Artists Encyclopedia Article

Artists

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Artists

Artists use mathematics throughout their creative process. This woman may use proportions to determine the perspective of her painting, as well as the size of her canvas or frame.

Are artists and mathematicians two completely different kinds of people? Brain research suggests that artists may create their works by using the right side of their brains, whereas mathematicians may reason and calculate by using the left side of their brains. However, it is not necessarily true that art and math cannot coexist. Perhaps the most famous example of someone who excelled in art as well as math and science is Leonardo da Vinci. Indeed, many artists today use mathematical formulas and calculations in their work.

Anyone who mixes solutions as part of his or her work uses formulas and **proportions**. Photographers, for example, who develop their own film must mix dry chemicals and liquids to create the baths in which they immerse film and paper. Someone who works with ceramics mixes glazes and calculates formulas involving time and temperature for firing the glazed pottery. Most painters and graphic artists do not grind and mix their own pigments to make paint, but they do use the mathematics of proportion as they work with perspective. They also use math as they determine the dimensions for paper, canvas, and frames.

Moreover, all artists who sell their work to earn their living use mathematics to track costs, expenses, and income. Artists who work with expensive materials, such as gold, diamonds, and other precious metals and stones, may base their prices partly upon the current market price for these **commodities**. Sculptors, who may create a miniature or mold in wax and then cast it in bronze, may also consider their expenses for these procedures, as well as the cost of raw materials, as they determine the price of their artwork. Other artists adjust their prices based on the amount of time involved. As artists become known, their prices may move farther away from the cost basis and be more related to their aesthetic and market value. Nonetheless, every artist who uses a gallery or an agent will become familiar with the mathematics of percent as they pay commissions on every work that is sold.

See Also

Ceramicist; Computer Graphic Artist; Percent; Photographer; Ratio, Rate, and Proportion.

Bibliography

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