



THE QUARTERLY  
MAGAZINE OF THE  
WORLD PANTHEIST  
MOVEMENT

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ISSUE NUMBER 9 • AUTUMN 2002

# Pantheist art: *the primacy of nature*

There is an intimate connection between Pantheism and human aesthetics. Our sense of nature's overwhelming beauty, and the variety, complexity and interwovenness of that beauty is perhaps what gives us the deepest feeling of awe and wonder at the universe.

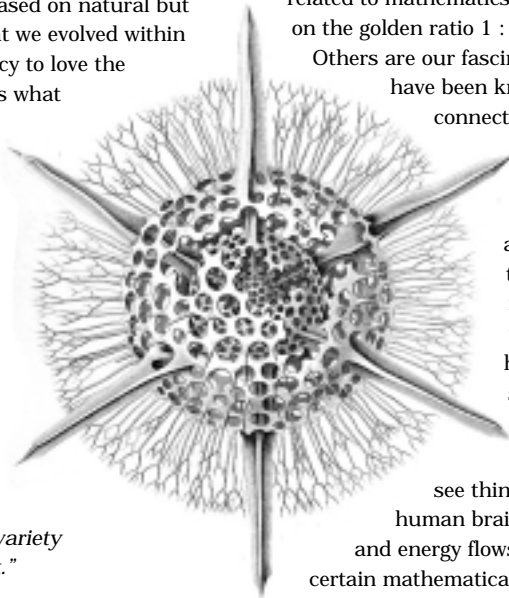
The sight of setting suns and cloud-wreathed mountains may be what inspires most humans who follow even theistic deities to believe in the power and wisdom of their gods. Yet theism also contains within its theology a diversion of attention and feeling away from nature itself, to the supposed invisible creator who lies behind it. Pantheists are more likely to marvel at nature as its own collective creation, more likely to focus intensely on what they see and sense for its own sake, rather than as a reflection of something beyond it.

Naturalistic pantheists with a scientific bent may wonder how such a powerful feeling of affinity can arise within them.

For me, it is a feeling of identity, based on natural but wonderful causes. First of these is that we evolved within nature and we have an inborn tendency to love the matrix from which we emerged. This is what American naturalist E. O. Wilson calls "biophilia," which he defines as "the innately emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms." This feeling gave us an evolutionary advantage in the past, and helps to motivate us to defend nature today. It helps to explain our

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*"From my earliest youth I have been spellbound by the formal beauty of living things. Nature creates in her womb an inexhaustible wealth of wondrous forms, whose beauty and variety outreach by far all human-created art."*  
Ernst Haeckel, *Art Forms in Nature*



love of animals and landscapes, and our desire to surround ourselves with pets and houseplants and gardens.

But our aesthetic fascination with nature goes deeper than this. It extends into the basic forms found in nature: spirals, radials, spheres, honeycombs, crackings, branchings, stripes, waves and turbulent flows. We find these forms repeated in many different animate and inanimate fields, and fractally at many different levels: branching in arteries, trees, rivers and lightning; turbulence in clouds and liquids; cracking in skin and clay and bark; radial forms in sea creatures and stars; spirals in shells and galaxies and whirlpools. This fascination with form could also have a partly evolutionary explanation: our tendency to recognize and love of these patterns would drive us to reproduce them, and give us an impetus to tool-making and art.

There is also an even more abstract level of fascination, related to mathematics. Our attraction to relationships based on the golden ratio 1 : 1.618 (see page 3) is one example.

Others are our fascination with musical harmonies, which have been known since the time of Pythagoras to be connected with simple mathematical ratios.

What are we to make of these enigmatic numerical relationships? Platonists and other theists might argue that these numbers, like others that show up in maths and nature, are ideas in the mind of God, which God used when designing nature. Our souls have access to these numbers on the spiritual plane, and so find them attractive.

Naturalistically-inclined folk would see things very differently. Both nature and the human brain are constructed of physical entities and energy flows, and these combine and relate in certain mathematical relationships according to the

WPM art and photography galleries: <http://community.webshots.com/album/39622611gbwMMH>

Editorial: Paul Harrison

Design and UK production: First Image

US printing and distribution: Blessed Bee Inc.

properties of energy and matter. The fact that we construct mathematics and that maths corresponds to nature - the fact that we find certain mathematical ratios in nature pleasing - these wonders are not an expression of our unity as spirits with an invisible spirit being. They are an expression of our unity and community with the natural world. They are not a sign of our character as primarily spiritual entities, but as physical beings comfortably seated in a physical world.

## Art as a form of science

Pantheists have a special fondness for nature's own creations, and for artists who deal with nature's beauty. Many artists have been primarily concerned with nature. The stress on nature in Chinese and Japanese art reflects the centrality of nature in Taoist and Zen thought. In the case of Western nature artists we can't conclude from a focus on nature that they were pantheists - though we can conclude that nature was

central to their thinking and activity. Whether we know what their religious beliefs were, or not, there are some nature artists like John Constable, Claude Monet, Georgia O'Keefe or Andy Goldsworthy where one feels at least a pantheistic feeling towards nature. Their work reveals a deep obsession with nature, a consistent programme of investigation of nature, pursued with commitment and dedication.

Can there be an explicitly pantheist form of visual art? What would be the character of a pantheist artist? There's no question of orthodoxy here - although most artists adopt one or other dominant approach from their times, all artists are individualists. It's a question more of the source of inspiration and the focus of attention. For the pantheist artist nature is central. Art can never rival nature. Evolution - the continual refinement of living and non-living forms in interaction with each other - produces endless variations and marvels, from the tiny architectural shells of radiolaria and diatoms and the microscopic sculptures of pollen, to the eyes painted on a male peacock's ostentatious tail.

Pantheist artists produce reflections of nature, meditations on nature, variations on nature. At their very best, if they have instinctive access, they can become a byway of evolution, a creator of new forms that spring from the same fountains of creativity that engender natural forms.

Nature for the pantheist artist is not simply nature in the sentimental sense of cute animals and lovely landscapes: it is nature in all its self-created diversity, including nature's raw materials and favoured forms, and the mathematical principles behind them.

For the pantheist, art is another form of exploration and discovery of nature, in some ways similar to science. It may be a discovery of nature as normally perceived, in terms of trees or tigers or birdwing butterflies. This level may be where photography or representational art focus. Nature photography allows nature to paint its own portrait. The photographer merely selects which part of nature to present to the viewer. He or she may also choose to simplify nature,



Artist's Shit (Piero Manzoni); Pebbles (© Paul Harrison)

## Nature finds as art

As the dadaist Marcel Duchamp once declared "Art is whatever the artist says is art." Duchamp went out and purchased a white porcelain urinal, signed it R. Mutt, and transformed it into art, thus proving his thesis.

Art schools, galleries and critics have taken Duchamp's view fully on board. The artist Piero Manzoni took the principle to the extreme in 1961, when he had several tins of his own excrement canned. Labelling them "Artist's Shit" he sold them by weight for the market price of gold on the day of the sale.

