

SPACE SCOOP

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A Ghostly Face in Space

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Do you ever look at clouds in the sky and see the shapes of objects and people in them? Well, astronomers do the same thing in the night sky.

This new photo shows a cloud of gas and dust in space, which is called a nebula. New stars are born inside a nebula, so they are also sometimes called star-forming regions. These newborn stars are very hot and make the gas in the clouds glow brightly, which means that we can see them through telescopes.

Some of these space clouds are named after things that they look like, such as the Horsehead Nebula. But can you see why the nebula shown above is nicknamed the Gabriela Mistral Nebula? Here's a clue: click on the photo to see the full picture. Now, look closely at the right-hand edge of the pale pink part of the nebula.

What do you see? Can you see the outline of a human face? Astronomers think that it looks very similar to the face of a famous poet from Chile called Gabriela Mistral. (Click here to compare the nebula with a photo of the poet.) It's spooky!

▲ COOL FACT!

The connection between the poet and astronomy is even stronger, as Gabriela Mistral was born in a region of Chile that is home to some big telescopes.