

Helsinki to get its own coral reef in the form of an artwork

The Helsinki Satellite Reef is an artwork that will be created for the Helsinki Biennial together with residents of Helsinki. It is the latest addition to the worldwide *Crochet Coral Reef* project by sisters Margaret and Christine Wertheim and their Los Angeles-based Institute For Figuring. The *Crochet Coral Reef* is one of the world's largest participatory science and art projects, drawing the public's attention to climate change and the plastic waste that threatens the world's oceans.

Created in 2005 by sisters Christine and Margaret Wertheim, the *Crochet Coral Reef* project combines mathematics, environmental activism, marine biology and handicrafts. Within the project, the Wertheims work with citizen participants to create large-scale crocheted installations that imitate vibrant, colourful coral reefs through collaborative processes. This communal creativity highlights not only the damage humans do to the Earth's ecology, but also our power for positive action.

"Satellite Reefs" of the overall *Crochet Coral Reef* project have been created in over 40 cities and countries around the world, including New York, London, Riga and Abu Dhabi. To date, more than 10,000 people have participated in crafting this vast woollen archipelago. Now, Helsinki Biennial is bringing the project to Helsinki, too.

Communities in Helsinki will crochet corals, nature's rapidly disappearing wonders, to create the *Helsinki Satellite Reef*. The individual crocheted pieces will be assembled into one large-scale work of art. Materials used will include yarn and recycled plastic.

Libraries and service centres around Helsinki will participate in the artwork. Schools will also have the opportunity to take part in the project at local cultural centres. In addition, HAM Helsinki Art Museum will host communal crocheting events during the spring.

The *Crochet Coral Reef* project is an example of the Wertheims' art-making philosophy, which aims to make ideas in science and mathematics more understandable and more pleasurable. Having grown up doing handicrafts themselves – knitting, crocheting, embroidering, and sewing – the sisters now combine their lifelong love of crafts with their professional interest in science.

HAM's crocheting events in spring 2020:

4.2., 18.2., 3.3., 17.3., 31.3., 14.4. ja 28.4. from 4 to 6.30 pm, place: HAM-paja, Tennispalatsi

[Facebook event](#)

Helsinki Biennial is an international contemporary art event that takes place every two years. HAM Helsinki Art Museum is responsible for its production and curation, and the head curators are Pirkko Siitari, Head of Exhibitions at HAM and Taru Tappola, HAM's Head of Public Art. Helsinki Biennial is part of the Helsinki City Strategy and will be held for the first time on Vallisaari Island from 12 June to 27 September, 2020. The main partners of Helsinki Biennial 2020 are Metsähallitus and the Jane and Aatos Erkko Foundation. The Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation and the Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland are also supporting the biennial.

All artists, artworks and the Helsinki Biennial programme will be announced in spring 2020.