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Cover picture

Keith Tyson (b. 1969)

Keith Tyson, born in Lancashire, England, is a Turner Prize-winning painter and sculptor. He had a traumatic childhood, numerous mental breakdowns and was admitted to a psychiatric unit. Viewing these as childhood existential traumas, he says that questions about the meaning of human existence inspire his creations, many of which also incorporate philosophical themes, scientific concepts and mathematical formulae. Fractal Dice, first exhibited in 2008, are sculptures of dice that are morphed into different shapes. Underpinning this work is a mathematical system called the random iterative function, which dictated by the rolls of the die and, applied three-dimensionally, determined the individual sculpture’s size, colour, angle and extrusion. According to Keith, Fractal Dice was inspired by gambling but was not the result of his own addiction. He says, ‘In the past I have become addicted to gambling as a diversion defense when the stress of life becomes overwhelming. I spent years losing. I had the Dostoevsky disease, where I couldn’t stop. It’s your life in a spin’. Keith Tyson is an artist in residence in the astrophysics and cosmology department at the University of Oxford. He has exhibited widely across Europe, America, North America and the Far East.

Text by Sanju George, a Birmingham-based addiction psychiatrist with a special interest in gambling addiction.

Reproduced courtesy of Keith Tyson; photography by Gordon R. Christmas c/o PaceWildenstein NYC.

We are always looking for interesting and visually appealing images for the cover of the Journal and would welcome suggestions or pictures, which should be sent to Dr Allan Beveridge, British Journal of Psychiatry, 17 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PG, UK or bjpsi@rcpsych.ac.uk.