We can't all expect critical acclaim for our plumbing supply purchases, excrement or soiled underwear. Implicit in Duchamp's quote is the prior question: who is an artist? In practice the definition applied is: "An artist is whoever is considered an artist by galleries and critics." The primary task of the would-be successful artist is

therefore to break through to recognition by galleries and critics. Once this has been achieved, anything the artist claims to be art and wishes to exhibit or sell may receive serious attention and earn a high price.

It should be possible for pantheist artists to turn this to advantage once they have got past the gatekeepers of the art bazaar. They can roam beaches and forests and deserts, picking up shells, fossils, wave-beaten roots. They can exhibit these as their own "work" simply because they selected them, gain attention for nature's originality, and help to guide art into more wholesome channels.

Every one of us can "create" such nature art for our own home galleries, for ourselves and friends to admire. Most pantheists and other nature lovers have displays of found and purchased items like pebbles, crystals or tree seeds.

# Magic numbers in maths and art

One of the most fascinating illustrations of the link between the mind and the physical world - between human aesthetics and mathematics on the one hand, and nature on the other - is the "golden ratio" of 1 : 1.618. The number 1.618 is known as Phi.



This number was known to the ancients, not of course in decimal form, but as half the square root of five, plus a half. The Parthenon, noted for the beauty of its proportions, is 1.618 times as wide as it is tall on its frontal elevation. Its side elevation is root five times longer than it is tall.

Geometrically, the golden ratio can be obtained by dividing a line into two parts, in such a way that the shorter part is to the longer, as the longer is to the whole: in both cases this ratio is one to Phi.

Mathematically, Phi has almost magical properties, all of which follow logically from the geometrical premise: -

- Phi plus one, or 2.618, is the same as Phi squared.
- Phi minus one, or 0.618, is the same as one divided by Phi.

This smaller number 0.618 is known as phi. Small phi also has strange properties:

- Small phi plus its square, 0.382, add up to one.
- One divided by small phi equals big Phi.
- Small phi divided by big Phi equals the square root of small phi.
- Big Phi divided by small phi equals big Phi squared

It's fun to play around with these circular relationships

and discoveries. But these ratios and numbers are not just mathematical games: they show up in nature too.

The 13th century mathematician Leonardo of Pisa (filius bonacci or son of the Bonacci) pondered how a single pair of rabbits might increase in the course of a year. He assumed that each pair produced one new pair per month, and that rabbits became fertile at age two months. He thus came upon the Fibonacci sequence which bears his nickname. Each successive number in this sequence is the sum of the previous two: so, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144 and so on. As the numbers grow, the ratio of each number to its predecessor gets closer and closer to big Phi - and the ratio to its successor gets closer to small phi.

Fibonacci manifests itself in the growth of plants. Many plants tend to have numbers of petals that correspond to Fibonacci numbers. Michaelmas daisies, for example, have 55 and 89 petals. Some large seed heads have Fibonacci numbers of spirals. On many plants leaves tend to grow in a way that allows most light through to the leaves below, and this results in growth at the rate of 0.618 leaves per turn around the stem.

The Fibonacci ratios also show up in the WPM's symbol, the Nautilus shell. Any point on the Nautilus growth spiral is Phi times further from the centre than the point directly below it - so a full turn is needed before Phi is reached. In certain shells with looser spirals, Phi is reached after only a quarter turn.

during the processing or exposure, by increasing contrast, suppressing detail, focussing on outlines or dominant patterns. Representational art may do the same, and involves perhaps even closer attention to detail, since the artist's pencil or brush strokes have to reproduce the thrust of nature's growth patterns, sometimes in the finest detail of twigs, leaves, limbs or textures.

Pantheist art may be an exploration of the constituent forms of nature that we often miss - the tree's bark, the tiger's markings, the birdwing's iridescent patches. Often a photograph or painting that shows the part rather than the whole can sharpen and renew our perception. It may be a patient and systematic exploration of nature's materials such as clay or marble or the

melted sand that is glass. Ceramics and sculpture often involve the investigation of natural materials and how they behave under human manipulation.

Or it may be an exploration that goes back to the mathematical formulae or creative principles that underlie natural forms, using them to create new phenomena, never seen before, yet in the spirit of nature.

## Art as pantheist practice

Pantheism can be expressed not just through the subject or materials or shapes of art, but even through the simple act of doing art. Here it's important to remember that every one of us can be an artist, at least for ourselves and for our families and friends, if not

professionally for a wider market.

Every one of us can use art as a part of our pantheist practice. Art is a way of focussing our attention very closely on nature's fine detail, on the properties of materials and surfaces, on our own skills and physical limitations in interaction with the materials we use.

Art can also be subtle evangelism: a way of communicating to others the beauty of nature, along with ways of seeing nature afresh, free of the blur of accepted concepts and stereotypes.

Finally art can be homage to nature, a way of expressing one's deep gratitude to nature, of cementing one's connection to nature, and enshrining it in semi-permanent form.

*Paul Harrison*

# Photography as Meditation

I am not a photographer. I am a meditator. My intent when I take a photograph is not to record an image, but a portrait. I have always loved Annie Liebowitz's work. I admire the way she captures what people are about, not just their image. She once did a portrait of soccer star Pelle. The entire image is of his feet. How else do you photograph a man famous for using his feet?

She makes portraits. I try to do the same. I simply make portraits of natural places and landscapes. Why nature? I think perhaps it is simply a matter of sharing. Like some born again zealot, I head out into the woods and find "God" there, and I want everyone else to see. I suppose deep down there is the hope that if I can show the divinity in a tree by a stream, the viewer can trace that divinity back to nature on their own.

I wander about until I find an interesting place, and then I give it my full attention. Tracing each individual line in the mind's eye, studying each shadow, watching the play of light becomes a sort of mantra. You begin to place importance on things that you might not have noticed otherwise.

Sometimes what can be seen with a casual glance, and what can be felt about a place is very different. Sometimes the best illustration of miles of canyon is only a rock in the middle of it. Sometimes the best view of an entire forest is found in one tree. At the risk of slipping into animism, you find the spirit of the place. That is the end goal. An image that gives a feeling of the area, not a view of it.

If you look at one of my photos, and you find some of that awe you might feel gazing at the night sky, or pondering trees that live longer than nations, then it achieved my goal. But is it art? Is it beautiful? Is the Milky Way art? Is a cheetah's stride? Are the finest



*Meditation: Close or continued thought; the turning or revolving of a subject in the mind; serious contemplation; reflection; musing.*

*Trees in snow © Shane Smith*

sculptures made by hands, or wind and water? Perhaps all that we can as humans can claim of our art, is that it is always at best a poor copy of Nature's own.

*Shane Smith*

*Shane Smith's photos can be seen at <http://shentzu.home.mindspring.com/mysticlighta/>*



Ice © Paul Harrison

# *Breaking the cliches*

I have been taking serious photographs for almost thirty years now. I started as a photojournalist, focussing on humans in social contexts, often in poor communities in Britain. As I travelled more and more in less urbanized developing countries, the pictures were more and more of humans in their ecological relations with nature - in agriculture and so on.

