




June 2018

# The Art of Evolving Consciousness

MacQueen, Kim

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.ciis.edu/cejournal>

 Part of the [Clinical Psychology Commons](#), [Cognition and Perception Commons](#), [Cognitive Psychology Commons](#), [Critical and Cultural Studies Commons](#), [Family, Life Course, and Society Commons](#), [Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Ethnicity in Communication Commons](#), [Liberal Studies Commons](#), [Social and Cultural Anthropology Commons](#), [Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education Commons](#), [Social Psychology Commons](#), [Sociology of Culture Commons](#), [Sociology of Religion Commons](#), and the [Transpersonal Psychology Commons](#)

## Recommended Citation

MacQueen, Kim (2018) "The Art of Evolving Consciousness," *Journal of Conscious Evolution*: Vol. 8 : Iss. 8 , Article 1.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.ciis.edu/cejournal/vol8/iss8/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals and Newsletters at Digital Commons @ CIIS. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Journal of Conscious Evolution* by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ CIIS. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@ciis.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@ciis.edu).

Journal of Conscious Evolution

Issue 8, 2012

## **The Art of Evolving Consciousness**

Kim MacQueen<sup>1</sup>

*California Institute of Integral Studies*

### **ABSTRACT**

This paper supports the position that the arts have the capacity not only to give us information intellectually about the evolution of the human endowment of consciousness, but can also evoke a felt sense of previous stages and anticipate transitions and emerging stages. In this paper I give examples of artworks that suggest each stage of the evolution described in the writings of Jean Gebser. For purposes of this paper the artworks are limited to visual arts and sculpture. I think that much of humankind's vast historical and multicultural endowment of the arts can remind us of previous periods of development as well as assist in our appreciation for and integration of previous stages of consciousness while incorporating the emerging stage of integral structure of consciousness. Gebser writes, "Only when they (all the structures) are integrated via a concretion can they become transparent in their entirety and present, or diaphanous (and are not, of course, merely illuminated by the mind). (Gebser, 1984, p. 99). I believe that works of art can facilitate that concretion and integration of previous structures, and play a critical role in the emergence of an integral structure of consciousness.

---

<sup>1</sup> [kgmacqueen@gmail.com](mailto:kgmacqueen@gmail.com)



*From the Chauvet Cave*

*From the first we have made art...*

*with some combination of urge and response and will.*

*We blew paint on the walls of caves to show our signature, the palm of our hand.*

*We made a mark.*

*Art.*

*We have hummed and chanted and blown air into pipes of bone...and pulled animal gut taut over hollow bowls to make rhythm at ritual and celebration.*

*We have opened our throats for lullabies and operatic trills, for raunchy blues and melodies of sublimity.*

*We have danced by fire and drum, by lute, by steel guitar, by ourselves, with our tribe... rooted, resonated with earth ... or flying across a stage, otherworldly.*

*We have taken up pigment in dirt and ground ores and plastic and water, and made images on surfaces: flat or shaped, found or fashioned.*

*We have created form and substance out of clay and wood and bronze and marble and steel and light...from matter to poetry.*

*We have told stories one to another, and many to all.*

*We have brought stories to life on stage and through moving pictures, captivating audiences with morality and immorality and the struggles of being...human.*

*We have written and read and printed and typed all manner of words to bring glory to God or to Man or infamy to both.*

*We have created increasingly complex technology to create increasingly complex art.*

*We are human.*

---

*Art sings from the axis of truth to wake us up to who we are and where we are going. Alex Grey.*

I can remember the very moment I started to read Jean Gebser. I was sitting at a dinner table in British Columbia three years ago, with a cup of tea in my hand, browsing through the website "Questia" for resources on art. Somehow his name popped up, and I ended up reading some of *The Ever Present Origin*. Within the first 20 minutes I found myself light headed with the hair raising on my neck and arms (this seems to be the physical counterpart to my epiphanies). I had been a fan of Ken Wilber's for some years, and thought I understood his brilliant synthesis of the evolution of consciousness (What hubris! I had, in actuality, read exactly two of his books, and attended exactly one of his seminars!). But somehow Wilber's approach, while it certainly engaged my mind, did not connect to my soul. Gebser's did.

*Resonance is not created like an act of will; it is experienced autonomously, the stirring of 'like to like', the thrum of the tuning fork inside us. James Hollis.*

I felt the "thrum of the tuning fork" when I read Gebser. Somehow I understood, for the first time, that I was truly a part of a process: a humanity that has been unfolding for epochs. I had been following an interest in how the arts both reflect and inspire different states of consciousness, but now I realized with a shock, that the arts provided a map not only of the growth of an individual, but also provide some kind of important information about the "geography" and "history" of human consciousness...a picture of our species! Suddenly I had a profound and moving sense of this vast array of the arts of different times and cultures and locations as a rich endowment: a legacy of the story of humankind. I thrilled to the moment of epiphany, that shock of both discovery and recognition, that the arts provide a treasure trove of information, of experience, and as Hollis' describes it, *resonance*. Gebser's description of the



unfolding of human consciousness also resonates deeply with my own overarching worldview of the Baha'i Faith, whose Founder, Baha'u'llah, writes that one of humanity's purposes is to "carry forward an ever-advancing civilization" (Baha'u'llah, 1999, p. 346).

