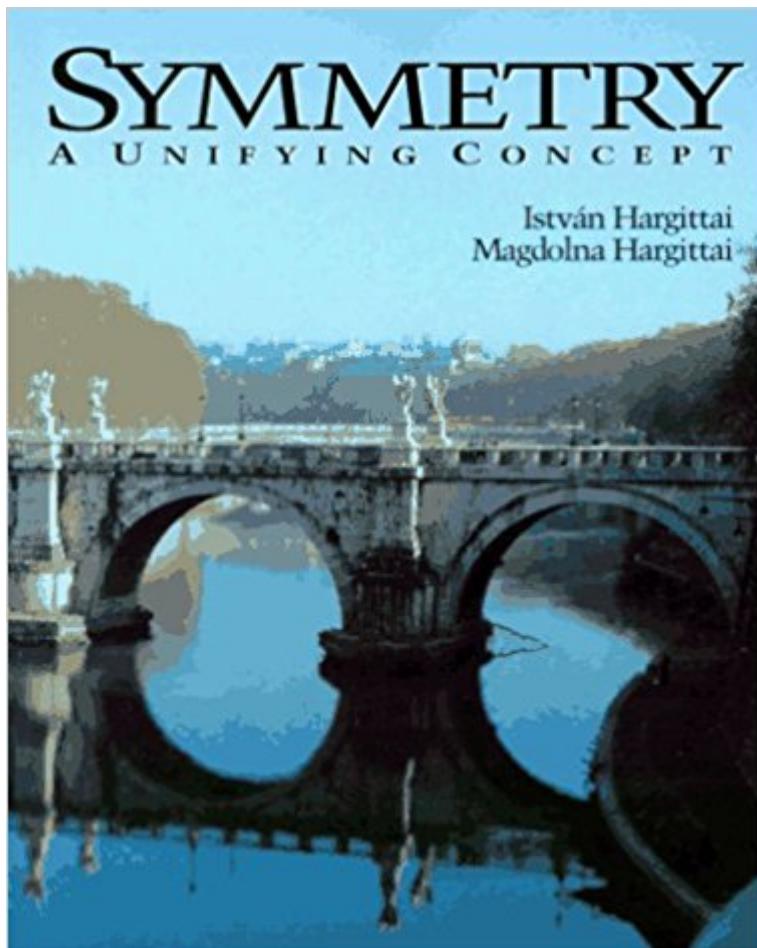


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Symmetry: A Unifying Concept



Synopsis

Book by IstvÁfÁjn Hargittai

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Customer Reviews

Book by IstvÁfÁjn Hargittai

This is a great book that changed the way I looked at the world after I finished reading it. Be sure to read it, though -- Just flipping through it and admiring the pictures probably isn't enough to get the full effect.

"Symmetry: A Unifying Concept", by Istvan and Magdolna Hargittai, Shelter Publications, Inc. CA 1994. ISBN 0-936070-17-X. PC 220/210 pages includes Intro., Further Reads, Author ID, Index 4 pgs., Ack. & Permissions 4 pgs., 550 photographs plus plethora of cartoons. 10 1/2" x 8 1/2". The authors are both distinguished research professors in structural chemistry with numerous publications, have produced an intriguing book on diverse symmetries, classifying some 25 varieties and defining their intrinsic natures in rather innovative style embracing those found in Nature and those produced by the Hand of Man. There is some exacting methodology in classifications that range from mirror, movement, chirality, rotational, snowflake, geometric, redundant, spiral, motifs, to crystallines, etc. At the molecular level, we learn all amino acids in living organisms are left handed and corresponding nucleotides (of nucleic acids) are right handed, and that all naturally-occurring

snowflakes are equilateral, equiangled hexagons. We are shown examples of Nature's utilization of Fibonacci series, the Golden-Ratio, -Section, -Rectangle, Logarithmic Spiral and the Magic Number 230 in crystalline structure. The treatise photographically encompasses and aptly describes a plethora of symmetries that should be of interest to all age groups -- it is not encumbered by mathmatic particulars. The causal representations of symmetry in Nature has yet to be elucidated, but may be a product of efficiency conservatism, inherent molecularity, or an assemblage not yet understood. Be assured that upon reading this book one is wont to discover symmetry in...almost everything, something which is sure to please the authors.

not a bad little book. actually i should say big book, as it is fairly large. the book is filled with many interesting photos and other visual examples of symmetry in nature, art, architecture, geometry, etc. interestingly two of the examples have been casualties of recent attacks, one a sculpture at the world trade center, and the other the beautiful spiral malwiya mosque in iraq.beware that the math is very light to non-existent in the book, which may be good or bad depending on your perspective. it also contains a few innacuracies/ommisions. for instance it does not differntiate between logarithmic, golden, and fibonacci spirals.golden spirals are logarithmic, but fibonacci spirals are not. the authors also perpetuate the myth that nautilus shells are golden spirals, when in fact they are only logarithmic.i'd like to see a second edition with more math, and more accuracy as well as better layout and graphic design. the richness of the visual material deserves a better designer (authors, have your designer read edward tufte).

Wonderful. Will expand your love of art.

Opened the book up and someone has cut out half a page. Kinda ruins the gift factor for my family artist.

Gain a new appreciation for the symmetry that surrounds us. The authors, both structural chemists, have assembled 550 photographs and 300 drawings that explore the mirroring, repetition, spirals and rotation of line, form and color in natural and human design. From the face of a tiger, and Blake's explicit "fearful symmetry," to Warhol's Coke bottles, Roman sculpture, Korean beam-end decorations, honeycombs, snowflakes, BMWs, the Eiffel Tower and Persian tile, this book is a visual delight. The text, if you are inclined, offers a clear explication of the authors' view that symmetry unifies, but the pictures easily stand alone. Try this: Find a full front picture of your face - bigger is

better - photocopy it. Cut this in half right down the middle. Hold each half, separately, with the nose edge to a mirror. What you are doing is assembling a portrait of two right sides or two left sides. Notice anything? (This works even better if you have a scanner and can manipulate the image on a computer screen.) It's just one of many revelations to be savored in SYMMETRY.

This book is a wonderful book for anyone interested in the subject. It describes the various types of symmetries recognized by mathematics, and shows many examples of each of them, as used in design. It is not very mathematical, in fact, and if you're looking for a book more heavily oriented in that direction, you might be disappointed. But if you want to get a first introduction to symmetry, and treat your eyes to some wonderful illustrations, get this book!

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