Eventually nature took first place. One reason was that, instead of getting bolder at taking photos of people, I became increasingly shy - increasingly aware of how people felt about me taking their photos. In some places people loved it and insisted on posing or smiling straight at the camera, sometimes even dressing up in their finest clothes. But that was not what I wanted as a photojournalist. I would ask them to look away from the camera and get on with what they were doing. This. Gradually I came to feel that they had a right to have their photos taken in the way they wanted. On the other hand I was not

very interested in doing that.

In other places people hated having their photos taken. Sometimes they were sensitive about their poverty; some saw the Western photographer as a condescending imperialist; some had cultural beliefs about the evil eye. In some Islamic countries photographing women was unacceptable. I grew tired of all the explanations and pleadings and intrusions involved in taking photos where people did not initially want me to.

The other reason for the shift was a growing interest in capturing elements of nature. I have always been fascinated by the less obvious aspects of nature - especially by natural form. To see this free of the ways in which people often stereotype nature as picture postcard, it helps to focus on levels that are not the ones we usually notice, on patterns and textures isolated from the objects that are part of - tree bark as fresco; rock as tile. Or forms isolated from the usual reference points - waves without banks

or shores; clouds without horizons. To some extent my photography is engaged in breaking cliches, showing nature in unfamiliar ways without the veil of concepts that humans use to obscure it.

I don't claim credit for creating my photographs. Nature creates. What I do - and what any photographer does - is to select and collect things as they associated at specific moments in time. The photograph freezes what Cartier-Bresson called the "privileged moment." In my book all moments are privileged and will only occur once in all history.

I frame the shot - but the scene takes its own picture in light, engraving itself on film through the photons that ricochet off it. This is often just for my own benefit, but when others see my pictures I hope that they are getting a chance to learn how to see nature's creativity and pattern-making for themselves, so that they can appreciate it directly at the source, without needing a mediator.

*Paul Harrison*

# Sharing in the oratorio of existence

## An interview with Paxdora

*How long have you been making graphics of the kind you do now?  
What started you off?*

I began three years ago by teaching myself how to use MS Paint, discovered on an old computer someone gave me. A friend started sending me some of her photos, beautiful nature scenes which I practised on. The discoveries were endless. My experimentation evolved into a format employing reflections and reflective patterning of natural forms that had always held a mystical power for me ever since I was a tiny kid.

*How do you choose your themes?*

The themes are usually subliminally imbedded within Nature - something magical or evocative that invites my focus. Contemplation of a photo almost always invokes an abstract idea I want to visually realise as an 'alternative' image. After some digital fooling around (this is a kind of meditation for me), the image suddenly *becomes* and I know that was the theme I had intuited and needed to express.

Many of my pieces convey recurring themes, such as, "Nature is Exemplar", and, "Patterns Build Nature." One thing I'd like to emphasize is that none of my images are presented as a perfected realization - I have left things deliberately in a "non-finalized" state, because the reality we call Existence is Ever-Becoming. The caption I wrote for "Heart of the Matter" says it all: "Just can't seem to finish this thing."

*Are all your basic components natural objects - from photographs and so on?*

Yes, always; the objects and forms of Nature contain intrinsic abstract constructs, vital conceptual clues,

within their visual manifestation - a non-verbal kind of information. It is actually another kind of language that is intuited and *recognized* by the innate core of my being. They are like personal chords or thematic melodies that emanate from the creations being visually contemplated. The urge that arises within me is to echo back, adding my own variations, as a celebratory



*Heart of the Matter © Paxdora*

expression of my profound appreciation, a sharing in the 'oratorio' of manifestation, and as a way to show other humans how they might be able to perceive the natural world in new ways that transcend their mundane view.

*How do you decide how to transform these?*

The crucial part of my work is in the choices I make, selecting the parts I want to isolate within the photo for exploration and explosion. This action begins to reveal previously obscured metaphorical content and implicit "clues" about our own unique spirituality and the awesome creative impetus of our divine Cosmos. In some of the selections I want to convey an intrinsically dream-like, other-worldly aspect of terrestrial forms that echoes the phenomena of Universal process in being.

*What would you like the spectator to take away from viewing your work?*

My first hope is that these images would help to kindle that conceptual creativity that is inherent, but usually dormant, within most human minds. My second hope is that they might invoke some deeply latent Pantheist feelings of awe and reverence towards Nature and the Cosmos, and possibly instigate some new spiritual meditation upon the divinity within Natural Creation. For me, this a kind of Pantheist evangelizing, and my contribution toward the formation of a Pantheist memplex based not on verbal doctrine (words) but on imagery stimulating visceral perception.

I would hope that the viewer would become infected with a desire to cultivate her own unique ability to perceive, from as many different perspectives as possible, all the glories that

are and could be manifested within Existence. Just hanging upside-down, as children do, would begin to open up one's alternative windows of perception, and help one to realize that nothing HAS TO be accepted as the only, correct, way of being or having. Any shifting of perspective (changing positions for a different view) or readjustment of one's focus can bring so many other things into our range of observation, which may help us greatly in wanting to change our stale viewpoints - to restore our childlike amazement and wonder about Life and the sheer joy of discovering the myriad facets of Being.

I call my works C.R.O.N.O.graphs - Contrived Reflections Of Natural Objects - because contriving is what we humans really do best. I mean "reflections" to connote meditations, as my work is a very meditative discipline for me.

*For me some of your most striking works show the viewpoint from the interior of something, like a leaf or an acorn.*

This approach intends to show how we can exercise and develop much greater empathy by employing our most powerful and least appreciated attribute, our sapient imagination. When we “make believe” we are something else, as we did when we were children, we virtually become the “other” and begin to see and experience life from that other perspective. My hope is to inspire curiosity enough to make people want to really think about differences instead of ignoring them.

*I am also intrigued by your strange creations that look like things that Nature could have created but didn't get round to it just yet.*

The intrinsic, natural right to exist of any being or entity that is strange, new, or unexpected (anomalies) should be recognized and accepted by humans as an “amen” (so be it). The fear of the unknown often does more to harm us (as well as to the ‘other’) than its actuality, and if we practice confronting the things we fear, one by one, we can begin to learn that they are not as horrible as we had assumed. I think the point I’m trying to make is that the “aliens” we keep searching the heavens for may well be sitting smack dab in front of our eyes, within our tangible everyday environment - and that they have been coexisting with us in symbiotic harmony, with or without our acknowledgment of their existence. Our opinions have nothing to do with their implicit value in the great Process of Universal existence.

*Your titles are very suggestive, how do you arrive at them?*

The captions were developed as ‘backup’ to ensure that the viewer really understands the message should the image alone not strike the subliminal chords of resonance I intend. The words are really a form of over-kill, but some ‘newer people’ on the planet need to have “show & tell” expositions to understand subliminal clues.

*Paxdora's images can be seen at <http://community.webshots.com/user/paxdora>*



Mysterious Island © Oliver Chadwick

# Mysterious Island

“Mysterious Island” was the first of twenty-one drawings that I was asked to produce for a book with the intriguing title, the “Gurdjieff Meditation & Colouring Book”.

