



Joseph Beuys
Reservoirs of impulse:
drawings, 1950s–1980s

4 September—20 October 2023

Seoul Fort Hill

Thaddaeus Ropac

London Paris Salzburg Seoul

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Reservoirs of impulse, the inaugural exhibition to take place in the ground-floor gallery of the newly-expanded Thaddaeus Ropac Seoul, is the first presentation in South Korea dedicated solely to Joseph Beuys's drawings.

Carving out his place at the forefront of post-war European art, Beuys understood drawing to underpin all aspects of his multifaceted work as a sculptor, pioneering performance artist, theorist, teacher, environmentalist and political activist.

Crucially, he did not conceive of his works on paper as studies or preparatory materials for projects in other mediums. Rather, he experienced the physical act of drawing as the primary means to crystallise his conceptual thinking. As Ann Temkin, art historian and curator at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, writes, 'Beuys has been described by those who knew him as constantly drawing; he drew while travelling, while watching TV, while in private discussion, while in performance. Beuys's attitude towards drawing implied it to be as intrinsic to him as breathing.'

Spanning four decades of Beuys's creative output, from the 1950s to the 1980s, the works on view in Seoul illustrate major themes that recur throughout the artist's oeuvre. Assembling these works from across Beuys's artistic career, the exhibition asserts the function of drawing as a generative domain for the artist's deep thinking about the nature of art. 'My drawings make a kind of reservoir that I can get important impulses from,' said the artist. 'In other words, they're a kind of basic source material that I can draw from again and again... everything is in principle already foreshadowed.'

Thaddaeus Ropac

London Paris Salzburg Seoul



Untitled, 1954

Watercolour on paper, mounted on cardboard with an additional
cardboard strip attached to the lower edge

Sheet 52.5 x 38 cm (20.67 x 14.96 in)

Frame 68 x 52.5 x 3 cm (26.77 x 20.66 x 1.18 in)

(JB 1249)



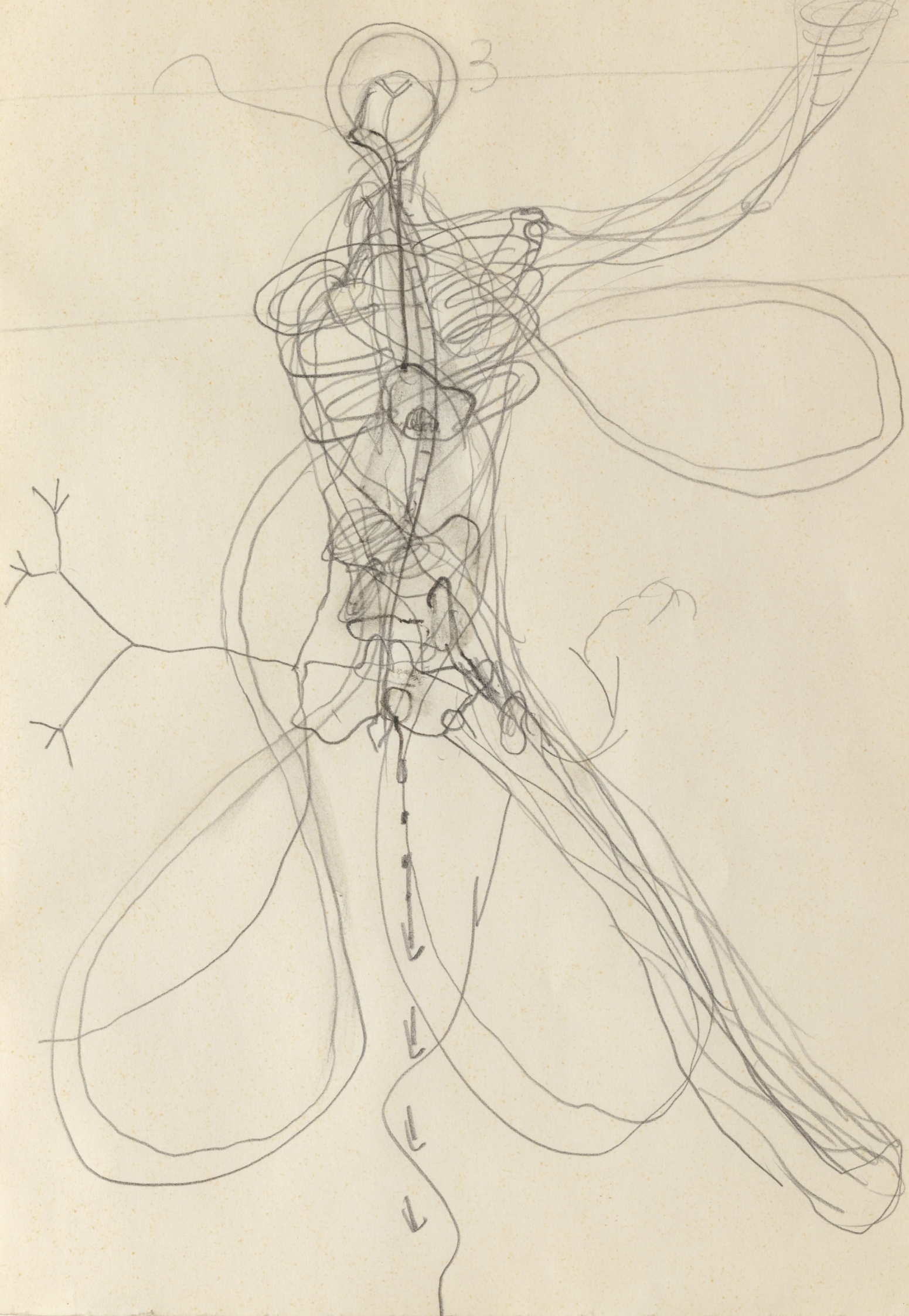
Bewegung Rhythmus, 1962

Pencil on folded sheets of paper in 4 parts (A-D)

Each image 21.7 x 15.2 cm (8.54 x 5.98 in)

Each frame 67.2 x 53.6 x 2.8 cm (26.45 x 21.10 x 1.10 in)

(JB 1059.A-D)





Combining figurative and abstract elements, this watercolour is ambiguous in nature. The facial features of a figure, clearly articulated in pencil, transform into a large, block-shaped form atop his forehead. Arrows within the geometric block suggest the passing of energy between the figure and abstract form, imbuing the work with a dynamism that is matched by the juxtaposition of differently coloured paints. A passage of black watercolour is clearly demarcated from a mauve counterpoint, the two connected only by a stalk-like form that extends from a red, bulbous pod and ends in a bird's foot. The work speaks to the conceptually experimental approach to drawing sustained by Beuys throughout his career.

