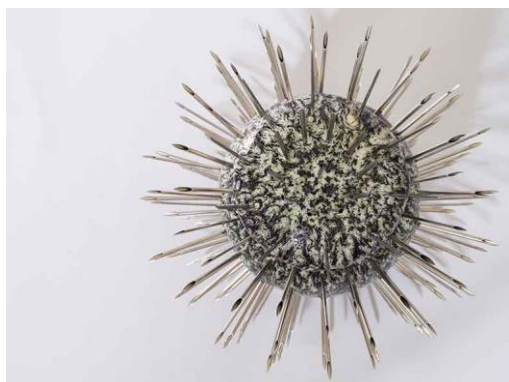


PRESS
INFO

October 2021



Press visit:

Tuesday, 12 October 2021, 10 am

Opening:

Tuesday, 12 October 2021, 6:30 pm

Pressmaterial:

www.tinguely.ch/en/press

The Cost of Life. A perspective on health by Paddy Hartley

13 October 2021 – 23 January 2022

British artist Paddy Hartley is best known for his art works made of ceramic. The «Cost of Life. A perspective on health by Paddy Hartley» at Museum Tinguely and at Basel University's Pharmacy Museum is not only the first ever presentation of his works in Switzerland but it also positions them in a very specific context. The notion of 'cost of life' is strongly related to that of risk, a central theme in medicine and research. Both concepts play a key role in the work of Paddy Hartley, which is why Roche commissioned him with an exhibition to mark its 125th anniversary. Museum Tinguely's exhibition of selected objects and photographs by Hartley that runs from 13 October 2021 to 23 January 2022 will be paralleled by an intervention embedded in the permanent collection of the Pharmacy Museum.

Hartley, who is based in Berwick, Northumberland, produces works on medical and scientific themes in a wide range of media and materials. His works are full of implicit comparisons of past and future whose purpose is to lead us to a deeper understanding of humanity's efforts to stay healthy and combat disease. His artistic comment on medical developments explores their – sometimes contradictory – consequences for us humans. He works in the most diverse media, including biological tissue manipulation and assembly, digital photography, digital embroidery, installation, garment assemblage and of course ceramic.

The English term 'cost of life' has many meanings, all of which, unlike its literal German translation, have some connection to risk. The set phrase 'at great cost of life' means taking a very big risk indeed. This is also a key theme for pharmaceutical companies engaged in research, which owing to the high costs of research and development are presumed to have a very high risk exposure. To mark its 125th anniversary, Roche commissioned the British ceramic artist Paddy

Hartley to create an exhibition with this title. The obvious intellectual and visual affinity with Hartley's work also prompted Roche to acquaint him with 'The Challenge of Life', the now legendary symposium that it famously hosted in 1971, exactly fifty years ago. The subheading of that event was 'Biomedical Progress and Human Values' and it addressed many of the fundamental questions raised by medical progress. For the pharmaceutical industry, which back then was on the threshold of the biotech revolution, those issues are still as topical as ever. After engaging critically with the conference report, Hartley succeeded in translating his impressions of that debate of 1971 into an exhibition that takes up many of the same questions and draws parallels to the way we perceive health and healthcare today.

The objects and photographs by Hartley on show at Museum Tinguely attest to his preoccupation with this subject over a period of many years. His intervention in the permanent collection of the University of Basel's Pharmacy Museum, meanwhile, makes our efforts to stay healthy a direct, unmediated experience, which in turn exposes the tensions between past and future. Hartley decided to work mainly with white- and red-glazed porcelain paper for 'Cost of Life', although he also uses metal, glass, and textiles wherever this seems appropriate. The works of art are various shapes and sizes, though they are all mounted on plinths. The inspiration for this comes from Hartley's conversations, conducted over a twenty-five-year period, with both patients and medical professionals with an intimate knowledge of these issues.

A patient-focused perspective

Hartley nurtures a profound interest in the human body, and specifically in the matter of how patients who are injured or sick view their own bodies. This patient-centred perspective and Hartley's efforts to articulate what befalls people when they become patients is wholly congruent with the patient-oriented philosophy of Roche. The works of art articulate the artist's own reflections on the discussions he has had, but are also cross-referential with the result that the themes of one work frequently crop up again in another, or even several others, even if in a different form. Together they present an intriguing and thought-provoking body of work, the exploration of which brings some surprising findings to light. Engaging in an internal and external dialogue with the works, viewers soon find themselves reflecting on the intimate connection between life and death, health and sickness, control and helplessness. As a ceramicist, Hartley is constantly trying out new materials and methods and knows that many of his experiments will fail. He actually depends on some of his experiments failing, as only by this route can he arrive at successful works. As a pharmaceutical developer and producer, Roche is in exactly the same situation.

The choice of Paddy Hartley

Roche has long been interested in collaborating with artists who engage with the patient perspective as part of their work and Hartley fits this bill perfectly. While many artists are interested in the relationship between art and science, Hartley's area of interest is much broader in scope. He has a mission to understand what

patients actually experience – how they feel pain, for example – and has found a unique way of expressing this from a philosophical point of view.

Hartley's work is internationally exhibited, collected and published. In addition to «The Cost of Life» he works on themes such as memorialization and remembrance, the discourse between faith groups and biomedical research, and steroid use and abuse in the bodybuilding community. Hartley also works closely with pioneers from the border zone where science and art overlap. Thus, he has been both a Visiting Senior Research Fellow at the Department of Tissue Engineering & Biophotonics at King's College London and Artist in Residence at the National Maritime Museum in London. Much of Hartley's work is created with the support of the London-based Wellcome Trust and the resulting projects have realised outcomes such as the design and creation of his appearance-altering 'Face Corsets', the production of Bioglass facial implants for clinical use, and latterly his interpretations for 'Project Façade' responding to the surgical and personal stories of facially injured WW1 servicemen.

Curator: Alexander Bieri, Curator of the Roche Historical Collection and Archive

Exhibition catalogue:

The Cost of Life – Paddy Hartley, Editiones Roche, 2021 ISBN 978-3-9525350-1-1
Hardcover, 184 pages, numerous illustrations. German/English with a foreword by
Christoph Franz CHF 24.–

General Information:

Title: The Cost of Life. A perspective on health by Paddy Hartley

Adresse: Museum Tinguely | Paul Sacher-Anlage 1 | 4002 Basel, Switzerland

Duration: 13 October 2021 – 23 January 2022

Opening hours: Tuesday – Sunday, daily from 11 am–6 pm

Websites: www.tinguely.ch | www.celebratelife.roche.com/the-cost-of-life

Social Media: @museumtinguely | #museumtinguely | #tinguely | #paddyhartley |
#costoflife | #museumtinguely25

Press contact: Isabelle Beilfuss | T.: +41 61 68 74 608 | Email: isabelle.beilfuss@roche.com

**Museum Tinguely is subject to the Covid certificate requirement. Therefore,
we ask you to present your certificate and your identity card at the entrance.**

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