Whatever its name and origins, it’s probably the most obviously pantheistic picture I’ve done although, when I drew it, I didn’t even realise that I was a Pantheist. I was able to interpret my brief in a way that connected comfortably with my own deep feelings. Looking at it now, I can recognise themes that have been influential throughout my life, stepping stones on my own path to Pantheism. Greek mythology was an absolute passion of mine when I was very young, and the antics of the Olympians evoked a far more profound “religious” response from me that church attendance ever managed, because they seemed so intrinsically bound up with the beauty, mystery and unpredictability of the natural world. Distant panpipes start to whisper on the breeze in that sun-drenched Arcadia of my imagination and, in a strange subjective process of connection, trigger a sense of absolute wonder and awe that’s the only realistic way any of us have to perceive the

Universe of which we’re each a part.

Space and time are other themes to which I often return. One is easy to depict and the other is much more tricky. The focal point of this picture is the hollow tree trunk. Within it are stars and a spiral galaxy, while from it emerge a curving procession of planets and a stream of acorns. One of the acorns is already growing and, in time, will become another tree to replace the old stump as it decays away and dies.

Nature, in both its tranquil and violent aspects, provides aspects of the background. Waves pound an undefined shore; lightning splits the clouds; ash from a volcano becomes a swirling spiral around a crescent Moon whilst huge pinnacles of flame erupt from the Sun. And, beneath all this mayhem, life goes on - vines ripen and birds dip low over still water, creatures and things live and die. Maybe the island represents subjective experience, apparently isolated but in reality connected to everything.

I suppose that what I wanted most to convey in this picture is a sense of energy, renewal and connection with the mysterious.

*Oliver Chadwick*



# Sculpture: Recreating Nature's Recursiveness

About fifteen years ago I become aware of Chaos Theory and the fractal imagery so often included in books on the subject. My fondness for such shapes stems, I think, from growing up in Minnesota under the canopy of hardwood trees. For at least half the year, their beautiful branches are bare, often highlighted by a layer of newly fallen snow or spectacularly covered in sparkling ice.



moved by images on the screen. At the same time I discovered devices called "stepper motors" which break up rotation into discrete steps. The thought of being able to use a computer to control the movement of real-world objects, not just an array of glowing phosphor dots, was irresistible. My first machine was an Easter-egg coloring robot. One stepper rotated the egg East / West, while the other moved a pen North / South - a simple two axis plotting device.

My early work focused intensely on building Computer Numeric Control machines which move tools under computer guidance by entering numeric co-ordinates in two or three dimensions. These machines enabled me to make artworks infused with algorithmic design - forms which could be expressed by a program or formula. Within a few years, I moved from drawing on eggs to cutting steel plates and tubes. I often chose fractal patterns.

It may seem that rigidly controlled machinery moving various cutting tools in tightly pre-programmed paths could not be more removed from the natural mechanisms responsible for towering oaks overhead. But the longer I study fractal geometry, the more I feel a deep sense of recognition: I've seen this before - oaks, clouds, mountains, ferns, galactic spirals. The link is recursion. Forms in nature are built from recursive processes (eddies within eddies that trail from your canoe paddle), just as fractal images are built from recursive mathematical processes.

In more recent years much of my work has centered around the machines becoming artworks in themselves. In my current position as Artist-In-Residence at the Science Museum of Minnesota, I have the wonderful opportunity to continue exploring motion control as an art medium, while at the same time teaching kids the skills they need to start their own experiments. More information: [www.taomc.com](http://www.taomc.com)

Recommended reading: *The Algorithmic Beauty of Plants*, Prusinkiewicz and Lindenmayer, 1990.

*Bruce Shapiro*

I was deeply influenced by the scientific and philosophical implications of this relatively new field - specifically, that regardless of how closely we measure and study them, dynamic systems are inherently unpredictable. At the heart of this unpredictability, is recursion - the process of taking "output" and feeding it back as "input." The shape of a tree is a good example: if "branch into two stems from one" is the output process, then by feeding the newly formed branches back into this process the familiar tree-form is created. Objects created by recursive processes exhibit fractal geometry - self-similarity across scale. A tree is composed of smaller "trees," which are themselves made up of smaller trees, and so forth.

I spent some time creating fractal images like the Mandelbrot set on my computer monitor. But I never felt truly

Sand spiral machine © Bruce Shapiro  
Bruce's work can be seen at [www.taomc.com](http://www.taomc.com)

## Members on art

### Concern for nature foremost

A Pantheist artist, by definition, would most likely be a 'religious' or spiritual person whose work would be concerned with exploring and expressing the myriad facets of divinity within Nature (or the Cosmos) in a uniquely personal way. The perspectives manifested within the art would express a lot about the artist's feelings: reverence, love, awe, joyous celebration or a meditative exchange

involving the artist's reciprocal echoing of the revered subject.

Pantheist Art can be a "paean," a psalm, a canticle, etc., to the beloved divinity within Nature and All That Is. It can also be a medium for meditation, which may serve to inform, enlighten or inspire other humans to view our "sacred" material world in new, revelatory ways - and possibly help in expanding our scope of human perception and awareness. I see much of

my own work as being a form of intuitive & spiritual 'iconography' of the Cosmic Process. The Mandelbrot Fractals and a great deal of the new Fractal Art that can be found on the Net is also quite 'pantheistic' in this regard.

*Paxdora*

If there is a criterion for art being considered pantheistic, I don't think it would be the religion/philosophy of the creator. Vivaldi was a priest but his Four Seasons might be considered a Pan



# Ceramics: The artist as a force of nature

*Sheila Rudich Rosenthal*



*Cowhide pot © Sheila Rudich*

Being a third generation pantheist, I was raised to wonder about the treasure of all that is natural, and this has greatly influenced me in all my artwork.

I have worked in several media, but none has fascinated me so intensely or for as long as ceramics. Shaping the clay I have always felt a special passion in creating wondrous textures. I use natural materials to make impressions - acorns, leaves, nuts, flowers, rocks, shells, driftwood, anything I find on beaches. My shapes are very organic and usually have a very natural asymmetry.

I often make folds and patterns in my works, often in a chaotic rather than a regular way. It's not easy to reproduce chaos. Humans have a tendency to introduce some obviously designed regularity. I try to let the chaos that's typical of nature come into my hands as I work.

I like to parallel natural processes like the folding and layering of rocks. I love to explore materials, to investigate different glazing and clay effects and to conduct experiments, like a scientist. I never quite know what will come out of the kiln - I am always excited when I open the door, to see how things have turned out, and often they turn out unexpectedly.

The heat inside the kiln ranges up to 2400 degrees F - hotter

than volcanic magma - so through this the artist becomes a force of nature, recreating geological processes. I allow nature to work through me, through my hands. With clay you are forced to go with the forces of nature, especially gravity. I feel I am expressing nature with nature's resources and forces.

I have taught ceramics in schools and studios for over 30 years and find myself always inspired by, and teaching from, a very pantheistic inner place. I have also sold my work over these years. I have felt a deep inner satisfaction in believing that through teaching and selling, I have sparked and enhanced people's awareness of nature. In this way I feel I am expressing my deepest self as a pantheistic artist - and I am spreading the awareness to others. I feel I am subliminally making a politically active statement with my work and teaching, startling people with the beauty of nature, which overrides all cultural and human conflicts that are so widespread today, helping them to recognize natural beauty in other contexts.