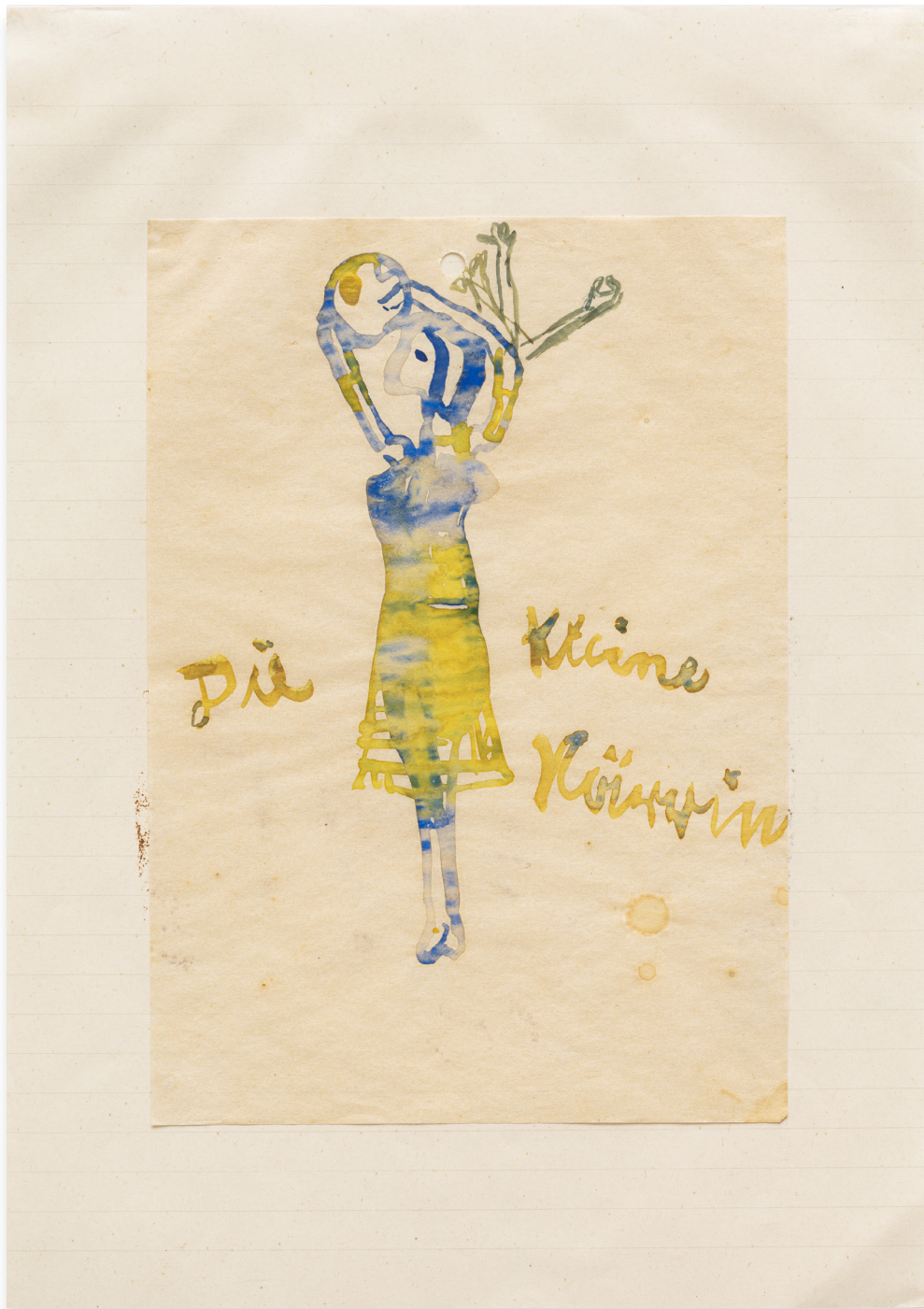
Untitled, undated

Watercolour and pencil on paper

Sheet 29.5 x 42 cm (11.61 x 16.54 in)

Frame 52.5 x 68 x 3 cm (20.66 x 26.77 x 1.18 in)

(JB 1242)



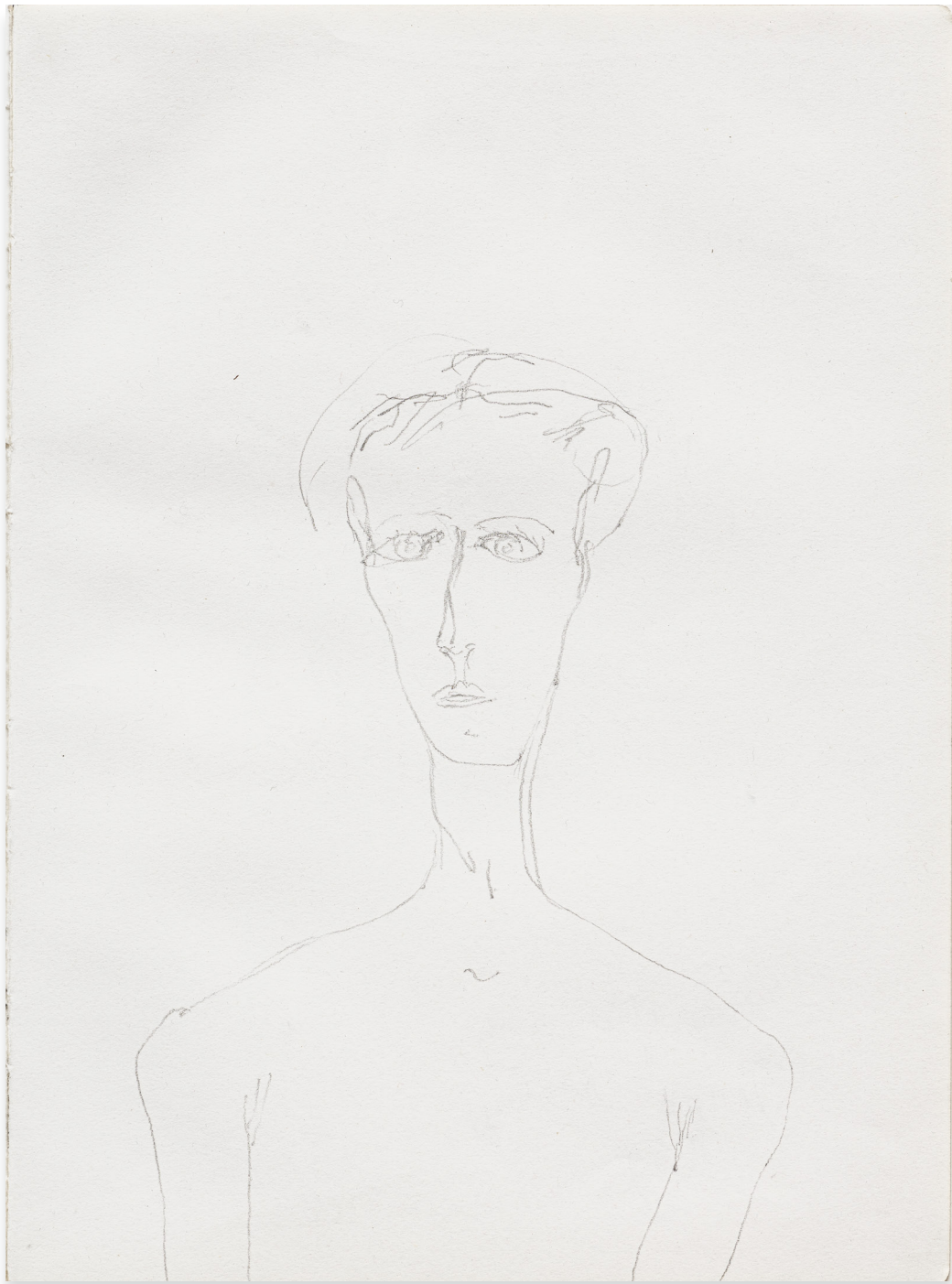
Die kleine Närrin (The Little Fool), 1956

