



Ephemer: The Intersection of Art and Math in Lea Stephany's Vision

Authors: Lea Stephany
Submitted: 20. June 2025
Published: 14. July 2025
Volume: 12
Issue: 4
Affiliation: Independent Artist
Languages: English
Keywords: Art; Ephemere; Exposition; Mathematics.
Categories: Visual Arts, Architecture and Design
DOI: 10.17160/josha.12.4.1055

Abstract:

In the following article, artist Lea Stephany discusses her new exhibition Ephemer in an exclusive interview. She explains the main ideas behind her latest works, emphasizing that while research and science rely on clear structures and firm logic, it is creative and unconventional thinking that leads to truly innovative solutions. The exhibition highlights the deep and meaningful connection between art and science.

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Editor's Summary

In the following article, artist Lea Stephany discusses her exhibition *Ephemer* in an exclusive interview. She explains the main ideas behind her latest works, emphasizing that while research and science rely on clear structures and firm logic, it is creative and unconventional thinking that leads to truly innovative solutions. The exhibition highlights the deep and meaningful connection between art and science.

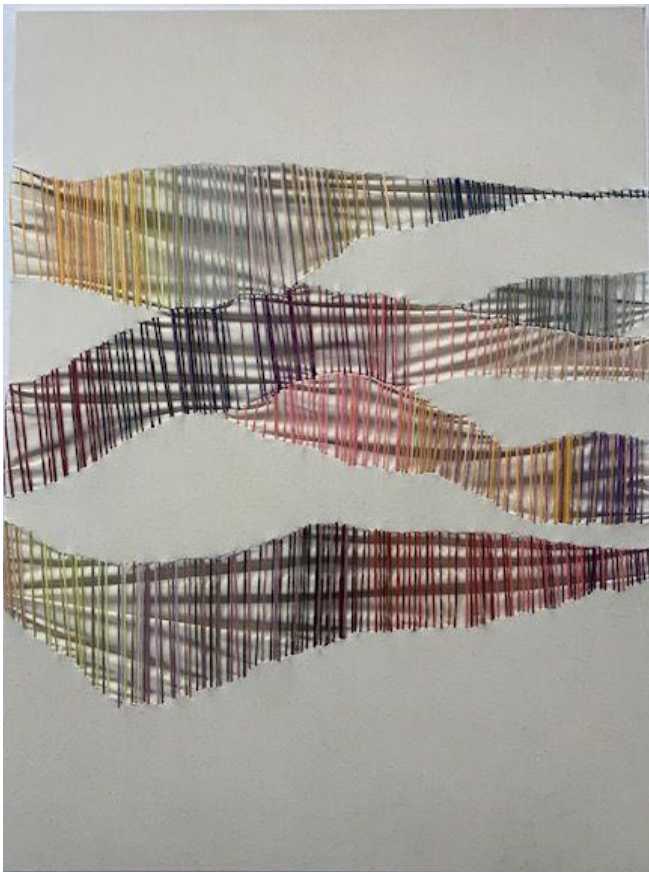
Lea Stephany's artworks can be explored further on her official website: www.lea-stephany.de



Lea Stephany is a young artist from Ulm, Germany, who recently exhibited her artworks in the exposition called *Ephemer* held by the *BioThera Roland Mertelsmann Stiftung*. In a recent interview conducted at the opening of the exhibition she shared the philosophy behind her art with us.

In her exhibited works, the artist highlights the connections and interdisciplinary aspects of science and art. Her artistic method is characterized by the active interaction with the canvas, making it part of the artistic product itself.

Lea is studying Art and Mathematics simultaneously and she also combines these two areas in her art. The connection between the two fields has a long history, and still, in every artist it materializes in a very different way. In this interview, we discover how this special connection is represented in the art pieces of Lea.



Untitled

Wool and acrylic on cotton

90 x 120 cm

2024



The title of the exposition, *Ephemer*, makes reference to the ephemeral aspect of art. Lea stressed the importance of the interaction of the viewer with the art piece. The material aspect of the art piece is volatile, because the importance lays on the feelings evoked. But it is not so much performance art, rather it reflects the volatility of the art product. In this sense, Lea gives great autonomy to the viewer when it comes to the experience and judgment of the paintings.

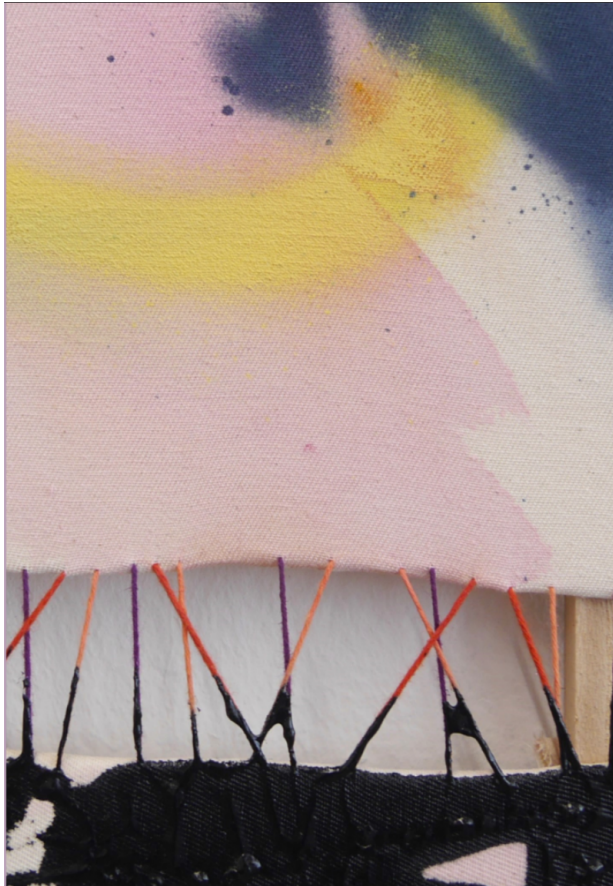


Kreislauf

Wool and acrylic on cotton

120 x 140 cm

2024

**Tanted**

Wool and acrylic on cotton

20 x 40 cm

2024

Tanted makes an allusion to the fleeting encounter as a person. Lea chose to write the title in English because she felt that in a non-mother language words have less weight. Like this, one is free to play around with the meaning without the culturally charged transcendence of the words. The piece, just as the title shows, represents two different feelings in one canvas.