We all have it within us to create things. If people could get turned on by creativity, it could greatly rehabilitate them and take away the purpose of or interest in conflict. Love of nature brings out the very best in people. We are all tiny pinpoints on a map that is so expansive and yet so universal to all of us - if we focussed on the beauties that we all enjoy and share it would take away so much of the hatred that is in the world.

work. Hovaness is a Christian but listen to 'Mysterious Mountain', or to 'And God Created Great Whales'.

I think what makes art pantheistic is a concern for humanity's place in nature, for nature. But it's much more than that. Pantheist art shares all or most of the following features:

It sees humans as part of a natural universe that is just as it is, no more, no less. And it sees the natural universe (including humans) as wondrous, interconnected, and numinous. For it, form evolves, and follows function.

Pantheist art is not concerned with

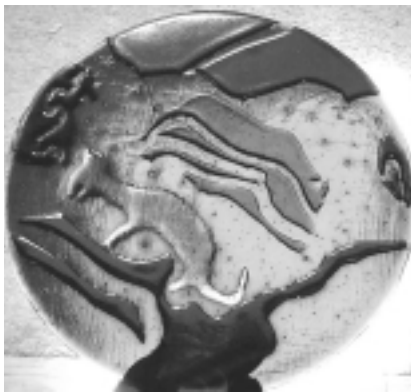
impressing in order to show off virtuosity. Pantheist art needs the degree of technique necessary (but no more than that) to create the piece and make it work aesthetically. Technique for technique's sake gets in the way. The art must appear artless (but not be artless). Raku pottery comes to mind. The technique is transparent. It is there. It must be there, but it must not come between the viewer and the vision. The vision is what counts.

Natural objects can be used to create art. But to do so, they must be selected, placed, composed, utilized with an artist's eye. Else they are just pretty, or

beautiful, or interesting natural objects but not art.

To be art a thing must be seen by the artist to be beautiful (not pretty, necessarily, but beautiful) and used - in a sense isolated and framed - for its beauty. Yet sometimes art is deliberately not beautiful but is deliberately hideous - an anguished cry at beauty lost or destroyed. But the ability to see, and feel must be there. Else the piece will not work. It will be shrill but dull propaganda. The vision must signify.

What exists is celebrated, and the self-evolving complexity of all that exists



*Gaia, glasswork © Walt Mandell*

is revered. This does not mean that pantheistic art portrays everything literally. It is not illustration.

It does not see man or nature as sinful. The body is not shameful to it, nor is sex. It has no use for distinctions of 'higher and lower'. Indeed it finds these laughable. Value is seen not as something God-given, but as meaning 'cherished by someone'. Pantheist art celebrates existence, even when dealing with painful subjects.

It is keenly aware of scale within scale, of forms nested in forms on ever larger or ever diminishing scale, of time periods and their passing, and geological time's immensity. It is aware of natural cycles, the days, the seasons, the weather, the phases of human life, ageing and death. Of fractals and chaos, of order and pattern. Of evolution.

It has no concern with an afterlife. It does not preach. It does not pray. It does not propagandize. It just shows how you belong (even when most alienated) to this wonderful, tragic, comic, beautiful, unbearably precious world. It celebrates life, unity, individuality, diversity, change, and the intricate webs of cause and effect.

In the end it says 'Thou art that'. And offers the consolation 'out of this universe you cannot fall'. And without preaching, holds up a mirror of empathy, perhaps of compassion - 'they too are you'. And sometimes speaks of love. But also of freedom, necessity, chance and death. And ever of change and transformation. Of the great dance that goes on till the end of time.

*Walt Mandell*

There are many artists I feel are great, but for my money, no one will ever create anything more beautiful than the cave art at Lascaux, France. I consider that the closest thing to Pantheist Art. I could never call the artists that created those paintings, primitive. Their knowledge of line, form and color was complete. They captured the essence of the animal.

*Ernie Hopkins*

The most abundant and varied source of Pantheist art is undoubtedly the Taoist tradition, which has influenced Chinese culture for millenia. In my office, I have two Taoist works of art. One is a large contemporary scroll painting that I bought in Taipei some years ago. It shows a mountainous landscape with some small human figures at the base, two friends drinking in a hut besides a torrent and a solitary traveller who is walking along a path that leads into the mountains. The painting invites us to follow the path and explore the distant mist-encircled peaks. The other is a round slab of veined marble set in an elaborate wooden frame. The pattern is suggestive of storm clouds, and evokes the way in which the Tao pervades nature. Linked to this is a distinguished tradition of poetry and calligraphy. Poems are often written on scrolls; the poem and the painting inform but do not exhaust each other. A delightful feature of Chinese art is that it pervades the whole of life. Fabrics and everyday objects such as brush holders and teapots, even slabs of ink, become works of art. Among the works made by human hands, the Chinese also place 'objets trouves', gnarled branches and interesting looking stones, as representatives of the world of nature.

However, while drawn to depictions of nature, Pantheist art is not limited to this. Pantheism embraces a wide range of values which may be represented by Pantheist artists, realistically or abstractly, as their muse leads them. For example the exploration of human nature is a topic which is of great interest to Pantheists and inevitably receives its expression in art.

*Tor Myrvang*

I make no important distinction between human and non-human nature, so I consider art about man isolated from nature, or trapped in human technology, to be just as pantheistic as any landscape painting. Even religious iconography - of gods and goddesses, saints, etc - is a portrayal of the human imagination, and since the imagination is also part of Nature, I consider all artwork - even supernatural religious artwork - to be pantheistic, depending on the eye of the observer. Still, it might be appropriate to encourage pantheist artists to explore the artistic potential of non-human nature more fully, to balance the dominance of art exploring human nature. Or better yet, to encourage depiction of humans interacting with non-human nature in a holistic way. The artwork could be composed in such a way that humans do not dominate the scene by size or emphasis. But ultimately, it should be remembered that artwork is a human enterprise, and human nature is naturally of primary concern to human artists. Elephant artists, now, that's a different matter.