Watercolour on tracing paper, mounted on lined paper

Sheet 29.5 x 21 cm (11.61 x 8.27 in)

Frame 68 x 52.5 x 3 cm (26.77 x 20.67 x 1.18 in)

(JB 1251)



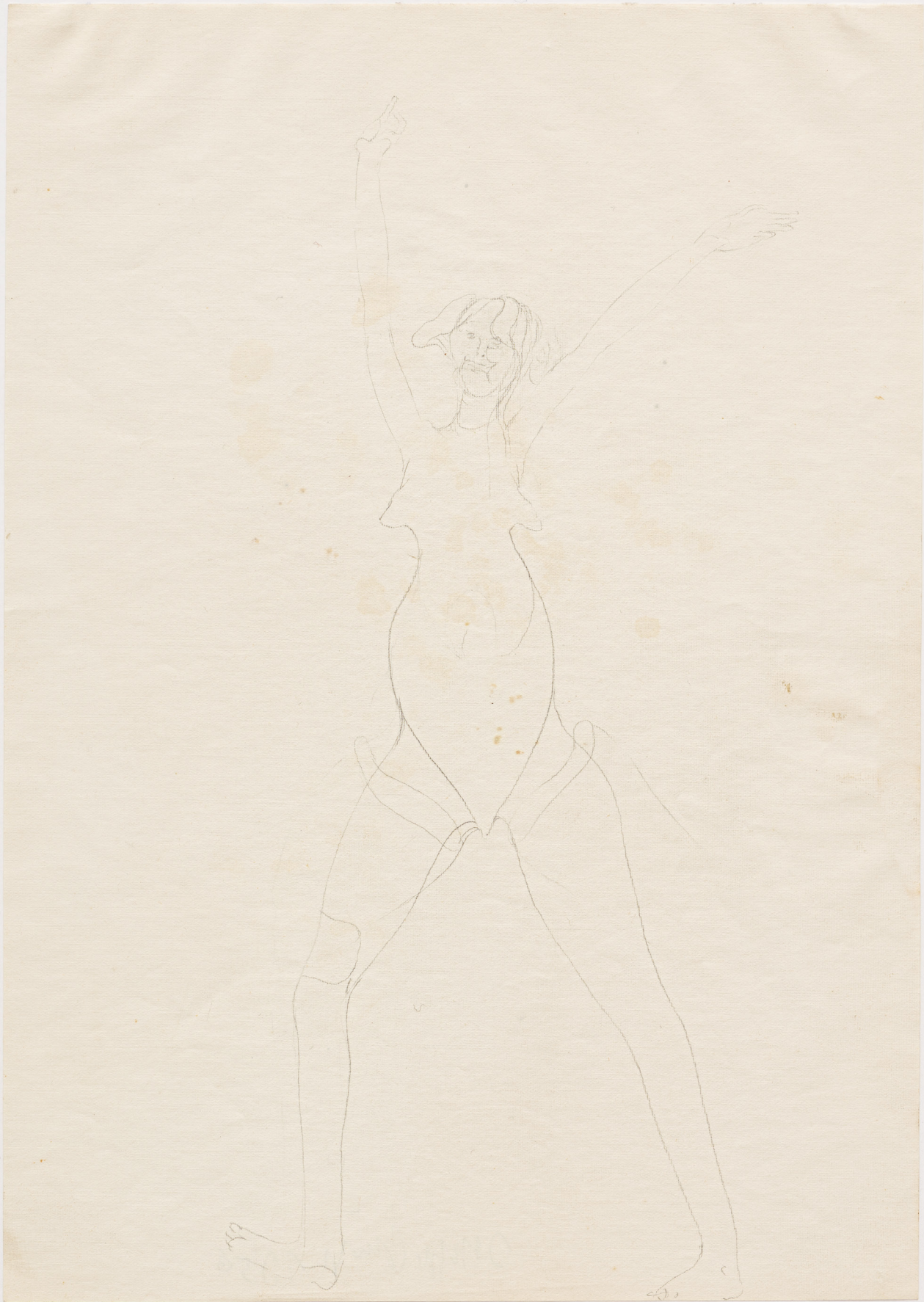
***Engländerin (Englishwoman)*, 1959**

Pencil on paper

Sheet 30 x 21.5 cm (11.81 x 8.46 in)

Frame 68 x 52.5 x 3 cm (26.77 x 20.67 x 1.18 in)

(JB 1265)



