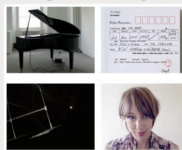




Katie Paterson is an artist featured in [Altermodern: Tate Triennial 2009](#), curated by Nicholas Bourriaud. Her past work includes *Vatnajökull (the sound of)*, which allowed viewers to telephone a glacier in Iceland, and *E.M.E (Earth-Moon-Earth)* where Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* was translated into Morse code and bounced off the moon by radio transmission, the patchy result played out on an automated grand piano.

Image Gallery



Dazed Digital: What is your involvement in the Tate Triennial?

Katie Paterson: I am showing a map entitled *All The Dead Stars* and staging a night-time lecture on dead stars, given by an astronomer on the grounds of the Tate, who will point out the locations of these now long-gone, invisible events.

DD: In your work *Vatnajökull (the sound of)* (2007-2008) you enshrined your mobile phone number in neon on the walls of two galleries. Does anyone ring you up still, expecting a glacier on the other end?

KP: Yes! For a while I kept the same number, often when I answered there would be a bewildered person at the other end, and me saying 'No you are right, it used to be a glacier!'

DD: How is your epic-sounding map of all the dead stars in the universe progressing?

KP: I'm reaching the end of this project, for now anyway. I might update it in 20 years. I've plotted just under 27,000 supernovae, white dwarfs, gamma ray bursts, and other types of what can be considered 'dead stars' – all of those that ever have been recorded and observed by humankind. It has been laser-etched onto black anodised aluminium. In fact, 27,000 is only a fraction of what actually exists – as one astronomer pointed out to me, 'You have gathered a representative set of stellar corpses. The list will forever be very incomplete.'

DD: You have said in the past that you aren't interested in science per se. Has your interest grown?

KP: Working on the dead star project has been fascinating. I began by imagining what a collapsing star sounds like, then found myself falling into the depths of space... When a supernova explodes it can burn as brightly as 100 billion suns, and the light from some of these dying stars is reaching us from hundreds of millions of years ago, before the Earth was formed. These astonishing distances and timescales interest me, and our inability to conceptualise them. Considering our connection to the universe and the life and death of stars may seem remote from human experience, but we are related in the most intimate way – every atom on Earth was synthesised by stars.

DD: Previous descriptions of your work often cite the word 'poetic', are there any poets that inspire you?

KP: I'm reading Japanese Death Poems just now, poems written by Zen monks on the verge of death.

DD: What's next on the horizon?

KP: I'm hoping to travel to a telescope atop Mount Kea volcano in Hawaii to look back in time, 13.2 billion years – around 95 per cent of the way back to the beginning of the Universe. Astronomers there are studying the earliest galaxies, searching for the moment the stars 'switched on' – which, for me, is rich with possibilities...

Altermodern: Tate Triennial 2009 opens 3rd February to 26 April 2009.

