

The Imaginative Transformation of Space and Place: Art and mathematics from studio to built environment and back again...

An LKL Maths-Art seminar by
Susan Tebby
Tuesday 13 November,
6.00 – 7.30pm
London Knowledge Lab, WC1N 3QS

My life and work as an artist has always co-existed with a deep interest in mathematics, particularly geometry, in such a way that, at times, they become part of the same complex web of ideas. Many artists use similar principles of mathematics: the golden section, or pendulum permutations, for example, but the outcomes are extraordinarily different. It would appear that the strictest of systems can give rise to almost infinite possibilities of expression; for this reason some ideas are returned to after many years with new insight.

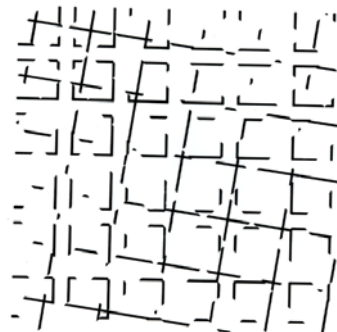
Working in the public arena presents many challenges. I am not so interested in sculpture-as-object, substituting town square for studio or gallery, but in a more integrated, environmental approach: working *with* rather than *for*. In this context, collaborative practice is essential, whether with client, public, architect, contractor in an *organisational process*, or with natural systems within and with which one is working: landscape, cityscape, topology, geology, or perhaps the kinetics of water in a *creative, investigative process*.

All welcome. No registration or ticket required, but an email to lkl.maths.art@gmail.com is appreciated to assist with planning.

For more than thirty years I have been investigating principles of natural design construction as used by Roman (and earlier) craftsmen in the design and making of geometric tessellated pavements and the systems that they probably employed, being almost certainly illiterate and innumerate. It would seem that they applied what I have called a corrective geometry, which worked whether or not they knew how or why it worked. I have used some of these principles in my own work, although, of course, research has shown me both how and why!

In addition, this approach has allowed me to develop projects for children so that they can enjoy making and drawing things which have underlying mathematical and geometrical structure, system and purpose, without necessarily realising how much they are achieving and absorbing educationally.

My current studio work involves light and shadow and the way in which these are modified by the surfaces across which they pass or are held or scattered. At the same time, the forms and disposition of the elements which generate the surfaces are the result of continuing research into mathematical systems and their principles.



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Susan Tebby has had a distinguished career as a practicing artist and as a fine arts academic. Her academic career culminated as Professor of Fine Art at De Montfort University, from which she resigned in 2001 to concentrate on her own work. Her artwork has been exhibited in more than 100 shows since 1964, and she is a leading expert on the work of Kenneth and Mary Martin, and the British Abstract Constructionism movement.

LKL Maths-Art seminar series

Website and archive: www.lkl.ac.uk/maths-art

This seminar is part of a regular series of maths-art seminars held at the London Knowledge Lab, usually on the second Tuesday of each month during term times. To receive email announcements about events, subscribe to the mailing list at www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/mailman/listinfo/lkl-maths-art.

Next seminar: December 11th, Meurig Beynon on model making and music making [www.dcs.warwick.ac.uk/~wmb]

We propose these seminars as explorations of the connections between "mathematics" and "art", where both terms are understood broadly: art implies visual art (painting, drawing, sculpture, computer graphics, video), architecture, music, textile art, literature/poetry (and others), and mathematics implies both mathematics as a discipline and the related disciplines in science and engineering for which mathematics is an essential means of expression and communication.

Seminars are normally video-recorded for viewing on the website, and may also be web-cast live.

The seminar organisers are John Sharp and Phillip Kent. We welcome your suggestions about speakers or topics for future seminars; email us at lkl.maths.art@gmail.com.

Getting to the London Knowledge Lab

Nearest tube stations are: Holborn (Central, Piccadilly lines), Russell Square (Piccadilly line). Approximately 10-15 minutes walk from either station.