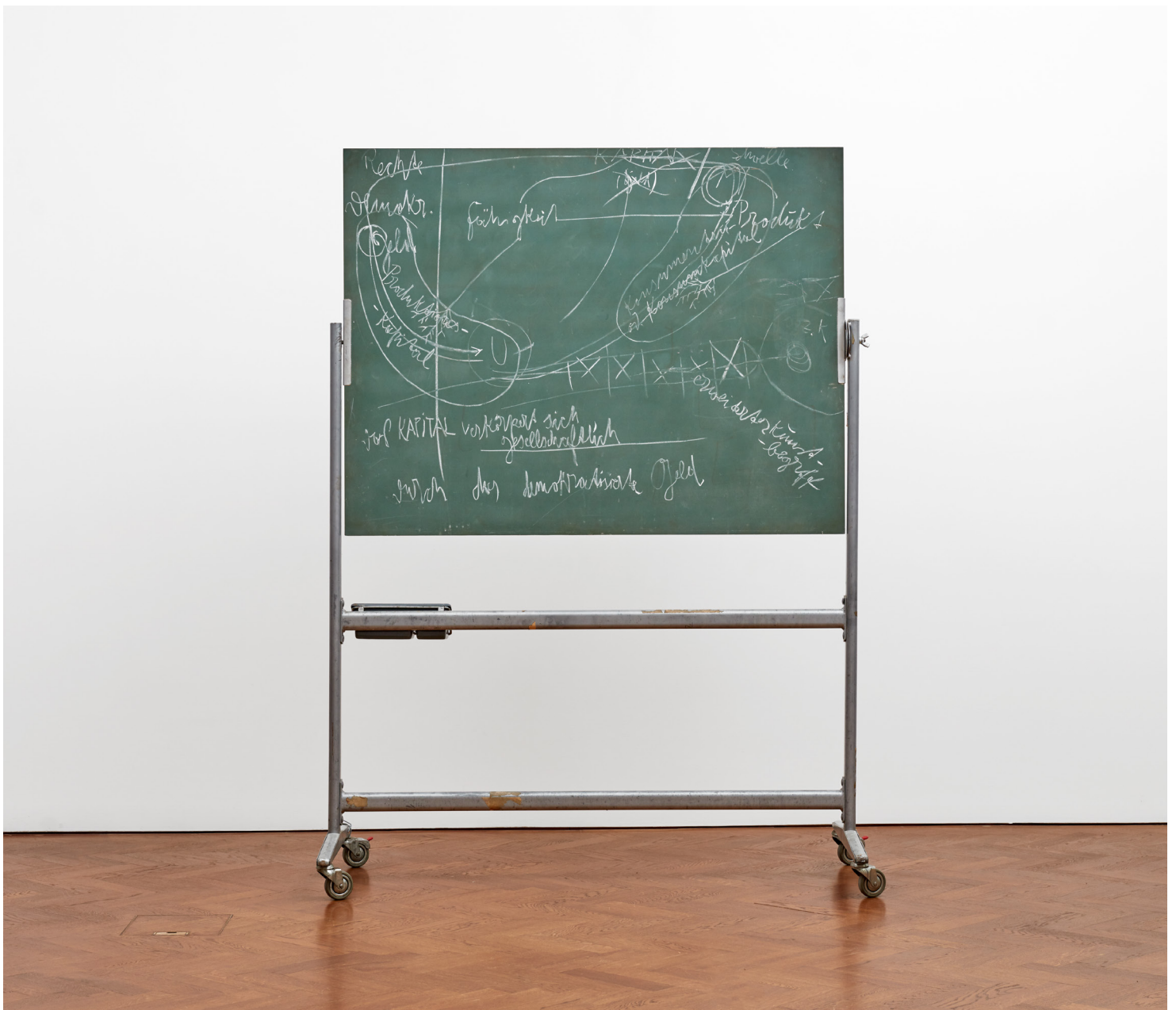
Untitled (Girl), 1956

Pencil on paper

Sheet 29.7 x 21 cm (11.69 x 8.27 in)

Frame 68 x 52.5 x 3 cm (26.77 x 20.67 x 1.18 in)

(JB 1270)



The blackboards included in the exhibition, Beuys sought to extend the spaces in which the act of drawing might take place, as represented by the blackboards. Within the public arena of live lectures, he created a number of these blackboard works as communication tools, believing that graphic systems were able to convey concepts in a mode that transcended the limitations of linguistic expression.

Ökologie und Sozialismus (Ecology and Socialism), 1980

Chalk, blackboard, tray and metal stand

Blackboard 99.7 x 128.9 x 22 cm (39.25 x 50.75 x 0.79 in)

Overall 189.9 x 138.4 x 61 cm (74.76 x 54.49 x 24.02 in)

(JB 1163)

