



The Blackboards, Dublin 1974

Date

1974

Primary Maker

Joseph Beuys

Medium

Chalk on painted wood

Dimensions

89 × 152 cm

Description

Joseph Beuys's altar-like installation on the windowsill of his workspace featured a copy of Ulysses by James Joyce, who was deeply important for Beuys who even added two chapters to Ulysses in the form of drawings in six notebooks. As a result of his interest in Joyce, he attributed a special significance to Ireland and its people and in 1974 Beuys came to Dublin to give a lecture in the context of his visiting exhibition of drawings entitled: The Secret Block for a Secret Person in Ireland. The lecture was delivered in Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane during which Beuys used three blackboards, in triptych form, to draw and notate his ideas. The Dublin bombings had occurred just months before his visit and Beuys offered his lecture and drawings as a form of utopian hope. He championed a pantheon of opposites such as "Myth", "Analysis", "Creativity Art Science", intuition and rational thinking which combined would result in a socially caring warm "sun state", all reconciliations he believed Joyce achieved in Ulysses. Beuys believed that art should not be an exclusive, hermetic system of inward looking ideas but an integration of all systems of understanding that had the power to make the world better and when in Ireland he set up an Irish branch of the Free International University for interdisciplinary research.