KASPAR LAURENZ
TREE OF DIFFERENT APPLE BLOSSOMS

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KITZBÜHEL

We are accustomed to thinking of art as something permanent. We conserve paintings, preserve sculptures, and seek to maintain their original appearance for future generations. The value of a work of art often seems to lie precisely in its ability to withstand the passage of time.

Yet we often recognise nature as a valuable artistic material only once it is no longer alive. Wood becomes sculpture once a tree has been felled. Plants are pressed, dried, or preserved. What was once alive is transformed into an unchanging object. Even the economic value of a tree is often measured by the price its timber would fetch once felled.

But could a work of art be valuable precisely because it is alive, because it changes, and because it will one day die?

My living sculptures are not finished objects but organisms whose development forms part of the artistic process. They grow, respond to their surroundings, change their form, and thus resist complete control. Unlike a painting, whose creation eventually comes to an end, a living tree remains in a constant state of transformation.

The artist is not so much a creator as a caretaker. He can intervene, shape, prune, and establish the conditions for growth. Yet life itself cannot be fully controlled. The work of art continues to develop independently of its maker.

In Tree of Different Apple Blossoms, this idea is connected to the question of diversity. Different apple varieties grow on a single trunk, each with its own blossoms, fruits, and patterns of growth. None of these varieties must surrender its individual character in order to become part of a greater whole.

In spring, the tree bears a multitude of different blossoms, whose colours and forms come together in a single crown. In autumn, they give rise to fruits that differ in colour, size, and flavour. A single tree can thus produce the diversity that would ordinarily require several trees. Its beauty lies not only in its outward appearance, but also in the variety of what grows upon it.

A democratic society likewise draws its strength from the differences among its members. It does not require everyone to think alike, but rather allows differing convictions to coexist within a shared framework. Such diversity, however, cannot be taken for granted. It must be enabled, protected, and continually renegotiated.

A tree bearing different varieties is no less dependent on care. It requires attention and maintenance. Branches may wither, diseases may spread, and external influences may threaten the entire organism. At times, individual varieties may need to be grafted anew, or the entire tree replaced by a young one. What matters is not preserving a particular tree at any cost, but continuing what it represents. A democratic order, too, must be capable of renewal without abandoning its fundamental principles.

Diversity is the strength of this work of art, but also a source of its vulnerability.

I do not intend the tree to serve as a perfect representation of society. Rather, it offers an opportunity to reflect on how different individuals live together: on belonging and independence, dependence and responsibility, the limits of control, and the need for mutual consideration.

Another aspect of these works concerns the relationship between an artistic idea and its realisation. Their creation is not the exclusive privilege of the artist. Grafting different apple varieties onto a single tree is a centuries-old practice that, in principle, anyone can learn and carry out independently.

Although Andy Warhol fundamentally challenged the myth of the unique original through his serial works, the notion of the uniqueness of the artistic idea persists in parts of contemporary art. Its subsequent realisation may then be regarded as merely repeating a work that has already been created. I am interested, instead, in an understanding of originality that lies not solely in being the first to formulate an idea, but in the individual act of bringing it into being.

The word idea derives from the Greek idéa, which can mean form, shape, or appearance. Yet the final form of a living work of art cannot be determined in advance. It emerges only over an extended period through a person's continuous engagement with nature.

Its realisation therefore requires more than a moment of creative inspiration. It demands a willingness to assume responsibility over decades and to accompany the work as it develops. Each tree will grow under different conditions, take on a different form, and be shaped by the decisions of the person who cares for it.

Repeating the idea does not mean repeating the work.

This long-term process of creation ultimately raises questions about time and impermanence. Someone who plants such a tree may grow old alongside it. As the person ages, the tree also changes its form, increasingly bearing the traces of time.

Yet like the human being, the tree is mortal. It may live for one or two generations. Its death, however, would not necessarily signify the failure of the work, but rather the ultimate consequence of its being alive.

It is precisely in this respect that the tree differs from a traditional understanding of the work of art. While we strive to preserve paintings and sculptures as unchanged as possible for future generations, a living work of art cannot be preserved without also

allowing it to change. Its growth, ageing, and eventual passing are not departures from an original state, but essential parts of the work itself.

As human beings, we seek to preserve memories, objects, and ideas beyond our own lifetimes, precisely because we know that our existence is finite. Yet perhaps the value of a work of art lies not only in its ability to outlive us, but equally in the time we share with it.

The tree is a work of art whose very life becomes the subject of the work.

Must a work of art endure through time in order to be valuable, or can its value lie precisely in being subject to time?