



# Gordon Wood Art & Design

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## Introduction

Welcome IEC community and all! I send greetings from Seattle, Washington, in the bioregion of Cascadia, North America. I'm grateful and joyous to be able to share my artwork, thoughts and words with you, especially in these unusual times via cyber modalities in the efforts to transition from the Anthropocene to the reciprocal mutuality of the Symbiocene.  
Be well, and enjoy all that the Artists here bring forth to fruition through their creative endeavors.  
Kindest regards, Gordon Wood

*\*\*\*Please Note: I have been graciously permitted by IEC to submit and provide this written text in-place of a short video. I have opted to do so for the reasons that it allows me to focus my intentions, thoughts and words in a significant dialogue regarding **Integral Art** better than a five-minute video format.*

*My desire is to continue the significant dialogue about Integral Art with the foundation laid out by Michael Schwartz, PhD in "**In the Spirit of Wholeness: Integral Art and its Enchantment Aesthetic**" & "**Prolegomena to Art's Transdisciplinarity**".*

*I've included links to a wonderful piece Michael Schwartz composed about my art for Integral Life, "**Nature and the Truth of Art**" and "**In the Spirit of Wholeness**" below from my website:*

<https://gordonwoodart.com>

[https://gordonwoodart.com/images/site/In\\_the\\_Spirit\\_of\\_Wholeness\\_Integral\\_Art\\_2015.pdf](https://gordonwoodart.com/images/site/In_the_Spirit_of_Wholeness_Integral_Art_2015.pdf)

*\*\*\*From The Art Exhibition Catalogue, The Fourth International Integral Theory Conference, July 16 - 19, 2015 Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California*

[https://gordonwoodart.com/images/site/Nature\\_and\\_the\\_Truth\\_of\\_Art\\_1-2013.pdf](https://gordonwoodart.com/images/site/Nature_and_the_Truth_of_Art_1-2013.pdf)

## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Nature - nonlinear, complex and dynamic – is the phenomenal, cognitive, intuitive, and reciprocal ingredient for me as an artist. Essentially this is the Generative Order, from which I become humble when I try to understand, even a small corner of a web of interconnected, symbiotic elements and relationships, each of which is inter- or intra-dependent on a majority of others in the biosphere and cosmos. In my art, I work with the elements of the natural system and rearrange them. I try not to do any harm to the source, while I hope that the objects I create let us see the human-nature experience in a compact and expansive form. Nature is the symbiosis of the flux of chaos, mystery and organization. Our rational experience of nature is the challenging element. We are the wild cards in the natural deck, put here to test nature's resiliency. We fool ourselves into thinking that we can impose order on a system that nature already has functioning in a flowing existence. Through my art I try to bring myself closer to the source, to make my-self see the cosmos as it is, and to celebrate the energy and mystery in sensuous detail. By doing so, I hope my audience will see it - self in a new, more connected way. Human art gives us glimpses of the truth that art is nature.

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## Beauty

Beauty has dynamic and integrative meaning. Beauty equals, retains, and emphasizes truth, and connection to subtlety and the sublime through its presence. Beauty expands the relationship of the soul to spirit and beyond through increased awareness, openness, and perception. Beauty embodies the very drive, creative and evolutionary of the Kosmos toward greater depth and expanding consciousness in the witness, beholder and through empathic capacities. Beauty embraces us in the timeless now by suspending the other chatter in our brains, creating space to be present in the moment. The freedom of non-duality sustains beauty and truth. Beauty nurtures growth, inspires, and confirms all the potential in the Kosmos. Decay - entropy is inevitable, unavoidable, and regenerative. One can't have beauty without decay; they go hand in hand, the Yin and the Yang, the Wabi Sabi. My vision and objective is to be a warrior for sustainable beauty, transcendence, and transformation via translation of all that this wondrous Kosmos provides through my actions and art.

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## My Process & Integral Art's Essence in my artwork

My creative process and art practice have evolved over my entire life, with the past forty (40), years being the most concentrated consciously. It has always been focused on exploring and comprehending sentience, while celebrating the reciprocal relationships and inputs, feedback loops integral to natural provisions. Literally and figuratively, I've pursued connecting-the-dots the entire time, and in the 1990's discovered Ken Wilber's work and writings in Integral Theory through my introductory reading of his book "Eye of the Spirit". It resonated with me deeply, and hence began my deep and broad dive into exploring and comprehending integral insights. It is a natural, organic dimension to my art's inspirations, influences, sources and image making process.

I love the process of painting and collage as my primary techniques and conduits for channeling my insights through the creative process. Painting is physical and tactile, supplying a deep and diverse integration of praxis, techné and poesis through semantics and syntax dynamics. Collage and its juxtapositions within the matrix of painting lexicon expands these dynamics and dimensions dramatically through contrast and challenging our brain's (mind's), perceptual capacities in a playful, phantasmagoric phenomenology. In doing so, I'm able to include and integrate the multiple state realms, subtle states, causal states, and boundless states simultaneously.

My process is an open and authentic one of cognition and intuition, on-going research and discovery, with placing a potent and appropriate title to each artwork as a final step in closure and moving on to the next adventure in image making.