I also quickly came to see "us", humanity, in a new way: as living records of all that has gone before. We each have within us all the stages that preceded our time. Perhaps all that has gone before, I realized, starting from our first experience with Origin, comprises the collective unconscious that Carl Jung described. And perhaps that unconscious wealth truly serves as the most fertile inspiration for the creative arts. This is what I found so different and so very exciting about Gebser. While Wilber posited an ever-increasing advancement of spirit (although perhaps without the honoring due various kinds of cultures and consciousness), and even though he clearly stated that "each stage of evolution transcends but includes its predecessors." (Wilber, 1996, p. 25), I still could not manage to connect his theory with the embodiment of humanness. That is exactly what Gebser encourages: to live all the stages all the time, and he never did presume that one stage was superior to any other.

Here is the line that grabbed me: the very first line of the Preface of *Origin: Origin is ever-present. It is not a beginning, since all beginning is linked with time. And the present is not just the "now," today, the moment or a unit of time. It is ever originating, an achievement of full integration and continuous renewal. Anyone able to "concretize," i.e., to realize and effect the reality of origin and the present in their entirety, supersedes "beginning" and "end" and the mere here and now.* (Gebser, 1984, p. xxvii). It is my belief that Origin is always available to us as individuals through differing efforts and routes, but the successive stages that have unfolded have taken cultures and peoples further away from the source. It seems that we needed to move from the One to the differentiated, and that Gebser's epochs have moved us in that direction. And now? Now we are all standing at a cusp, living in a transitional time, moving from a deficient mental state towards an integral form of consciousness. He suggests that in this stage, previous stages can unite in a new appreciation of oneness, of *Origin*.

What Gebser offers is a framework of the development of humanity in an early work of transdisciplinarity. Jean Gebser (1905-1973) was born in Poland, and was ultimately a resident of Switzerland. He was a cultural historian and philosopher. He reports that in 1933 he had the sudden realization of what developed over many years as his theory that "came to him as a 'lightning-like inspiration.'" (Combs, 2002, p. 78). From that flash of insight, he pursued sources

of art, philosophy psychology and other fields to flesh out a new and bold theory. Besides naming five stages of development of human consciousness, Gebser names two principles: latency and transparency (or diaphaneity). He uses latency to describe what is "not yet manifest" (Gebser, 1984, p.6). It is the potential of the human endowment, "the presence of the future" within. (Gebser, 1984, p. 6). Transparency is used to describe the manifestation of the best of each stage - the spiritual - in the world. This is strikingly resonant to David Bohm's suggestion of the implicate and explicate orders, and in fact Bohm suggested the same: "...in some sense, consciousness ... is to be comprehended in terms of the implicate order, along with reality as a whole....we are suggesting that the implicate order applies both to matter (living and non-living) and to consciousness, and that it can therefore make possible an understanding of the general relationship of these two..." (Bohm, 2003, p. 104). These principles again resonate to the Baha'i Faith when one of its central figures writes, "'Progress' is the expression of spirit in the world of matter." ('Abdu'l-Baha, 1972, p. 90).

In this paper, I attempt to associate certain works of art with particular stages, and also to identify works done well past identified stages as hearkening back to a previous time. For the scope of this paper, I will limit the search to visual art (painting and sculpture) and to artists primarily of the West. It is a paltry beginning, as I think comparing artworks of different stages allows us to see how we as a species have incorporated our full endowment of unfolding consciousness:

*Real discovery lies not in finding new landscapes but in seeing with new eyes.*  
*Marcel Proust*

It is my hope to expand the efforts at a later time to include many forms of the arts, and examples from around the world.

7

*The Uroboros (left)*

**Archaic structure of consciousness.** Wilber writes, "In Gebser's view, we "are able to glimpse therein the first glimmer of an age when world and man are just emerging (as differentiated entities)...it is an age when the soul still sleeps." (Wilber, 1996, p. 28). Wilber refers to this time as the *pleromatic-uroboric* by which he means to describe the physical nature with reptilian impulses. (Wilber, 1996, p. 27). While Gebser does not attempt a specific time period, Wilber suggests that the archaic associates with the "pre-sapiens human: to the times of *Australopithecus africanus*, *Homo habilis*, and into *Homo erectus*...as early as three to six million years ago and stretching to around 200, 000 years ago." (p. 32). (although Georg Feuerstein reports the possibility that the archaic stretches to as recently as 75,000 years ago (Feuerstein, 1987, p. 51). Feuerstein claims that "the archaic structure denotes a consciousness of maximum latency and minimum transparency" (Feuerstein, 1987, p. 51). (This observation makes very clear the difference of Pre/Trans issues that Wilber points out: that some theorists romanticize the archaic as a kind of bliss [pre-personal] - to the extent that they confuse this stage with a later form of enlightened consciousness [transpersonal]. Also, if we agree that the archaic stage is maximum latency and minimum transparency, we could argue that human consciousness is evolving towards maximum transparency and minimum latency). So, the archaic stage is full of unfolded potential. It is described as a kind of union with *Origin*, and as a dreamless sleep. (It is also interesting to note that Gebser's stages seem to correlate seamlessly with brain states of individuals described in Vedantic literature).

