

Nanopublication – Material Paradox as Character Embodiment

by Arnaud Quercy · Ariel – The Spirit · 2022



CLAIM 2: 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, shape-shifting 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 – Catalog raisonné. <https://arnaudquercy.art/en/catalogue-raisonne/AQ0332.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

WHERE THIS WORK LIVES

Series: Shakespeare

Collection: Spells and Magic

Technique: 3D Printed Wood PLA

OTHER WORKS IN THIS SERIES

Sir Galahad

Sir John Falstaff

Bertram

Ariel, the spirit

Ariel - The tempest

DOCUMENTED AT

Catalogue Raisonné — Ariel - The Spirit — Ariel - The Spirit — 3D Printed Sculpture — Arnaud Quercy (2022)

Gallery — Ariel - The Spirit

Nanopublication — Ariel - The Spirit — Physical Specifications

Nanopublication — Ariel - The Spirit — Wood Grain Simulation Through Print Orientation

Nanopublication — Ariel - The Spirit — Digital Image Documentation - aqc0332_img_full_1024x1024_webp

THEMATIC ELEMENTS

3D printed wood PLA geometric abstraction

Shakespeare The Tempest Spells and Magic Arnaud Quercy

elongated form compact sculpture

diagonal layer printing contemporary sculpture

EPISTEMIC PROFILE

Claim type	artistic statement
Voice	first person
Epistemic status	creative intention
Methodology	literary transliteration
Certainty	high

CHECKSUM (SHA-256)

3a86a22fb9294b11fc7510fa33f303b5ac11a0902f78628f6fa82fe21799cc0f

Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

Artist	Arnaud Quercy
Date	2022
Collection	Spells and Magic
Certificate	20221231-0002
Asset code	AQC0332
Identifier	NAN-CTX000090
Version	1
Published	2026-02-11

ISSN: [pending – Library of Congress]

© 2026 Multimodal Institute

Published by Art Quam Anima Publishing New York,
an imprint of AQA PUBLISHING LLC

c/o Northwest Registered Agent, 418 Broadway Ste N
Albany, NY 12207, USA
+1 917-764-5470

publishing.artquamanima.com

Last updated: 2026-06-11

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