PHYSICAL MATHEMATICS SEMINAR

Pollockian Mechanics: Painting with Viscous Jets

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ABSTRACT:

Beginning around 1945, American Abstract Expressionist painter Jackson Pollock invented and perfected a new artistic technique based on pouring and dripping liquid pigment onto a canvas stretched horizontally on the floor. Long recognized as important and influential by art historians, Pollock's works have also been studied as complex webs. But although the artist manipulated gravitational flows to achieve his aims, the fluid dynamical aspects of his process remained largely unexplored. I will discuss Pollockian Mechanics—the physics of lifting paint by viscous adhesion and dispensing it in free jets—focusing on the role of fluid instability. This technique will be contrasted with flows of pigment employed by other artists. I will conclude with comments on the scaling regularities of the poured patterns and their affinity to the "geometry of nature."

TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2015
2:30 PM
Building E18, Room 466A

Reception following in Building E17, Room 401A
(Math Dept. Common Room)

http://math.mit.edu/pms/

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