Living in a modern/post-modern age, it is very challenging to conceive of the kind of pervasive unity experienced by our prehistoric ancestors.

*A monk once asked Ummon, "What is this place where knowledge is useless?" Ummon answered him: "Knowledge and emotion cannot fathom it!"*

There is a great danger in describing the state from a perspective of what Gebser would call deficient mental state (Gebser, 1984, p. 3). I think the closest we can come to imagining this reality, unseparated from a sense of oneness, is through the experience that many of us now make great efforts to gain: that of the void, of enlightenment. If, as Marshall McLuhan suggests, "The sloughed-off environment becomes a work of art in the new and invisible environment." then perhaps we can experience our ancient legacy through art. Can paintings help us experience that stage?

Anish Kapoor's *The Origin of the World* (below) is an interactive piece. The black oval is an



imposing shape on a wall inclined away from the viewer. It is not possible to “peer into” the painting....but only observe from outside. It is the void, one step removed.

*A painting is not a picture of an experience, but is the experience. Mark Rothko.*



The black paintings of 20th century Abstract Expressionist Mark Rothko evoke, to my mind, a possibility of immersion into a sense of the void, with no limitations of being *just* the observer. The first (above) is *Number 7*. It allows a meditative experience of two shades of black....an empty canvas of color.



The second Rothko piece is simply called *Black* (left) and offers slightly more of a “frame”: a focusing shape to draw the observer into the deep.



And finally, the *Rothko Chapel* in Houston, Texas (left) showcases his Black paintings as a kind of communion, providing a church-like setting to engage with the unity within “nothingness”.



...primeval man is a vast dispersed being. Robert Duncan.

***Magic structure of consciousness.*** It is very likely that what independent scholar, Ellen Dissanayake calls the *behavior of art*, began far earlier than the study of artifacts have led us to believe. In fact she says, “Chipped stone tools, cave paintings, and fertility statues may be the earliest artistic artifacts that are extant, but they are not the beginning of art as a behavior, whose origin must be at least in the pre-Paleolithic phase of hominid evolution.” (Dissanayake, 1988, p. 8). Dissanayake maintains that the purpose of the creation of art is to “make special” a tool, an action...a belief.

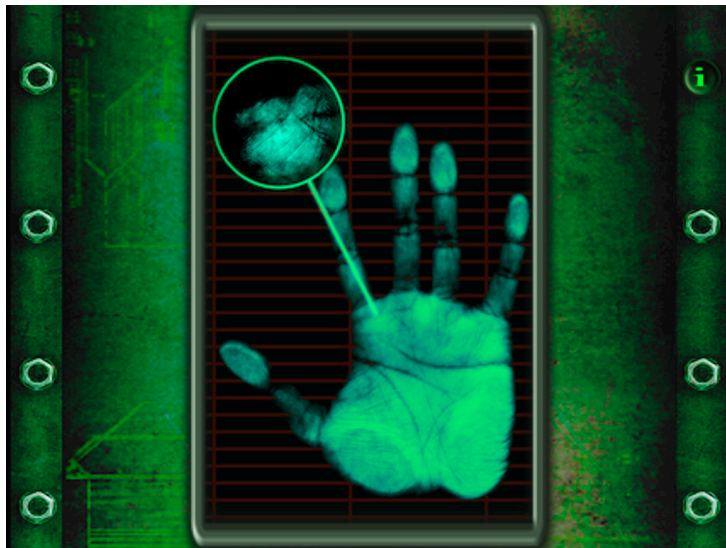
Arguably about 200,000 years ago (Wilber, 1981) out of centuries of dreamless sleep, consciousness made a leap into what is widely accepted as the first fully human hominid Cro-Magnon man, although our Homo erectus and Neanderthal relatives may have experienced a transitional state between the archaic and magical (Combs, 2002) as there is some evidence for beautification (“making special”) tools, and participating in burial rituals. Those behaviors certainly point to a pulling away from “embeddedness”. It anticipates *identity*. Many believe that the new awareness and thus separation from *Origin* can be described in the ancient stories of the Fall, the departure from Paradise. From an experience of unity in the natural world, man (and of course, woman) now had a new kind of knowledge. While identification developed as the family unit and the small tribe, there is here evidence of recognition of “being-in-the world” and one





step removed from Origin. Some of the first evidences of that more separated consciousness are found in cave paintings explored in France and Spain (previous page, left)

In a search for modern day work that somehow echoed that simple action of blowing paint over one's hand and making a mark, I was delighted to find a piece by poet/artist John Danvers, with a text message within (!) that reads, "*Each journey and place inscribed in the signs I make along the way.*" (previous page, right).