1) Gruppentexte

2) Transparente

3) Umweltzentrum

4) WAF

5) Sommer

6) Musik/Kabarettveranstaltung

7) ~~Frühjahrsfeier~~

8) Atomkraftlager

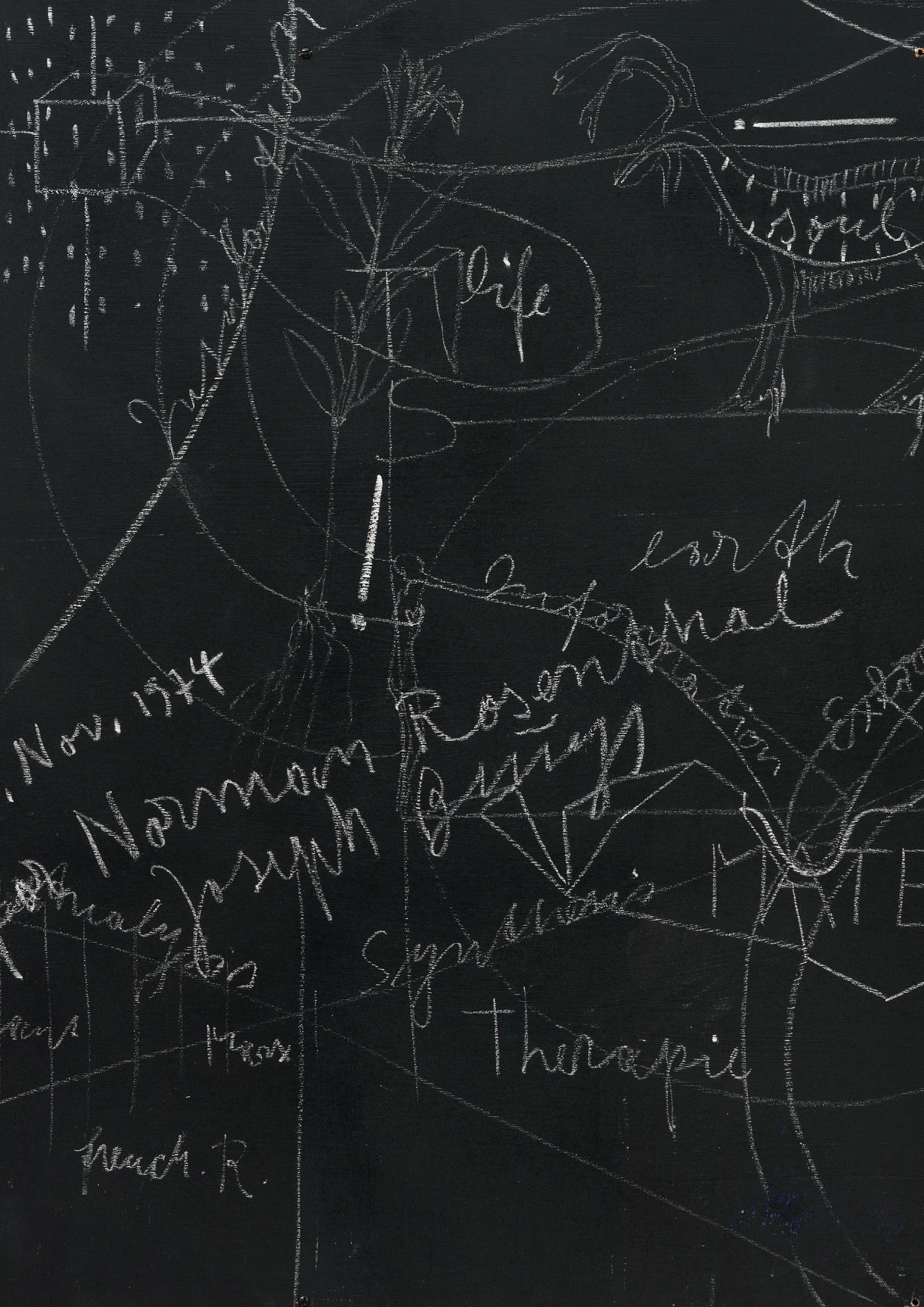
Joseph Blum
Kassel, 11.12.74
1980



C. 80



Installation view, *40 Years of Drawing*,
Thaddaeus Ropac, London, 2023.



Life

earth

Supernatural

Rosen

Synchronicity

Synchronicity

Therapie

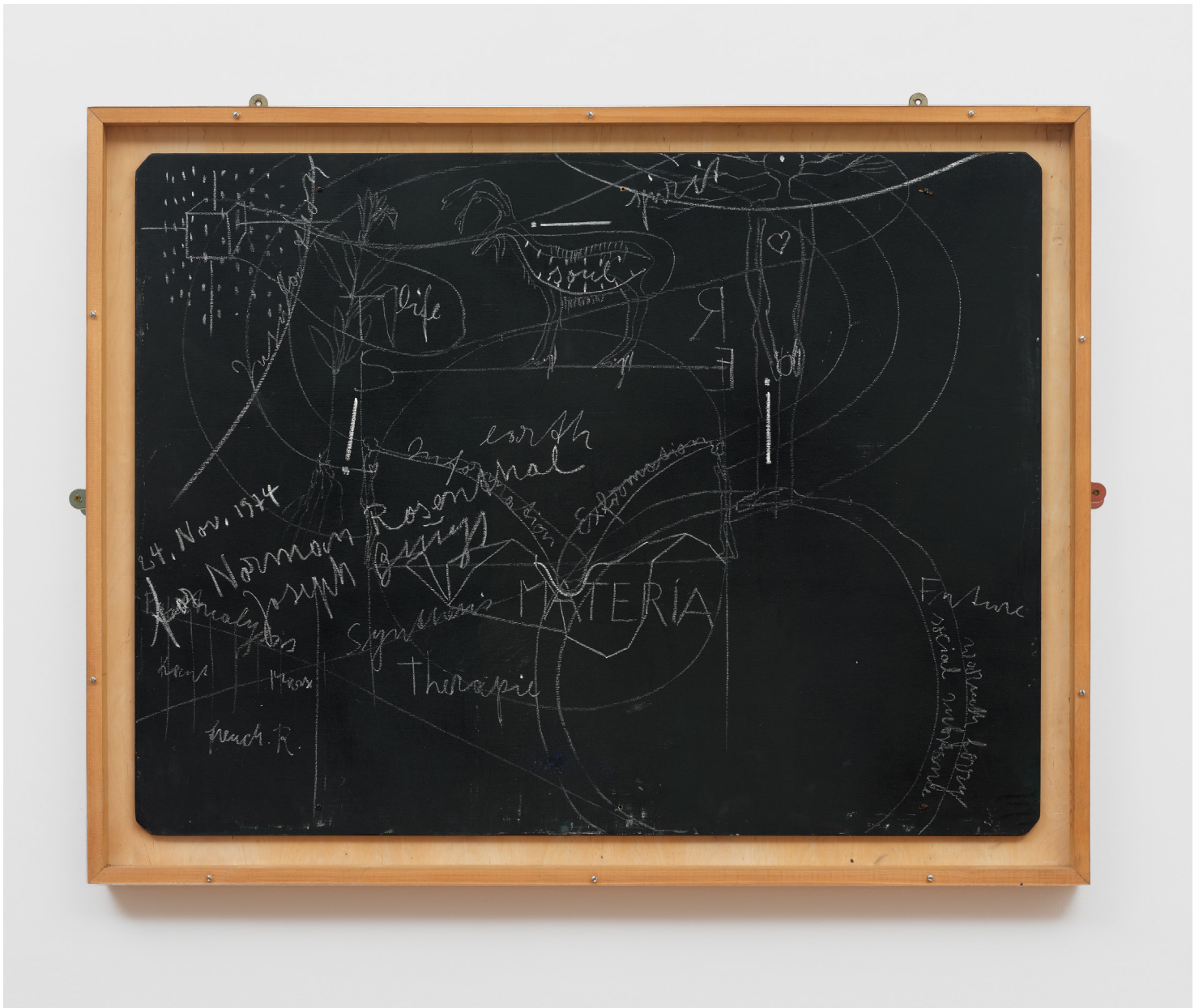
Nov. 1974

Hammam

Actual

R

much R



Untitled, 1974

Chalk on blackboard

Blackboard 89 x 120 cm (35.04 x 47.24 in)

