



Shoreline Community College Art Gallery
16101 Greenwood Avenue North
Shoreline, Washington 98133-5696

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LUN-YI TSAI

Transition Gadgets

April 3 – April 30, 2008

Opening Reception Thursday, April 3rd, 3:30 – 5pm

Shoreline Community College Art Gallery is proud to announce a solo exhibition by former Seattle artist Lun-Yi Tsai. In "Transition Gadgets," Tsai presents encaustic paintings inspired by the vivid colors of his new home Miami. In light of this recent move, he offers an exploration of mappings, which are quintessential mathematical objects. A mapping takes you from one place to another. What distinguishes your starting point from your destination? There are gadgets that allow you to discover these differences. The artist, with the help of his friend and mathematician Aravind Asok, uses the classical example of Hopf mappings to illustrate the act of mapping from a new perspective.

Brought up in an artist's family and trained as a mathematician, Tsai combines the artistic and the mathematical into lyrical drawings, paintings, and sculpture. His works reveal the hidden interconnections between the two apparently divergent disciplines of math and art. What makes Tsai's work so interesting to mathematicians and non-mathematicians alike is that he is able to bridge the gap between left- and right-brained individuals.

In the words of University of Washington Math Professor Sándor Kovács, "His works bring to life difficult mathematical concepts in a way that makes them approachable to a non-mathematician while giving a new visual image to the mathematician's understanding of the idea behind the concept. Lun-Yi's artistic touch combined with his enthusiasm and relentless energy to strive to understand difficult mathematical concepts yields absolutely unique results."

After their first meeting in November of 2006, Tsai and Asok started a dialogue that by the summer of 2007 had blossomed into a series of in-depth lectures/exchanges about the mathematical notion of "space" in Asok's office in the Math department at the University of Washington. Even though Tsai has in the meantime moved to Miami, these conversations have continued online. A recent visit to Miami by Asok has resulted in the creation of many new paintings in this exhibition.

In the words of Aravind Asok:

"Lun-Yi Tsai's most recent art explores the process of mathematics. To many people, this process consists of the formal manipulation of algebraic equations or the writing of proofs in plane geometry. While mathematicians often do write proofs, study geometry and perform formal manipulations, they don't usually study ideas that are explained in a few lines. On the other hand, mathematicians often do use elementary pictures to guide their investigations and motivate their proofs. Lun-Yi's latest work is inspired (in part) by our discussions about the evolution of the mathematical conception of space, and by the simple pictures I drew in an attempt to illustrate the concepts at hand.

"The classic Chinese work 'The Nine Chapters on the Mathematical Art' (1000-200 BCE) explains nine mathematical concepts in the form: (i) statement of the problem, (ii) statement of the solution, and finally (iii) explanation of the solution. Perhaps mirroring this construction, these new pieces begin with a 'problem,' the paper transcription of a mathematical lecture, on top of which Lun-Yi's beautiful encaustic 'solutions' are superimposed. What remains is for the observer to provide the explanation of these 'Transition Gadgets.' One might call them 'Sixteen Encaustics on the Mathematical Process.'"