

## Artist Enni-Kukka Tuomala unveils 'Empathy Objects' in North Cambridge

4 June - 7 July 2021



Enni-Kukka Tuomala, *Empathy Objects*, 2021. Photo: My Linh Le

Enni-Kukka Tuomala is an empathy artist and designer and the *Open House* artist in residence 2020-21 with Kettle's Yard.

On 4 June, *Empathy Objects*, a series of 7 newly created artworks, opened at Kettle's Yard and in locations across North Cambridge.

Tuomala has been working with local community groups and residents since March 2020, collaborating on the Campaign for Empathy x North Cambridge - the world's first community-centred campaign to promote empathy through art, as a powerful tool for fostering a sense of community and connection in a time of physical distancing, social isolation and beyond.

Throughout the residency Tuomala has been working with a number of local residents, to creatively explore where empathy lives in North Cambridge and what its role is, and should be, in the lives of the local communities. This collaboration has resulted in a series of artworks, *Empathy Objects*. Inspired by the art at Kettle's Yard, and people's experiences in the local area, the *Empathy Objects* connect the Kettle's Yard House with the local communities in North Cambridge.

The *Empathy Objects* include the *Empathy Manifesto*. The *Empathy Manifesto* is presented across the windows of North Cambridge Academy and Kettle's Yard and boldly and publicly declares the vision local children and young people have for how empathy will be embedded in their lives, their school and their community. During the

past year, Tuomala has worked with students from North Cambridge Academy and pupils from Arbury Primary School to create the *Empathy Manifesto*. Through a series of creative empathy activities, the participants examined what the role of empathy is in their lives today, and what it could be in the future.

*Empathy Discs* also appear at Kettle's Yard, Arbury Court Library and the Grove Primary school in Kings Hedges. Understanding and appreciating new and other perspectives is at the core of empathy. Tuomala is inspired by Gregorio Vardanega's *Disc*, an artwork which is displayed in the Kettle's Yard House, framing beautiful and, at times, abstract points of view of the plants located there. The *Empathy Discs* play with light, colour and visual perspective, inviting visitors to look anew at, perhaps, familiar sights in our community.

Tuomala's practice focuses on transforming empathy from an individual feeling into a collective and radical power, to create positive social change through public artworks, experiments, interventions and communications. She has previously been commissioned to explore empathy by a broad range of organisations from the BBC to the Finnish Parliament, Bath University, the Greater London Authority, Bow Arts and LIFT. Tuomala is currently also exhibiting her work in the online exhibition *Care at the Design Museum* (7 April-2 August), in her solo show *Is there Space for Empathy?* at Bow Arts' Nunnery Gallery in London (21 May-8 August), and is about to represent Finland at the London Design Biennale 2021 in June.

Enni-Kukka Tuomala has said:

*“The Empathy Objects, created in a shared moment of isolation through remote collaboration, reflect our universal and timeless need to build connections with each other, ourselves, and our environment. It has been a joy and a privilege to get to know and work with people across North Cambridge, and Kettle’s Yard, over the last 15 months as a part of the Campaign for Empathy. I want to thank everyone who has been a part of bringing the Campaign to life for their openness, their generosity and their kindness. When we first started planning the Campaign for Empathy in early 2020 I couldn’t have imagined how our already pressing need for empathy and a sense of community would grow exponentially. We started with a vision to make North Cambridge the most empathic community in the UK, and I know empathy will live on in the hearts of local people beyond the Campaign. In the words of a pupil from North Cambridge Academy, who shared their hope for the future of their community as a part of the Empathy Manifesto activity; “Our community is all happy and cheering each other up. I hope for this to carry on.”*

Jonathan Stanley, teacher at North Cambridge Academy has said:

*“All the students at North Cambridge Academy who have been involved with the Campaign for Empathy have enjoyed the opportunity to connect with, inspire and uplift the local community. Young people’s voices are important and must be heard. The Empathy Manifesto enables our students to share their hopes for us all after the pandemic.”*

*Empathy Objects* will be displayed at Kettle’s Yard and across North Cambridge from 4 June - 7 July 2021.