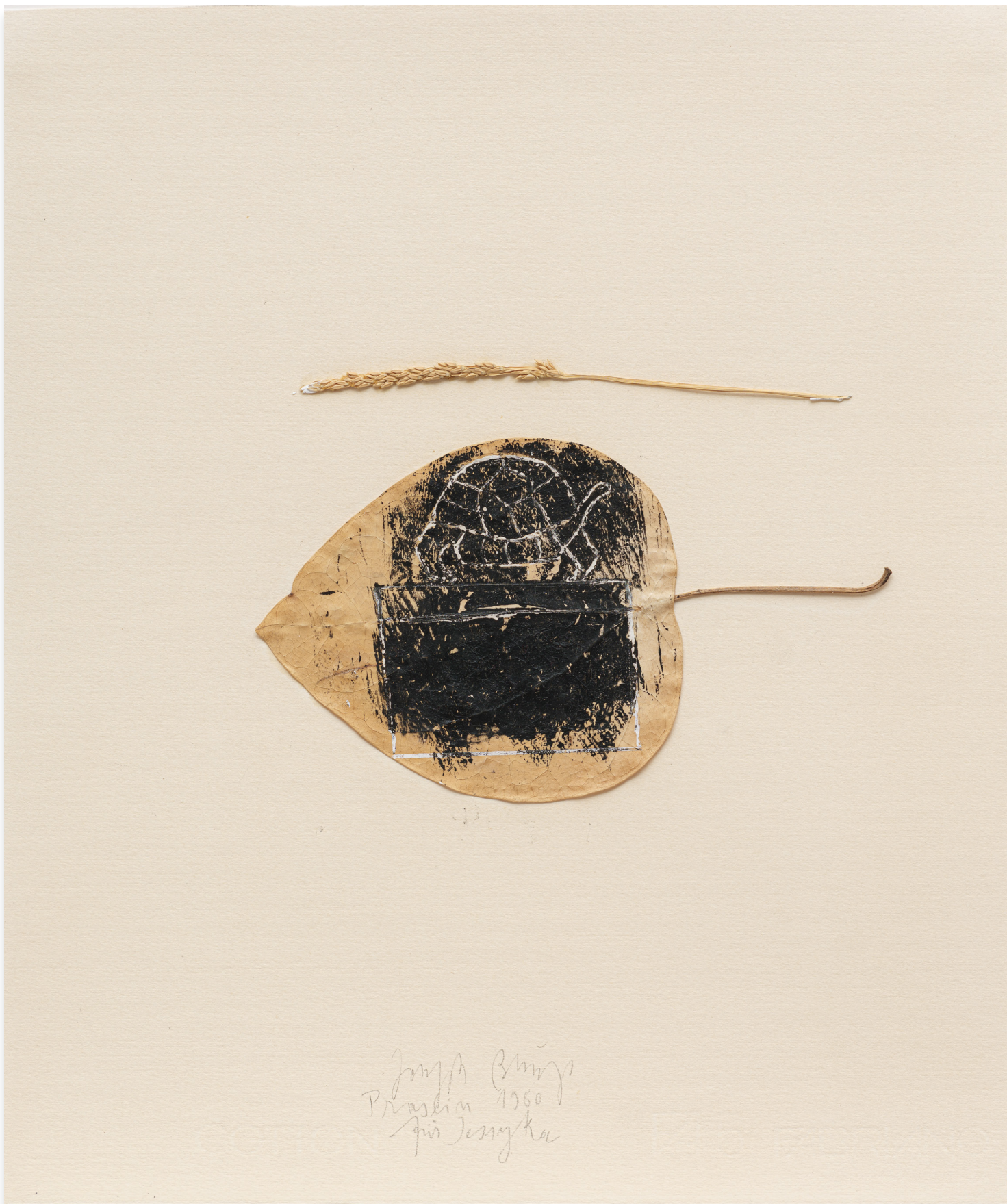
Frame 103.4 x 134.1 x 6 cm (40.71 x 52.8 x 2.36 in)

(JB 1219)



*There are a lot of things that I call drawings,
nevertheless they are mostly – what is the term?
It's not a line, it is a surface, it's a full surface...
I call all those things drawings because I do not
have such a specialized understanding of drawing,
that a drawing mostly exists of line or scribbling or
making shadowy effects with the pencil.*

— Joseph Beuys



Untitled, 1980

Rubbing with oily, black pigment on leaf overworked with white ink,
ear of wheat and pencil on paper

Sheet 39.5 x 33 cm (13.55 x 12.99 in)

Frame 68 x 52.5 x 3 cm (26.77 x 20.67 x 1.18 in)

(JB 1319)



Drawings of animals, plants and landscapes reflect Beuys's lifelong interest in the natural sciences, a passion that almost prompted him to enter a career in medicine. Animals appear as highly coded symbols, referencing Christianity, Germanic folklore and the artist's own travels. Incorporating leaves, pressed flowers and plant-based pigments into his drawings, Beuys physically enacts the interconnectedness he observed between humans and their environments through the very materiality of his work.

