

A R T A N E S S A Y

Notes on the Interweaving of Art, Language, Mathematics, and My Works

*A few thoughts on what
Arslohgo is dealing with*

Digital Art • Language • Picture

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Art, language, and mathematics form a curious triangle of human systems of expression. Each claims to articulate something fundamental about the world, each operates through signs and rules, yet each resists clear categorization as “natural” or “artificial.” This tension isn’t a problem to be solved—it’s the productive core of our creativity.

If we consider artificiality not as a binary opposition but as a spectrum, mathematics appears as the most artificial system: its symbols are pure convention, its rules explicit and exceptionless. A mathematical proof tolerates no ambiguity, no regional variation, no historical relativization. The square root of 2 is irrational, regardless of culture or context. Language, by contrast, grows organically, almost like a living organism. Children acquire it without formal instruction; it evolves, adapts, mutates. Yet every specific language is an artifact of human culture, artificial in the sense that it must be made and transmitted. The German I interweave with English in my “lohgorhythms” is both organic and constructed. Art—and here’s where it becomes paradoxical—often seems most artificial when it appears most natural, and most natural when it displays its artificiality. This is what I aim to achieve, for instance, with my digital appropriations of Escher’s mathematical nature studies.

Mathematics has vocabulary and syntax, but it lacks what makes language alive: the possibility of misunderstanding, productive ambiguity, poetic imprecision. Mathematics is perhaps less a language than a linguistic ideal, the utopia of perfect communication without noise—or rather a metalanguage? My works should demonstrate that this separation isn’t absolute. When I digitally manipulate Escher’s geometric transformations, I’m speaking simultaneously in mathematical terms (through algorithms), linguistic terms (through titles and contextualization), and artistic terms (through aesthetic decisions). The boundaries blur.

This reveals a fascinating temporal dimension: Mathematics claims timelessness—a Pythagorean theorem is as valid today as it was 2,500 years ago. Language, however, is radically historical; every word carries sediments of its usage history. Art both dates and transcends—we instantly recognize a Renaissance work, yet it can still move us today. My digital appropriations add another temporal layer: these works are technologically bound to our present, to CMYK color spaces and algorithms that didn’t exist thirty years ago, yet they draw on Escher’s “timeless” mathematical structures, which were themselves playing with infinity. This creates a kind of temporal stratification—the eternal nature of mathematics, the historical nature of language, and the momentary nature of digital execution merge into works that contain multiple temporalities.

If language is artificial, does it follow that it’s art? This equation is too simple. Not everything artificial is art—a traffic light is artificial but not art (unless Joseph Beuys declares it so). Art requires more than artificiality: intention, aesthetic dimension, the possibility of failure. Everyday language mostly functions below the threshold of the artistic. But—and this is evident in my works—language always carries the potential for art within it. When “See/Meer” (sea/ocean) or “sehen” (to see) and “sea” collide in my works, when the visual and the phonetic drift apart, language’s latent artificiality becomes manifest art. Escher, whose work I appropriate, embodies the fusion of mathematics and art. His tessellations are mathematical theorems in visual form, yet they’re not mathematical communication. They’re art that employs mathematical structures, just as poetry employs linguistic structures without being

mere language exercise. When I digitally transform such works, another layer emerges: The code executing the manipulation is both mathematical and linguistic—programming languages are formalized intersections between human language and mathematical logic.

Perhaps the opposition of “natural” and “artificial” is itself the problem. We humans are natural beings who create artificial worlds. Our artificiality is our nature. Language, mathematics, and art are different modes of this natural artificiality, different ways the human mind orders and expresses itself and the world. In my works, I let CMYK color spaces meet mythological allusions, algorithmic precision generate semantic ambiguity—causing this dichotomy to collapse. The digital is no less “natural” than the analog when both are mediated through human creativity.

Mathematics, language, and art operate on different levels of meaning. While mathematics strives for unambiguous reference, language oscillates between precision and poetry, and art seeks meaning beyond meaning. Yet these levels are by no means hermetically sealed. In my “Sky” works, for instance, mathematical image calculation, linguistic double meanings, and artistic vision overlap to create a whole that’s more than the sum of its systemic parts. The questions about art’s artificiality, mathematics’ linguistic nature, and language’s artistic quality can’t be definitively answered because they’re incorrectly posed. They assume separations that don’t exist in practice. Thus each of my works is simultaneously a mathematical object (calculable, algorithmic), a linguistic sign (meaningful, interpretable), and an artwork (aesthetic, expressive). The boundaries between these domains are themselves artificial constructs—useful for analysis, obstructive for creation.

Art emerges precisely where these systems meet, rub against each other, alienate and fertilize one another. My “lohgorhythms” aren’t art *despite* being mathematically calculated and linguistically coded, but *because* they place these different systems of human meaning-production in productive tension. In this sense, the ultimate artificiality is perhaps the ability to translate, transform, and transcend between different symbol systems—exactly what art, in its highest form, has always done.