



May12
Celebrating Women
in Mathematics

I-Math



Universität
Zürich UZH

Sophie Germain

'from prime numbers to elasticity'

lecture given by

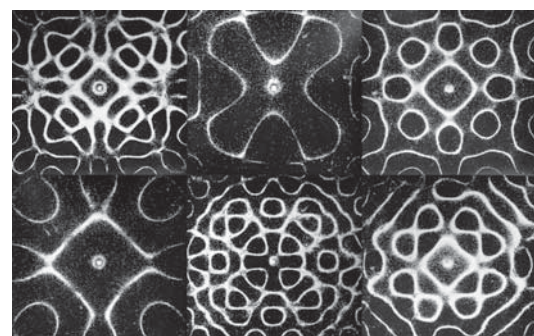
Elisa Gorla (Neuchâtel)

Mikaela Iacobelli (ETH)

May 20, 2026 - at 17:15 - Y15 G19



2, 3, **5**, 11, 23, **29**, 41, 43,
83, 89, **113**, 131, 173 ...
Germain primes



vibrating plates

Abstract: Do you know what are Germain's primes and why they are useful in cryptography? How to explain patterns of a vibrating plate? Should the mean curvature of a surface be called 'Germain's curvature'?

Sophie Germain (1776-1831), who worked and corresponded with Lagrange, Legendre, and Gauss under the pseudonym of Monsieur Le Blanc, was the first woman to win a major competitive research prize in Mathematics.

In this talk, accessible to all Bachelor students, after a short video on Germain's life, professors Elisa Gorla and Mikaela Iacobelli will explain some of her fundamental contributions to number theory and to the theory of elasticity.