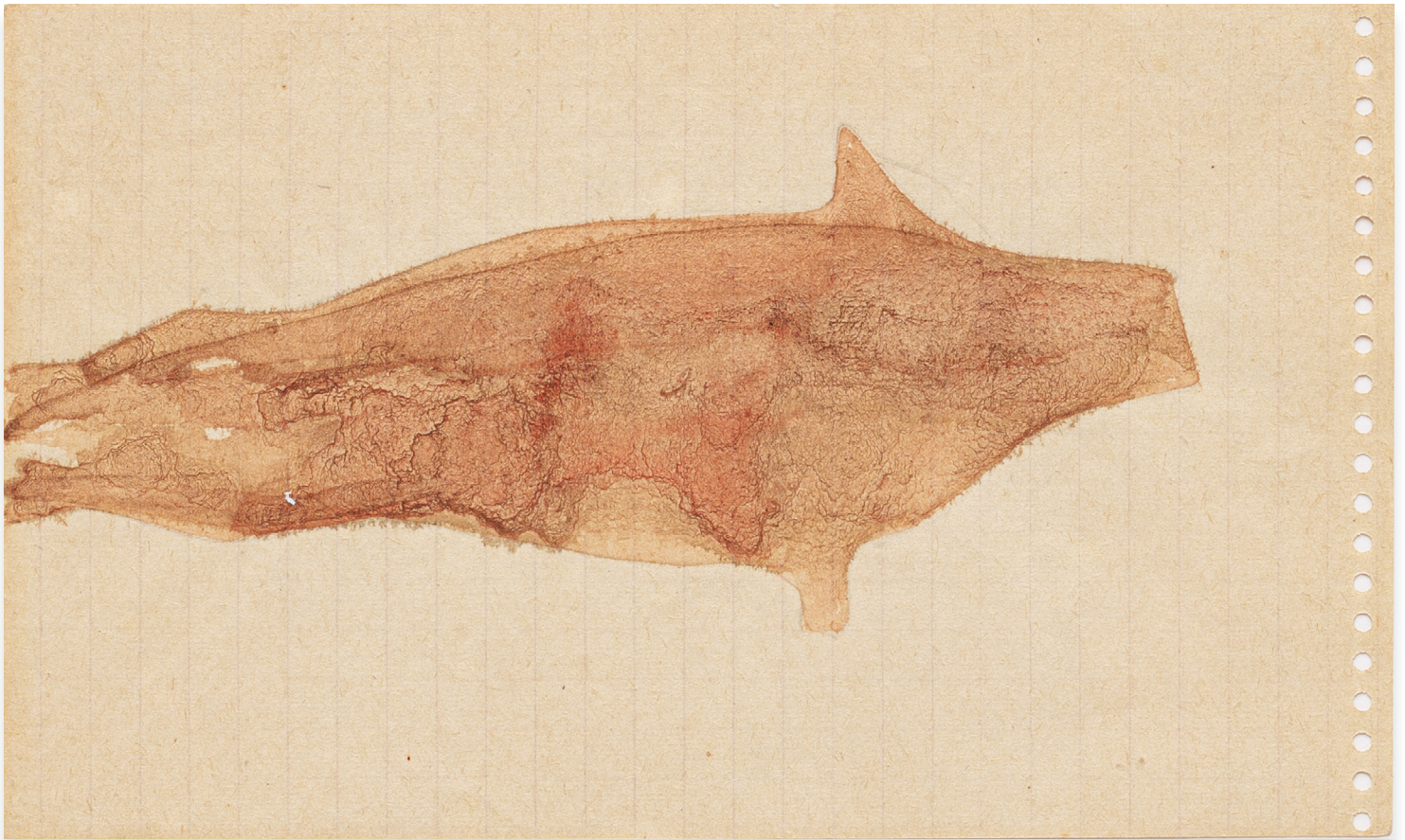
Untitled, undated

Pencil on browned, squared paper from a spiral-bound notepad and tulip tree leaf, both in transparent film, glued on four sides

Work 15.5 x 23.6 cm (6.1 x 9.29 in)

Frame 52.4 x 68 x 3.7 cm (20.63 x 26.77 x 1.46 in)

(JB 1308)



*I ask questions, I put forms of language on paper,
I also put forms of sensibility, intention and idea on
paper, all in order to stimulate thought. And I not only
want to stimulate people, I want to provoke them.*

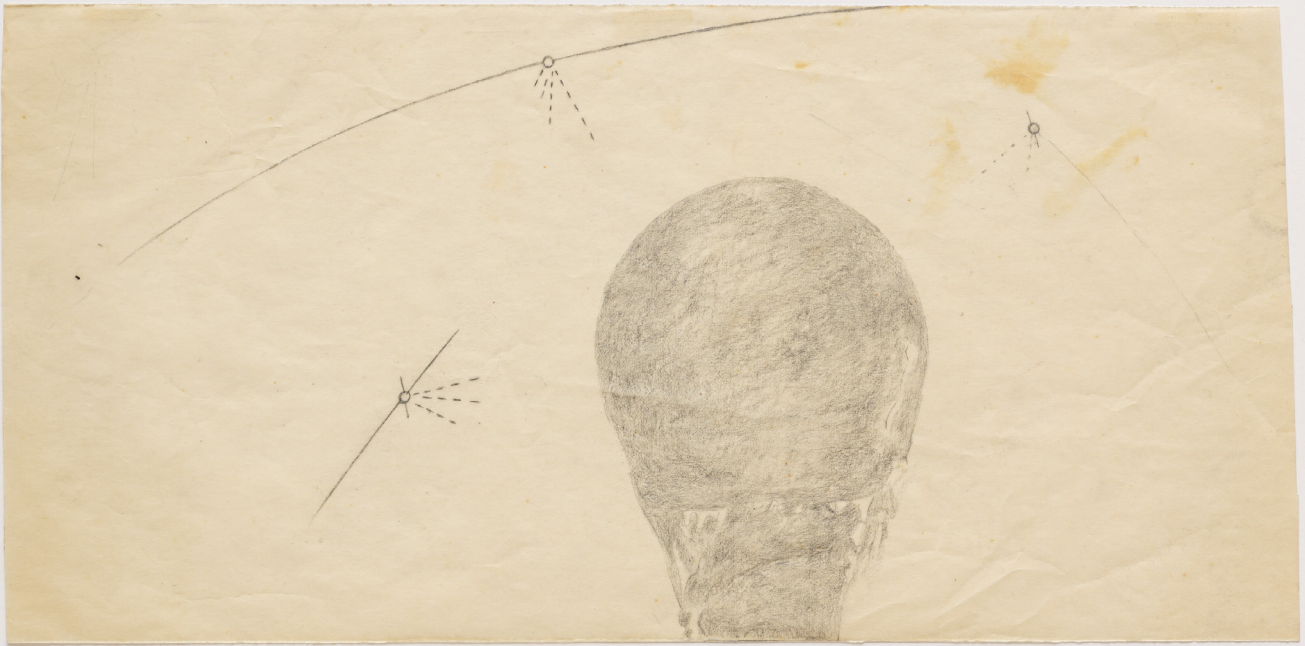
— Joseph Beuys

Untitled (Sea Angel, Seal 2), 1948

Watercolour and pencil on browned,
squared paper from a spiral-bound notepad
Sheet 8.5 x 14 cm (3.35 x 5.51 in)

Frame 68 x 52.5 x 3 cm (26.77 x 20.67 x 1.18 in)

(JB 1293)



This untitled drawing epitomises Beuys's conceptualisation of the celestial landscape as a metaphorical bodily organ, entwining the corporeal with the astrological. Small, circular points exude dotted rays to depict stars arcing through the sky. In turn, a shaded form in the foreground is reminiscent of the back of a head or a skull, as well as a planet or moon.

