Collective hosts Scottish premiere of Katie Paterson's 'Afterlife' installation

Afterlife by Katie Paterson, created in collaboration with architects, Zeller & Moye, at Collective Gallery in Edinburgh. © Eoin Carey.

EDINBURGH.- This summer, Collective shares a solo presentation by internationally acclaimed Scottish artist Katie Paterson, as her new work Afterlife is exhibited in Scotland for the first time.

Commissioned for Folkestone Triennial 2025, curated by Collective's Director Sorcha Carey, this important new work will be shared with audiences from Friday 19 June – Sunday 6 September. The exhibition will be presented as part of Edinburgh Art Festival (EAF26) - the UK's largest annual festival of visual art, running from 14—30 August 2026.

Afterlife brings together nearly 200 amulets in a sculptural installation designed in collaboration with Berlin/Mexico City-based architects, Zeller & Moye.

Amulets are miniature talismanic objects, typically carved in stone. Appearing across millennia and cultures, they are small enough to be held in the hand or worn, and are generally considered protective.

Afterlife reimagines this tradition. Working with museums around the world, Paterson has recreated amulets from civilisations across the globe (including Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Viking, Islamic, Japanese, Indian, Chinese, Celtic, Greco-Roman and Pre-Columbian), using materials sourced from endangered landscapes and fragile ecosystems, to serve as a bridge between past and present.

The materials used to recreate the amulets reflect the pressing environmental issues of our time. Rocks from glacial terrains left bare by retreating ice, coral from the Great Barrier Reef, stones from islands facing rising sea levels, and other materials from devastated or threatened ecosystems are transformed into tiny objects of reflection, connection and renewal. Each material carries a story of environmental fragility, symbolising urgent issues such as biodiversity loss, deforestation, and the impact of climate change.

Installed in a distinctive circular table crafted from sycamore by local makers Silvan, Afterlife explores themes of deep time, geology, and the environment. Drawing on centuries of cultural and spiritual traditions to reflect the fragility of the natural world today, Afterlife prompts us to consider the legacies we leave for future generations.

Afterlife was commissioned by Creative Folkestone for Folkestone Triennial 2025, with additional support from The Shifting Foundation, Collective, and Goethe-Institut Glasgow.

Talking about her exhibition, Katie Paterson said: 'Afterlife began as an attempt to hold deep time in the palm of the hand. These amulets carry stories from across millennia and cultures, remade from materials drawn from endangered places on Earth. They are small objects, but they hold vast landscapes — reminders of what is disappearing. Afterlife is an offering of protection and connection, across time, across cultures, and across the living Earth.'

Director of Collective Sorcha Carey said: 'We are so excited to be sharing this major new commission by one of Scotland's leading artists. Afterlife, like so much of Katie's work, transforms our sense of time, while welcoming us into ideas and thinking that extend far beyond our own lifespan. Originally conceived for Folkestone Triennial, Afterlife gains a new resonance in the context of Collective: set in a historic observatory on top of an extinct volcano, our gallery offers a unique vantage point from which to reflect on deep time and the landscape.'