

AQC0332

Nanopublication — Material Paradox as Character Embodiment

by Arnaud Quercy · Ariel - The Spirit · 2022



ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION FIRST PERSON CREATIVE
INTENTION LITERARY TRANSLITERATION HIGH

Material Paradox as Character Embodiment

I embody Shakespeare [4]'s Ariel [1]—an air spirit paradoxically bound to servitude—through a wood-textured sculpture with an enigmatic, simplified face, using the material contradiction of 3D-printed "wood" (plastic simulating organic matter) to parallel the character [2]'s dual nature as both ethereal spirit and material servant.

CONTEXT

Shakespeare's Ariel in **The Tempest** exists as a fundamental paradox: a spirit of air and fire who is nonetheless bound to physical servitude, an invisible shapeshifter who must perform visible acts, a being defined by freedom-seeking who remains chained to obligation. The character embodies contradiction—immense magical power constrained by mortal command, ethereal nature forced into material consequences.

I translate this essential paradox into sculptural form through deliberate material and formal choices. The sculpture uses Wood PLA—a material that is simultaneously "wood" and "not-wood," plastic embedded with wood particles to simulate organic matter without being it. This material duplicity directly parallels Ariel's condition: a spirit forced to inhabit the material realm, powerful yet constrained, natural essence channeled through artificial means.

The form itself presents an enigmatic face reduced to minimal geometric planes—two simple eyes, a suggestion of nose and mouth, carved into an elongated, angular head. This abstraction serves

multiple conceptual functions. First, it captures Ariel's ambiguous, shapeshifting nature; the face is recognizable as human-adjacent yet distinctly otherworldly, neither clearly male nor female, neither fully present nor fully absent. Second, the geometric simplification suggests the act of binding or containment—as if the spirit's fluid, formless essence has been compressed into rigid, defined boundaries, much as Prospero binds Ariel to fixed tasks and fixed form.

The sculptural treatment creates a face that is simultaneously expressive and enigmatic. The simplified features invite projection—viewers may read different emotions or qualities into the minimal forms—echoing how Ariel in the play takes on whatever character is required (sea-nymph, harpy, invisible presence, musical voice). The face is there but not fully revealed, present but withheld, much like the spirit himself.

By rendering this ethereal character in faux-wood plastic—a material that performs "naturalness" through technical artifice—I create a sculptural object that embodies the same contradictions that define Ariel: the immaterial made material, the free made bound, the natural achieved through unnatural means, the enigmatic given just enough form to be recognizable but not enough to be fully known.

REFERENCES

- [1] Arnaud Quercy (2022). Ariel - The Spirit — Catalogue raisonné. <https://arnaudquercy.art/en/catalogue-raisonne/AQC0332.html> <https://arnaudquercy.art/fr/catalogue-raisonne/AQC0332.html>
- [2] "Ariel (The Tempest)." **Wikipedia**. Accessed 2026. [Character description: air spirit bound to serve Prospero]
- [3] "Ariel Character Analysis." **SparkNotes**. [Shapeshifting abilities and paradoxical nature]
- [4] Shakespeare, William. **The Tempest**. ca. 1611. [Ariel character analysis]
- [5] ***Document Information***
- [6] - ***Created:*** February 2026
- [7] - ***Format:*** Nanopublication Claims
- [8] - ***Version:*** 1.0
- [9] - ***Status:*** Final

CHECKSUM (SHA-256)

3a86a22fb9294b11fc7510fa33f303b5ac11a0902f78628f6fa82fe21799c-c0f

Artist	Arnaud Quercy
Date	2022
Collection	Spells and Magic
Certificate	20221231-0002
Asset code	AQC0332
Version	1
Generated	2026-02-22

© 2026 Multimodal Institute

Published by: Art Quam Anima New York LLC — publishing.artquamanima.com

Date of publication: 2026-02-22

Persistent URI: <https://multimodal.institute/en/nanopubs/2026/02/AQC0332-material-paradox-as-character-embodiment.pdf>

Content available under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 License (CC BY-NC 4.0)