

Nanopublication — Self-Interrogating Form - The Ontological Loop

by Arnaud Quercy · Dasein · 2022



Self-Interrogating Form - The Ontological Loop

I created "Dasein [1]" to embody Heidegger [2]'s definition of Dasein as "that entity which in its Being has this very Being as an issue." The sculpture's looping geometry creates a form that structurally interrogates itself through negative space—an entity that cannot exist without self-reference. The curved void is not absence carved from presence, but the constitutive relationship between form and formlessness, materializing Heidegger's ontological difference: Being is not another being but the ground that makes beings intelligible.

CONTEXT

Heidegger's **Being and Time** (1927) begins with a fundamental question: What does it mean to be? His answer introduces Dasein—literally "being-there"—as the unique entity that must ask this question. Unlike objects that simply exist, Dasein exists **as** questioning its own existence. This self-reflexive structure is not psychological introspection but ontological necessity: human being cannot occur without this built-in relationship to its own being.

I translated this philosophical structure into spatial form through a looping, organic geometry where positive and negative space define each other in reciprocal necessity. The sculpture cannot be comprehended by tracing only the solid wood form or only the void—the meaning emerges in their relationship, their mutual constitution. This

mirrors Heidegger's "ontological difference" (ontologische Differenz): the distinction between beings (entities that exist) and Being itself (the ground that makes existence intelligible). The sculpture is neither the solid nor the void but the **difference** between them, the tension that holds them in relation.

The self-interrogating loop literalizes Dasein's structure: a form that "looks back at itself," that cannot exist without reference to its own existence. Where a simple geometric solid rests in self-identity, this form writhes in self-questioning. The viewer's eye cannot settle on a single surface but must trace the continuous curve that returns to interrogate its own beginning. This enforced circumnavigation makes the phenomenological method sculptural: the thing reveals itself only through the sustained attention that Heidegger calls "letting-be-seen" (Sehenlassen).

The choice of 3D printed wood PLA carries additional ontological weight. The visible layer lines, the honest declaration of additive fabrication, refuse mimicry. This is not wood carved to suggest organic growth—it is synthetic material that honestly presents its own making. In Heideggerian terms, the sculpture resists "fallenness" (Verfallen) into inauthenticity by owning its thrownness into technological production methods.

REFERENCES

- [1] Arnaud Quercy (2022). Dasein — Catalog raisonné. <https://arnaudquercy.art/en/catalogue-raisonne/AQC0337.html>
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