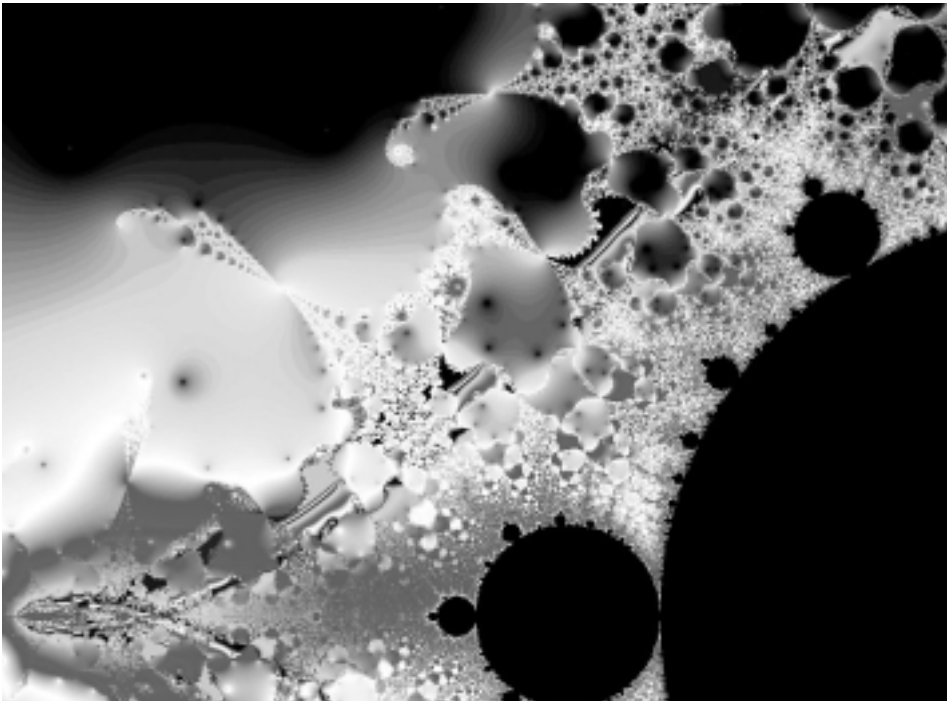
*Brer Davananda*

If to call an approach to visual art a 'pantheist approach' means approaching the subject matter in a way that honours the Universe and all within it, then I guess that could be called a pantheist approach. But throughout the ages, there have been artists of all disciplines and beliefs who have taken Nature (and all that that word implies) as the subject of their art. So, no, I don't think there can be a 'specifically pantheist' approach to visual art, if by that one means that the pantheist approach is recognisable to the viewer of the artwork. Of course, a pantheist artist would naturally, or presumably, have a pantheist approach to his/her work. But that would be a private matter, not something that could necessarily be determined from the finished artwork by anyone other than the artist.

*Sue Williams*

## Nature as art

Last Saturday my children (two boys aged nine and ten) went to Peach Mountain observatory with their father.



It's away from city lights, out in the woods somewhere - I've never been. Halfway through their time there, the Northern Lights began. Both of them were completely overwhelmed by this experience - my elder son lay on his back looking at the sky and refused to move or speak. (He's hyperactive, so this is big news.) My younger son said: 'It's like art, but not art. Art made by nature.'

*Joanna Hastings*

I cannot believe that anyone could look at the veins in a leaf, or drops of water, or feathers on a bird, and not see the Art in it.

*Linda Kerby*

Nonlinear mathematics and fractal geometry are areas where nature's order and beauty can appear divine. (The Mandelbrot set has been dubbed the "thumbprint of God".) If I have panentheistic leanings, they are due to this mathematical precision within the universe (or multiverse as the case may be.) The fractal concept has helped me gain more precise understanding of what resonates for me personally within nature, unifying things like self-similarity, geometric precision, and complex detail on multiple scales. A book I've enjoyed is *The Loom of God: Mathematical Tapestries at the edge of*

time. (Clifford A. Pickover.) It is a sort of bridging between math and theology. A more general introduction can be found in: *Fractals: The Patterns of Chaos: A New Aesthetic of Art, Science, and Nature* (James Briggs). To explore and create fractal images a great site is: [www.fractalarts.com/ASF/index.html](http://www.fractalarts.com/ASF/index.html)

*Katherine Peil*

I had a friend who insisted that every photo he took have at least some small noticeable encroachment of man in it. He even went so far as to go and find litter, and move it into his image if the scene he found was unspoiled. He said he did it to reflect reality, because in truth we have touched everything. To Me the simple fact that art has been made implies man's hand in the matter. How can we say any work of art is natural. Maybe snowflakes?

*Shane Turner*

### Can we deduce taste from pantheism?

I see little difference between moral judgements and aesthetic judgements regarding whether one can derive an "ought" statement from an "is" statement. In my opinion, moral and aesthetic statements are subjective statements of taste; they are not

statements of fact. Moreover, agreeing with Hume, I hold that these judgements can never be derived from statements of fact.

According to evolutionary ethics, evolutionary forces have shaped human tastes regarding what is good and bad. I agree with this, but nevertheless, this does not justify the derivation of an ought from an is. It merely explains what in fact we do have positive and negative tastes for.

I think exactly the same thing can be said for aesthetic tastes. Evolutionary forces have shaped what we consider beautiful. We can determine what we in fact think is beautiful from this evolutionary perspective, but

we cannot derive what we ought to think is beautiful.

*Todd Washington*

One approach for ethics and aesthetics is to ask "what ought we do (or deem beautiful), given what we are". I think another approach worth taking is to ask "what do we want our actions (or art) to say about us". The latter approach holds that our morality and aesthetics define us. What is the self- image we want to have and how do we promote that self-image by our actions? As individuals, "our actions, our ideas, and memories of us live on, according to what we do in our lives".

We leave a remembrance of us in the memories of those who love us and live after we are gone. As a species, we can look to noone else for validation and appreciation - we are the only conscious species on this planet. We are answerable to noone but ourselves. This is a more selfish motivation than wanting to leave a legacy for our children. In the end, it is what we want to see in the mirror, even more than what we want to bequeath to our children, that i think will be the most potent guide of our actions.

*Dennis Virtudazo*

# Great Art and Nature



Cloud study, Hampstead Heath

## Truth only will last

*John Constable 1776-1837*

It appears to me that pictures have been over-valued; held up by a blind admiration as ideal things, and almost as standards by which nature is to be judged rather than the reverse; and this false estimate has been sanctioned by the extravagant epithets that have been applied to painters, as 'the divine', 'the inspired', and so forth. Yet, in reality, what are the most sublime productions of the pencil but selections of some of the forms of nature, and copies of a few of her evanescent effects; and this is the result, not of inspiration, but of long and patient study, under the direction of much good sense.

It was said by Sir Thomas Lawrence, that 'we can never hope to compete with nature in the beauty and delicacy of her separate forms or colours, - our only chance lies in selection and combination.' Nothing can be more true, - and it may be added, that selection and combination are learned from nature herself, who constantly presents us with compositions of her own, far more beautiful than the happiest arranged by human skill. Painting is a science, and should be pursued as an inquiry into the laws of nature. Why, then, should not landscape painting be considered as a branch of natural philosophy, of which pictures are but the experiments?

*From his Lecture 4, 16 June 1836*

## In love with light itself

*Claude Monet 1840-1926*

Monet is the example of total dedication to capturing the fleeting changes of

nature. He would work for hours and days to capture the quintessence of light and colour, the lensed oscillation of a lily reflection, the tawny hue of evening light on a cathedral façade, or the rich deep orange-yellow of a sunset mirrored in a pond. Much of his work was done in the field, on the Normandy coast, on the Seine, in the forests around Paris.

Yet, paradoxically some of his best known series paintings involved quite artificial procedures, precisely because art took time while nature's lights and moods were so transient.

His paintings of the Thames, Rouen or the lily pond were not done quickly in

a single session. Instead Monet would work, often from a hotel room with a view, on many canvasses at once. He would get out the one that was appropriate for the time and weather and light and work on it for a short period, then when the light changed, he would put it away and get out the one that was appropriate for the new mood.

