

Author's Preface

Why did I make a mathematical gallery? Lithography combined with watercolor has been my hobby for many years and mathematics my profession, so sometimes, mathematics creeps into my pictures, though it is not always easy to see.

This essay by my granddaughter, Joanna R. Ingebritsen, written when she was 11 years old, expresses more clearly how mathematics and the senses combine.

Math and Me

1. Color: If math were a color, it would be a bright purple. Math is so up and down. One moment you are happy with the way things are going, the next you're frustrated. Purple is composed of two colors that describe this experience. Red describes excitement, blue symbolizes contentment, and purple is made up of both of these.
2. Sound: If math were a sound, it would be a soft, constant hum. Math is everywhere, though it wouldn't be too noticeable for you don't ever notice it unless you think about it.
3. Taste: If math were a taste, it would be the taste of soda. Soda has a taste really different from anything else. The fizziness seems to give it an attitude: explosive and fun at the same time. Sometimes math can be fun; other times it makes you cranky and you feel you're going to explode with anger.
4. Emotion: If math were an emotion, it would be mischievous. You never know what you can do with it or what it might lead to. It can cause lots of trouble, too, because so many people have trouble learning a new concept, or figuring out a problem.
5. Texture: If math had a texture, it would be rough. Here and there are little imperfections called: taking too long and hard to grasp.

All in all, math could be many things: Purple, a constant hum, the taste of soda, mischievous and rough. But, most of all the two words that describe math are: useful and great.

Mathematics can also be very beautiful when a hard problem turns out to have a very elegant solution. I hope that these pictures give you a little insight. If the mathematics at any point looks too hard, just skip it, or leave it for later.