



In [Goya's painting of the Fates](#), there is a 4<sup>th</sup> figure on which it has been speculated that it might be the artist. It spurs a line of query on how human beings engage with devices of their own making, in immersive extensions which—departing from a material query—becomes engaged in form.

The form becomes a migratory project shaping in the process—in search and query through a material struggle—as an **X**-factor emerging from a depth, and is caught in glimpses of weak signals. The formative process is intercepted and visible only in passing moments, as a surge from within.

A surge from within the materials. It raises the topic of what aggregates can be if gardened by humans. What they can be if left to themselves. Two art projects have been selected to discuss this problem: a detail from Jørund Blikstad's PhD in furniture, and Georgiana Dobre's MA in choreography.



The *mereology* of aggregates relates to the *part/whole* problem in the aspect that has to do with the *crowding up of the similar*, either in time or in space. The wood-carved *swirls* in Jørund Blikstad's *Peacock cabinet* therefore is a prime example of an *aggregate*: in a *joint* spatiotemporal sense.

This topic has crystallised in the wake of the C19 lockdown because there are aspects of our behaviour that has changed: the communicative aspect of behaviour that we understand as *ritual* (E. Leach). In the conditions of isolation communication will emerge by extension in time (woodcarving).

That is, by being sustained and iterated. Because spatial aggregates require the co-presence of elements partaking of the same event, to form that complex whole where the *symbol* moves beyond a dead mechanism to *animate* a gathering. Where the numbers make up for repetition in time.

Aggregates therefore provide a prime example of the **X**-factor in wholes, that otherwise will fall apart from the absence of the *animating principle*: the presence/absence of **X** is therefore the presence/absence of *design* (defined as the animating principle of all creative processes [[Giorgio Vasari](#)]).

So, if symbolism—as in [Dan Sperber's](#) take—it a mechanism relying on quotation, focalisation and evocation this is insufficient to define the ritual effectiveness: for a *quotation* to emerge, in ritual symbolism, repetition (or, *iteration*) is absolutely necessary. Quotation is here a term for *self-similarity*.

A recent prime example of self-similarity is Georgiana Dobre's work with a choreographic *assemblage* in which the media of video, speech and sounding provide the ground from which choreographic form is emergent, rather than superimposed on her reflection on material process of waste.

Her work [We go around in circles at night, and are devoured by fire](#) is the result of co-work and a community effort involving a visual artist, dancers, a composer and herself. In this work the triad between *quotation*—starting with waste-processes—*focus* and *search*, end up in a looming 4D tableau.

It features an alternative thesis on material and form, reminding of [Gilbert Simondon's](#) critique of Aristotle's notion of *hylomorphism*: that is, his opposing the idea that form is imposed on matter, and his idea of information resulting from the *cross-pressure* between matter and form.

That is, where information is the *communicative* aspect of *material-* and *formative* processes working together, in conflicting ways that also will drive a lateral displacement in different phases of the work (Dobre) or different works (Blikstad). This can occur *occasionally* in nature, but not always.

Which is why human being may have a largely neglected role as a *gardener of the earth*. That is, to attend the X-factor and work to let it emerge from the depth of *disordered systems*—defined by the said cross-pressure—not as decoration, but responsive to what also can lead to our own undoing.