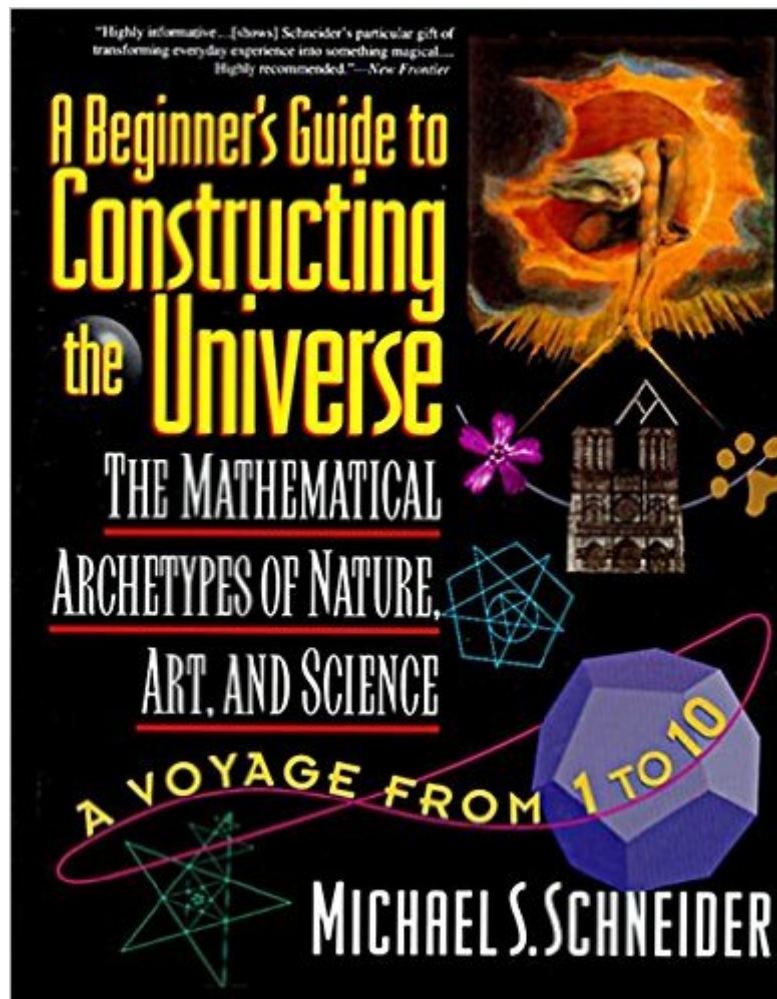


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A Beginner's Guide To Constructing The Universe: Mathematical Archetypes Of Nature, Art, And Science



Synopsis

The Universe May Be a Mystery, But It's No Secret Michael Schneider leads us on a spectacular, lavishly illustrated journey along the numbers one through ten to explore the mathematical principles made visible in flowers, shells, crystals, plants, and the human body, expressed in the symbolic language of folk sayings and fairy tales, myth and religion, art and architecture. This is a new view of mathematics, not the one we learned at school but a comprehensive guide to the patterns that recur through the universe and underlie human affairs. A Beginner's Guide to Constructing the Universe shows you: Why cans, pizza, and manhole covers are round. Why one and two weren't considered numbers by the ancient Greeks. Why squares show up so often in goddess art and board games. What property makes the spiral the most widespread shape in nature, from embryos and hair curls to hurricanes and galaxies. How the human body shares the design of a bean plant and the solar system. How a snowflake is like Stonehenge, and a beehive like a calendar. How our ten fingers hold the secrets of both a lobster and a cathedral. And much more.