Michael Schwartz captures the essence of the foundation of Integral Art in his statements:

*"While embracing cultural diversity and global complexity characteristic of the post-modern movement, integral art renews romantic and modernist terms of enchantment, disclosing the world as having far more than only instrumental and quantitative significance. The distinctive enchantment aesthetic of integral art has several interwoven dimensions."*

*"One is the modeling of expanded states of consciousness which, following the perennial philosophy and its contemporary updates, attune us to domains and modes of being still too often neglected or dismissed in contemporary culture: (1) subtle states that attune us to the luminous radiance of manifestation, (2) causal states that attune us to the edgeless emptiness and fullness from which all arises, as well as (3) boundless states of always already oneness. Profound modes of aesthetic shining and affectation come forth – types of beauty and sublimity – which disclose and demonstrate the inherent dignity and significance of beings and being."*

*"Integral art is an unapologetic affirmation of the meaningful richness and depth of existence, registering the dynamic wholeness of being (inclusive of negativity and absence), fostering health and vitality in evincing a non-reductive inclusiveness."*

Suzi Gablik, in both her books *"The Reenchantment of Art"* and revised edition of *"Has Modernism Failed?"* also emphasizes, reiterates what Michael Schwartz presents through her insights.

*"Integral" conveys a sense of responsibility to humankind as a whole and to all living beings. The idea of integralism involves some very real changes in perception and understanding that have been occurring over the past twenty years. I would claim that a more ethical artistic vision is already functioning among us. Founded in dynamic models of integralism, intersubjectivity, and transdisciplinarity, this new artistic culture no longer depends on the primacy of the dealer-collector-critic-curator network, but replaces it with very different kinds of networks."*

This past year, I've discovered the work of the philosopher, biologist and writer Andreas Weber, and his insight contribution to the human specie's integration within nature, hence the Kosmos. He presents the insight of *"Enlivenment"*, that reconnects us to nature as part of a deeply inclusive commons of mutual existence and transformation. In the synchronistic transdisciplinarity of Artistic Truth, Enchantment, and Enlivenment I explore and ask that we all do so collectively, mutually and in

reciprocity by thinking and acting in what I propose as post-post-modern Holonic waves of development and objectives with art being an integral component.

### Nature and the Truth of Art

“Human art gives us glimpses of the truth that art is nature.” – GW

Gordon Wood’s art celebrates nature. As he says, “Nature – nonlinear, complex and dynamic – is the phenomenal, cognitive, intuitive, and reciprocal ingredient for me as an artist.”

We humans are physical and biological beings, strands in the web of life. We are also more than this nature, achieved through the evolutionary emergence of culture and thought, the latter transcending and embracing the physical and biological domains. (Destroy all culture, molecules and life-forms remain; destroy all life-forms and culture is no more.) Surprising as it might sound, nature is in culture and not the other way around.<sup>1</sup>

We do well to see that along with all the glorious cognitive and cultural advances, human history has maintained for millennia an impulsion to impose order and control upon nature. Culture and thought have not simply nor neatly transcended and embraced biological and physical nature, but have striven to *dominate* it, resulting in an unhealthy fit that is now coming to the fore with the ecological crisis.<sup>2</sup>

Wood himself has a unique view of this problematic:

We are the wild cards in the natural deck, put here to test nature’s resiliency. We fool ourselves into thinking that we can impose order on a system that nature already has functioning in a flowing existence. Through my art I try to bring myself closer to the source, to make myself see the cosmos as it is, and to celebrate the energy and mystery in sensuous detail.

Wood’s art discloses nature, not in the mode of a scientific truth, but in the equally important if undervalued manner of an *artistic truth* – a truth that shines forth in voiding the impulse to control or escape from our natural condition: nature instead serving as art’s model of a primordial generativity, overflowing fecundity, and affirmation of being. This is an art that profoundly heals the nature/culture divide.<sup>3</sup>

Michael Schwartz / December 2010

<http://integrallife.com/arts-nature>

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<sup>1</sup> On the evolutionary emergence of the phiosphere, biosphere, and noosphere, each new domain transcending and embracing what has come before, see the opening of Ken Wilber’s *Sex, Ecology, and Spirituality*.

<sup>2</sup> The German critical theorists Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, in their dark mid-twentieth century classic *The Dialectic of the Enlightenment* (1947), explained how this impulsion to control nature has resulted in humanity’s alienation from the natural world on the one hand and on the other in humanity’s self-alienation from its own natural constitution. ISE Teacher [Saniel Bonder](#) expounds a similar, if more luminous, narrative of humanity’s “hyper-masculine” epoch, a period from early civilization to the present, informed by unconscious impulses to control nature, fix the self, and/or escape the world – the latter being found in many forms of spiritual practice.

<sup>3</sup> In integral theory, one of the post-rational waves of development, called the centaur, re-integrates the body and the mind. The nature/culture rift being pointed to in this commentary, however, is deeper than what the centauric structure-stage mends, more along the lines of what Bonder calls the “spirit/matter split” (see his book by that title).