

Arts **VISUAL**

## Katie Paterson's works connect enormity to the human scale

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It has been three years since the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art started their NOW programme to celebrate the diversity of contemporary art practice and the role of artists in society. Beginning in 2017 with Nathan Coley, it has seen some 37 artists shown in major exhibitions themed around the interests of key artistic figures, with many new works subsequently acquired for the permanent collection from artists who weren't previously represented, including pieces by Susan Philipsz, Jenny Saville and Monster Chetwynd. This last exhibition revolves around the work of Katie Paterson, whose evocative installations marry both art and science, deep time and the everyday.

"Katie's name has been on the list since before we started," says chief curator Lucy Askew of the brilliant Scottish artist whose research-led work puts cosmic space and time into a domestic framework with a strong dose of the sublime.

"We have her work in our collection, and we were quite surprised to see that she hadn't had an institutional public exhibition in Scotland, despite her great profile internationally."



# A window on time and the cosmos

Paterson, who studied at Glasgow School of Art (2004) and at the Slade (2007), is perhaps best known to the public for her Future Library project.

Set up in 2014, it asks one author a year to provide a book or text that is held under lock and key in Oslo until 2114, when it will emerge for the first time, printed on paper made from trees planted 100 years previously in the Future Library plantation just north of Oslo. Its inaugural author was Margaret Atwood, with others including David Mitchell and Elif Shafak having

contributed. It is typical of Paterson's visionary work, taking the vast spaces of time and creating an awe-inspiring window into these through something nonetheless solid and graspable, whether that is in bouncing the Moonlight Sonata off the surface of the Moon and playing back the disjointed relay from its surface on a player piano (Earth-Moon-Earth, 2007) or creating a mirrorball out of images of nearly every solar eclipse documented by humans (Totality, 2016).

Her gallery-based work is a synthesis of science, poetry and philosophy, of mental and visual ideas, rigorously researched in collaboration with scientific institutions and others. For the exhibition, the gallery has borrowed 18 Paterson works. "Time really is within all her work, whether it's a candle burning down over 24 hours giving out different scents or lightbulbs emulating a lifetime worth of moonlight. It connects the impossible

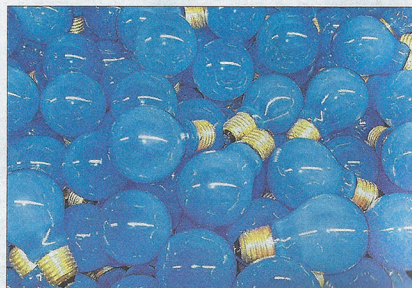
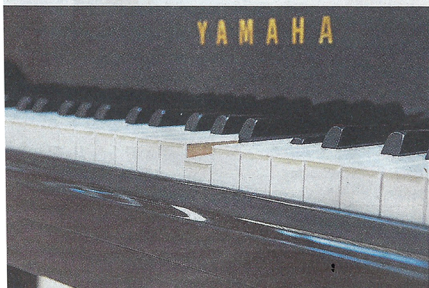
idea of the enormity of the cosmos to the human scale," says Askew.

Co-curators Askew and Lauren Logan have taken this theme of time and how artists have dealt with it in different ways to inform their choice of artists to accompany Paterson. Alongside her work the gallery will show Darren Almond's Fullmoon, a collection of long exposure photographs made by the light of the full Moon. "It took 15 minutes or more to create each one, so you have time occurring both in the process of how they are made and also in what they are about."

Elsewhere in the gallery will be a documentation of Progressive, a 2017 performance by Glasgow-based artist Shona Macnaughton made when she was nine months pregnant in Dennistoun. "It looks at performance as a transient, temporal thing. We'll be

Above: Katie Paterson's Totality, a mirrorball made of images of nearly every documented solar eclipse, 2016

Far left: Earth-Moon-Earth, 2007, and, left, Lightbulb to Simulate Moonlight



"It's like a reverse collage. She looks at the history of image making and how images are formed, and in particular a place in India where CGI is made for Hollywood, and what it means to look at a film now. It's a very swift journey through time which goes back to a prehistoric location in western India called the Deccan Traps, which is a site of huge volcanic activity that created basalt rocks.

"And into these rocks later, beautiful carvings were made in temples excavated out of the rock caves. It's about image making and the excavation of images," says Askew.

The overlaid images are accompanied by a "very ambient throbbing soundtrack. She's inserted elements of sound from the Jurassic Park soundtrack – it being the first film in Hollywood to use CGI throughout the film. There are lots of hidden references."

NOW may be embarking on its final leg but as usual there is plenty of time to view and re-view it, and you have until next May to take advantage of this rare chance to see such a major "retrospective" of Paterson's work.

NOW, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (Modern One), 75 Belford Road, Edinburgh, 0131 624 6200, www.nationalgalleries.org, Oct 26 to May 31, daily 10am-5pm

showing photographs, scripts and props from her performance to invite viewers to look at the real sense of journey through performance... Shona was very newly pregnant at the time and couldn't get away from the fact that she was going through a very particular process herself – a change in her body and a regeneration of life." The final film is by American artist Lucy Raven. Entitled The Deccan Trap,