

# Gaia Emerges. (But all that he grasps...)

A digital painting by [Steve McRoberts](https://smmcroberts.net), ©2020.



Full resolution image at: [https://smmcroberts.net/art/GaiaEmerging/Gaia\\_Emerges.jpg](https://smmcroberts.net/art/GaiaEmerging/Gaia_Emerges.jpg)

While it is amusing to sit back and watch as art critics analyze one's work, I thought it would be fun to write my own analysis. This is especially so since few if any art critics are likely to take notice of my digital paintings.

[Gaia](#) (aka Gaea) is the personification of the Earth. In Greek mythology she was the mother of all, including the other gods.

In this 1875 painting of *Gaea*, by Anselm Feuerbach, we see her floating above the Earth, her nude body covered at one strategic point by conveniently placed fabric.



In more recent times, the [Gaia Hypothesis](#), developed by James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis in the 1970's, proposes that living organisms interact with their inorganic surroundings on Earth to form a synergistic and self-regulating, complex system, in many ways equivalent to a living organism. In other words, the Earth had become personified by science, as it was by mythology.

In my painting, instead of floating above the Earth, I have Gaia breaking through the crust of the Earth as if it were an egg shell. This was inspired by a painting of Dali's.



*Geopoliticus Child Watching the Birth of the New Man (Salvador Dalí, 1943)*

A conveniently placed telescope serves the same end as Feuerbach's fabric in maintaining Gaia's modesty.

My intention is for her to represent not only the ecology of the Earth, but also the emerging awareness of our impact on the environment, and the steps being taken to lessen that impact (e.g. the "Green New Deal.") This is depicted in the astronaut-artist's first canvas (resting on the bottom of the easel) in which a lava-stream erupts from the Earth where Gaia's leg has emerged, spewing off of the planet some symbols of environmental destruction (a smoke-stack and an oil-well) and of war (a military drone).

I sought to contrast the ancient goddess with the subsequent patriarchal culture and religion. Which, on a more basic level, is the eternally conflicted balance between women and men. Here I have focused on a representative testosterone-obsessed man.

Adapting the adage, “Men are from Mars and women are from Venus,” I have placed the men on the moon, viewing the woman on Earth. The bareness of the moon also suggests the lack of a future for those who would continue environmental destruction.

The astronaut represents both science and art. Dressed in white (actually a light gray, which appears white in the intense sunlight) he is meant to be objectively recording what he sees. He stands between Gaia and the man in black: a neutral passive observer, taking no sides and no actions. His outfit is a combination lab-coat / artist frock / astronaut suit. He peers into the telescope and paints what he sees.

Gaia is facing forward, with a hopeful look to the future. The man in black, in contrast – with his back to us – lunges towards the canvas, trying to grasp what the artist is painting. He is panting for it (tongue out) and drooling over it. This second canvas is a stereogram, which, if you “look through it” (by focusing your eyes slightly beyond the screen) you will see what the telescope is covering. I chose this method because I wanted the viewer to have to look at things in an odd sort of way before being able to see “all that he grasps.” Also, I did not want the painting to be dismissed as “pornography.”

The man in black represents one of the most powerful males existing today: the closest thing we still have to a male deity, and so contrasting nicely with the goddess Gaia. This man’s attitude towards women was best expressed in his own words: “Grab 'em by the pussy. You can do anything.”

Despite all of the environmental progress made in the last few decades, the burgeoning Green movement, and the contributions made by women in all sectors of society, all he sees are things to exploit for his own ends.

Behind his back he holds a coat-hanger. This symbolizes an anti-abortion stance: another way of controlling women. On the hanger are see-through undergarments made for sex-play. Further driving home the point, on the shelf of the easel are condoms and erection pills [These are purposely mis-named, as the correct names are trade-mark copyrighted. The name on the box of condoms is a bit of a joke: instead of the popular *Trojan* brand (which features a Trojan soldier’s helmet on the box) we have *Panzer* as the brand name, with a German helmet pictured. This ties in better with the fascist government we are currently enduring. The idea of placing symbols of war on a box of condoms reveals how entrenched are aggression and violence in our society: being incorporated even into the very “act of love.”]

The primitive reaction of the man to the dramatic breakthrough scene before him indicates a low level of intelligence. [As does the fact that he chooses to be “macho” in refusing to wear a space-suit, similar to how some men refuse to wear a protective mask during a global pandemic, and choose to stare at a solar-eclipse without eye protection.] So, I used a Dalinian hole, placed in his head, revealing a pea floating in the middle to indicate a pea-sized brain.





*Example of Dalinian holes (Detail from The Madonna of Port Lligat, Salvador Dali, 1950)*

Since this man has told tens of thousands of lies, his tongue morphs into a snake. The phrase “lying snake” comes to mind, as well as the infamous “forked tongue” of lying politicians. The idea of a morphing tongue I owe to the artist Diane Monico [where the “tongue” is actually lava pouring out of a hole in a mountain that resembles a face].



*Retirement by Diane Monico, 2015*

The snake threatens a baby, which, terrorized, crawls into a waiting kennel. This symbolizes the locking of children in cages at the border of the U.S. and Mexico. It completes the picture of patriarchal violence against the Earth, women, and children.

The baby also represents the future, which is being restrained and diverted from its natural course of progress by antiquated notions of the patriarchal mindset.

### **A Note on Style and Tools**

Broadly speaking, I would categorize my style as Surrealistic, heavily influenced by Dali. However, Dali sought to depict the irrational in a realistic manner, with no intended message. In contrast, I have definite rational messages I want to convey with my impossible scenes. Surrealism, and modern art in general, tends to frown upon iconography. I, however, have embraced symbolism.

My digital paintings are made not with paint, brushes, and canvases; but with software, pixels, and screens. The software tools I use are primarily: Blender, Makehuman, GIMP, and Stereogram Maker. These tools are all free, and I am indebted to their brilliant creators. Dali would've loved these tools, and no doubt embraced them. In his later years he was working with the latest hologram technology to convey his images in 3D. I think he would've at least dabbled with Blender and GIMP had they been available to him. And it's likely that he would've created more than one digital painting masterpiece.

### **Guide to seeing the hidden image in the stereogram**

The hidden image in the stereogram is difficult to see. It *can* be seen at normal resolution, but it's easier if you zoom in to where it almost fills the screen. One click on the center of the canvas should do it.

Then look at the jar. Change your focus from the screen to a point behind your screen (i.e. uncross your eyes) until you see the jar diverge into two jars that look to be about 3" apart (using the scale of the painting; not 3" apart on your screen).

If you then look a bit above the white highlight dot on the main part of the jar you should see a raised horizontal division sticking out from the background. This raised part is meant to represent the thighs

Finally, look up to see the V-shaped indentation in that raised part, and then what lies within that indentation.