

Fractallic Design Presents:

<http://fractallicdesign.com/psychedelic/interview-with-fractal-artist-brummbaer/>

Interview with Fractal Artist Brummbaer

Tell us a bit about yourself, How did you come about to create psychedelic animations, what attracted you to these kind of visual aesthetics?

Let me skip the biographical details for now and I will tell you what attracts me at this very moment to fractal aesthetics. I will have to admit that I'm addicted to a fractal program called Mandelbulb 3D.

Maybe not exactly addicted - but almost!

And I'm not the only one!

There is a small group of individuals, who love to explore the visual manifestation of an algorithm that isn't more voluminous than $\frac{1}{2}$ a page of text and can be edited by you. The sheer multitude of forms and textures that spring out of these algorithms is mind-boggling and unprecedented in the history of the visual arts. You navigate worlds – unseen by humans so far – and you are the first one there! And these worlds are ready to morph into something completely different, with the smallest change of just one parameter. The addiction manifests itself, when you are not going to bed because you desperately need to know what might appear behind the next corner, or deeper in the fractal, or if we turn a 1.1 into a 1.2 ... It is the spirit of discovery applied to an inner space, big enough to display continents.

But we want to differentiate between what is called “Eyecandy” and a more meaningful, artistic expression. “Eyecandy” has nothing to offer but beauty, but so has my wastepaper-basket when I look at it through a kaleidoscope. Mind you, there is nothing wrong with beauty for the sake of beauty – it has its place – and some fractal images or animations are just breathtakingly beautiful!

As Tim Hodgkinson in his blog: “Orbit Trap – A Blog About Fractal Art” in a not uncritical, but very generous article about my Tralfamadore Paintings says: “I've often thought fractals are better used in supporting roles than playing the starring role themselves. I think that's the lesson to be gained from this collection of Brummbaer's fractal art.”

Yes, everybody has to determine for themselves if they regard something as art, but an image is not necessary art because it is “beautiful” or “fractal”. Particularly in a fast paced environment, where 30 frames a second rule, a still painting has to offer something more substantial, something lasting, something that reveals itself over time. Like a zen koan.

My fractals are romantic, they are very emotional statements...

Can you tell us a bit more about your special interest in fractals? What do they mean for you?

Dr. Mandelbrot looked at graphs of the New York Stock Exchange and could tell the genuine graphs from others, random generated graphs.

By the style – I presume!

Next he elucidated us with his ideas about coastlines – their varying measurements, depending on the distance, and the obvious reiteration of the shapes the closer you get. A coastline is pretty much recognizable as such, just by looking at the shape. If we change the line a little bit we can have a line that looks like a crack in a rock, or like lightning, or like a cloud and, and, and...

A line can be mathematically described as an algorithm.

I understood that Dr. Mandelbrot had found the mathematical equation for intuition!

Another example: Once I had painted a pile of broken hearts -- the hearts looked fine, and now I just had to paint some cracks on the hearts. To my dismay none of the brushstrokes I painted looked like a crack, but like somebody disfigured the hearts with poorly executed brushstrokes. I tried again and

again until I was coming to a point where I have the tendency to unintentionally destroy the whole painting. So I stopped! A little later, when I had distracted myself long enough, I suddenly felt the moment, walked over to the canvas and started painting cracks on the hearts that looked like cracks.

Where it came from I don't know – but it's what they call intuition. In this instance I actually got a little daring and tried what would happen if I tried to paint brushstrokes – It was not possible: Every stroke was a crack and it was my hand doing it without the interference of my brain, not even listening to the brain, once it was decided that I needed cracks.

Which programs and methods are you using to create your art work? Can you expand a bit about the process of your creation?

The answer is: Any method and any program that works! To specify: All the wonderful 3D fractal programs, which suddenly popped out of nowhere – most of them free downloads or available for very little money. The current favorite: “Mandelbulb 3D”, also “Incendia” – both free downloadable and maintained by some wonderful people, whose generosity reminds me of the sixties, when sharing was the way to start something new, without calculating future profits. Here I would like to remind the few people, who experienced an epiphany like I did, when I placed an x on a screen, and another x – and then the computer would draw a straight line between the two x's! Wow! And we understood instantly that we were intruding into a territory that was up to this moment exclusively owned and controlled by the government and other corporations. Until then, the only way to influence what would show up on your screen, was to write a letter to the TV-station. Timothy Leary was hailing us as the revolutionaries that would liberate the screen and make it available to everybody, as it should be in a free country.

Did it work?

Maybe to a degree – instead of kids passively watching cartoons, they at least have become active participants. I lately overheard two kids arguing about a character in a video-game: “Hey, don't kill him yet – I still want to experiment with him!” God bless his pointed little head!

