

CoBrA painter and situationist Asger Jorn invented what has been called football for the 21st century. Or, 3-way football. It proposes an experimental and systematic critique of dialectics: that is of competition, winning and scores. Instead, the 3-way football opens that path for a mixed regime between competing and collaborating, moreover it forces a discussion of the nature of the match in the detail of performance, production and process. [Vimeo](#).

In the above diagram Asger Jorn's design for three-way football is described in some detail. The question that will be discussed here is how to think of a match—in this football-green—if the 3 teams play *each* their game. We have no problems accepting that a regular football-match, on a conventional green, will feature *different* games: it is called *strategy*. But what are the implications of different games competing, if one has 3 instead of 2? Evidently, for each team the defences to cross will be doubled. On the other hand, the number of goals on the pitch are also doubled.

Say, that we are interested in what takes place at the centre of the field—where three games are *joined* into a specific pattern—and the distribution of goals, made by the 3 teams, is what locks a game into that *specific* pattern (with proportions depending on the number of scores by each team in the goals). Is it possible to imagine a kind of match in which the scores are instrumental to an ornamental function? Given that the function of an ornament is as a pattern holder, where the will of the 3 teams do *not only* compete, but also—and at the same time—*combine*? Joinery.

Moreover, could we imagine a series of matches in which the *environment* is variously intercepted? So that in one match we would be attentive to bird-song, the second to insects, the third to a nearby river, and a fourth simply to the wind? You may have heard of Dali who—during the Pyrenean climb—was asked to comment on the *Tour de France* in a radio broadcast: his line of comment was that the bicycle race and some insect were competing for his attention. This is what we would expect from an artist. But would we expect something similar from a physicist?

One nuclear physicist—Professor [Christoffer Gjøtterud](#)—explained that he felt he could sense the progress of a research break-through as the math somehow became more beautiful, economic or elegant. What may be the underlying idea is that the natural pattern *held* by the formula, somehow would reveal itself in the ornamental simplicity and beauty of the math-equation. Rather than mystery-laden curiosities, what may be at cause is the human ability (and occasional success) in relating *efficiently* to a level of reality with phenomena that are typically *beyond* their reach.

That we could arrange games games that *com-pete*—earning the teams and its members distinction—but also *combine*, is a potential we can see not only in 3-way football but also in games, sports or disciplines in which reaching the target is valued, but without an ego: like the Japanese *Kyodo* (archery) where divesting the archer's aim of ego, and reaching/hitting the goal are connected. Analytically: the ornamental *function* is to cross the realm of emptiness around the human ego, creating a gates to what would be otherwise remote; which is the possibility of agency at a *deeper* level, encompassing all/everything.



A football green is constructed for the experimental form of football with 3 goals and 3 teams, outside the Jorn Museum in Silkeborg, Aarhus amt, Denmark. The disorder of the game prompts a new experience of system

This is as old as mountains. A younger, but still old idea is that in the games of three-way football could be include this *agent* intellect ([Aristotle](#)) and the *human* intellect ([Freud](#)), so that their

differences would play out and in that way be joined in the game. In other words, we would have games that produce *history*. But there would also be a third player, of course. Which follows from a combination of the ornamental function and *swarm* psychology of humans: which is gathered in a single intellect called the *image* intellect ([Warburg](#)). Thus, there are now 3 games on the turf.

We are now articulating a level of game where the scores feature the adventure of *contingencies* hallowing the dynamics of the ornamental function proceeding from the *central area* of the green. The joinery between the 3 games is what is manifested by the scores. There is the *human* intellect which, when guided by the ego, becomes entrapped by emptiness (the *desert*). There is the *agent* intellect which, when assessed by the ornamental function, features a promise of liberation (the *garden*). Then there is the *image* intellect moving at the *transindividual* level: illusion vs. fiction.

