

# PILLARS OF CREATION

The Pillars of Creation are extensions of interstellar gas and dust situated in the Eagle Nebula (in Serpens) around 7,000 light-years away from Earth. They were first photographed on April 1, 1995, by the Hubble Space Telescope. The Pillars are named this because their gas and dust provide the necessary materials required in the formation of new stars and thereby new planets. However, they are also being eroded by light from nearby stars that have recently formed.

The pillars comprise molecular hydrogen, gradually being eroded and dispersed due to ultraviolet light emissions from nearby stars. The Pillars span around 4 light-years in length at maximum and are visible due to the shadows of evaporating gaseous globules, also known as EGGs, which shield the gas behind them from incoming UV flux.

It has been theorised that the Pillars of Creation were destroyed 6,000 years ago. This theory is due to images taken with the Spitzer Space Telescope. These showed a cloud of hot dust near the Pillars, produced by a supernova. Such a supernova's shockwave could have already destroyed the Pillars of Creation, but due to the finite speed of light, this destruction cannot yet be seen from Earth.

## References:

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