artist and His Vision*, directed by John Black and filmed by Mark Littlewood for Films of Scotland. This opportunity came about through Demarco's connections, and again there was a link to SGA because in the previous year Littlewood had filmed Beuys's Rannoch Moor 'Aktion', which formed part of *Celtic (Kinloch Rannoch): Scottish Symphony*, performed with Henning Christiansen.



Right:  
One of the ECA  
exhibiting rooms for  
the Jon Schueler  
*Sound of Sleat* exhibition,  
Edinburgh Festival,  
1973.  
Photo by  
Archie Iain McLellan.  
© Jon Schueler Estate.



Around the time of the Demarco Gallery exhibition, Schueler gave an inspirational lecture at ECA, seen by Hamilton and other students, having been invited to do so by Robin Philipson. As Cumming has written:

A relationship had quickly developed where visitors to the Demarco Gallery were often encouraged to visit the College [...] The flow of artists between organisations was part of the culture of the late 1960s...<sup>52</sup>

Schueler was no exception. And a few years later, he would have a major exhibition of one-hundred-and-fifty Mallaig paintings and fifty watercolours in ECA. This exhibition, *Jon Schueler, The Sound of Sleat, An Exhibition of Paintings*, (18 August – 8 September 1973), was sponsored by the young London-based art dealer, Richard Nathanson. Schueler occupied some of the same spaces that had been utilised by the Düsseldorf artists three years earlier – four teaching studios and the Sculpture Court on the ground floor, and another large studio upstairs. On this occasion, it was the artist Kenneth Dingwall rather than Demarco who suggested ECA as a venue, and it was a highly successful exhibition, in large part due to the organisational efforts of Salvesen, who was, by now 'absolutely indispensable' to Schueler (they later married in 1976). He met many people and sold a great deal of work, describing it as 'one of the most beautiful experiences of his life'.<sup>53</sup> The connection to ECA had clearly been stimulating and productive for Schueler, from his revelatory engagement with SGA in 1970, to his own large exhibition in 1973, seen by collector and dealer, Ben Heller, soon to become the artist's American representative.

## SGA's 'Shock of the New':

Art Education, Joseph Beuys, and Jon Schueler  
Christian Weikop

In 1975, Schueler moved back to New York after an American revival of interest in his work, in large part due to his tremendous productivity in Mallaig in the previous five years, and thanks to the endeavours of Heller, Bauer, Friedman, Salvesen, and others. He kept the studio in Mallaig for the rest of his life, usually spending three months there in most years, until his death in 1992. In 1981, he returned to the Scottish capital and took up a six-week residency at the Talbot Rice Art Centre (now called the Talbot Rice Gallery) of the University of Edinburgh, for a 'live' Edinburgh Festival exhibition entitled *The Search*, with the support of the director Duncan Macmillan. Here he painted very large scale work *in situ*, and some of the process was filmed, recalling the 1951 film directed by Hans Namuth of Jackson Pollock in the act of painting.

In 1981, Beuys happened to be in Edinburgh at the same time for his last work in the city, *New Beginnings are in the Offing*, which, with the assistance of the artists George Wyllie and Dawson Murray, involved the removal and relocation of the old doors of the Forrest Hill Poorhouse, the venue he used in the early 1970s, along with Kantor. The doors were transported first to ECA and later temporarily installed in the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, which in those days was located at Inverleith House at the Royal Botanic Garden. They were installed with the addition of a red light bulb under them for an exhibition *The Avant-Garde in Europe 1955-70* (The Collection of Städtisches Museum, Mönchengladbach). At the same time, Demarco was showing *Beuys in Scotland 1970-1980*, an archival exhibition at the Richard Demarco Gallery. Beuys visited his old friend Schueler at the Talbot Rice Gallery. Striking photographs, one showing the two of them together, and one with Beuys scrutinizing Schueler's remarkable palette table, were taken by Demarco. Beuys and Schueler were two artists with very different practices, but who, as discussed, shared a Romantic sensibility and a desire to heal the wounds of war through art, in part by immersing themselves in the regenerating landscapes of Scotland, a Celtic world that energised their creativity. It was undoubtedly an enduring relationship, one initiated by the inspiration of *Strategy: Get Arts*.

