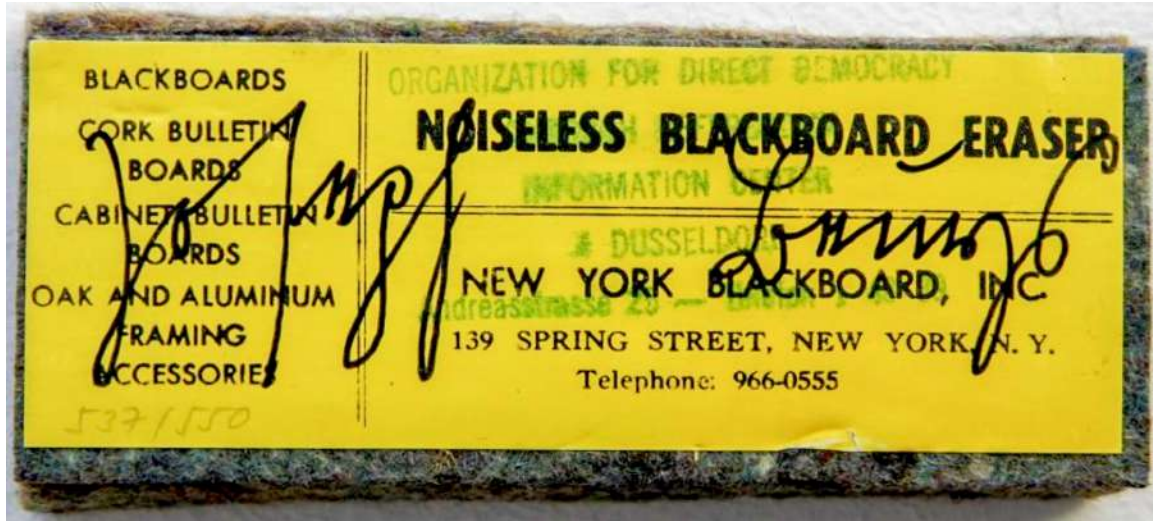


Akim Monet Fine Arts, LLC



Joseph BEUYS (1921 - 1986)

Noiseless Blackboard Eraser

Felt blackboard eraser, stamped, signed and numbered
Label yellow, typography black. Signed in felt pen
in Sütterlin (prewar German) script; numbered in
pencil by another hand; a very few copies
experimentally numbered by stamping.

2 x 5 ¹/₈ x 1 in (5 x 13 x 2,5 cm)

1974

Edition of 550 + 6 a.p. ; Ed. 537/550
Publisher: Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York

Beuys had the idea for the edition at a political lecture he held during his first trip to the United States. When collectors wanted to purchase a blackboard he had drawn and written on, Beuys had it erased with this type of blackboard eraser

PROVENANCE

Heinz Holtmann, Cologne

LITERATURE

Joseph Beuys, The Multiples, A Catalogue Raisonné of multiples and prints 1965-1986 compiled and edited by Jörg Schellmann, 8. Edition (First Full English-Language Edition) 1997, Published by the Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, Mass.; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and Edition Schellmann, Munich-New York at Schirmer/Mosel Verlag. Munich, catalogue No. 101, illustrated p. 132 and catalogue entries p. 132 & 445

EXHIBITED

Disruptive selection, Fall 2019, Popcorn Gallery Akim Monet Fine Arts, Los Angeles
Assisted Readymade, Winter 2022, The Lone Star Gallery Akim Monet Fine Arts, Dallas

OTHER EXAMPLES IN SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Museum of Modern Art, New York - Ed. 385/550
The Broad, Los Angeles
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra - Ed. 306/550
Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh

NOTES

The question of softness is not central to *Noiseless blackboard eraser* 1974—a laminate of wood and felt: it is both hard and soft. Both properties are needed to define the other, and both materials are required to ensure the function of the object as a blackboard eraser.

It is likely that this combination of properties, of soft and hard, resistant and flexible, obdurate and absorbent, attracted Beuys to this commonplace, factory-made object. He seems likely to have chosen the object not because of its softness or for its functional use to wipe chalk, but rather for felt's symbolic properties.

Beuys is known for his use of unconventional art materials, and particularly felt, which has strong symbolic associations for him. In the artist's own philosophy, felt is connected with insulation, protection and healing powers, which he attributed to his experiences during World War II. (He has described how he was rescued from a plane crash by nomadic Tatars who rubbed him with fat and wrapped him in felt to heal his broken body.)

Art, likewise, has the power to restore a broken society, a potent message in postwar Germany. As the prime expression of human creativity, art was a force for change; a positive power to excite, link and mend communities. As such, it was a political and educational tool and Beuys emphasized this by taking on the role of a teacher in his performances.

On his first visit to the United States in 1974, Beuys gave a series of talks on connections between art, science and society. He illustrated these with diagrams on a blackboard. When a collector tried to acquire one of the blackboards, Beuys wiped the diagram away with an eraser like this one.

The anarchist Mikhail Bakunin once noted that 'the passion for destruction is a creative passion'. In the same way that the wood and the felt in the eraser support each other, destruction is allied to/supports creativity.

Michael Desmond
Senior Curator
National Portrait Gallery, Canberra

Artsearch.nga.gov.au. (2019). *Beuys, Joseph | Noiseless blackboard eraser*.
[online] Available at:
<https://nga.gov.au/exhibition/softsculpture/default.cfm?MnuID=3&SubMnuID=2&BioArtistIRN=18600&IRN=43710&ViewID=2>
[Accessed 24 Jul. 2019].

JOSEPH BEUYS

THE MULTIPLES



Joseph Beuys, The Multiples, A Catalogue Raisonné of multiples and prints 1965-1986, cover

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