

3D PRINT

Eagle Nebula/M16, the Pillars of Creation

The Eagle Nebula, or Messier 16, is the site of the spectacular star-forming region known as the “Pillars of Creation”. Within the tall towers of gas and dust, showcased in a new 3D model, new stars are being born. The Pillars of Creation are a fascinating, but relatively small, feature in the southern part of the Eagle Nebula. The Eagle Nebula overall spans about 55 light-years across and is located in the Milky Way galaxy about 7,000 light-years from Earth.

How to Create Your Own Pillars of Creation



The Pillars of Creation in the Eagle Nebula, made primarily of cool molecular hydrogen and dust, are being eroded by the fierce winds and punishing ultraviolet light of nearby hot, young stars. Finger-like structures larger than the solar system protrude from the tops of the pillars. Within these fingers can be embedded, embryonic stars. The tallest pillar stretches across three light-years, three-quarters of the distance between our Sun and the next nearest star.

In 2D images, only 3 pillars (left, center and right) are apparent. However, in 3D, there are four separate clouds within the pillars:

- Pillar 1A is the top part of the left pillar
- Pillar 1B is the bottom part of the left pillar
- Pillar 2 is the central pillar
- Pillar 3 is the right pillar

The 3D sculpted computer model used in the Pillars of Creation visualization was converted to the STL file format and set atop a round base for use with 3D printers. Select the 3D printer of your choice to make your own Pillars. Download the files on our page. For the 3D-printed example shown here, one color of PLA filament was used. Support structures were not required. Some post-processing of light sanding and hand-cleaning were required to smooth the edges.



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