

EGGOPOLIS (1990)

NAME

Eggopolis = City of Eggs. After building Eggopolis a childhood experience resurfaced in Alan Parkinson's memory. One Easter time, his father showed Alan a box of regular chicken eggs that he amazingly transformed into brightly coloured eggs.

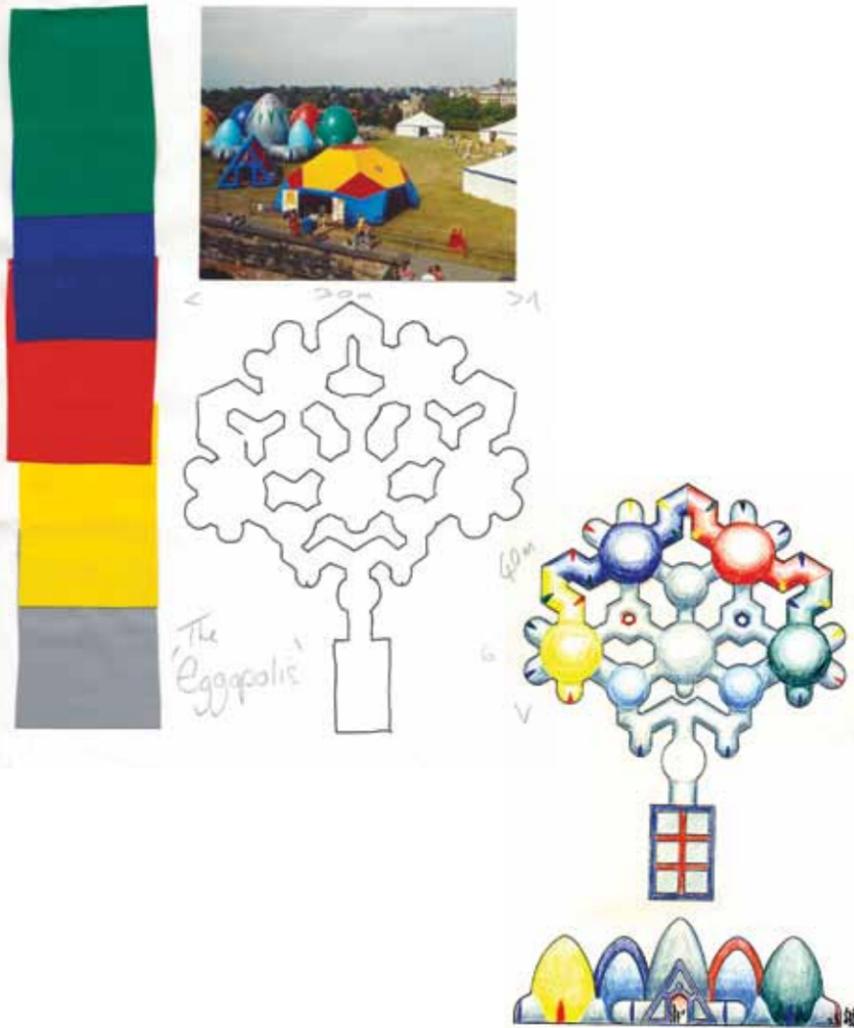
DIMENSIONS

It had maximum dimensions of 25m x 31m, rose to 8m in height and covered an area of 520m².

STORY

Eggopolis launched Architects of Air. A dance company showed an Edinburgh Festival director, Duncan Low, a video of their dance work inside Eggopolis. He was sufficiently enthused by the backdrop to track it down and book it. Edinburgh was a great success with the media as well as the public. One photo appeared on the front page of a national newspaper.

PLANS



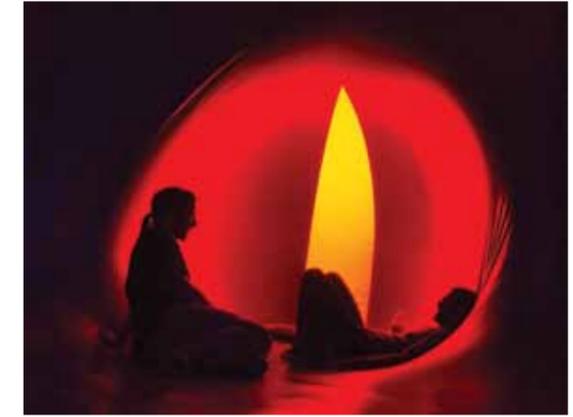
Eggopolis in Edinburgh, UK
Photo: Courtesy of the Scottish International Children's Festival

In 1990 a three-way collaboration between Springwood, a centre for adults with special needs in Nottingham, and Touch and Go Theatre company led to the creation of Eggopolis. Eggopolis was conceived around five linked domes that would function as spaces for a promenade performance. Eggopolis toured the UK, offering performances inside that catered for centres for people with special needs and for the public at large.