It was also interesting to discover a parallel palm print being used in our very post-modern world as a different kind of proof of identity: a security “password”. I found myself smiling at the metaphor, appropriate in either/both millennia of “Here I am. I seek entrance to the next part of my journey”. (smile)

So, out of deep dreamless sleep emerged the way of simple sleeping. Gebser writes, “Everything that is still slumbering in the soul is at the outset for magic man reflected mirror-like in the outside world; he experiences this outer world blindly and confusedly, as we experience dream events in sleep.” (Gebser, 1984, p. 46). And from that confusion began our struggle for power....as the human “begins to be conscious of his own *will*.” (Gebser, 1984, p. 46).

One of the most identifying marks of this stage, and what allowed our ancestors to feel a sense of power, was the belief in a “point like-unitary world” (Feuerstein, 1987, p. 61). The reality they experienced was full of associations, the parts of which were interchangeable. If early hunters created paintings of animals they wished to kill, they would draw the animal and throw spears....knowing that this was not a simple preparation, but in fact an enactment of the successful hunt. The killing itself had already happened; it was just a *re-enactment* of the ceremony.



*Cave painting showing the pre-hunt enactment*

Wilber refers to this ancestor as typhonic man. Emerging from embeddedness into a new



kind of awareness, but still rooted deeply in uroboros, he/she is “Half man, half serpent -- man and animal, man and uroboros, still intertwined...There is the typhonic self, the self that has differentiated its body from the environment but not yet differentiated its own mind from its body.” (Wilber, 1981, p. 47). In *Up from Eden* he mentions specifically the *Sorcerer of Trois Freres* (p. 47). I was delighted to find a depiction (left) of

*Cernunnos*, a much later example of the Typhon (7th - 4th c. BCE) in the Celtic horned god.



From the search of more modern examples of art dipping into the magic structure of consciousness, and specifically for expression of the typhonic nature of that structure, I was very moved and happy to find Frida Kahlo's *Il Piccolo Cervo* (The Small Deer) (below). It was moving to stumble upon it because at one time I had a significant response to this painting, and had not the background of stages of consciousness to deepen even more fully my appreciation of it. Kahlo, through her use of art as a mirror of her own painful life, may very well be a visible reiteration of the arc of the evolution of consciousness!



I think it is very important to underline here that all of the stages of the evolution of consciousness retain not only relevance, but that the more buried aspects of our human endowment actually give power and potency to the arts. Combs writes that they (those older structures) “...exert a lively influence even today. Indeed, we would not want it otherwise, for it is the light of the origin itself that shines through magic consciousness.” (Combs, 2002, p. 90).

It also occurred to me that examples of point-like unitary feature of magical consciousness might be connected in a transformative way with certain Native American sand paintings and creations of Tibetan mandalas. Each piece shares the idea that what is being created represents reality, but differs from ancient magic in that the later versions include an awareness (I think) of higher and layered realities that correspondent to our experience. In these more recent attempts to connect, magic has been transformed into spiritual.



*14th c. Tibetan Mandala*



*In myth... we enter the sphere of dream awake. Joseph Campbell.*

***Mythic structure of consciousness.*** Of the next stage of the evolution of consciousness Gebser writes, "...whereas the distinguishing characteristic of the magic structure was the emergent awareness of nature, the essential characteristic of the mythical structure is the emergent awareness of soul." (Gebser, 1984, p. 61). Now the human emotional endowment (yet another step towards identity) is unfolded, along with imagination.

*Is that what soul or spirit is? Outward flying attention, the gaze that binds us to the world?  
Mark Doty.*

Feuerstein further offers Gebser's opinion, "Imagination, expressing itself through myth, 'renders the soul visible so that it may be visualized, represented, heard and made audible.'" (Feuerstein, 1987, p. 95).

These new talents are not clearly evidenced until agriculture became a Neolithic stronghold. Because of this new capacity of abstract thinking, and the correspondence of seasonality with a new recognition of time, the Great Mother became the imagined benefactor of the world. For thousands of years, she was the object of worship and the inspiration of art, particularly art that associated her with fecundity. And in thousands of years, as Wilber suggests, the Great Mother



evolved into the Great Goddess (Wilber, 1981).

I am fascinated by the world of myth emerging from so many different cultures, but Greek mythology holds a powerful sway in the Western world, and has inspired endless works of art: poetry, sculpture, and images from the time it emerged. An older version of the Great Mother Goddess is represented in Demeter on a Greek pottery shard (previous page, left) and with her daughter Persephone on a stone bas-relief (previous page, right).

