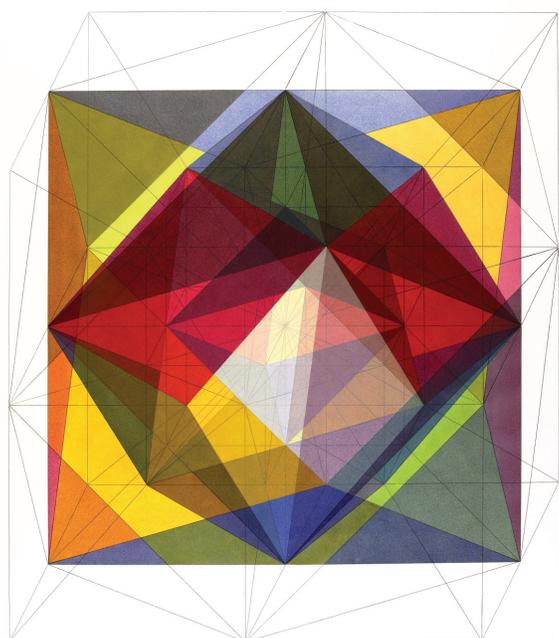


Bridges Pécs 2010

Paul Gailiunas



Chrome 163, John Hiigli, 2005.

The Bridges Conferences, running annually since 1998, bring together mathematicians, scientists, artists, educators, musicians, writers, computer scientists, sculptors, dancers, weavers, model builders, and more in a lively atmosphere of exchange and mutual encouragement. Each participant will experience the conference differently, and I can only record my personal recollections of the 2010 Bridges in Pécs, Hungary, the widest ranging conference so far.

Bridges is not just talks. An innovation in 2010 was a film fest, held on the first evening. One

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item illustrates the informality and dynamism of Bridges. The night before the opening, people were sitting around talking, and a newcomer showed an animation. The moderators of the film fest happened to be present and were so impressed that with less than twenty-four hours' notice the schedule was changed to include this work.

The art exhibitions provide another example of the flexibility of Bridges. Work in the official exhibition has been formally submitted and appears in the catalogue: Mingjang Chen's *Chaotic Landscape Painting* uses elements that arise naturally from iterated function systems to produce a convincing landscape in the traditional Chinese style. John Hiigli's *Chrome 163* depicts overlaid images of polyhedra, and for me the challenge is to understand how they are related. Another piece that challenges the viewer to apprehend multiple images is *Coquillage* by Jacques Beck. A highlight of the informal exhibition was pieces created by



Coquillage, Jacques Beck, 2009.

scribing circles onto stainless-steel plates. Shine a light and a three-dimensional image appears. The stainless-steel versions of some of Lajos Szilassi's regular toroids have also stayed in my memory.

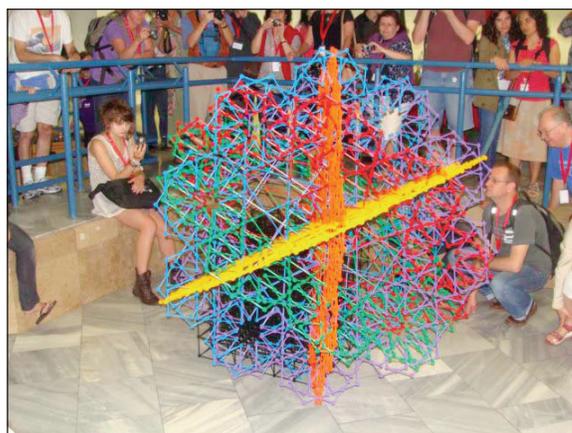
Another innovation was the ScienTile Competition. There were seventy-two designs that included several imaginative ideas, as well as straightforward decorative tiles of high quality. Of course there were the regular Bridges extra events: the music evening, the informal music evening, the theatre night, and the excursion.

I had visited the region of Pécs before, but I was very happy to visit some of the attractions again. The sculpture park at Nagyharsány was certainly worth a second visit. The Apáczai Education Centre, a school complex apparently attended by almost all the children in Pécs, was new to me. The main reason for visiting it was to see the Bridges Pécs 2010 Zome sculpture in its permanent place. Since it had to be transported, it was quite small, but, as usual, it was an impressive creation.

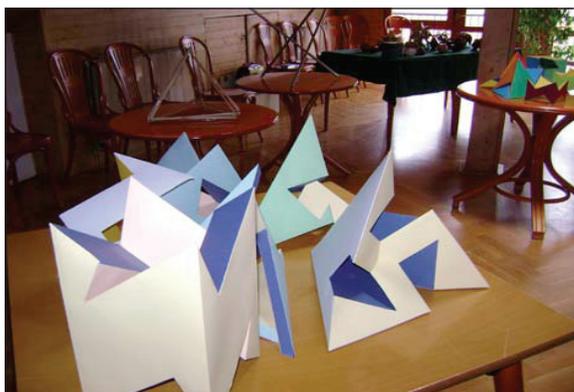
Theatre Night was a performance by the Schaffer and Stern Dance Ensemble, who use the medium of dance to explore and communicate mathematical concepts. The evening was entertaining, as well as thought-provoking, and thoroughly enjoyed by the audience. The informal music event was as varied as ever, with a selection of Bridges participants displaying an eclectic mix of styles to a high musical standard. The formal event consisted



Building the Zome Sculpture



The Zome sculpture installed.



The informal art exhibition.

mainly of modern jazz and improvisation with the Ávéd-Fenyvesi Quartet and *The Well-Tempered Universe* by Sc.Art. We also had the ANK Pécs Children's Handbell Choir and the staggering virtuosity of Katalin Gál Poór, who performed his own composition based on the opening digits of the decimal expansion of π .

Even if you did not come to Pécs, if you have ever been to Bridges you will recognize the special character of the conference I have described. If you have never been to a Bridges conference, all I can say is, you do not know what you are missing.