



The Love After Death exhibition

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Exploring your digital life after death

A unique installation, which invites members of the public to reconsider how they think about death, will open in Newcastle next week.

[Love After Death](#) has been created by [Dr Stacey Pitsillides](#) of Northumbria University, who researches how technology and design can impact our understanding of death.

The exhibition will chart the different ways people in the past, present, and future have dealt with, or could deal with, death and dying. It will also

explore how the digital data we collect throughout our lives, such as photos, videos and posts on social media channels, could allow our memories to live on after we die.

Visitors to the exhibition will be invited to collect their own set of '[tickets for the afterlife](#)' which detail some of the diverse practices and opinions surrounding death from around the world and throughout history.

Examples from the past include safety coffins – designed to prevent people being buried alive, Catacombs – large and highly decorated underground cemeteries, and spirit photography – which attempted to capture images of ghosts and spirits.

Current examples of lesser known options available after death include mixing ashes with concrete to form a reef ball, which sits on the sea bed and provides a habitat for marine life, and woodland burials, which provide an environmentally friendly alternative to cremation.

Many of the legacy tickets explore the role technology can play in death, with examples including live streaming funerals for friends and relatives in other countries, and placing QR codes on gravestones which allow people to access and leave digital content such as photos and videos.

There are also examples of how we may approach death in the future, including downloading our consciousness into a robotic body and living on as an artificial being, and preventing death by cryogenically freezing a person to -130°C in the hope of reviving them in the future.

As Stacey Pitsillides explains, the aim of the exhibition is to address some of the reservations people might have when it comes to talking about death and explore how we can use technology to plan for death in the 21st century.

“Technology allows us to leave behind a digital legacy, to live on through the memories we have created during our lives,” she said. “But how do we deal with the material left behind by those we love in way that is respectful to them and not overwhelming for us?”

“How we die is a profoundly personal journey and I hope this exhibition will give visitors an opportunity to learn more about how people have dealt with

death throughout history, and also consider what they would like to leave behind and the options open to them, now and in the future.”

In addition to the Tickets for the Afterlife, which will be placed within a patterned geodesic dome for visitors to find, there will be design objects on display.

These include an embalmed USB stick, inspired by the concept of a ‘digital data funeral’, created by Dr Audrey Samson of Goldsmiths, University of London and entitled [*Goodnight Sweetheart*](#).

Artefacts from Northumbria University’s Professor Jayne Wallace’s [*Enabling Ongoingness*](#) project, which explores how digital memories can be stored in crafted objects that act as physical blueprints for memories, will also be demonstrated throughout the exhibition.

The exhibition will end with a panel of experts that will engage the public to think more deeply about the future of death.

Love After Death takes place from Monday 4th to Saturday 9th November at Newcastle City Library and is part of the [*Economic and Social Research Council’s*](#) (ESRC) [*Festival of Social Sciences*](#).

- Find out more about the [*Love After Death*](#) exhibition.
- [*Dr Stacey Pitsillides*](#) works within [*Northumbria University’s School of Design*](#). Find out more by coming along to one of the University’s upcoming [*Open Days*](#).
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