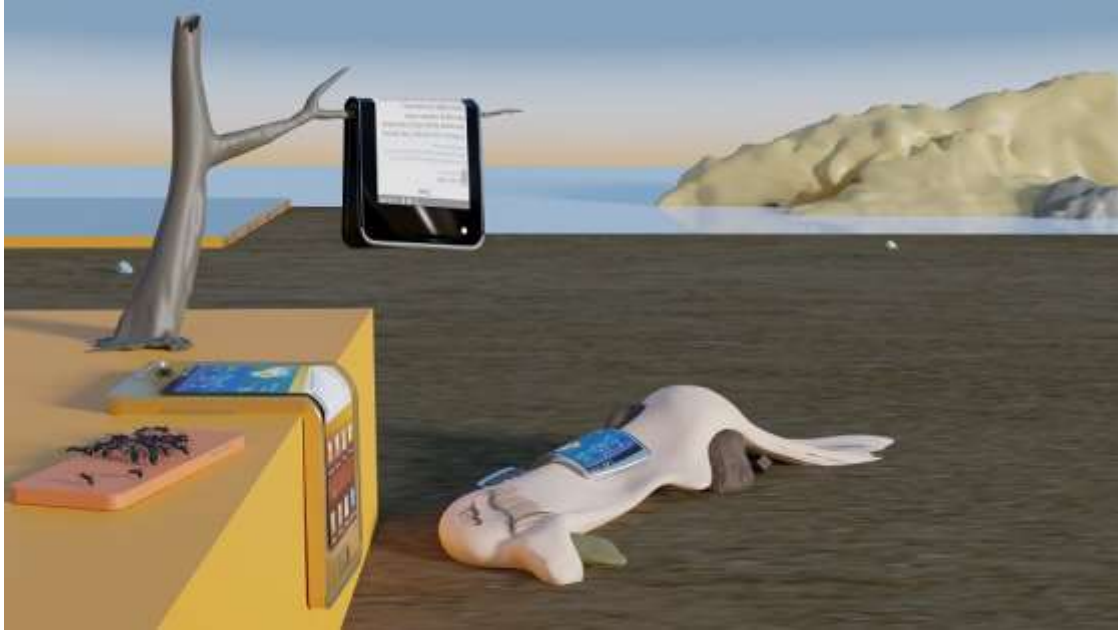


The Persistence of Messaging.

A digital painting by [Steve McRoberts](#), © 2020.



Full resolution image at: <https://smmroberts.net/art/persistence/persistence.jpg>

This painting is a homage to Salvador Dali's famous 1931 painting, [The Persistence of Memory](#):



Dali originally entitled his painting *Soft Watches*, but later renamed it (probably because he created another painting, in 1933, which he called *Soft Watches* [though it actually featured a soft alarm-clock]).

He recreated the motif in 1939, on a much larger scale, for his [Dream of Venus](#) exhibit at the World's Fair, replete with some of his other recurring symbols: lobsters, burning giraffes, and people with drawers in their body:



During his “atomic period” Dalí repainted his masterpiece yet again. This time as [The Disintegration of the Persistence of Memory](#):



In my version I have replaced the pocket-watches with cellphones, since they are now even more ubiquitous than watches were in the thirties.

The phones show the weather in Dali's beloved Port Lligat, and the time for its sunset in late October (when I completed the painting).

The cellphone on the tree branch contains a text-message on the bottom of its screen, which cannot be seen from the viewer's perspective. Fittingly, the message asks: "*If a cellphone rings in the wilderness, with no one there, does it make a sound? Is its msg 'delivered'?*" Putting a new spin on the old conundrum about [a tree falling in the forest](#). This message *can* be seen by viewing the painting via the 360 degree view offered by poly.google.com at <https://poly.google.com/view/49Gf4qZDXwi>, or in the animated version on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6TOB8R-QEdI>. The latter includes a conical anamorph followed by a 360-degree 3D tour of the digital environment of the painting.

Ants symbolize death or decay in Dali's paintings. In some ways cellphones have led to the decay of manners and other aspects of social interaction in our time. The Twitter message on the tree's cellphone shows another major source of the decay of our civilization. Fortunately, the persistence of these digital messages ensures that no one will forget their import.