



Rock Icons: Arches Nat'l Park, 6 mi. marker,
by Elta Wilson, Acrylic on canvas, 24" X 36", 2009.

The 21st Century New Way of Seeing: A Nexus of Art, Science, and Ethics

Fully abstracted art numbs the viewer as if reaching for oblivion with a martini or a toke. Art in the 21st century must be grounded in science, substance, and ethical inquiry. Millions paid for exploding bananas and stuffed plastic sharks is obscene. Total abstraction fails because it avoids the tough questions: Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going? What is this art about and why? Within the Scientific Revolution of the 21st century, both artists and scientists are visionaries offering substance to guide our future.

Dr. Elta Marie Wilson, JD, DMin—artist, theologian, journalist

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Read the Introduction below...

Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?

We live on the cusp of the Scientific Revolution and welcome the Golden Age of Astronomy that impacts us with knowledge of billions of galaxies. Yet our perspective is grounded throughout the ages with earthbound philosophies, ethics, and religious notions that constitute memories without a path to the future of space and understanding the reality of our Universe and its exploration. There seems no means of comprehending our true size. Our own entire solar system is too small to pinpoint within the Milky Way.

A mere 400+ years ago in 1600AD Dominican Friar Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake for insisting that the earth moved around the sun. Where will science find us in the next 400 years? Will we find and learn of the values of our true size? Will we understand the notion of time? Does time weave in and out like cloth, expanding and slowing with the design of the Universe or multiverse? Will our understanding of death and perhaps “eternity” expand to encompasses the Universe itself?

Are we so small that we do not count? Or do we? How do we understand our true size? We might visit the Grand Canyon and feel the land. With rocks over 30 million years old surrounding us, we could breathe in the age of the earth and find a split second of connection. But how do we understand a Universe that is so vast we do not even know its true size or shape or age? Are we so limited that cannot even imagine it? We are sensate beings with an understanding of our size on earth, but how do we expand our psyches to embrace our new knowledge of the Universe?

As we face the most confounding issues in human history, artists draw designs worthy of any bathroom. Abstraction, they call it. Art connoisseurs boast, “Wonderful colors! And look at those painterly brushstrokes!” I ask, “So what?”

Art for art’s sake is dead. It lacks fundamental substance for the 21st century. It is self-absorbed. Our great museums curry favor of the *uber*-rich and suck from them funds and concern that could serve more pressing needs. A large, plastic replica of a shark in a pretend aquatic tank sold for \$12 million. A skull painted with smeared blues

and black sold for over \$100 million. It is obscene. Any meaning that can be attributed to these “artworks” is over intellectualize nonsense that smacks of greed.

Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going? These are the questions Paul Gauguin asked in 1898. Great art of the 21st century must reflect substance and ideals of humanism and the knowledge of science. As a matter of conscience, I decry the self-absorbed designs that pass for great art. I stand tall for the use of art to help us all understand our world and our Universe, and to preserve it. I cry *foul!*