*The images of myth, when drawn from the depths, stir and touch us even when we do not know why, because they intimate, even activate, the mysterious depths we embody as well. Myth then resonates because it intimates what we already carry in our nature but can only dimly perceive by cognition. James Hollis.*



More modern versions of that particular myth include the painfully evocative ceramic figure sculpture of the imprisoned Persephone by Maria Wickwire (above).

And the same myth is shown as a modern Persephone balanced precariously on a wire, calling us to remember her struggles, but to reframe them in a modern perspective: balancing between two worlds, walking the tightrope of modern life. The artist is Jeanie Tomanek, and the painting is called, simply, *Between*, (below).



Of course much of the rich and loamy stories of the mythological stage of consciousness has provided inspiration for artists, film makers (George Lucas, Steven Spielberg), musicians and poets, and has been interpreted for new generations by a recent translator, Joseph Campbell. He acted much like “psycho pomp” to a generation of post-modern artists and thinkers by making accessible long forgotten aspects of the endowment of myth. Before him, Carl Jung engaged with his own buried stages of the evolution of consciousness, and especially in the land of myth to discover and develop the startling and spiritual gifts of his version of depth psychology.



*The new vision of Greco-Roman art began to shift away from the fusion of human-animal deities and focus more on ideal and naturalistic human forms. Naturalism corresponded more with the ascending world-view of rational investigation and description of nature (including human anatomy) which was the beginning of organized scientific medical inquiry. Alex Grey.*

*You must give birth to your images. They are your future waiting to be born. Rilke.*

***The mental structure of consciousness.*** Gebser proposes that all stages in the evolution of consciousness demonstrate an efficient (with positive effect) period, followed by a deficient (with negative effect) period (Gebser, 1984). The mental structure grew out from the eventual deficient era of the mythological stage, and became recognizable around 1 BCE. It has pushed us into a three dimensional appreciation of reality (and art). It has given us an experience of the “arrow of time” and the ability to identify causality (Feuerstein, 1987), important elements of a developing scientific worldview. Actually identifiable long before 1 BCE as early as in 500 BCE with the philosophers of Greece, it was not seen before 1250 AD in Europe. But when it took hold, it held tight! Gebser writes, “...it is the first intimation of the emergence of directed or discursive thought...” and, “This process is an extraordinary event which is literally earth-shaking: it burst man’s protective psychic circle and congruity with the psychic-naturalistic-cosmic-temporal world of polarity and enclosure. The ring is broken, and man step out of the two-dimensional surface into space, which he will attempt to master by his thinking. This is an unprecedented event, an event that fundamentally alters the world.” (Gebser, 1984, p. 75).

In the world of visual art, of course, the most famous shift to the aspect of what Gebser calls *ratio* is that it gives rise to *perspective*. In individuals, that perspective shifts the “sense of self in objective space somewhere in the head. The heart, noted Gebser, is the source of the experienced soul, as the head is the source of *ratio*.” (Combs, 2002, p. 99). Using principles of abstract mathematics (algebra vs. geometry) artists came to be able to construct paintings that are reflective of that change. In the early years of the mental shift in European Middle Ages, figures are flat, literally two dimensional, and figures are placed together with no apparent sense of space. During the Renaissance that changed dramatically, and it is one of the most powerful evidences of the flowering of the mental structure of consciousness.

Shown below are three images. One is a mosaic rendering of Emperor Justinian and his followers, created in medieval times (top, left). Below that is a piece of work that can demonstrate the transition: Giotto's *Lamentation*. We can see a tendency towards depth of field, three dimensions, and a stylized but more naturalistic composition. Finally, Leonardo da Vinci's *Virgin of the Rocks* demonstrates the flowering of the new capacity to experience and convey perspective (below, right).



The shift from mythic to mental awareness was fraught with vast upheavals for our more modern relatives. Though heralding the glories of science and logic and the promise of progress, it involved the loss of a matriarchal understanding of the world, the rise of a wildly imbalanced patriarchal influence, and the growth of monotheism, which while unifying, afforded a great loss in the stories and features of mythic life. Towns and cities grew up with all of their benefits and challenges. And we developed a level of self-awareness that for the first time headed us to independence and an inevitable sense of isolation, culminating in the existential crises so well documented in the twentieth century. It was a mutational period. We are, for the most part, still in the mental structure of consciousness, though clearly suffering through its deficient days. We too live in the agony of a mutational period.

*Any attempt to comprehend a “whole” or “higher” truth must take the cacophony of individuals, each with his or her own opinion, his or her own “truth,” into account. Postmodern doubt has replaced the confident trajectory of invention and progress, which characterized modernism.*

*Alex Grey.*

---

*The artist is the antenna of the race. Ezra Pound.*

This transitional period has seen a progression of deconstruction and new attempts to define spirituality just a hundred years ago. From the work of the transitional artist, post-impressionist and later cubist, Paul Cezanne, who Picasso and Matisse called, ‘the Father of us all.’ we see the large strides from one world to the next (his *Le chateau Noir* is on the following page). Gebser described the cubists as seeking to “...see things not only from above or in profile but also seek to penetrate them.’ (in Feuerstein, 1987, p. 147). Cezanne was followed by too many to mention, but the list includes Picasso and Matisse and Kandinsky and Brancusi and Pollock and Newman....all experimenting with new ways of conveying spirit, multiple perspectives and reflecting to us the tumultuous times. That particular age and stage (20th century art) is worthy of close and thoughtful inspection and reflection...at another time.





