



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

The World Is Changing: Goethe as a Compass

The world changes not only through human actions, but through shifting ways of perception. Sometimes that change unfolds quietly, beneath the skin of time, where earth, body and consciousness touch. Art can make such a shift perceptible — not through explanation, but through attunement. Through attention. Through closeness.

What moves me in Goethe is not his versatility or intellectual range, but his way of seeing. For him, art, nature and science were not separate domains, but different ways of participating in a single living process. Perception did not mean distancing oneself, but involvement: an encounter in which human being and world shape one another.

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

Colour plays a particular role in this. Not as decoration, but as life force. Colour is an organ of the world soul — a living skin through which the earth breathes. When light flows through pigment, it reveals not only visible nature, but also the movement that animates it. In this sense, painting is not representation, but resonance: a moving along with what lives.

This insight resonates in the work of artists who, each in their own way, sought to penetrate the origin of form. In Turner, colour becomes a cosmic respiration: destruction and rebirth, darkness and light, fear and hope. His paintings do not depict events, but forces — movements that exceed the human perspective. In Mondrian, the same search takes the form of reduction: a return of form to its origin, to carriers of an underlying order. And in Twombly, it is as if the hand itself tries to follow what occurs just before form emerges: lines as traces of a thinking, searching movement.

In *Faust*, Goethe gives these forces a voice in the figure of the Earth Spirit. Not as mythological ornament, but as the embodiment of a reality that moves through all things. The Earth Spirit speaks where form is still movement, and movement still will. It reminds us that no body ends at the skin — that human, earth and breath are part of one living coherence.

And then there is that leaf, which continued to resonate in my mind like a small key: the *Ginkgo biloba*.

*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, 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*)

Goethe's words about the one and the double, the separated and the connected, continued to resonate within me. It was as if this leaf became an inner compass: a sign of unity that can divide without losing itself.

In *Oneness*, and in the wooden sculpture *Eenling*, I am not seeking representation, but presence. *Eenling* is an egg-shaped body, carved from wood, with fissures running outward from the heart. Not as rupture, but as opening. As a sign of inner tension and life force at once. The fissure is not damage, but transition — a place where inside and outside touch.

The form does not refer to something else; it is what it shows. Like a seed or a stone, it requires no explanation. The sculpture stands as a concentrated stillness in the landscape: a body that breathes, that holds tension, that carries within it the possibility of transformation. Here, form is not ornament, but breath.



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

Working with natural materials — wood, earth, clay — makes tangible what Goethe meant by formative force: a knowing older than language. Matter carries memory. Each layer, each fibre, each crack tells something of time, pressure and rest. When I work with these materials, I experience form as a process of listening — a moving along with what seeks to appear.

Art, in this sense, is not an addition to the world. It makes visible what has always been present, but is rarely perceived. Not by inventing something new, but by attending to what presents itself. By making space for silence. For resonance.

For me, Goethe is not a historical reference point, but a compass. Not because he provides answers, but because he indicates a direction: towards 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 — embedded within a larger, breathing whole.

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

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