

The End is Not Yet

Humans have been making and using prayer beads for millennia. Their exact origin remains uncertain but earliest historical use traces to Hindu prayers in India. The statue of a Hindu holy man with beads dates to the third century BC.

In traditional prayer bead making, the construction, number and arrangement varies by religion, culture and use, and all represent specific ideas, 'The End is Not Yet' comprises 792 beads representing the total number of hours our country spent locked down at level 4 during the Covid-19 pandemic. In spiritual tradition, prayer beads are used as amulets or talismans but most often to count prayers or mantras. In this work, we count the weeks, days and hours until freedom and safety are restored. The work comprises 5 sets, 4 of which contain 168 beads (total hours in a week) and 1 smaller set containing 120 beads (the final 5 days of level 4). Each set contains a large head bead marking the point of entry into the cycle and 7 signifier beads symbolising the beginning and end of each day in lockdown. Beads are constructed from first aid kit contents - bandages, slings, gauze swabs etc. Materials typically reserved for concealing and protecting physical wounds in this instance are given a new association.

Title: The End is Not Yet 2020

Artist: Christine Cook

Materials: Mixed media

NFS