

Image: Hubble snags starry galaxy

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Credit: ESA/Hubble & NASA, P. Erwin

In this image taken by the Hubble Space Telescope, the galaxy NGC 4380 looks like a special effect straight out of a science fiction or fantasy film, swirling like a gaping portal to another dimension.

In the grand scheme of things, though, the galaxy is actually quite ordinary. Spiral galaxies like NGC 4380 are common in the universe. These colossal collections of stars, often numbering in the hundreds of billions, are shaped like a flat disk, sometimes with a rounded bulge in the center. Graceful spiral arms outlined by dark lanes of dust wind around the bulging core, which glows brightly and has the highest concentration of stars in the galaxy.

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

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