

Mensch im Klang Gottes XVII. Von Goethe's Schwarzbier

ARIAN Bagheri Pour Fallah

Von Goethe's Schwarzbier (2021) is a work of art in the 'modular medium.' (Bagheri Pour Fallah, Cambridge University Press 2022). Split between two modules, one; a physical object, along with a video reproduction linked to on a blockchain, it forms one of the thirty fragments of the **Teilkunstwerk, 'Mensch im Klang Gottes' (2019–21)**, a site-specific artwork by **Arian Bagheri Pour Fallah**, at the Stiftung Künstlerdorf Schöppingen. The fragment thwarts the logic of the 'objet trouvé' (found object) in several key ways. Contrary to the objet, the physical module in 'Von Goethe's Schwarzbier' is not found by the author (artist) but by the audience (reader). In this reconfiguration of the literary/ethnographic form, 'récit,' the primary character of the work leaves the readers fragments that, upon founding, act but as entry points into a much vaster, sprawling mythos. Récit, in this implementation, can be summarized as 'lived literature,' or, literature in lieu of the bookform, whereby the act of interpretation (hermeneutics) becomes more than a passive task, as in participatory and relational art.

Equally, the twofold-module structure questions the practice of site-specific art in an ever-increasing dominance of the informational space, and the subordination of the (gallery/museum) space to the internet and social media, with the premise of boundless access across time and geographies. Completed by Arian while Artist-in-Resident in Schöppingen, on a scholarship awarded by the NRW Stiftung "Natur Heimat Kultur," the Ministry for Culture and Science of the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia, the artwork exists next to former resident, Stefan Sous' '**Flunki Kiel' (Dekonstruktionen 1995–99)**, a categorically different piece designed to deconstruct the 'physical space,' following Tony Cragg, whose formalism is queried in Mensch on two levels. On a theoretical

level, the work's point of departure is decidedly metaphysical, namely, Joseph Beuys' 'Soziale Plastik,' carried out coinciding with Beuys' 100th birthday. As regards artistic practice, the work highlights the rejection of form in favor of irreducible, timeless phenomena such as ethos (character). Form is here endlessly iterable, with the modular structure allowing for destabilization of fixed media, best exemplified in the three pictures included, which range from text-art, land art, to bricolage. Beuys' theory of art, albeit modified, by virtue of modular media, enables traversing from 'society' into 'community,' viewed either in contrast or in parallel with 'composability,' in blockchain culture, which is here expressly liberated from algorithmic culture.

What links, moreover, the metaphysical foundation of the fragment, and the work more broadly, to Goethe, is the existential anthropology of Peter Wust, which locates the 'romantic reaction,' as exemplified by Goethe, as the precursor to the 'total uprooting of man' in the 'modern' epoch. This is made further explicit in the minting of the fragment on a blockchain yet denying its listing and appraisal, in a deliberate refusal, following Wust, of 'the treatment of men as money-getting and money-spending machines.'

In the extent that récits are concerned with time in a timeless (neuter) manner, this grants the **Dortmund U-Tower**, a former brewery, the unique capacity to house the digital (second) entry point. More specifically, the fragment bears on the legend around Goethe's exclusive diet of the Schwarzbier, which informs not only the mythical construction of the broader artwork, with closer links to 'Aus meinem Leben,' but following along the tenet of asceticism. Therefore, as the 'site' of the 'second' module, the U-Tower has the temporal advantage of having housed 'physical' bottles in the past, now reversed, an apparition in their place, with the source objet, permanently in Schöppingen. The timeless approach poses yet another, ultimate question—in a hundred years, where would be 'the work of art' be?