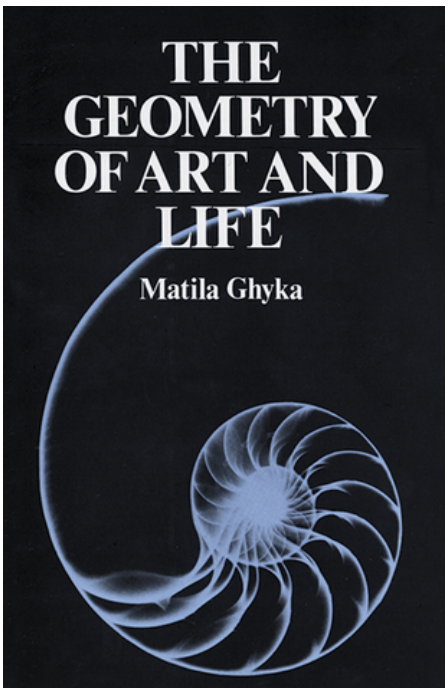

The Geometry of Art and Life

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Is everything chaos and chance, or is there order, harmony, and proportion in human life, nature, and the finest art? Can one find a natural aesthetic that corresponds to a universal order? If so, what importance can it have for the scientist, artist, or layman? What is the "true" significance of the triangle, rectangle, spiral, and other geometric shapes? These are but a few of the questions that Professor Matila Ghyka deals with in this fascinating book. The author believes that there are such things as "The Mathematics of Life" and "The Mathematics of Art," and that the two coincide. Using simple mathematical formulas, most as basic as Pythagoras' theorem and requiring only a very limited knowledge of mathematics, Professor Ghyka shows the fascinating relationships between geometry, aesthetics, nature, and the human body.
Beginning with ideas from Plato, Pythagoras, Archimedes, Ockham, Kepler, and others, the author explores the outlines of an abstract science of space, which includes a theory of proportions, an examination of "the golden section," a study of regular and semi-regular polyhedral, and the interlinking of these various shapes and forms. He then traces the transmission of this spatial science through the Pythagorean tradition and neo-Pythagorism, Greek, and Gothic canons of proportion, the Kabbala, Masonic traditions and symbols, and modern applications in architecture, painting, and decorative art. When we judge a work of art, according to his formulation, we are making it conform to a pattern whose outline is laid down in simple geometrical figures; and it is the analysis of these figures both in art and nature that forms the core of Professor Ghyka's book. He also shows this geometry at work in living organisms. The ample illustrations and figures give concrete examples of the author's analysis: the Great Pyramid and tomb of Rameses IV, the Parthenon, Renaissance paintings and architecture, the work of Seurat, Le Corbusier, and flowers, shells, marine life, the human face, and much more.
For the philosopher, scientist, archaeologist, art historian, biologist, poet, and artist as well as the general reader who wants to understand more about the fascinating properties of numbers and geometry, and their relationship to art and life, this is a thought-provoking book.

The Geometry of Art and Life Details

Date	:	Published June 1st 1977 by Dover Publications (first published 1946)
ISBN	:	9780486235424
Author	:	Matila Ghyka
Format	:	Paperback 208 pages
Genre	:	Art, Science, Mathematics, Nonfiction, History

From Reader Review The Geometry of Art and Life for online ebook

Alhamdamar Mudafiq says

all about "the golden ratio" is very clear in this book with many plate showed.

Brad Blackman says

Excellent book, though I wish it went into more analysis of paintings and sculptures over the ages.

I can't wait to apply a conscious use of geometry to my painting and design work.

Dead Poet says

Dense and riveting. After reading this book I now have and endless amount of ideas for paintings....and other stuff.

Brian says

This was a pretty good book on sacred geometry. The author is an often-quoted expert on the subject.

Libby says

very calming, read after some super intense short stories.

Michael says

I found this little book indispensable for gaining new perspectives on Geometry and the role it played in art, life, and architecture. The modern approach to geometry tends to focus on the mathematical or numerical relationships between objects being studied - i.e. all circles can be broken down into 360 degrees, whereas the sum of all angles within a triangle will add up to 180 degrees. While this modern approach is technically "correct", it is a far cry from the approach taken by the ancient geometers who measured fields, built temples, and created classical works of art.

Ghyka takes us on a trip through through the ancient process of construction, clearly illustrating the "active" nature of geometry, and potentially creation itself. He is able to do this by synthesizing the old and the new, choosing to use numbers to illustrate constructions rather than doing away with numbers entirely as other authors have sought to do.

This work is remarkably clear and succinct, illustrating constructions that anyone can follow and participate in. Gyhka spends a fair about of time on the concepts of ratio, proportion, and symmetry — not a surprise for someone focusing on the artistic nature of proportions. For as ethereal a book as this is, the author remains incredibly grounded, punctuating his prose with phrases such as "If Architecture is petrified or frozen Music, so is Music 'Drawing in Time'".

Insights such as these made the book a joy to read, all the while remaining imminently practical. I found this work to be essential in answering some of the fundamental questions found in Philosophical Geometry, most importantly whether the square or the circle should be considered the "primary figure" from which all others are derived.

A masterpiece of philosophical writing, even though some exceptions have been found to several of Ghyka's conclusions — most notably those regarding crystalline geometry.