Enni-Kukka Tuomala, *Empathy Pebble*, 2021, Kettle’s Yard. Photo: My Linh Le



Enni-Kukka Tuomala, *Empathy Manifesto*, 2021, North Cambridge Academy. Photo: My Linh Le



Enni-Kukka Tuomala, *Empathy Disc*, 2021, Kettle’s Yard. Photo: My Linh Le

## Notes to Editors

For all PRESS and PHOTO enquiries please contact Helen Dickman at [press@kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk](mailto:press@kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk)

## About Enni-Kukka Tuomala

Enni-Kukka Tuomala is a Finnish Empathy Artist and Designer based in London. Her vision is to transform empathy from an individual feeling to a collective and radical power for positive social change through public interventions, installations, experiences, processes and tools.

Having created artworks and led projects around the world from London and Tokyo, to New York and Helsinki, Tuomala's collaborative and research-based practice builds on understanding and investigating the delicate relationships between empathy, culture, space and systems. Her work aims to break taboos and challenge social, cultural and behavioural norms in order to remove barriers to difficult conversations and bridge the growing divides in our society, whether between humans, or humans and other species. She has worked with the Finnish Parliament since 2018 to bring empathy into politics, collaborating with six Members of Parliament to create Empatia Ele; a collection of empathy tools for politics. Tuomala has also created empathy commissions for the likes of the BBC, Greater London Authority, London Borough of Newham, Imperial College London, Bath University, LIFT, Bow Arts and Virgin, including challenging 50 global Virgin CEOs to a series of empathy exercises as a part of the Embodying Empathy installation and launching the Campaign for Empathy, the world's first community-centered campaign to promote empathy through art and design.

A graduate of the Royal College of Art and Imperial College London with a joint MA and MSc in Global Innovation Design, Tuomala has exhibited her work at the Philadelphia Museum of art and she recently installed her first permanent public artwork in London and opened her first Empathy HQ: a creative studio and a community space in Bow, London. As well as being the Open House Artist in Residence 2020-21 at Kettle's Yard, Tuomala is a Designer in Residence 2020 at the Design Museum, London. Currently you can see her work in the Design Museum digital exhibition "Care" (7 April-31 July 2021) on <http://designersinresidence.designmuseum.org/> and at the upcoming London Design Biennale 2021 at Somerset House where Tuomala will represent Finland in June.

Website: [www.ennikukka.com](http://www.ennikukka.com) | Twitter: @ennikukka | Instagram: @akin.kollektiv

## About Open House

Open House is a long-term creative programme in partnership with communities in North Cambridge and Kettle's Yard. Each year we work with an 'Artist in Residence' who is selected by people who live and work in North Cambridge to deliver an exciting and innovative programme of arts activities. Open House is funded by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Cambridge City Council.

[www.kettlesyard.co.uk/learn/open-house-artist-residency/](http://www.kettlesyard.co.uk/learn/open-house-artist-residency/)  
[facebook.com/openhousecambridge/](https://www.facebook.com/openhousecambridge/)  
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## About Kettle's Yard

Kettle's Yard is one of Britain's best galleries - a beautiful and unique house with a distinctive modern art collection, and a gallery exhibiting modern and contemporary art. Supporting this is an established learning and community engagement programme, archive, and programme of chamber concerts. In February 2018, Kettle's Yard reopened after a two year development by architect Jamie Fobert. The new Kettle's Yard includes state of the art new exhibition galleries, generous education spaces, a café and new welcome areas. Kettle's Yard's mission is to contribute to society by inspiring and engaging audiences through art, learning and research of the highest quality. We believe that great art should not be the privilege of the few, but for everyone. Our values reflect Kettle's Yard's creator Jim Ede's support for artists and belief in art's power to make us look again and change how we act in the world.

Open House forms a key part of Kettle's Yard commitment to build a dynamic and creative long-term relationship with its neighbouring communities of North Cambridge.

[www.kettlesyard.co.uk](http://www.kettlesyard.co.uk)

## About Esmée Fairbairn

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation aims to improve the quality of life for people and communities throughout the UK both now and in the future. They do this by funding the charitable work of organisations that are building an inclusive, creative and sustainable society.

The Foundation is one of the largest independent grant-makers in the UK. In 2017 they made grants of £40.5 million towards a wide range of work within the arts, children and young people, the environment and social change. They also have a £45 million allocation to social investments for organisations with the aim of creating social impact.

[www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk](http://www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk)