



## Pickaxe

documenta-artworks

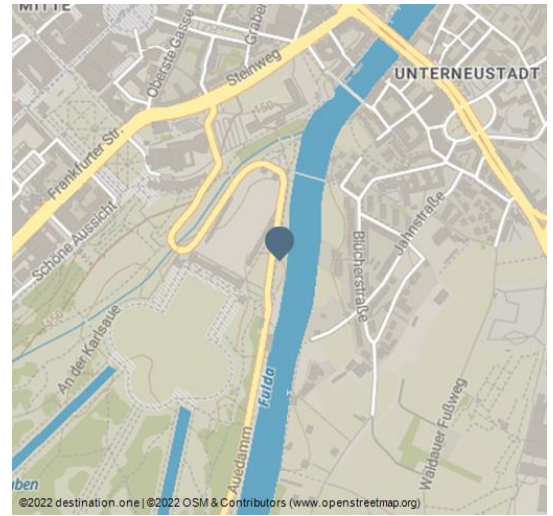


Stadt Kassel; Foto: Nils Klingner

**On the banks of the Fulda, the work of art "Spitzhacke" by Claes Oldenburg, installed for documenta 7, towers imposingly.**

One of Claes Oldenburg's best-known artistic methods is the alienation of everyday objects by enlarging their scale and altering their material. So when the artist discovered a pickaxe at a construction site during the preparations for documenta 7, the tool inspired him to oversize it: a now almost archaic tool of the trade with a closer connection to Kassel's reconstruction period than to the current mechanised world of work. In this ironic-pathetic grand gesture, Pop Art, originally intended to be provocative, becomes narrative.

The sculpture inscribes itself in the city's history and topography with anecdotal elements: The idyllic, seemingly random location on the river marks the point where the extended axis of Wilhelmshöher Allee meets the banks of the Fulda. And so the artist spreads the myth that the monumental tool could have been hurled over the city from the heights of the Bergpark by Hercules, the industrious ancient demigod, instead of his club, and got stuck there, pointing back to himself.



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