*Le Chateau Noir*

We are a kind of typhon creation ourselves....parts of us are deeply connected to our roots of consciousness, and a new capacity on the horizon. Some of us are more ready than others to embrace the shift that is underway. Our human consciousness has evolved from deep, dreamless sleep to a sleep state, to dreaming - and then we woke up. What's next? Gebser suggests that we are destined for transparency.... perhaps a stage of new spiritual awareness.

***The integral (or aperspectival) structure of consciousness.*** The emerging stage of consciousness may be hard to grasp. How can we know a place that most of us have only had intimations of, and that employs a language most of us have yet to learn? I think of the shift between the mythic and mental stages, and can imagine the current tumult as a sample of at least that degree of “growing pains”. Most likely more.

For now, we can observe, reflect and speculate that the aperspectival stage has been shown to us through the arts. Further, Combs describes this development: “It is perhaps apparent that there is a spiritual depth to integral consciousness. Indeed, its transparent or “diaphanous” quality is suffused with the light of the spirit, the animating radiance of the origin, and to a greater degree than any dominant structure since the archaic consciousness, but here with a solid clarity previously absent.” (Combs, 2002, p. 101).

We would then expect our transitional and integral artists to exemplify a multi-perspectival approach from a meta-perspectival vantage place, to perhaps include the stages gone before while make reference to a brand new understanding of time and space, and to find ways of suggesting higher realities, and also to demonstrate visually a journey from latency to

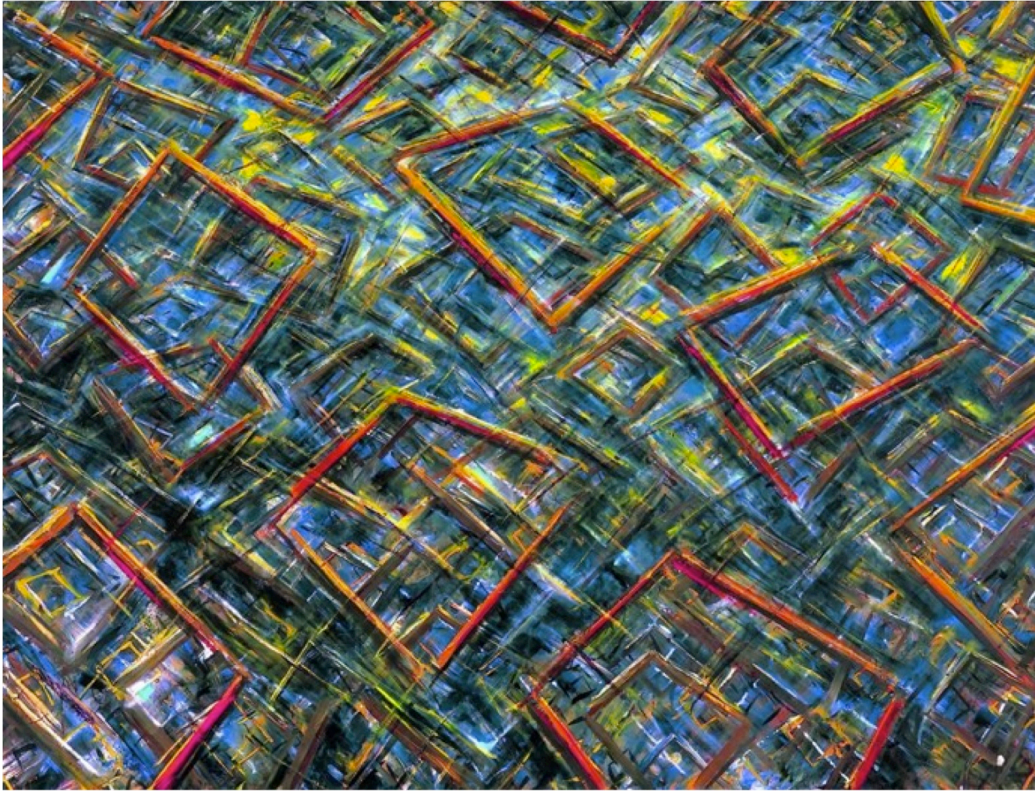


transparency. Well. That’s a start.

Anish Kapoor’s *Spheres* (left) sits outside of the Royal Academy of Arts in London. Not only can you absorb, from one vantage point, a collection of many perspectives of the same site, but on any given day you share the viewing with many other people, all seeing themselves in the spheres, seeing you in the spheres, seeing the back and front of people at the same time. It is both exhilarating and disorienting!

