

# Nanopublication — Cubist Abstraction as Codex for Supernatural Subjects

by Arnaud Quercy · Noppera - bo - The Mujina of the Akasaka Road · 2021



FORMAL METHODOLOGY FIRST PERSON INTERPRETIVE  
INTENTION SYSTEMATIC FORMAL APPROACH HIGH

## Cubist Abstraction as Codex for Supernatural Subjects

I apply geometric simplification derived from cubist principles to render supernatural entities from Japanese folklore. The [3] faceless noppera [1]-bō becomes a study in essential volumes—ovoid head, simplified torso, extended arms—where the absence of facial features is not a lack but the primary sculptural statement.

### CONTEXT

The "Spells and Magic" collection explores supernatural subjects through systematic formal reduction influenced by early 20th-century cubist approaches to form. Rather than naturalistic depiction, I employ geometric abstraction as a **codex**—a deliberate set of constraints that govern how mythological entities manifest in three-dimensional space.

For the noppera-bō, this codex translates the supernatural subject into intersecting volumes: the head as smooth ovoid, the torso as simplified mass, the arms as extended cylindrical forms. This geometric vocabulary creates visual coherence across the collection while allowing each folkloric entity to maintain its distinctive characteristics. The noppera-bō's essential feature—facelessness—

becomes not an absence to be filled but the sculptural subject itself: a perfectly smooth, featureless surface where human perception expects and demands facial information.

This approach references cubism's analytical phase, where objects were decomposed into geometric essentials and reassembled to reveal underlying structure rather than superficial appearance. However, rather than analyzing visible reality, I apply this methodology to **invisible entities**—yōkai, spirits, supernatural beings that exist in narrative and cultural imagination rather than physical observation.

The faceless head functions sculpturally as both void and presence: it is volumetrically complete (a full form) yet perceptually absent (no features to recognize). This paradox mirrors the noppera-bō's folkloric function as an entity that presents human form while withholding human identity. The smooth surface becomes actively unsettling precisely because it refuses to provide the visual information our face-recognition neural systems evolved to process.

The extended arms suggest gesture—perhaps revelation, perhaps beckoning—without completing narrative action. This formal ambiguity allows the sculpture to exist between states: between human and non-human, between presence and absence, between form and formlessness.

### REFERENCES

- [1] Arnaud Quercy (2021). Noppera - bo - The Mujina of the Akasaka Road — Catalogue raisonné. <https://arnaudquercy.art/en/catalogue-raisonne/AQC0336.html>  
<https://arnaudquercy.art/fr/catalogue-raisonne/AQC0336.html>
- [2] Artwork documentation: AQC0336, "Noppera-bo - The Mujina of the Akasaka Road," 2021. Wood PLA on metal, 20.5×12.0×12.0cm. Collection: Spells and Magic. Private collection, Schmitten, Germany.
- [3] Foster, Michael Dylan. *The Book of Yōkai: Mysterious Creatures of Japanese Folklore*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2015.
- [4] Hearn, Lafcadio. "Mujina." In *Kwaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange Things*\*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904.

### CHECKSUM (SHA-256)

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