BODE
Galerie

The Nature of Being

Dietrich Klinge - Woo Jong Taek - Rubica von Streng

What does it mean to be human when we understand our existence not as separate from nature, but as part of its continual transformation? This question touches on fundamental ideas about the relationship between humanity and nature that find different forms of expression in philosophy, science, and art. We observe nature, seek to understand its underlying laws, and try to determine our own place within this order. In doing so, we can easily lose sight of the fact that we, too, are subject to the very processes that bring our environment into being and transform it. Emergence and dissolution, constancy and change are not opposites, but mutually dependent states within a continuous cycle.

In *The Nature of Being*, Bode Galerie brings together three artistic practices that explore this relationship from different cultural and formal perspectives. The works of Dietrich Klinge, Woo Jong Taek, and Rubica von Streng offer distinct ways of approaching questions of origin, existence, and transformation.

In the heads created by German sculptor **Dietrich Klinge**, we first encounter the human being as a physical presence. Yet his works elude the conventions of traditional portraiture. Rather than exploring individual identity or cultural affiliation, Klinge pursues the idea of something universally human. His approach to material is central to this pursuit. Taking the natural qualities of wood as his starting point, he develops his forms without wholly subordinating the material's own character to his artistic intent. The heads, subsequently cast in bronze, retain the traces of their making. Nature and human intervention remain equally visible. The human form thus appears not as something detached from nature, but as an expression of how deeply we belong to it.

A different approach to this interconnectedness can be found in *Memory of Origin*, a series by South Korean artist **Woo Jong Taek**. His painting explores the origin of all being and the relationship between human experience and the order of nature. In the powerful gestures of his abstract compositions, the creative process itself becomes a way of experiencing nature. Here, a cyclical understanding of existence can be discerned, one that recalls the East Asian concept of yin and yang.

Opposing forces are understood not as independent states, but as parts of an ever-changing whole. In this context, origin does not denote a moment confined to the past, but a fundamental connection that endures in the present.

With her work on paper *Magma*, **Rubica von Streng** turns our attention to the elemental forces of change in nature. The title refers to a geological process in which matter changes state while new formations emerge. *Magma* thus symbolizes the inseparable connection between dissolution and the emergence of new forms. In the overlapping layers and fluid transitions of her painting, this idea of continual transformation becomes visible. Nature appears not as an immutable given, but as a dynamic system in which natural processes unfold across different timescales, continually giving rise to new forms. Coming into being and passing away do not stand in opposition; they are the conditions of renewal.

What unites these three artistic practices, then, is less a shared depiction of nature than an understanding of existence in which change is a fundamental condition of all being. While Dietrich Klinge inquires into the essence of being human, Woo Jong Taek explores the origin and cyclical order of life. Rubica von Streng extends these reflections to the elemental processes of matter and their temporal dimension.

The Nature of Being invites us to reconsider the presumed separation between humanity and nature: to see them not as two independent entities but as parts of an interconnected whole in which all that exists comes into being, changes, and continues in another form.

Anna Bode