His most prolific series relate to his garden at Giverny. Here, wanting a more stable framework on which he could study the subtle variations of light by season and time of day, he laboriously created an artificial garden and pond out of a field by a railway line.

## Monet on Monet

*My only desire is an intimate infusion with nature, and the only fate I wish is to have worked and lived in harmony with her laws. The only merit I have is to have painted directly from nature with the aim of conveying my impressions in front of the most fugitive effects. . . I am following Nature without being able to grasp her. I know that to paint the sea really well, you need to look at it every hour of every day in the same place so that you can understand its way in that particular spot; and that is why I am working on the same motifs over and over again, four or six times even.*

*When you go out to paint, try to forget*



*what objects you have before you, a tree, a house, a field or whatever.*

*Merely think here is a little square of blue, here an oblong of pink, here a streak of yellow, and paint it just as it looks to you, the exact color and shape, until it gives you your own naive impression of the scene before you.*

## Nature as gallery, material and subject

*Andy Goldsworthy 1956 -*

Among artists working today Andy Goldsworthy is among the closest attuned to natural pantheism. Nothing is on public record to suggest his religious views, so it's not known if he is consciously a pantheist. But he sounds like one. Though he has made some permanent structures, especially walls, he creates mostly ephemeral works, liable to decay, dry up, blow away, melt, or fall down. He then photographs these before they disappear - or even during the process of decay. The vulnerability to time, and its effect on his work, is also part of the work and part of why his work reflects and embodies nature's processes.

Nature is Goldsworthy's art gallery. He makes his constructions almost always in natural settings, in the open air, in places such as Dumfriesshire, the Yorkshire Dales or the Lake District in Britain, Grize Fiord in the Northern Territories of Canada, the Australian outback, and even the North Pole.

His materials are drawn from nature. They may be clay, rocks, twigs, leaves,

### *Goldsworthy on Goldsworthy*

*I enjoy the freedom of just using my hands and "found" tools - a sharp stone, the quill of a feather, thorns. I take the opportunities each day offers: if it is snowing, I work with snow, at leaf-fall it will be with leaves; a blown-over tree becomes a source of twigs and branches. I stop at a place or pick up a material because I feel there is something to be discovered. Here is where I can learn.*

*Looking, touching, material, place and form are all inseparable from the resulting work. It is difficult to say where one stops and another begins. The energy and space around a material are as important as the energy and space within. The weather - rain, sun, snow, hail, mist, calm - is that external space made visible. When I touch a rock, I am touching and working the space around it. It is*



feathers, even ice and snow, usually from the location where he is working, so that there is a close interdependence of location and matter. On occasion he has made things out of nothing, out of the very absence of material - such as when he lay on a red rock in a rain shower creating his own dry shadow, or when his frost shadow sheltered hoary grass from the sun on a winter's day. He rearranges natural materials to depict his subject matter. Although his topics are always, in some way or other, once again some aspect of nature, they are almost as diverse as nature. By rearranging his materials he delineates nature's favourite shapes and processes in playful ways, such as an ammonite spiral made of broken pebbles, or a radial explosion of ice.

Perhaps more than any other artist time and change are his subjects too. He will create a work by throwing sticks or dust into the air and seeing how they fall, or by embedding materials in huge snowballs and seeing how they are distributed when these melt. He builds precarious cairn-like columns from wet rocks cemented together with ice, which will tumble when the ice melts.

*not independent of its surroundings, and the way it sits tells how it came to be there. I want to get under the surface. When I work with a leaf, rock, stick, it is not just that material in itself, it is an opening into the processes of life within and around it.*

*When I leave it, these processes continue. Movement, change, light, growth and decay are the lifeblood of nature, the energies that I try to tap through my work.*

*I need the shock of touch, the resistance of place, materials and weather, the earth as my source.*

*Nature is in a state of change and that change is the key to understanding. I want my art to be sensitive and alert to changes in material, season and weather. Each work grows, stays, decays. Process and decay are implicit. Transience in my work reflects what I find in nature.*

## News of the WPM



Rick Bamford



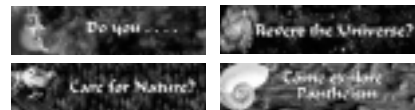
Rick Davis



Audrey Pavia

*Following the move of UK membership secretary Oliver Chadwick and WPM information officer Stuart Stell to the panel of directors, elections were held for vacant seats on the Membership Advisory Committee. Rick Bamford (New Jersey), Rick Davis (Ohio), and Audrey Pavia (California) were elected.*

## Conserving Nature



*The frames of our animated gif at Ecology Fund*

The World Pantheist Movement saved 35 acres of wildlife habitat by sponsoring two click-for-nature organizations. At Ecology Fund our sponsorship saved 22 acres of rainforest in through the World Parks Endowment. At Care2's Race for the Rainforest our sponsorship saved 13 acres through the Nature Conservancy. In both cases our checks were made out directly to the nature conservation agencies, and our contributions also gained 400,000 views for a banner ad for the WPM. The Ecology Fund ad was particularly successful, bringing us 6,500 extra visitors, a much higher click-through rate than average for Web banner ads.

In September the directors voted another \$2,000 for similar sponsorship with Ecology Fund and with The RainforestSite. We shall be repeating this exercise at regular intervals, leaving a few months' gap between each so that we are seen by a new round of people.

## New Celebrants Code

In September the directors officially adopted a code about celebrants so that we could fulfil our aim to provide pantheist and nature-lovers with weddings, funerals and other ceremonies in keeping with their beliefs. It's important to note that WPM

*Continued on next page*

Continued from previous page

celebrants will not be hierarchs with any special religious authority.

We tried to reach a careful balance. On the one hand we feel that any member should be empowered to perform ceremonies for friends or relatives, in line with our belief that the reverent response to nature requires no priestly mediation. Allowing this removes the absurd situation where the WPM might have to refer its own members to the Universal Life Church if they want the status to perform a ceremony for friends or relatives. On the other we feel a responsibility to ensure as far as practicable that anyone publicly advertizing for clients using our name and symbols should be responsive and informed. We believe that general public

has a right to feel confidence in the seriousness and capability of a civil celebrant to provide an adequate and sensitive service. There will initially be two categories of celebrant:

WPM members who wish to perform a wedding or funeral for friend or relatives will be able to get official WPM authorization to do so by forwarding a request from those friends or relatives to celebrants@pantheism.net. If they want to use WPM name or symbols they should also indicate agreement with the World Pantheist Movement belief statement (<http://www.pantheism.net/manifest.htm>).

Certified celebrants: members wishing to advertize celebrant services to the public using the WPM name or symbols, and to perform weddings or funerals

without specific authorization for each one, will need to get WPM certification. This will be subject to certain requirements of knowledge of basic skills relating to prenuptial and bereavement counselling, familiarity with a range of model ceremonies and approaches, and character references. For category two we will now need to develop a form of questionnaire and set reading and collect some sample ceremonies. If you would like to get involved in this, you can join the celebrants list:

<http://www.yahogroups.com/group/wpmcelebrant>.