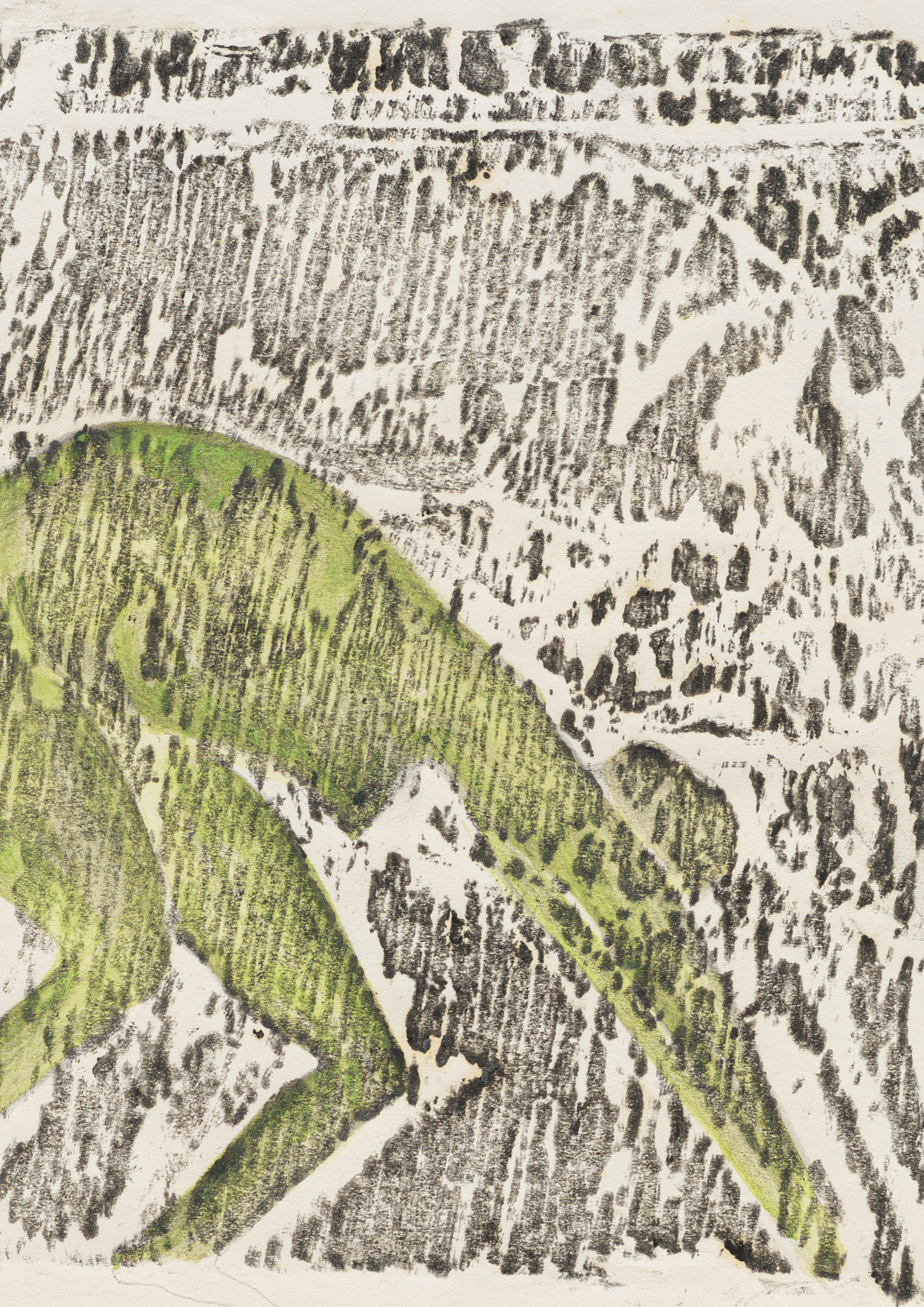
Untitled, undated

Pencil on tracing paper

Sheet 15.5 x 31.5 cm (6.1 x 12.40 in)

Frame 68 x 52.5 x 3 cm (26.77 x 20.66 x 1.18 in)

(JB 1266)





Untitled (Planting a Coconut, 1980) was created during a holiday in the Seychelles. Family tradition tells that Beuys found a piece of wood and turned it into a printing block with a pocket knife. He then rubbed it with a paint mixed from coconut oil and soot, to give it its blackness, which was applied to the paper. A figure is articulated in green watercolour atop the rubbing, its feet and an accompanying ovalar coconut added beneath in pencil. These pencil additions demonstrate how both humans and plant life are intimately connected to the earth.

Untitled (Planting a Coconut), 1980

Woodcut with coconut-oil-based printing ink blackened with soot,
pencil rubbing, pencil additions and green watercolour on paper

Sheet 26.77 x 40.5 cm (11.81 x 15.94 in)

Frame 52.5 x 68.30 x 2.7 cm (20.67 x 26.88 x 1.06 in)

(JB 1241)

Current & upcoming exhibitions



London Ely House

Mandy El-Sayegh
Interiors
1—30 September 2023



Daniel Richter
STUPOR
10 October—1 December 2023



Paris Marais

Han Bing
got heart
2 September—7 October 2023



Irving Penn
The Bath
23 September—30 November 2023



Paris Pantin

Alvaro Barrington
THEY GOT TIME
18 October 2023—27 January 2024

Current & upcoming exhibitions

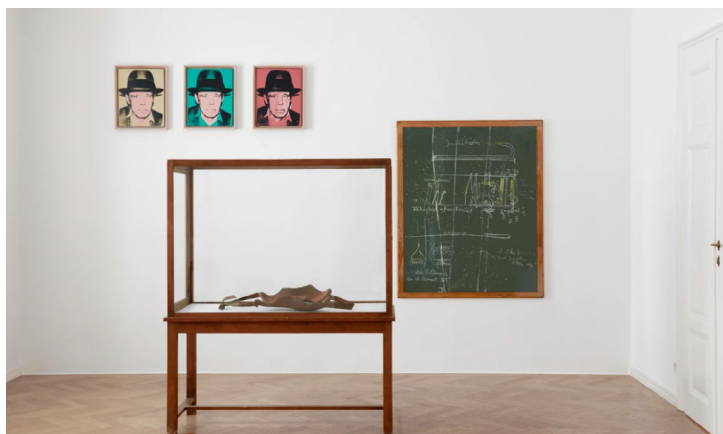


Salzburg Halle

Group show

40 Years

28 July—30 September 2023



Salzburg Villa Kast

Group show

40 Years

28 July—30 September 2023



Richard Deacon

Tread

7 October—23 December 2023



Seoul Fort Hill

Donald Judd

4 September—20 October 2023