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MICHAEL SCHULTHEIS

Dreams of Pythagoras

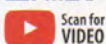


1
*Cardioid
Limaçons of
Pythagoras,*
acrylic on canvas,
48 x 72"

2
*Pythagoras
Winter,* acrylic on
canvas, 48 x 48"

3
*Balios and
Xanthos,* acrylic
on canvas,
48 x 72"

4
*Convex Limaçons
of Pythagoras,*
acrylic on canvas,
60 x 60"



Some may agree with Augustine of Hippo who believed “that mathematicians have made a covenant with the devil to darken the spirit and confine man in the bonds of Hell.” Others may agree with Bertrand Russell who wrote, “Mathematics, rightly viewed, possesses not only truth, but supreme beauty—a beauty cold and austere, without the gorgeous trappings of painting or music.”

Artist Michael Schultheis writes, “As humans, we have a fascinating capacity to visualize mathematics. Our analytical concepts can be visualized, written down in notation, and then shared as a logical and visual language for others. These creative issues from our minds are analytical expressions, and the visual process of rendering them is analytical expressionism. This is the world I explore while painting.”

Schultheis takes the cold analytics and finds in them the gorgeous trappings Russell thought were lacking. He was trained as an economist and worked in computer software engineering. Gazing at whiteboards after long meetings, he saw beauty in the scribbled formulas, erasures and layers of information. He has taken the process of working out solutions on a whiteboard to making paintings in which his calculations and the forms that result resemble the gestural aspects of abstract expressionism.

Winston Wächter Fine Art in Seattle, Washington, is hosting its fifth solo exhibition of his paintings, *Dreams of Pythagoras*, through December 23. Pythagoras was the ancient Greek philosopher and mathematician whom most of us know for the Pythagorean Theorem (“The square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the square of the other two sides” comparing the three sides of a right triangle.)

Schultheis explains, “Pythagoras falls into a deep sleep and dreams of all the progenies of his original idea. These paintings are what he sees in the internal chalkboard of his mind.”

In *Balios and Xanthos*, two heart-like shapes formed when a circle rolls around a



3

circle of equal radius, face each other at the left of the canvas. These two limaçons are geometric forms that appear throughout the composition in a dense mass of calculations that seemingly floats in the blue vastness of space, or the blue Aegean in the mathematician's dream.

Balios and Xanthos were two horses given by Poseidon to King Peleus of Phthia who, in turn, gave them to his son Achilles to draw his chariot in the Trojan War. Achilles' friend Patroclus fed and groomed the horses and when Patroclus was killed in battle, the horses are said to have stood still on the battlefield and wept.

Schultheis is comfortable with people reading into his paintings, seeing the geometric shapes as objects and inferring relationships between and among them. The two limaçons are two forms in geometry, related in their having been formed by the same intimate movement of circles. They may be Balios and Xanthos, and they may be Achilles and Patroclus. The gallery comments that in other paintings, the two warriors are "represented as two limaçons circling around each other to find, and ultimately draw a new orbit together." ●



4