

Critics' choice

Life&Arts

Visual arts Jackie Wullschläger

A place that exists only in moonlight: Katie Paterson and JMW Turner

Turner Contemporary, Margate

In a decade-long career, Paterson has cast, melted and recast a 4.5bn year-old meteorite and sent it back into space ("Campo del Cielo (Field of the Sky)"), set up a telephone link to an Icelandic glacier where callers hear rushing water and breaking ice ("Vatnajökull (the sound of)"), and is growing a forest to be cut down, a century hence, to make an anthology of books from manuscripts written today ("Future Library").

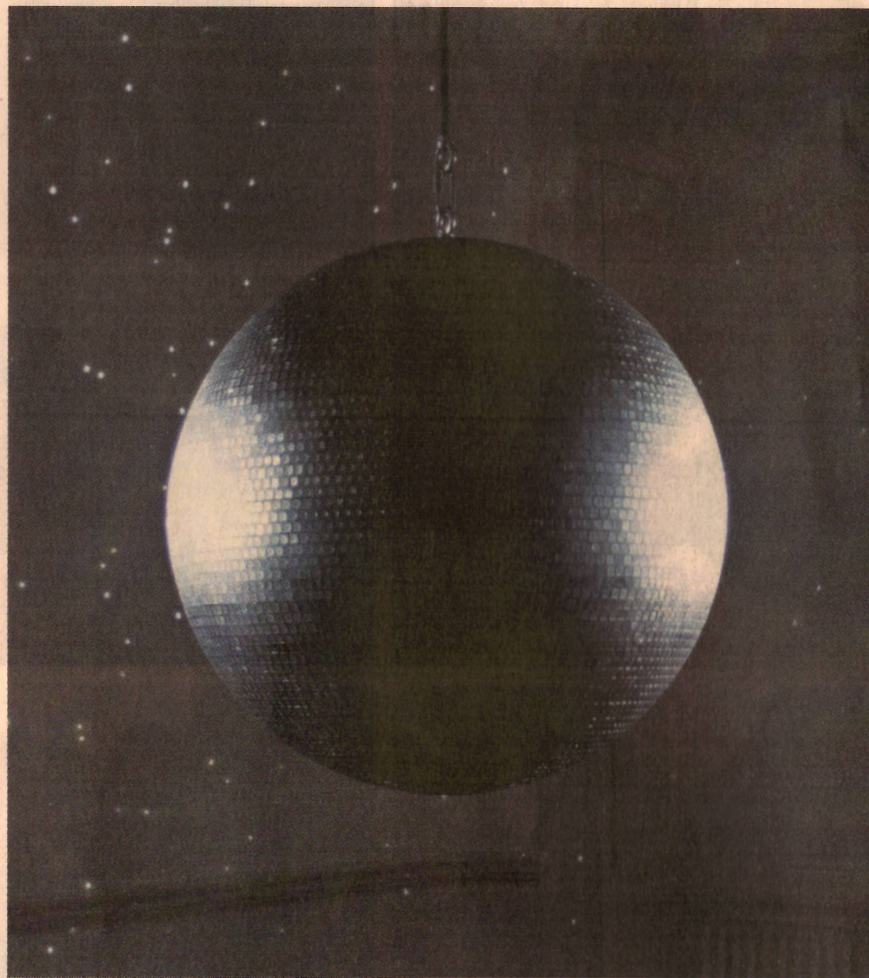
A lyrical conceptualist, she works slowly, playing out the long view, the billion-year perspective. This show includes almost all her works, or records of them, and launches a new one: a two-metre spinning wheel attempting to span "the colour of the universe from its very beginning to its eventual end".

No Paterson piece is like any other, though themes of time, space, infinity, nature, link them all; throughout too is a sense of wonder,

contemplation of both human minuteness in the global scale of things and our ability to create beauty. For "Earth-Moon-Earth", Paterson translated Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" into Morse-code signals, bounced them off the moon's surface and has a piano play the music as it returned to Earth, with gaps where the transmission failed.

"Timepieces" is a group of adapted clocks telling the time across the solar system. "Totality", resembling a disco mirrorball, is a globe with more than 10,000 tiny tiles showing nearly every image of an eclipse ever made, rotating so that spotlights form myriad reflections.

"Fossil Necklace" comprises beads each representing a moment in life's evolution — a Thai mollusc, a New South Wales seed fern. Thus the material world suggests the immaterial and mysterious; this is where Paterson connects to Turner's ethereal watercolours, some of which she selects to accompany this show. turnercontemporary.org to May 6



Katie Paterson's 'Totality' (2016) — Flora Bartlett/Arts Council Collection

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