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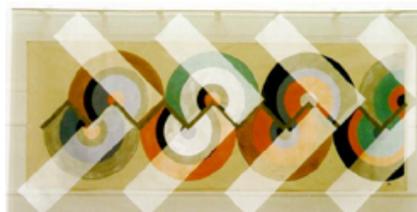- CAMPUS STOCK PHOTOS
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By Cindi Schmalz (March 29, 2007)

Arts and Mathematics Conference Celebrates 15th Anniversary at Science Library March 30

The University at Albany celebrates the 15th anniversary of the Art and Mathematics Conference (AM) with a reception and presentations on the first floor of the Science Library on Friday, March 30, from 1 to 4 p.m.

Highlighting the conference is an exhibit, also located on the first floor of the Science Library, running through April 30, of the work of featured artist Benigna Chilla, professor of art at Berkshire Community College. From 2 to 4 p.m., there will be a discussion of the artwork and slide shows.

Benigna Chilla, "Shifting Circles", 1990

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Chilla received her M.A. from UAlbany in 1973 and her M.F.A. from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1974. She has spoken at several conferences and has been the curator of many exhibits over the years. Her optical geometric art is made up of three planar surfaces consisting of one canvas surface and two layers of screening. Each layer is a geometric painting; the paintings relate and interact as one moves in front of the artwork. Her artwork can be viewed on the Visual Mathematics Web site.

Also on display is UAlbany Professor of Sculpture Edward Mayer's work *Blocolus Prime*, in the atrium of NanoFab 200 (CESTM). The 18-foot-high sculpture is fabricated from 720 conical wire frames designed for growing plants. A star-shaped form is created when eight of the conical frames are fastened together, radiating out from a spherical center. Ninety of these basic modules link up to produce a rectangular structure which moves in and out of chaos and order as one views it from different vantage points, alternately revealing a variety of repetitive patterns - spheres, cones, diamonds - or a blur of linear confusion.

In the late 1960s, Nat Friedman, founder of the Art and Mathematics Conference and professor emeritus of the Department of Mathematics, saw connections between the mathematics he taught and the art he created. In 1980, he set up and taught a course devoted to the creative process in mathematics and art. In 1992, he organized the first conference at UAlbany, which was hosted here until 1998. The first conference brought together 150 participants.

In 1998, Friedman founded the International Society of the Arts, Mathematics and Architecture (ISAMA). Both AM and ISAMA conferences have been hosted at other universities in America and Europe.

Friedman said, "Art and mathematics are both about seeing relationships. Creativity is about seeing from a new viewpoint and this unifies art and mathematics." He maintains that "seeing" should be added to the three "Rs" of teaching. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are taught in elementary schools, and the concept of developing the ability to "see" should be included. The conferences have reinforced the important role that mathematics and art can and should play in visual arts.

Ivars Peterson's new book, *Fragments of Infinity*, reviews Friedman's Art and Mathematics Conference and other information about the subject. Friedman has also helped the International Society of the Arts, Mathematics, and Architecture publish the monthly electronic journal, *Hyperseeing*, in which this idea is further explained and explored through the artwork of visual mathematic. The journal is available free at the The International Society of the Arts, Mathematics, and Architecture Web site.

Editor's Note: Cindi Schmalz, a UAlbany senior, is an intern in the Office of Media and Marketing.

Please send questions or comments about the UAlbany News site to: **mediarelations@uamail.albany.edu**

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