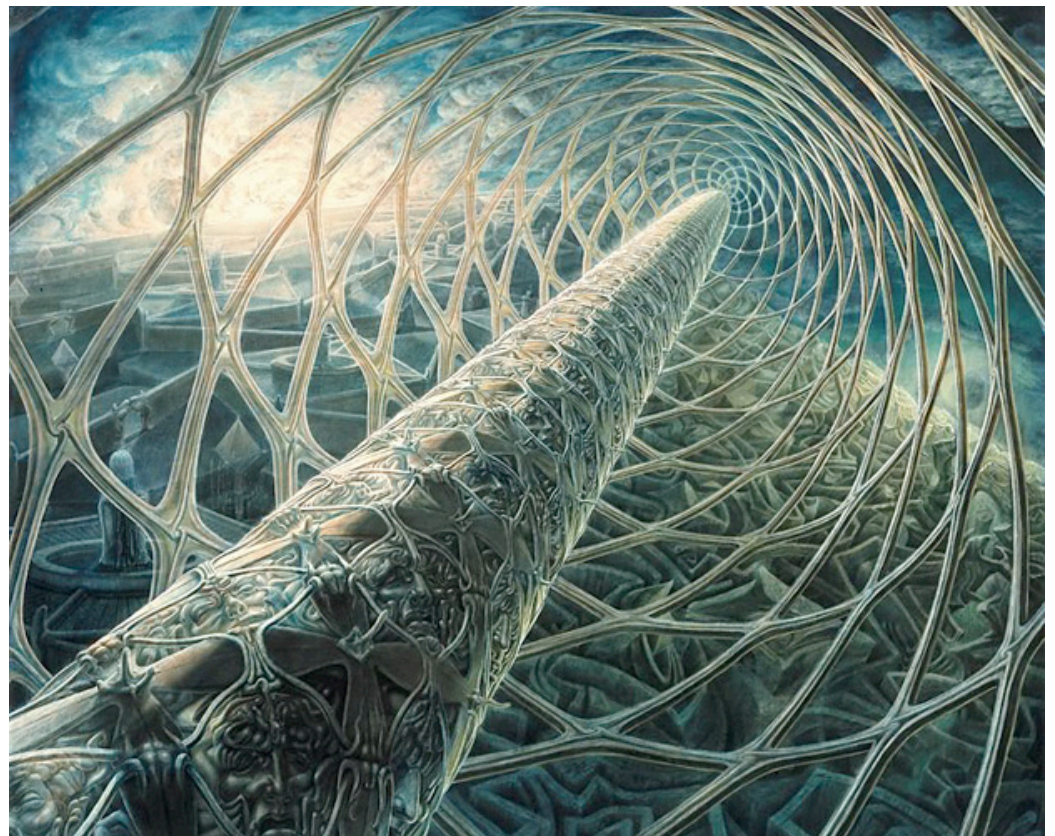
Another example of multi-perspectival art is *Borderspace* by De Es Schwertberger (following page). We see a collection of frames that allow viewing of particular parts of the painting, and at the same time set the





viewer on a high roost, able to take the whole collection of frames in one view. Also, the frames are open, suggesting permeability (and perhaps a kind of transparency).

On another canvas, De Es has created a journey for us in *No End.* (right). We have a sense of nested beings locked in some kind of struggle, but heading together in a luminous line to...forever.







I think one of the most powerful examples of an artist whose work demonstrates a personal experience of a spiritual journey is found in the evolving art of Canadian Landscape artist, Lawren Harris. From top left, clockwise, you can experience the evocative shift from realism to ever-transparent forms.





And finally, the work of Alex Grey is of the first artists to be named *integral*, largely because of his recognition by Ken Wilber. The piece above, *Net of Being*, is a powerful and almost overwhelming 15 ft x 7 ft canvas. It shows layers of light, many perspectives, and invites us to a meditation of the integral structure of consciousness.

I believe that turning to our artists (all of our artists.... not only the tiny sampling of visual artists here) can bring us a felt sense of the stages of consciousness that link us to each other and to our ancestors. As Gebser suggested, we should seek to live all stages, at all times.

---

*Art is the mirror, perhaps the only one, in which we can see our true collective face. We must honor its sacred function. We must let art help us. Alice Walker.*

## References

‘Abdu’l-Baha. (1972, 11th ed.). *Paris Talks*. London, UK: Baha’i Publishing Trust.

Baha’u’llah. (1990). *Gleanings from the writings of Baha’u’llah*. Wilmette, IL: US Baha’i Publishing Trust.

Combs, A. (2002, 2nd ed). *The radiance of being: understanding the grand integral vision; living the integral life*. St. Paul, MN: Paragon House.

Danvers, J. (2006). *Picturing mind: paradox, indeterminacy and consciousness in art and poetry*. New York, NY: Rodopi.

Dissanayake, E. (1988). *What is art for?* Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Feuerstein, G. (1987). *Structures of consciousness: the genius of Jean Gebser. An introduction and critique*. Lower Lake, CA: Integral Publishing.