Opposite top:  
Jon Schueler with  
Joseph Beuys at the  
Talbot Rice Gallery  
Edinburgh, 1981.  
(Young Wenzel Beuys  
and John Halpern  
also in photograph).

Opposite below:  
Joseph Beuys  
looking at Jon Schueler's  
palette table at the  
Talbot Rice Gallery,  
Edinburgh, 1981.  
Photos © Richard Demarco.  
Demarco Digital Archive.







## SGA's 'Shock of the New':

Art Education, Joseph Beuys, and Jon Schueler

Christian Weikop

1. Christian Weikop, "More Impact than the Venice Biennale": Demarco, Beuys and *Strategy: Get Arts*, *Tate Papers*, no. 31, Spring 2019, <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/31/beuys-demarco-strategy-get-arts>, accessed 19 April 2021.
2. Richard Demarco & Jon Schueler: A Conversation. Taped by Jon Schueler in his Studio, Romasaig, in Mallaig, Inverness-shire, Western Highlands of Scotland, October 1970. Transcript edited by Magda Salvesen. With thanks to the Jon Schueler Estate, [www.jonschueler.com](http://www.jonschueler.com), and the Jon Schueler Archive, for access to unpublished edited transcripts by Magda Salvesen, March 2021.
3. Richard Demarco, *A Unique Partnership: Richard Demarco, Joseph Beuys*, Edinburgh 2016, p. 110.
4. My italics. For the full text of the 'Introductory Note', see materials on this exhibition at the online Smithsonian libraries, <https://library.si.edu/donate/adopt-a-book/seven-exhibitions>, accessed 23 May 2021.
5. See Anna McNay 'Art into Society – Society into Art: Seven German Artists', 9 February 2016, <https://www.studiointernational.com/index.php/art-into-society-seven-german-artists-review-institute-of-contemporary-arts-ica-london>, accessed 19 May 2021.
6. This is a review of an ICA archive exhibition curated by Lucy Bayley and Juliette Desorgues in 2016.
7. Merilyn Smith, 'Joseph Beuys: Life as Drawing', in David Thistlewood (ed.), *Joseph Beuys: Diverging Critiques*, Liverpool 1995, p. 177.
8. Alexander Hamilton in conversation with the author on 12 March 2021.
9. Cordelia Oliver, 'The Glasgow School in the Forties', *The Times*, 12 September 1968.
10. Demarco & Schueler: A Conversation. Transcript edited by Salvesen.
11. Cordelia Oliver, 'Dada for the seventies', *Guardian*, 24 August 1970.
12. The artist Kenneth Dingwall in correspondence with me, 5 May 2021.
13. The *Blaues Dreieck*, inspired by Yves Klein's use of ultramarine, was also installed by Palermo at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels in February 1970. Palermo even inscribed the blue symbol in Alexander Hamilton's copy of the SGA catalogue, an inspiring and generous gesture by the German artist for a young ECA student artist.
14. Richard Demarco & Jon Schueler: A Conversation. Transcript edited by Salvesen.
15. Elizabeth Cumming, *Robin Philipson*, Bristol 2018, p. 103.
16. Ibid.
17. Cordelia Oliver interviewed by Giles Sutherland, 13 May 1999, Glasgow. Transcript available at <http://gilessutherland.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Cordelia-Oliver-pdf-interview-file-web.pdf>, accessed 19 April 2021.
18. Jennifer Gough-Cooper talking about Richard Demarco. Transcript from recording, 17 October 2011. Richard Demarco Archive.
19. Ibid.
20. Copy of full letter, dated 1 September 1970, from artist Jon Schueler to the editor of *The Scotsman* newspaper is available on the Demarco Digital Archive. [https://www.demarco-archive.ac.uk/assets/3646-p1970\\_letter\\_from\\_jon\\_schueler\\_the\\_scotsman\\_ref\\_strategy\\_get](https://www.demarco-archive.ac.uk/assets/3646-p1970_letter_from_jon_schueler_the_scotsman_ref_strategy_get), accessed 19 April 2021.
21. See [https://www.demarco-archive.ac.uk/assets/377-1970\\_beuys\\_celtic\\_kinloch\\_rannoch\\_scottish\\_symphonyp](https://www.demarco-archive.ac.uk/assets/377-1970_beuys_celtic_kinloch_rannoch_scottish_symphonyp)
22. Richard Demarco in correspondence with me, 25 July 2020.
23. Jon Schueler, 'A Letter about the Sky', *It is*, no. 5, Spring 1960, pp. 12-14. Two paintings by Schueler can be found in the University of Edinburgh Art Collection. Schueler's work is also in the collections of the Whitney Museum in New York, the Cleveland Museum of Art, National Gallery of Australia and Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, among many other places.
24. Jack Baur in the brochure for Jon Schueler's exhibition at the Whitney Museum, New York, April-May 1975.
25. Letter cited in Jay Parini, 'Jon Schueler: The Castelli Years', *The New Criterion*, November 2010, pp. 46-47. See <https://www.jonschueler.com/essays.html>, accessed 19 April 2021.
26. Demarco & Schueler: A Conversation. Transcript edited by Salvesen.
27. Ibid.