Both types of celebrant will have to make sure they comply with the law of the country or US state they wish to celebrate in.

**Mike**

Today, Brenda, I join my life to yours, not only as your husband, but as your friend, your lover, and your confidant. Let me be the shoulder you lean on, the rock on which you rest and the companion of your life. With you I will walk my path from this day forward.

**Brenda**

Today, Mike, we begin our new life together. Let us assume our roles as marriage partners with love, understanding, trust, and mutual fidelity for as long as we both shall live. I ask you to share this world with me, for good or for ill. Be my partner, and I will be yours.

**Minister (as they exchange rings)**

The circle is the symbol of the sun, earth, and universe. It is the symbol of peace. Let this ring be the symbol of unity and peace in which your two lives are joined in one unbroken circle. Wherever you go, return unto one another and to your togetherness.



Wedding of Beatrice and Mike Mondragon, August 11, 2000

# Almanac



## Special events

November 30 John Tolland's birthday	February 14 Valentine's Day	
December 10 Geminids: Starwatching + Human Rights Day	February 15 Birthday of Galileo	
January 22 Surrender of native lands by Chief Seattle	February 17 Giordano Bruno's martyrdom	
February 2 Imbole	March 8 International Women's Day	
February 12 Darwin's birthday	March 14 Einstein's birthday	
		Almanac [Universal time=GMT, EST + 5, PCT + 8]



## Equinoxes & Solstices

2002	
Winter solstice 2002	December 22 01:15
2003	
Spring equinox	March 21 01:00
Summer solstice	June 21 19:10
Autumn equinox	September 23 10:47
Winter solstice	December 22 07:04



## Full Moons

2002	
October 21	07:20
November 20	01:34
December 19	19:10
2003	
January 18	10:48
February 16	23:51
March 18	10:34
April 16	19:36



# *nature and spirituality*

People of every religion are striving to find a theological basis for environmental concern. The oriental religions have traditionally placed strong emphasis on harmony with nature. In Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism respect is accorded to living creatures because they may be incarnations of dead humans. In Taoism living simply, in accordance with nature, is the highest goal.

The West has had a much tougher task in finding a religious grounding for concern about nature. The Old Testament vision is that nature is created primarily for humans to have dominion over and to use. The New Testament, the core scripture of Christianity, focuses on ethics towards other humans and shows no concern with duties towards animals or nature.

All three main Western/Middle Eastern religions see this earth as secondary to an afterlife in heaven. Indeed all three have an apocalyptic vision of the Last Judgement in which God himself destroys the earth and every living thing on it.

Pantheism is one of the oldest religious traditions, and reserves its deepest reverence for Nature and the Universe. Nature is central, sacred, and demands to be treated with respect, love and care.

One of pantheism's basic tenets is the unity of all things. The whole universe is a unity that was born together in the same instant. Nature on earth is also a unity of all living beings. We all had a single origin and



Everything is fruit to me which thy seasons bring, o nature; from thee are all things, in thee are all things, to thee all things return.

**Marcus Aurelius**

we share many of the same genetic codes.

Living things do not exist in isolation but in ecological communities, in which all the members have evolved together into a fine balance of interdependence. The planet itself is one vast ecosystem in which life deeply affects, and is affected by, the atmosphere, the oceans, and even the solid crust. Human actions have seriously disrupted local and planetary ecosystems. Our task now is to restore the lost balances.

Pantheism does not believe in an afterlife in heaven. This earth is our only home, we can't hope that God will provide us with a new earth if we wreck this one. The responsibility lies on our shoulders alone.

Pantheism has a deep respect for the welfare of animals. In pantheism all animals are equal centres of awareness of the Universe, and as such they demand equal respect. Respect does not mean we cannot use nature and her products, but it does mean we must use them sparingly, wisely, and with deep compassion, always remaining aware of the impact our actions may have on other living beings and natural communities.

# *the WPM and nature*

Nature and the environment are a central concern of the World Pantheist Movement.

Our local groups usually meet in natural areas, when the weather permits, for hikes and picnics and star-watching parties.

Our view of nature is explained in these clause of our belief statement:

- All matter, energy, and life are an inseparable connected unity of which we are an inseparable part. We rejoice in our existence and seek to participate ever more deeply in this unity through knowledge, celebration, meditation, empathy, love, ethical action and art.

- We are an integral part of Nature, which we should cherish, revere and preserve in all its magnificent beauty and diversity. We should strive to live in harmony with Nature locally and globally. We acknowledge the inherent value of all life, human and non-human, and strive to treat all living beings with compassion and respect.

As in all matters of ethics, we leave it up to the individual to decide how to apply these principles. For example, many of our members are vegetarians, but many are not: the choice is yours. What we probably all have in common is a concern for compassionate farming, where animals are allowed to lead lives that are as natural as possible.

We tend to be aware of the environmental consequences of our actions, and to bear these in mind in our choices in what we buy and consume. When thinking about waste, we emphasize reducing, re-using and

recycling. Our magazine Pan often focuses on green issues - a recent issue was entirely devoted to sustainable living. Our general mailing lists often discuss environmental concerns and appreciation for nature. We also have two specialized mailing lists of interest: a list for vegetarians, and an environmental action list which sends out alerts from the major environmental organizations. We have bought the domain [www.wildkids.org](http://www.wildkids.org), where we plan to create an action, fun and information-oriented nature site for children and young people.

In the long run we aim to help interested local groups to create a network of multi-purpose natural reserves. These will protect and enhance biodiversity through natural woodlands and shrub areas with native species, and through open areas with wildlife-friendly gardening. They will provide simple lodge-style indoor facilities for pantheist meetings, and a natural setting for ceremonies like weddings and funerals. Any structures on these reserves will be built to the most environmentally-friendly standards.

If you have a deep reverence and concern for nature, and would like to find a spiritual expression for this that does not involve turning your back on reason and evidence, then the World Pantheist

Movement may be the right place for you.



The World Pantheist Movement, 131 North Ludlow Street, Suite 1311, Dayton, OH 45402-1111, United States  
The World Pantheist Movement PO Box 18687 London NW3 2FG, United Kingdom.

[www.pantheism.net](http://www.pantheism.net)



Join the World Pantheist Movement today...

Personal benefits:

- Quarterly 'Pan' magazine.
  - Free e-mail forwarding address at our domain, eg: Yourname@pantheism.net
  - Membership of associated mailing lists and bulletin boards.
  - Membership of a rapidly growing, vibrant international community.
  - Public benefits:
- Helping promote earth-honoring life-affirming pantheism as a religious option and alternative to traditional religions.
  - Supporting the creation of a network of celebrants for pantheist weddings and funerals.
  - Making possible an expanding pantheist presence in all media.
  - Helping to promote the formation of local groups.
  - Making possible free associate membership for people from developing countries and emerging economies.

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\* Family provides one copy of the magazine plus up to four e-mail forwarding addresses @pantheism.net and four memberships of the World Pantheist Movement bulletin board.

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*Nature  
and  
Spirituality*

WORLD PANTHEIST  
MOVEMENT

