



The Leaf of the Ginkgo biloba Photograph taken at the exhibition Goethe. *Verwandlung der Welt*, Bonn, 2019

It was at the exhibition Goethe. *Verwandlung der Welt*, Bonn, 2019, that the image of the *Ginkgo biloba* struck me so deeply.

*“The leaf of this tree, entrusted to my garden from the East, grants those who know it a secret meaning of the finest fruit.*

*If it is a living being that has separated itself,  
if there are two that distinguish one another, then they appear as pairs.  
To answer such a question I have found the right one —  
do you not feel that I am both one and double?”*

(Free rendering after Goethe, *Ginkgo biloba*)

One and double.

Separated and connected.

A small leaf as a signpost — not an explanation, but a question that keeps on resonating.

# One and Double

## *Goethe as a Compass for Living Form*

The world changes not only through human actions, but also through shifting ways of perception. Sometimes that change unfolds quietly, beneath the skin of time, where earth, body and consciousness touch.

What moves me in Goethe is not, first and foremost, his intellectual range, but his way of seeing. For him, art, nature and science do not appear as separate domains, but as different ways of participating in a single living process. Perception does not mean keeping one's distance, but involvement: an encounter in which human being and world shape one another.

That attitude — attentive, loving, without judgement — is not a method. It is, rather, an inner alignment. In Goethe's work the world does not appear as an object, but as movement. Form is never fixed; it is on its way. What we see is a moment within an ongoing transformation.

Colour plays a particular role in this. Not as decoration, but as life force. Colour as a living skin — as if the earth breathes through it. When light flows through pigment, it reveals not only visible nature, but something that animates it: movement, tension, rhythm. In this sense, painting becomes less an image than a resonance — a moving along with what lives.

In the work of artists who have engaged with Goethe's thought, that search appears again and again, each time in a different guise. In Turner, colour becomes a cosmic respiration: destruction and rebirth, darkness and light, fear and hope. His paintings show no events, but forces — movements larger than the human perspective. In Mondrian, the search becomes quieter, more austere: a reduction, a bringing-back of form to its origin, to carriers of an underlying order. And in Twombly, it is as if the hand is trying to follow what takes place just before form appears: lines as traces of a searching, thinking movement.

In *Faust*, these forces are given a voice in the figure of the Earth Spirit. Not as mythological ornament, but as an embodiment of a reality that works through everything. The Earth Spirit speaks where form is still movement, and movement still will. It reminds us that no body ends at its skin — that human being, earth and breath belong to one living coherence.

In *Oeness*, and in the wooden sculpture *Eenling*, I therefore seek not representation, but presence. *Eenling* is an egg-shaped body, carved from ash wood, with fissures running outward from the heart. Not as rupture, but as opening. A place where inside and outside touch — and where something appears that cannot easily be fixed.

*Eenling* forms the heart of my project *Vliedgrange*. Cut from an ash tree, it dried for two years in my studio. On a summer evening, *Eenling* took shape — as an invitation to stillness.

In that seclusion I experienced how form sometimes reveals itself only when connectedness becomes visible. And a question remained, simple and persistent:

What does it mean to truly be part of this ancient earth and its history?

For me, Goethe is not a historical reference point, but a compass. Not because he provides answers, but because he keeps a direction open: a way of seeing in which human being and world do not stand opposed, but bring one another forth. In a time when the earth is often regarded as backdrop or raw material, this attitude reminds us that we are participants — held within a larger, breathing whole.

Perhaps change begins there: not in action alone, but in perception. In the capacity to learn to see again — with open senses, with reverence for what lives, and with the willingness to remain with what is not yet closed.



*Sculpture Oneness - Circumference at centre 150 cm, diameter 47.5 cm, length 90 cm*

More about my project Vliedgrange can be found on my website under Projects.

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