The outer domes all had one dominant colour and Eggopolis' centre dome featured a motif sometimes called The Spiral of Life owing to its resemblance to growth patterns in nature.

PODS

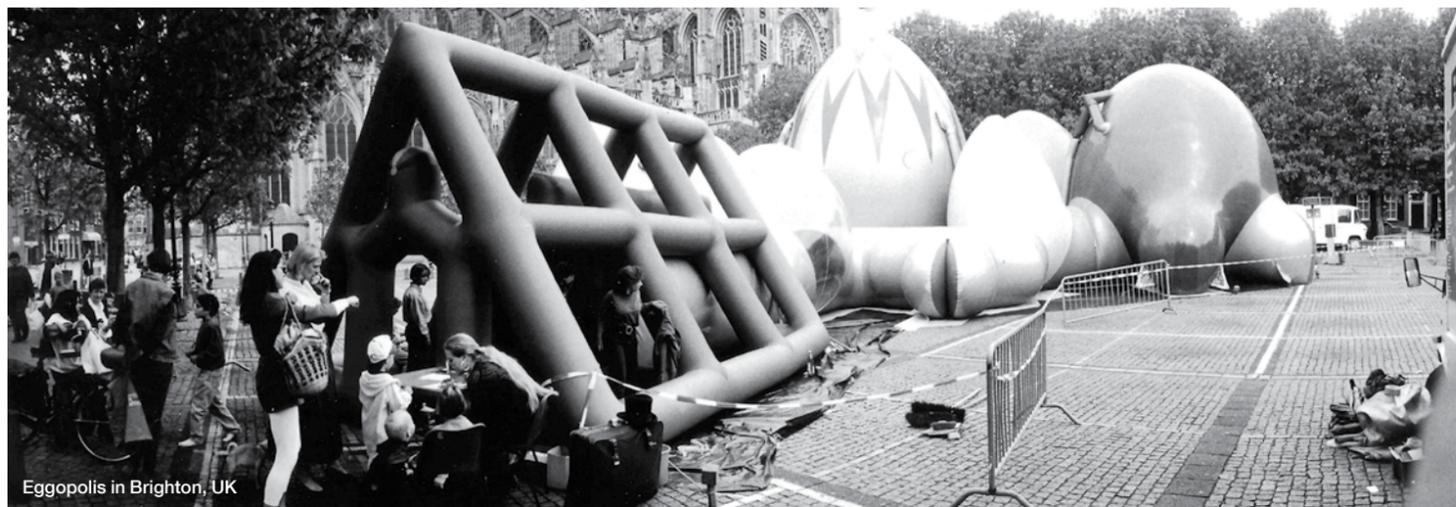
Eggopolis was the first structure to incorporate the anchored pod. These pods gave domes a larger stabilising footprint on the ground and at the same time they provided a structural logic to an integral anchor point. Safety was already a central consideration, for years Parkinson kept pinned to his drawing board a newspaper photograph of an accident in Australia. A bouncy castle had taken off in the wind, with people on it and hanging from it. It served as a constant reminder of the need to factor safety into the design. The integral anchor points of the pods that could pull the structure firmly to the ground were a key component in the evolution of the luminaria. With the safety came with the bonus of being able to use the central lune of the pod as a perpendicular Gothic-style window to allow coloured light to enter – an example of form and function working well together. These anchored pods have since been a common element of all the luminaria.