27. See [https://www.demarcoarchive.ac.uk/assets/91970\\_group\\_including\\_beuys\\_england\\_schueler\\_home\\_john\\_martin\\_edinburgh](https://www.demarcoarchive.ac.uk/assets/91970_group_including_beuys_england_schueler_home_john_martin_edinburgh)
28. B.H. Friedman (ed.), *School of New York: Some Younger Artists*, New York and London 1959, p. 66.
29. For more on Demarco's life and career, see Christian Weikop, 'Crossing Borders, Bridging Histories: Christian Weikop in conversation with Richard Demarco', *Tate Papers*, no. 31, Spring 2019, <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/31/beuys-demarco-interview>, accessed 19 April 2021.
30. Demarco & Schueler: A Conversation. Transcript edited by Salvesen.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Jon Schueler quoted in Whitney Balliett, 'Profiles: City Voices: Jon Schueler and Magda Salvesen', *The New Yorker*, 25 February 1985, p. 38.
34. See Weikop, 'Crossing Borders, Bridging Histories'.
35. Jon Schueler, *The Sound of Sleat: A Painter's Life*, Magda Salvesen and Diane Cousineau (eds.), New York 1999, pp. 195-196.
36. Demarco & Schueler: A Conversation. Transcript edited by Salvesen.
37. Magda Salvesen in correspondence with me, 31 March 2021.
38. Hubertus Butin, 'The Un-Romantic Romanticism of Gerhard Richter', in Keith Hartley (ed.), *The Romantic Spirit of German Art, 1790-1990*, exh. cat., Edinburgh 1994, pp. 461-463.
39. This famous Turner story is retold in Richard Ingleby, 'North: Jon Schueler in Scotland', in Gerald Nordland and Richard Ingleby, *Jon Schueler: To the North*, London and New York, 2002, p. 29.
40. See Georg Jappe, 'The Republic of Individualists', in *Strategy: Get Arts*, exh. cat., Edinburgh, 1970, n.p.
41. Demarco & Schueler: A Conversation. Transcript edited by Salvesen.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Jon Schueler, Talks with Klaus Rinke, September 1970 in Romasaig, Mallaig, Inverness-shire, Scotland. Transcript edited by Magda Salvesen.
47. Conversation between Jon Schueler and Friedhelm and Julia Döhl. This took place in Romasaig, Mallaig, Inverness-shire, September 1970. Transcript edited by Magda Salvesen.
48. Richard Demarco in Weikop, 'Crossing Borders, Bridging Histories'.
49. Jon Schueler to Walter Levin, cited in album sleeve notes for the recording *Friedhelm Döhl Edition Vol.1: Sound of Sleat / Winterreise / Notturmo* (1982), Dreyer Gaido, Münster 2004.
50. Magda Salvesen in correspondence with me, 16 April 2021.
51. Demarco & Schueler: A Conversation. Transcript edited by Salvesen.
52. Cumming, *Robin Philipson*, p. 103.
53. Schueler, *Sound of Sleat*, p. 343.