

LEN HURLEY

The Highly Commended for Contemporary Art Awards 2016

Infinite Possibilities

By Dr Julie Rees

From the Central Coast of New South Wales, new media artist Len Hurley (b.1953) blends mathematics and art to create fractal artworks that are intricate and mesmerising. Fractals are an irregular geometric pattern that can infinitely recur no matter the scale. These patterns exist all around us from the smallest sub-atomic particles to snowflakes, clouds, and even the largest galactic cluster. Len's digital creations specifically explore the mathematical fractal space of infinite structures. By creating and manipulating geometric shapes, Len not only illustrates the beauty of fractals but provides a glimpse into the complexity of these forms that often cannot be viewed by the human eye.

Len received a highly commended in the 2016 *Contemporary Art Awards* for his animation *Three Boxes* (2016).

The animation begins by zooming towards and away from an intricate box, capturing it in various positions. However, with every magnification new details form a world where shapes and colours are combined to yield unique structures through which the observer's eye can wander. Len's incredible work takes a holistic view of the macrocosmic and microcosmic levels, offering a visual experience representative of the unseen worlds we are not privy to in ordinary reality. The superimposed melodic soundtrack adds further intrigue by encouraging a deeper sensory engagement with the work. *Three Boxes* (2016), aims to challenge the viewer's perception of infinity by providing a compelling example of the inner and outer worlds that exist beyond our everyday lives.

Through sophisticated algorithms, Len digitally constructs the geometric shapes in order to produce the seemingly infinite image. Throughout each stage of the animations, he carefully modifies the formula, which subsequently alters the outcome via form, colour, and light. His working method is through trial and error, by changing textures, colours, and mathematical equations numerous times. Consequently, his works can sometimes take up to six months to finalise. Len believes that this process is necessary to produce the desired outcomes. The resulting work exhibits the self-repetitive nature of fractals but also

highlights his preoccupation with construction and minute detail.

Exploring fractals since the 1990s, Len has developed his understanding of this

complex subject by taking advantage of technological advances. Through creating an interpretative representation of a fractal, Len's work allows audiences to consider the possibility that reality is limitless.

On this page, *Three Boxes* (2016), animation, 1920 x 1080 pixels.

Image courtesy of the artist

Len Hurley's artwork can be viewed at:
<http://www.contemporaryartawards.com/finalist-exhibition-2016>

