

Lee McCormack

Lee McCormack's egg-shaped work 'Oculus' is a room of one's own, shaped to the curves of the body. 'Oculus' is a curvaceous, ergonomically sculpted pod for one, where the occupant can expand their imagination. For 'Decompression Chamber' McCormack is presenting a specially customised version of the work, clad in concrete externally, though retaining its voluptuous curves, and sprayed with brilliant lime green inside. When stepping inside the work, visitors experience an experiment in colour which alters the viewer's perception of space and time. The glowing colours and UV lights disorient, making the viewer feel like they are floating in deep space. The "intimate, womb-like personal space, moulded to the human form" provides an extraordinary platform to experience such an immersive, experimental work. The 'Oculus' can be utilised for the display of multimedia works of all varieties; as the designer notes, the 'Oculus' pulls together ideas from the artist, the composer, the web designer, the filmmaker, the software developer, the curator, the musician."

The 'Oculus' is a supremely technologically advanced way of creating, to use McCormack's phrase, "a third space" outside of our normal experience. It provides a space for one's imagination to take flight by creating a complete, enclosed environment for one individual, and is as the designer argues, "a place to work and play, a place to dream, stimulate your senses, your personal sanctuary: a place to imagine the impossible." the 'Oculus' is designed to be an embracing space, an innermost retreat which isolates its user within an egg-like shell. Inside, the isolation from distraction allows us to enter a state of heightened receptiveness. As McCormack notes, "the 'Oculus' enables you to be in your own personal space, where you seem to notice things you never saw or heard before in films you might have seen a dozen times." Selecting the perfect level of lighting, sound, climate controls, and functions permits every aspect of the outside world to be put at bay.

McCormack has said, "I have always been interested in the idea of the container and contained, including pod-like forms that can protect or encapsulate a person or object." His first commercially produced work was a protective case called 'Pod' for transporting high-tech equipment. The 'Oculus' continues his interest in experimental uses of industrial processes; it draws upon technologies from the automotive and aviation industries, drawing on the aspirations of earlier modernist design. McCormack's refined visual vocabulary echoes those of illustrious architectural predecessors and near-contemporaries like 'Future Systems'. Indeed we might best see the 'Oculus' as a work of micro-architecture, both in its experimental approach to materials and in its exquisitely refined proportions. In its smoothed, streamlined shapes, the 'Oculus' recalls 'Future Systems' Lords Media Centre, which like McCormack's original design, was constructed in a boatbuilding factory. The attention to detail lavished on the 'Oculus' is greater than that on even bespoke, high-spec buildings. For example, the range of control the occupant has over their environment is extraordinary. The user has access to full climate control and a bespoke lighting system, as well as every aspect of their visual and auditory stimuli.