



Press release, September 1st, 2021

Katie Paterson's work consists of the scents of the first and last forest

In the IHME Helsinki 2021 Commission by Scottish artist **Katie Paterson** entitled *To Burn, Forest, Fire*, you can experience the scent of the world's first forest 385 million years ago and the scent of the last forest in the age of the climate crisis. The work is based on the artist's concern about the world's sixth extinction. The work will take place as a series of incense burning ceremonies, which will be held in different parts of Helsinki from 1 to 30 September 2021.

“We share a quarter of our DNA with trees and trees are our lifeblood. Nevertheless, we have cut down nearly half of the forests on our planet and are destroying rainforests so quickly that they may be gone in a hundred years. I believe that the planet and all of its life are closely connected and we can face the climate catastrophe more efficiently through our senses, intuitively. I hope that my work will take participants to the first forest on Earth and a future scenario that I hope we will never end up with.” Katie Paterson says about her art work.

Katie Paterson's studio has collaborated with scientists to clarify questions, such as, how to define the Earth's first forest? What kind of trees and plants grew in the Devonian forest, 385 million years ago? What living life forms today resemble those ancient species? Ecologists and biologists studying endangered contemporary rainforest biomasses investigated the Earth's living forests that are in danger of disappearing in our lifetimes, and their scents.

The scents of the past and the future forests were transformed into custom-made incense sticks in collaboration with the Japanese incense maker Shoyeido.

Incense ceremonies are being held in more than ten locations across Helsinki, indoors and outdoors, together with IHME's partners. Up-to-date event information is updated on the IHME Helsinki website. IHME's audience staff will gather the audiences for hour-long ceremonies in order of arrival. We invite the audience to calmly experience the artwork. Health safety is important to us and we follow up-to-date guidelines for public events related to the covid-19 pandemic.

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IHME commissions works of contemporary art that unite the worlds of art, science and climate change mitigation. Each year, we produce a public artwork and a series of events that offer a vision and hope amid the environmental crisis. Our work is made possible with the support from our founding foundation Pro Arte Foundation Finland, Kone Foundation and Saastamoinen Foundation in 2020-22.

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