considering an intimate modern
In a world of diminishing resources and environmental degradation due to excessive plunder of a natural world, ‘reduction’ has come to have special importance. Here we consider two modes of ‘reduction’, minimalism and frugality, examining the values that underpin their two distinct modernities.

To ‘minimize’ is to ‘reduce to a minimum, to estimate or make appear to be of least possible value, or amount or importance’. Though simple enough in definition, ‘minimal’ implies a possible absolute. This also relies on quantification; on measurement, which at least in principle is always approximate. Thus the idea of the ‘minimal’ must marry the contradictory, desire for an ‘absolute determinism’, with a process that is ‘always approximate’. This contradiction only allows for an accurate description of objective reality, which gives rise to a sense of determinism that was commonplace at the founding moments of European modernity.

The term ‘minimalism’ in architecture, as in music and the visual arts, generally refers to a work stripped down to its essentials, devoid of expressive elements and artifice, particularly historical reference, to heighten a gestaltic perception of an object. “Parts bound together in such a way that they create a maximum resistance to perceptual separation”, said Robert Morris of a specific movement in the visual arts that had its roots in an abstract approach of the International Modernism of the 1920’s. Though evolving from developments arising out of a more immediate reaction to the Abstract …