New designs on diplomacy

A SPECIAL REPORT on how diplomatic territory is being redefined and redesigned in Washington, Harare and Kathmandu

Building a Better Embassy
Creating a new type of mission for diplomacy, culture, trade and even shopping

Super secure
Embrace advances in materials and technology to improve security – but don’t build a bunker

Do like the Danes
An embassy should be a showroom for a nation’s best brands and design

Better living
Use your compound to sell a complete way of life

100% branded
The new embassy isn’t just competing with other countries but also the entire consumer landscape. Think H&M or foreign affairs

Signature branding
Be unmistakable with your vernacular and choice of architect

Get out there
The modern mission should re-engage with consumers, not just civil servants
LIGHT BULB MOMENT
— London

Preface
In our regular series looking at people's working lives, we enter the world of Katie Paterson, a 27-year-old artist who brings ideas of the universe to life. One of her witty installations involves calling a mobile phone inside a glacier.

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PHOTOGRAPHER
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“I'm based at my office here at home. I don't like artist's studios. I rented one in Berlin for a month and did absolutely nothing because as soon as I walked in it's like, 'Ugh... paint!' I can't work around all that stuff. I just need a clean, white desk so I don't get lost.

I work on my own but meet some pretty unexpected people to help engineer my pieces. When I sent Beethoven's 'Moonlight Sonata' to the moon I worked with 'moon bouncers' — enthusiasts with huge antennae in their back gardens who bounce messages to each other via the moon. The music was converted into Morse code and when it bounced back to earth some of the dots and dashes were missing, they must have hit a crater or something and bounced off somewhere. The effect, without the notes that got lost on the moon, was quite spooky. I think the moon bouncers enjoyed it too, because it's illegal to bounce anything sensitive or commercial, so they usually end up just saying, 'Hello John, how are you?' but via the moon. That project was a bit different.

From that I thought, 'Oh yeah, I'll make a map of all the dead stars in the universe,' and the Greenwich Observatory put me in touch with 'supernova hunters'. They're obsessive, too. From across the world I got amazing replies from so many of these people who immediately got into the nature of life, the universe and everything. It's to be expected, I suppose, when your hobby is looking for dying stars.

At the moment I should be working 24 hours a day. I'm making new works and reviving old ones. 'Light Bulb To Simulate Moonlight' came from an idea to do just that. I think trying to replicate daylight is enough of a funny idea, so I'm doing moonlight — I think the failure of this will be its success. Again, I've managed to find this great, goofy guy as I do for a lot of my projects — Dieter is the senior innovation manager for Osram light bulbs in Germany and he just seems to like the idea. I'll get to meet him when the bulbs go into production in Slovakia next week. He's doing it all for fun, not telling his bosses. He just sent me an email saying, 'When the moon comes out I think of you.'

For my solo show at the Albion in October I'm going to display a lifetime of moonlight. I've worked out that the average lifespan for a human is 66 years — that's 289 bulbs. There'll be one bulb hanging in the gallery lasting 2,000 hours and 288 stacked beneath it. The idea came from John Cage's '4 33' — where he closed the lid of a piano and opened it after four minutes 33 seconds, allowing the audience to think about all the other sounds in the room. It's very Zen. This may make people think about the other sounds going on around the moonlight in space. God knows what they'll think.

'Black Firework For Dark Skies' has taken months to make. It's a black firework, a 'star shell'. I am determined that
Life on earth
Katie Paterson CV

1961: Born in Glasgow
2000-4: BA (Hons) tapestry, Edinburgh
        College of Art
2005-7: Master of Fine Art, Slade School
        of Fine Art, London
2007: Artist in residence, Centre D’Art
        de Marnay Art Centre, France
2008: Solo shows at Modern Art Oxford
        and Albion Gallery, London,
        alongside Ai Weiwei
2009: Altermodern: Tate Triennial 2009,
        Tate Britain, London

I went to see as many of the glaciers and
odd places as I could and I made ice
records. I recorded the sounds of three
glaciers crunching along in Iceland.
I brought the water back from each
icecap, cast the water into an LP using
dental silicone, then I froze the real
glacier water inside, which gave me three
records made of ice that played the actual
sounds of the glacier—the cracking of the
ice. It took me months. I did a million
experiments and broke three record play-
ers in the process. The records lasted two
hours before they melted. I’ll be showing
films of them at the Tate Triennial exhib-
tion next year.

I quite like these old technologies that
I use. I like what happens to things when
they go through different processes, how
things get changed or lost. There’s a sort
of sadness about things—you can try and
communicate with the moon but it’ll
come back in pieces; you can phone the
glacier and hear it but it’s melting away.

This way of working can be a little
demoralising, though—where everything
suddenly comes together at the end. At
the Slade we would have tutorials and
people would come along with the huge
paintings they had done and I’d be like,
“Ta-dah! I’ve got a list of things I’m trying
to work out—I’m still trying to send
something to the moon.”

My inspirations aren’t really artists. I’m
probably more interested in things that
aren’t directly connected to art such as
Japanese haiku and science and technol-
ogy. I’m personally rubbish with science,
although I did make a big cake in the
shape of the Hadron Collider. It’s diffi-
cult to explain how I work sometimes—
how do you explain to someone why you
want to phone a glacier? I don’t know.
Sometimes words can’t quite... you
know. That’s why I’m an artist.” — (44)