The upper part reminds one of the rainy days when you go out as a child and spend the whole day playing. In contrast to the lightness of the upper part, the lower side is completely black, adding a dramatic tone to the painting. This generates a heavy contrast between the two atmospheres. Yet, just as Lea told us, the titles sometimes coerce the interpretation of the viewers into the illusion that they are seeing what the artist wants them to see. She believes in a freer interpretation of art, where the viewer has the freedom to connect with the art piece as they feel.

The creative process of interacting with the canvas in such an active way came from an accident. Once, when she was painting, one of her canvases broke, so she sewed it. This became the leading aesthetic of her exhibited pieces, where she felt more and more comfortable with the manipulation and playing around with the materials.

**Trug**

Wool and acrylic on cotton

120 x 140 cm

2024

Just as the artist explained, this is one of the aspects in which her two fields of study, art and mathematics, are similar. She places great importance on the process of creation itself, which for her is a continuity of trial and error. Lea always begins with an initial notion, but then the way the material and the external factors interact changes the outcome into some unexpected idea or painting.

Moreover, both mathematics and art work with abstract ideas, the only difference is that they get materialized in different ways. Equally, the two of them are driven by very deep emotions like love, curiosity, fear (...). These heavy feelings deeply impact the final product of the creation process. Through finding new ways of handling a material, mathematics and art are much closer than one would think.



As she explained to us, one of the mathematical theorems that best represents for her this connection of the fields is the *Rees Lemma*. The idea is that every bounded linear functional on a *Hilbert space* can be represented as a scalar product with a fixed element of that space—a concept mathematicians understand very well. Like this they can represent an abstract element in a tangible way. This is a parallel to how art works, because in art, you often have abstract thoughts or feelings that one doesn't always know how to express. That's why you might not express them in language, but instead search for new forms of representation. This principle is the one that guides the audience through the exposition of Lea Stephany.



About the Artist

Lea Stephany studied Art and Mathematics for teaching (Lehramt) until September 2024 at the State Academy of Fine Arts Stuttgart and the University of Stuttgart. At the State Academy of Fine Arts Stuttgart, she was part of the Margolis class, focusing on painting. Prior to that, she studied in the Bunk class from 2019 to 2020 and subsequently, from 2020 to 2021, with Jörg Mandernach and Anna Ingerfurth, who were serving as interim professors. In addition, she completed a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics at the University of Stuttgart from 2016 to 2022.

About the Authors

Sara Tóth Martínez has B.A. in History from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Currently she is doing an M.A. at the University of Freiburg in Altertumswissenschaften and specializing in Ancient Greek space perception and identity formation processes. She is also working as an editorial assistant at Josha.

Neher Aseem Parimoo works as a Research Funding Manager at the Mertelsmann Foundation, where she manages projects on cancer and artificial intelligence. Former Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Science, Humanities, and Arts (JOSHA), where she promoted open and inclusive publishing. With a background in biomedicine and genetics, Neher has contributed to research in neuropathology and molecular biology. She has participated in initiatives such as the SciCultureD Erasmus+ programme and Berlin Science Week, emphasising ethics and inclusivity in science.

Cinthya Souza Simas is a psychologist graduated from the University of Amazonia (UNAMA), with additional cross-cultural studies at the Evangelische Hochschule Freiburg in Germany. She is currently specializing in Clinical Behavior Analysis at the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná (PUCPR), and has completed training in Behavior Analysis, Human Resources, Legal Psychology, Suicidology, Psycho and organizational diagnosis, Neuropsychology, among other areas. She currently serves as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Science, Humanities and Arts.



Gerhard G. Steinmann is co-founder and Co-Editor in Chief of Josha. He is also Chair of the International Academy of Science, Humanities, and Arts (IASHA e.V.), a non-profit association. He is a pathologist, psychologist, and professor at the Medical Faculty, University of Kiel, Germany. He graduated from the University of Hamburg, Germany. At the Department of Pathology at the University of Kiel, he worked at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York, NY, USA. In 1985, he joined Boehringer Ingelheim, Germany, and held management positions in Research and Development, International Project Management, Pharmacovigilance, and Drug Clinical Research in the Oncology, Immunology, and Virology therapeutic areas.

Roland Mertelsmann is founder and Editor in Chief of Josha. He is a hematologist, oncologist and professor at the University Medical Center, Department of Oncology and Hematology in Freiburg, Germany. He started his career as a medical student at the Universities of Göttingen and Hamburg, Germany and the King's College School of Medicine London, UK. After his graduation at the University of Hamburg, he mainly contributed to the isolation of the blood stimulating growth factor G-SCF during a fellowship in Hematology and Clinical Oncology at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer New York, NY, USA. In 1985, he became professor and head of the Department for Hematology and Oncology at the University of Mainz, Germany, and since 1989 at the University of Freiburg, Germany.