Gebser, J. (1984). *The ever-present origin*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press.

Grey, A. (2001). *The mission of art*. Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications.

Nichol, L. Ed. (2003). *The essential David Bohm*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Wilber, K. (1981). *Up from eden: a transpersonal view of human evolution*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books.

## Images

Page:

2: Palm print from the Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc Cave

<http://listeningtogolem.blogspot.com/2011/09/dream-and-underworld.html>

7: *The Origin of the World*, Anish Kapoor

[http://www.scaithebathhouse.com/en/projects/anish\\_kapoor\\_the\\_origin/](http://www.scaithebathhouse.com/en/projects/anish_kapoor_the_origin/)

8: *Number 7*, Mark Rothko

<http://www.theartblog.org/2010/10/mark-rothko-in-washington-d-c-studies-in-light/>

9: *Black*, Mark Rothko

<http://toulousestreet.wordpress.com/tag/mark-rothko/>

9: *Rothko's Chapel*, Mark Rothko

<http://www.theartdaily.blogspot.com/2010/04/mark-rothko-rothko-chapel-1971.html>

10: Palm print from the Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc Cave

<http://listeningtogolem.blogspot.com/2011/09/dream-and-underworld.html>

10: “*Each journey and place inscribed in the signs I make along the way.*”

Danvers, J. (2006). *Picturing mind: paradox, indeterminacy and consciousness in art and poetry*. New York, NY: Rodopi.

11: Security palm print app

<http://www.iappfind.com/app/397661339>

12: Pre-hunt cave painting, Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc Cave

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1349303/Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc-Werner-Herzogs-3D-film-brings-paleolithic-cave-life.html>

12: Cernunnos

<http://www.berkshirehistory.com/legends/herne02.html>

13: *Il Piccolo Cervo*, Frida Kahlo

<http://roberlina.com/2012/05/01/the-small-deer/>

14: 14<sup>th</sup> c. Tibetan Mandala

<http://www.asianart.com/mandalas/page14.html>

15: Demeter

<http://www.theoi.com/Gallery/K3.1.html>

16: *Persephone*, Maria Wickwire

<http://www.sculpture.net/gallery/showphoto.php/photo/289>

<http://www.pnwsculptors.org/profilewickwire.htm>

17: *Between*, Jeanie Tomanek

<http://onepinkgoose.blogspot.com/2009/05/oodles-of-whimsey.html>

<http://www.jeanietomanek.com/>

19: Emperor Justinian and his followers .

[http://www.emmabiggssandmatthewcollings.net/ideas/history/05\\_ravenna.html](http://www.emmabiggssandmatthewcollings.net/ideas/history/05_ravenna.html)

19: *Lamentation*, Giotto

<http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/giottos-lamentation>

19: *Madonna of the Rocks*, Leonardo da Vinci

[http://arthistory.about.com/od/leonardo/ig/leonardo\\_paintings/ldvpg\\_09.htm](http://arthistory.about.com/od/leonardo/ig/leonardo_paintings/ldvpg_09.htm)

21: *Le Chateau Noir*, Paul Cezanne

<http://www.flickriver.com/photos/mbell1975/tags/c%C3%A9zanne/>

22: *Spheres*, Anish Kapoor

Photograph by Kim MacQueen

23: *Borderspace*, De Es Schwertberger

<http://s3.amazonaws.com/integral-life-art/DeEs/DeEs.html>

23: *No End*, De Es Schwertberger

<http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/de-es-schwertberger?before=1326382685>

24: Lawren Harris:

*Winter Landscape with Pink House*

<http://www.galeriedada.com/lawren-harris-winter-landscape-with-pink-house-00000800.html>

*Mt. Lefroy*

<http://artcontrarian.blogspot.com/2011/09/lawren-harris-strong-canadian.html>

*Abstraction*

<http://www.wetcanvas.com/forums/showthread.php?p=9009641>

*Sun and Earth*

<http://www.michaelrosenfeldart.com/exhibitions/exhibition.php?i=04d&m=d&w=1143&p=6>

25: *Net of Being*, Alex Grey

<http://www.opensourcereligion.net/photo/net-of-being-by-alex-grey?context=popular>

*Kim MacQueen has an M.A. in Psychology (University of West Florida) and has a special interest in Transpersonal and Jungian approaches to theory and practice. As a counselor she has concentrated on working with couples. As an educator she has taught young children (as a teacher and administrator of a Montessori school), young adults (as a university instructor), and has presented various kinds of workshops on topics that include meditation, comparative religion and the developmental nature of relationships. She is currently a doctoral student in the Department of Transdisciplinary Studies at the California Institute of Integral Studies where she is pursuing one of the growing passions of her life: the role that the arts have played, and continue to play in the ever-developing story of humankind. She is particularly intrigued by the links between things, the areas of boundaries and connection where the language of metaphor becomes alive and meaningful, where those links connect one soul with another and each soul with the sacred.*