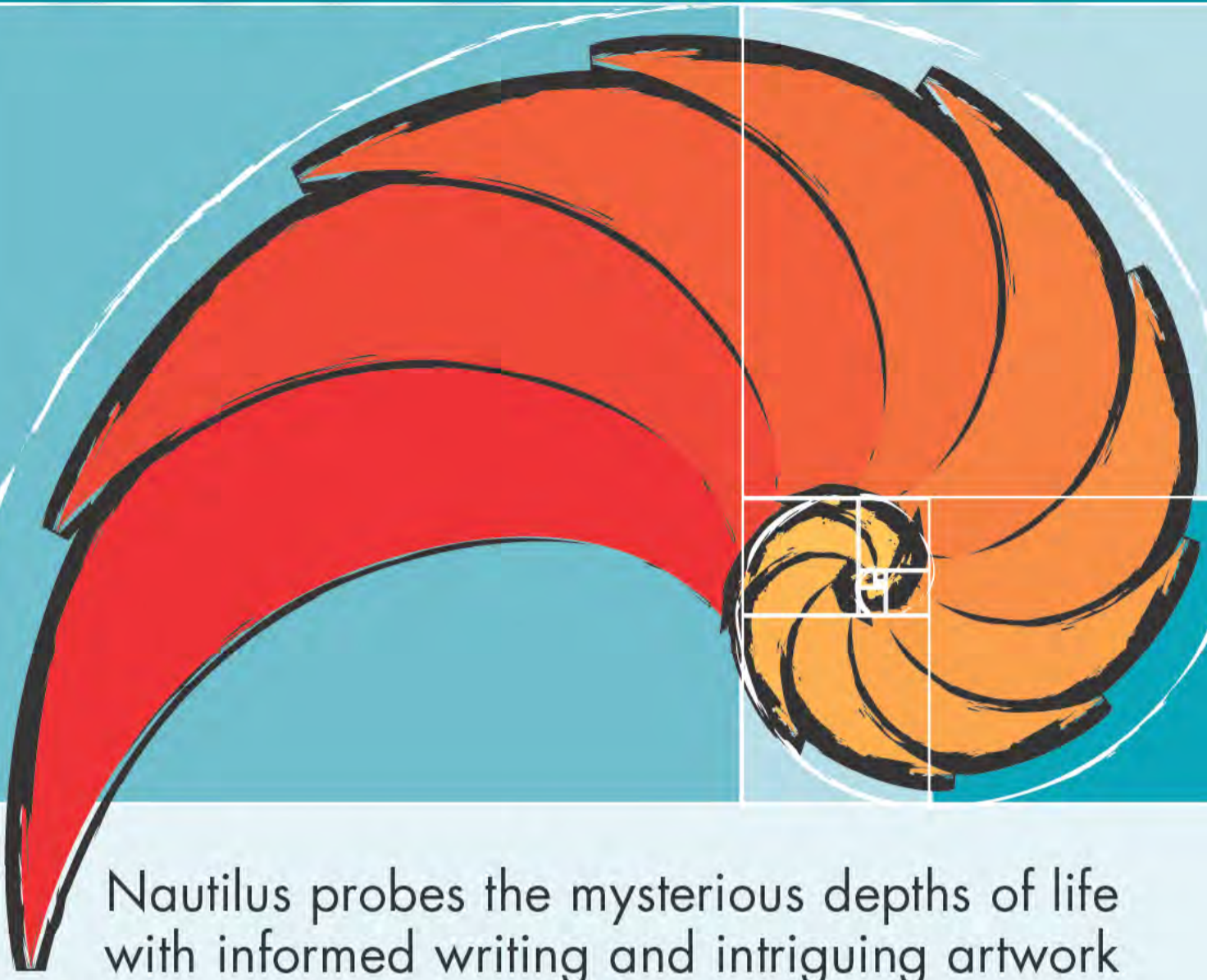


# DIVE DEEP



## Nautilus probes the mysterious depths of life with informed writing and intriguing artwork

The shell of the nautilus symbolizes renewal and growth.

