

SAINSBURY CENTRE

Dear Citizen Scientist,

Thank you for taking part in *The Great Nurdle Hunt* and contacting Fidra with information about your nurdle findings!

This autumn, the Sainsbury Centre in Norwich, UK, is hosting environmental artist, Maarten Vanden Enynde's *Check Mate*. This is an important work that draws attention to the plastic pollution within the world's oceans. Maarten began making *Check Mate* in 2020 and has now collected approximately 262,000 nurdles for this project. By sending your nurdles to the Sainsbury Centre this autumn, you will help Maarten to fill another square of the giant chess board.

If you are based in the UK and would like to contribute to this project, could you please post your nurdles to

ATTN: Vanessa Tothill
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University of East Anglia
Norwich Research Park
Norwich NR4 7TJ
UK

Check Mate will be on display at the Sainsbury Centre from **10 September 2023 – 14 January 2024** in *The Stuff of Life/The Life of Stuff*.

We can only accept donations before and during the exhibition dates.

More about *Check Mate*...

According to legend, the game of chess was invented by a courtier for a king. So delighted was the king by the game that he swore to reward its inventor with whatever he asked for. 'Just put one grain of rice on the first square, two on the second, four on the third, eight on the fourth, and go on doubling like that till the last square is reached,' came the answer. The king laughed at this seemingly modest request and ordered it to be fulfilled. But his laughter soon turned to lamentation as it became clear that not all the rice in his kingdom or even in the whole world would fill so much as half the board. Each time *Check Mate* is exhibited the chessboard is enlarged as a new square is filled with an exponentially increasing number of plastic pellets: 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, 512, 1024 (and so on). The work visualises the scale of the problem of plastic pollution – over 300 million tonnes are produced annually – and at the same time amplifies worldwide efforts to raise awareness and find solutions to this complex and multilayered global threat.

Also known under the more poetic and tragic name 'mermaid tears', nurdles are released into the environment, creating unprecedented pollution in the oceans and on beaches worldwide. Currently, nurdles cannot be recycled in general recycling. These plastic pieces are the raw material of nearly all our plastic products, which means they are often made of different types of plastic. *Check Mate* is a growing installation, a huge chessboard that is gradually filled exponentially with plastic nurdles that are collected around the world by a growing team of volunteers and organisations that hand pick the nurdles during seasonal beach cleanings or after huge nurdle spills that take place regularly.

https://www.maartenvandeneynde.com/?rd_project=1882&lang=en

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<https://www.facebook.com/Checkmatenurdles>

With thanks,

Vanessa Tothill
Curator