Other programs I'm using are: 3DS Max, Painter, Photoshop, Premiere, After Effects, etc... For fractals besides the already mentioned: Xenodreams (which offers an output as a regular object), Mandelbulber, – and last not least some fractal plug-ins for Photoshop. At Fractalforums.com you will find more links to fractal stuff than you will have time to check. Good advice and free downloads. They are the best!

You use a big variety of mediums, from the newest advanced 3d computer programs, to classical old master's oil paintings techniques, why is that?

For a long time I was perfectly happy to create stuff in the computer, I wanted everything to be watched on the screen, no hard-copy should soil this planet with another object, no tree should ever fall to display my art. I still prefer it that way, but I also understand the joy of painting and creating a tangible object of beauty. I noticed there is an enormous difference between a plain computer print – even on canvas – and the mixed media objects I paint, which glow with color-overlays, hand painted in the old master's technique of layering opaque and transparent pigments to maximize the albedo and make the colors glow vividly.

When did you start painting? Have you studied in art or design school? What is your opinion about academic art studies? Where your inspiration comes from? What are the motivations for your work?

I never went to art school, but since I was on the road most of my juvenile years, I learned about art in a unique way: I became a pavement painter and I systematically studied great painters – very often popular local geniuses – by copying them on the pavement. (Like Rubens, Rembrandt, El Greco, etc...) And I liked the effect that the next rain would wash it all into oblivion. For the same reason I liked exploring light-shows years later: A few burned slides was all that was left from a night of visual debauchery – a small ecological footprint! In a world filled with unnecessary consumer objects, whose

production poisons the very world it is supposed to improve upon, a small ecological footprint seems desirable.

So naturally, when computers came around with the promise of whole worlds inside of a computer chip, I was ecstatic and for the last 30 years grew along with the hardware and the software.

I was privileged to be friends and work with some of the great digital pioneers and at times I've been called one myself. (Haha!)

A quick note: Computers are devices designed to model and simulate reality, and if we want to see a rock, or a tree, or a sunset on our screen – we will have to understand what constitutes a rock, a tree or a sunset, and, because the computer doesn't know, we will have to find out ourselves, and feed the hungry little circuits with the necessary data. The question how reality manifests, leads to truly spiritual questions taking us deep below the quantum level. – And we have come far this way – “simulated reality” has become at times indistinguishable from reality.

In fact, we also have reached a state where fractal imagery is not distinguishable anymore from our wildest fantasies. Understanding that we just have scratched the surface of this new phenomenon: “Fractal Design”, I expect to see more and more fractal inspired designs – by the end of this decade it might be as ubiquitous as art deco was at beginning of the 20th century.

All that's missing is the link that connects fractal space with real space – how to turn the “fractally imagined objects” into tangible designs for lamps, buildings, furniture, computers, etc.... Gravity and aerodynamics can be implemented into the fractal algorithms, and we will be able to create beautiful and functional objects, something like “form follows function” meets “Bavarian Baroque”, or a “psychedelic Bauhaus”.

Can you tell us a bit more about the connection of your work to Kurt Vonnegut books? In which way do they inspire your art? Can you add a bit more about the planet of Tralfamadore?

Of all people it was Timothy Leary who turned me on to Kurt Vonnegut. About Bokononism – a fictitious religion in “Cat's Cradle” one of Vonnegut's remarkable books – Timothy said: “This is a perfect example of how religions will be in the future”. Wishful thinking by Timothy, who, of course was at other times a great master in the transition from “wishful thinking” into a “self-fulfilling prophecy”. Vonnegut, on the other hand, who invented Tralfamadore, describes it as a planet without any particular limiting or inhibiting attributes. He himself created several contradicting versions of Tralfamadore in different books and if I recall correctly – somewhere he describes Tralfamadoreans looking like toilet plungers with triangular eyes on top. So everybody feel free to create their own version of Tralfamadore.

Can you tell us a bit more about the story of "Thru the Moebius Strip", what's it all about?

With a storyboard by Jean Girard Moebius, and without much supervision, I created this trailer for a CG movie that was finally produced in China and is a lot better than the American critics would let you believe. I'm sure it is available as a DVD: “Thru' the Moebius Strip”

Great movie for kids, nice Moebius design!!!

Brummbaer L.A. 2011

check out more great art work from Brummbaer:

YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/Brummbaer45>

Fractal Tralfamadore paintings and animations:

<https://sites.google.com/site/brummbaerontralfamadore/>

My old website also with precomputer material:

<http://www.brummbaer.net/>

Vimeo:

<http://www.vimeo.com/user924863/videos>

Flickr — mixed paintings:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/brummbaerbrummbaer/>

My two music CDs from where I took a lot of my animation soundtracks:

<http://www.cdbaby.com/Artist/Brummbaer>

The two E-books I published — The first one has been published as a paperback in Germany and got some very friendly reviews:

http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=pd_rhf_s_3?ie=UTF8&search-alias=blended&keywords=kindle%20brummbaer

...and some more biographical material:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brummbaer>

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0115949/>