As the creature grows each season, it adds a new, larger chamber to its beautifully spiraling shell. It continually outgrows its living space and has no choice but to rebuild and move forward.

The spiral design allows it to continue growing throughout its life, while preventing it from going back to its old space. Ironically, this ingenious evolutionary design is considered a living fossil, as it has changed little over its millions of years on earth.

This tentacled, spiral-shelled cephalopod is an appropriate symbol and name for **Nautilus**, a website devoted to exploring the mysteries of life using science, culture and philosophy. Knowledge is what allows us to expand our world and leave behind the smaller spaces we used to occupy.

### Monthly topics

The site is like an online magazine that explores a different topic each month. Each Thursday, a new chapter is posted relating to the chosen topic. Each chapter consists of several essays exploring different aspects of the monthly subject.

The essays are written by an eclectic collection of academics, writers, journalists, scientists

Each issue combines the sciences, culture and philosophy into a single story told by the world's leading thinkers and writers. We follow the story wherever it leads us. Nautilus lets science spill over its usual borders. We are science, connected.

From Nautilus About page

and other professionals. The topics are explored from a variety of viewpoints and disciplines, such as the sciences, math, music, art and athletics. Many are written like research papers, complete with footnotes and bibliographies.

This month's topic is genius, and it's explored from many angles. Famous geniuses are examined in novel ways, such as a comic book-style story about filmmaker Stanley Kubrick and Dutch master painter Johannes Vermeer discussing fame and the creative process over coffee and milkshakes. It ends with Vermeer signing an autograph for a fan who mistakes him for '80s rock icon Meatloaf.

The moral genius of Abraham Lincoln and Albert Einstein, along with Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi, is explored as it relates to their political or scientific genius. They had the insight to recognize their unique positions in the flow of history and the courage to follow their consciences to change its course. Their actions cost three of them their lives.

In addition to notable geniuses

from history, the essays also focus on other aspects of genius. The role of nature versus nurture in musical genius is explored, as is the brain structure and function of elite athletes. Artificial intelligence and genetically engineered genius are discussed. There's even an essay hypothesizing that city living is making raccoons smarter.

### Variety of styles

Because the writers are so diverse, the essays vary greatly in style. Some are light reads with a pop-culture feel, like the aforementioned Vermeer comic. Others are dense, academic slogs sprinkled with specialized terminology. But most are enjoyable and enlightening reads that can be finished in five or 10 minutes.

Past issues have covered topics such as light, time, home, waste and nothingness. A link at the top of the page allows you to peruse these prior posts. Another link lets you subscribe to a printed version of Nautilus. There are also links for the site's blog, store and to subscribe to the weekly Nautilus newsletter.

While the meat of the site is its

writing, what first attracted me is the artwork that accompanies the articles. Wonderful images from contemporary illustrators and, to a lesser degree, photographers, adorn the pages of Nautilus. Some of the artwork featured is animation, and there are some nice videos as well. The Society of Illustrators recognized some of the illustrations featured on the website in its annual exhibition this year.

It's not just the artwork that makes the site easy on the eyes. The overall design is quite nice as well. It has a clean contemporary look with intuitive navigation. The typography is organized with a logical hierarchy, but it could be more unified.

There are some interesting transitions as you scroll down the home page. A full-page illustration gives way to a grid of type and images on the featured stories. Continue scrolling down to view featured blog posts, the most popular posts and the Nautilus Spotlight post. The site has won, and been nominated for, several industry design awards, as well as awards for the writing.

Overall, Nautilus is an interesting and engaging website. Not all of the essays will hold your interest, but most of them will. And the artwork is a visual feast. If you're looking for a site that rises above the fluff that populates much of the Internet, this is it.

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