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THE  TIMES**Art shoots for the stars with Katie Paterson's Second Moon**

Katie Paterson

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Katie Paterson combines art with science — and her new project encourages us to consider our place in the universe

A second moon is about to be launched into space — or into airspace at least. On September 8, the artist Katie Paterson, working in partnership with the British Science Festival and UPS, the freight company, will dispatch a packaged fragment of lunar rock on a year-long journey. Over the next 12 months, this parcel will circle by aeroplane (with periodic touchdowns, of course) west to east around the planet, crossing oceans and continents, passing cities and deserts and forests, at twice the speed of the moon, looping the earth 30 times in total.

You can track the parcel's progress across the skies via an app that will allow you to see not only the view from this "second moon" to Earth, but also the view from the real moon to our planet and your own place on the cosmological map as, zooming out on screen, you travel farther and farther into the outer reaches of the solar system. "Over the course of this project, you will see the movements of all the planets in relation to this second moon," Paterson explains.

The Second Moon is the latest of many pieces in which Paterson has brought together the cosmological and the conceptual, the scientific and the poetic, the massive and the minute. She encourages her spectators to push their imaginations to their outermost reaches, to contemplate the mysteries of their place in the universe. She is the artist who transmitted Beethoven's *Moonlight* Sonata to the lunar surface and back; installed a live phone line from a gallery to the groaning depths of an Icelandic glacier; mapped the locations of the 27,000 dead stars that are known to humanity (and continues to send a letter of condolence each time another one dies); took a grain of sand and got nanotechnological experts to carve it to just 0.00005mm across before casting it loose in the deserts of the Sahara.

Born in Glasgow in 1981, Paterson trained at Edinburgh College of Art and then the Slade. But it was a year spent in Iceland, in between, that transformed her practice. "I had no particular interest in the cosmos before that," she says. "And I was definitely not scientifically minded." In Iceland, however, under enormous skies glowing with northern lights, seeing the Earth's energy bursting through its crust in geysers and sensing the incredible slowness of the glacial creep, she tapped into the vision that has been developing ever since, taking a year-long residency in University College London's astrophysics department, peering through Hawaii's Keck telescope into the universe's first light.

Such experiences underpin her multi-disciplinary, essentially conceptual pieces which, at the same time as they probe the boundaries of scientific knowledge, remain simple. "What you see in my work might be subtle and minimal," says Paterson, "but the imagination has to take a leap and it's where that takes you that matters. Though it is very important to me that what I do is real — that there really was a microphone implanted in a glacier — where the mind can take you is completely open and unlimited."

There is one place, certainly, that Paterson's art should take her, and that is on to next year's Turner Prize shortlist.