



Group 2: The Fat Corner

A. Look at the image and discuss the questions.

Important: You have 4 minutes for this part. Once you're done, go to the next page.



Click [here](#) to see the image of Beuys Artwork.

Alternative: Open the QR-Code:

SCAN ME



1. What do you see on the image?
2. What is Beuys doing in the image?
3. Which materials/objects can you identify?

B. Find out more about the artwork.

Important: You have 5 minutes for this part. Once you're done, go to the next page.

The process: In 1982, Beuys placed 5kg of fat into the top corner of the main building at the art academy in Düsseldorf. There, he let the fat melt, degrade, and turn rancid over time. Until his passing, nobody interfered with the fat corner nor cleaned it up.



The material: Fat was one of Beuys' most frequently used materials. It could be found in many of his artworks, such as *The Chair with Fat*.

Fun fact: After his passing in 1986, a janitor accidentally cleaned up the fat at the art academy. The fat remnants were saved and repurposed, but a big lawsuit forced the state of North Rhine Westphalia to pay 40.000 Deutsche Mark in penalties.



Discuss:

**What may have been the meaning behind the process?
Why do you think Beuys used fat as material in his artworks?**



C. Find out more about the symbolism and meaning behind the artwork.

Important: You have 6 minutes for this part. After this, the group exercise stops.

The history: During World War II, Beuys was part of the German air force. In 1944, he survived a plane crash in Crimea in Eastern Europe.



The myth: For his entire life as an artist, Beuys told the story that he was saved by nomadic Crimean Tartars after his crash. They were said to have saved him by slathering his body in fat and wrapping it afterwards in felt fabric. Today, it is known that the story was not factual but merely a myth.



Beuys' Philosophy: Beuys disliked the elitist atmosphere in the art world and aimed to make art accessible to everyone.



Discuss:

1. Art is always open to interpretation. What do you think the performance was about?
2. How do you feel about this performance? Why?

interested / curious / surprised / unsettled / shocked ...



SOURCES

Beuys, J. (1982). *Fettecke* [Painting found in Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe]. Retrieved September 29, 2021, from <https://zkm.de/en/artwork/fat-corner>

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Schreck, C. (2018, March 30). Art Damaged [Web log post]. Retrieved September 29, 2021, from <https://art-damaged.tumblr.com/post/172412035100/joseph-beuys-fettecke-fat-corner-1982>