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Customer Reviews

This is a very well written book that relates some basic concepts in geometry to science, architecture and life. Each of the ten chapters is about a geometric shape and Mr. Schneider shows how to construct it using only compass and straight-edge. The author begins every construction from a circle, and every line is shown as the intersection of two or more circles. This is consistent with his assertion in Chapter One that the circle is Unity, but I believe it is also more accurate

geometrically. Mr. Schneider gets into the Platonic Solids, explains the golden section and its use in architecture and nature, shows the regularity in nature and a lot more. This is a very educational book that covers a lot of ground, and does so in an entertaining way. What I really like about the book is the author's ability to bring geometry to life. There are many diagrams, drawings and pictures which make it easy to follow the text. The book is written for the layman, not the mathematician. If you are looking for a more rigorous introduction to geometry, try reading H.M.S. Coxeter (if you can!). This book would be a nice companion to "The Power of Limits" by Doczi, "The Geometry of Art and Life" by Ghyka, and "The Divine Proportion" by Huntley. If I had to recommend only one book about geometry for the average reader, this book would be my first choice.

I'm quite biased because I'm the author. Just thought I'd mention that it took over 20 years of research and 2 years to write & illustrate (500 illus!), plus hundreds of relevant quotations in the side margins. The numbers 1-10 (& 12) are the key to the code of nature's designs, and are the basis of an ancient symbolic language used to design the arts, crafts & architecture worldwide. Each of 10 chapters looks at that number & its related shapes, as they appear in nature's beautiful forms, in art, in symbolism, and as archetypes of our own spiritual nature. Shapes are the characters of the alphabet in which the Book of Nature is written, and this is a "math" book with no math (the kind of cold "math" we were shown in school, anyway). Some people call it "sacred geometry". This book will save you years of research, and show you how to appreciate the shapes of nature as a symbolic language familiar to our deepest self. Every shape has a "meaning" and this book shows you what they are. Reviews (Parabola Journal Winter 95, New Age Journal 8/95, etc, all remark how "accessible" it is. I hope you enjoy it. If you read it, write me, if you like. Happy Trails! Michael S. Schneider NYC

Who knew that our universe is such a spectacularly ordered place? Michael Schneider takes us on a fantastic voyage through the primary numbers one through ten, and shows us how numbers and geometry have helped shape our world and the cosmos. Why is a manhole cover round? Because a circle, whose diameter is everywhere equal, is the only shape that won't fall into its own hole. Three symbolizes harmony -- life has a beginning, a middle and an end. Life forms are often characterized by pentagons (cut an apple in half crosswise and look at the seeds), while six is the number of structure-function-order, as seen in the hexagonal symmetry of crystals and snowflakes. This book is by no means for math majors only; even math dummies like this reviewer will find themselves totally caught up. Art and design students especially will appreciate the almost infinite variety of possible

designs suggested within each primary number and the basic shapes (circle, square and triangle). Schneider also shows how, with a compass, pencil and straightedge, one can construct one's own symbolic universe. I came away from this book not only enlightened on the subject of symbolic math, but blown away by the relationship between geometry and religion. Because reading this book makes one realize that the universe is not random, as we see it within our limited scope, but has a definite function and order, and perhaps only the God who created it according to His plan can see it whole. Judy Lind

I really did not like math when I was in school. What was the point? Manipulating a bunch of abstract concepts for the mere sake of doing the work. Why don't they teach this type of math in schools? Well anyway, I believe that you can not truly understand life, religion and the world around us without taking a long look at this beautiful knowledge that has been preserved for so many millenia. If you want to look into the mind of God, study the rules by which he organized the universe. And if you think that everything around you is chaos, read this book and look again. You will find that everything from the microscopic to universal aggregate is striving toward simple and beautiful geometric patterns. The author does a nice job of giving to the reader a piece of his deep understanding and love for this subject. This book is more of a textbook and is neatly organized. I highly recommend also getting a copy of Sacred Geometry: Philosophy and Practice by Robert Lawlor. It has lots of exercises to immerse the student in the beauty of geometric relationships. These two books go hand-in-hand. Lastly, I can not emphasize enough how much more understanding I gained about religion by learning geometry. Does that sound bizarre? I suppose, but it is true.

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