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Decades ago, when explorers discovered painted figures of horses, bulls and other animals preserved on cave walls near Lascaux, France, they were astonished by the renderings' sophistication. The cave painters were, after all, primitive peoples of the Paleolithic Age. What prompted these creations? Was it an instinctual need to make art? A hunting guide to the movement of game? An essential part of early religious ceremonies? All three? ● No matter the intent, ancient and modern humans alike seem compelled to describe the world symbolically, whether in images, words, sounds or, in recent times, through the use of mathematical symbols. Within the last quarter century, the maturation of algorithmic code has enabled a new breed of specialist, the computer scientist, to become something of an artist. Like their forebears, these scientist-artists are attempting to represent reality in unique, vivid ways. ● The following trio of articles describes projects being conducted by Old Dominion researchers who are using computer software and hardware to depict the natural world or the ways humans influence and shape it. To us the work may seem complicated or exciting; millenia hence our descendants may judge it as we do ancient cave painting: beautiful, early attempts to clarify the complex.