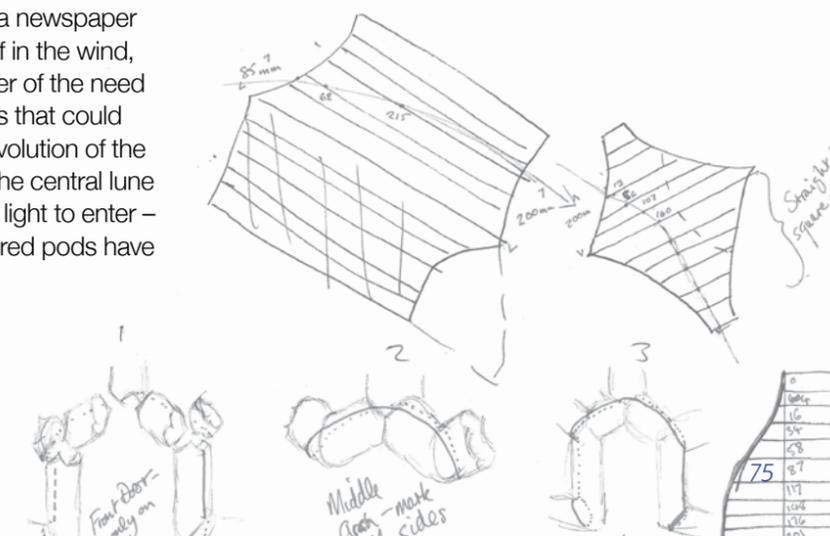
Inside a pod



Anchored pod

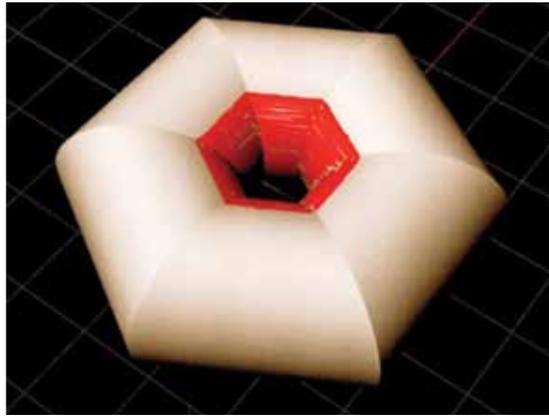


Eggopolis in Brighton, UK





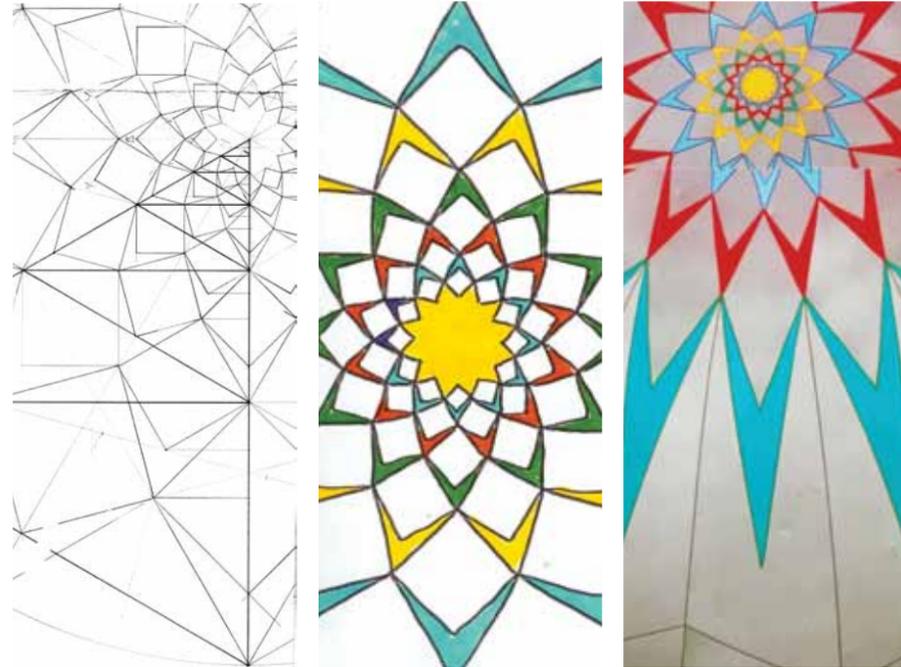
Eggopolis model



A column formed by six cylinders



Inside view of a coloured column



Spiral of Life from drawing to dome

The pods became the places that visitors could pause in their exploration – human-sized spaces set back from the thoroughfares where they could sit, sleep or chat, simply making themselves at home.

COLUMNS

Another element of Eggopolis that is a common element to all structures was the 'column', a form that has been likened to a cave formation where a stalactite meets a stalagmite. In the luminaria the columns are rendered as a translucent colour while the surrounding material is opaque. This gives the column an intense radiance that often inspires visitors to touch it to try and work out just how it could be so bright. Many find it hard to believe it is simply coloured plastic with daylight shining through.

TUNNELS

The 'eggs' of Eggopolis were linked by different diameter cylindrical tunnels the smallest being 1.4 metres in diameter. The narrower tunnels proved problematic for elderly people to access. After Eggopolis, accessibility was improved and all tunnels since have been a minimum of 2.1 metres high.

"THE APPEAL OF THE EGGOPOLIS IS UNIVERSAL, ANYONE WILLING TO TAKE OFF THEIR SHOES CAN EXPERIENCE ITS LUMINOUS WALLS AND ITS PERSPECTIVE DEFYING TUNNELS. I RECOMMEND DOING SO"
KATE CLANCHY, THE SCOTSMAN



Eggopolis in Salisbury, UK