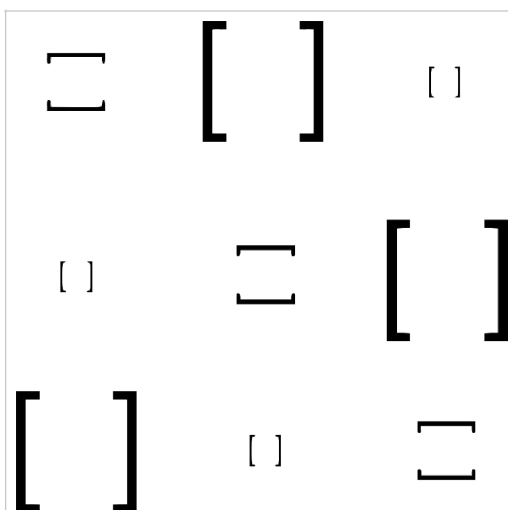
Asger Jorn's 3-way football has by now become a philosophical *parable*: in it are joined meta-physics (*causes*), aesthetics (what can be learned through the *senses*), ethics (the path- & goal-seeking for a *good* life). The 3-way games are always specific in the way that they join, and join parables of the organic whole/system we find in Arthur Schopenhauer's [magnum opus](#), but multiplied. It therefore moves resolutely out of the philosophical project to define a practice of artistic research: in which the propositions feature [precisions](#) on [aesthetics-epistemic operators](#).

Each match will feature a different proposition. What is at stake in the *individual* intelligence, is if the players will be able to give up their ego in order to define *agency* at the level of the match. What is at stake at the level of the *agent* intellect is whether natural diversity/*variety* will be sufficient to sustain it (in this realm). What is at stake for the *image* intellect is whether the players are caught by *illusion* or enabled by *fiction*: illusion defines in a world of its own, and is a reality unto itself; while fiction differs critically from illusion by its internal drive to be *marked* by reality.

The joinery of 3 games in Asger Jorn's football-design, will therefore will not be limited to value propositions in *abstract* relation to the turf in [Silkeborg](#). Rather it will join—as it were—to the will of the place: the *genius loci*, the load of deeds that teases out the potential of what a site/location *can* be. Which is why also that it is relevant in relation to a museum devoted to the life-work of CoBrA painter and situationist Asger Jorn. It is no accident that Asger Jorn's essay on [Triolectics](#), moving beyond dialectics, springs from 3-way football, and also from his reference to Lupasco.

Stéphane Lupasco was a Rumanian/French physicist-philosopher who distinguished between 3 matters, based on his queries in quantum mechanics and its extensions into science, art and philosophy. These are: physical matter, biological matter and psychic matter. These are clearly not the same as the 3 games featuring here. However, the match between them is likely to yield similar results. Or, for instance, 3 visual propositions on the Katanga-Cross: the Congolese installation in Fridericianum at [DOCUMENTA 15](#) last summer (2022). Various matches, different GAMES.

The chart to the left features 3 different games—according to the repertoire—as they compete



The gate matrix above is a selection in which the middle gate defines the diagonal: featuring a 3 way match with different games in the production-mode. Variants are explained in the body-text. An additional variant is: human intelligence, environmental intelligence and perhaps AI.

and/or join in a match: the chart contains a large, a medium and small element. The size does not express the importance of each, but their relation: the chart features a lopsided magic square. That is, each (horizontal) sequence, from left to right, is repeated by a (vertical) consequence: except for the single diagonal where they *align*. The square is presently limited to this view, because it allows us to conceive how the small bracket (small gate) as the *human* intellect, interlocked in struggle with the *agent* intellect (large gate), aligns in the the *image* intellect in diagonal (middle gate). It computes...

This is, as it were, in the relations that are relevant to the *production* of the match. If the view expands to zoom in on alternative samples, it is possible to establish alignments between of the large and small gate alike: featuring the match at the level of *performance* and *process*, respectively. And it is in the [triangle](#) between production, performance and process that we will be able to establish *anthroponomics*: a triolectic critique of economics and a system in which we perhaps can garden *with* AI.