

# BREATHING BUILDINGS

June 16–July 29, 2017  
The Japan Foundation Gallery

## CURATORIAL STATEMENT | Julian Worrall

Buildings, with their obdurate materiality and weighty durability, appear as among the most fixed and definitive of human creations. The work of Ainslie Murray unsettles this perception, focussing on the immaterial, evanescent, and fugitive dimensions of architecture. Through registrations of architectural experience presented in fine and delicate materials such as thread, fabric, and glass powder, Murray traces the subtle lineaments of the spaces that buildings enclose and surround us with. Under her sensitive yet penetrating gaze, “all that is solid melts into air”.<sup>1</sup>

In this exhibition, this perspective is brought into dialogue with the architecture of Kengo Kuma, a Japanese architect whose career has pursued what he terms “the dissolution of architecture”.<sup>2</sup> Kuma’s buildings break down masses into congregations of particles, and replace walls with layers of permeable filters. The objective is to integrate the building with its environment and embed architecture within its setting. Kuma perceives built space as a mesh of interrelationships rather than a field of objects, independent and distinct.

This chimes with Murray’s rendition of the embodied experience of architecture, writing of the complex process of researching and representing spatial experience that “we are not spectators in the complicated entanglement of air, body, sense, thought – we are the entanglement.”<sup>3</sup> We ‘breathe’ buildings; architecture permeates us; inhabitation is akin to inhalation. Through its staging of a cycle of spatial experience, mediation, translation, and representation, this exhibition explores the fluid boundaries between art, architecture, the environment and ourselves.

June 2017

## About the Artist

Ainslie Murray is an interdisciplinary artist, architect and academic working principally in installation. The artist states, “my work explores the augmentation of architectural space through subtle realisations of intangible, hidden, and forgotten spatial forces.” Initially informed by a research residency in Kyoto a decade ago, Murray has continued to engage with the aesthetic principles in Japanese architecture, most recently through the work of Kengo Kuma.

A Senior Lecturer in UNSW’s Faculty of the Built Environment, Dr Murray exhibits nationally and internationally and has shown work in China, Denmark and Scotland. Murray has received awards for her creative research practice from the Australia Council for the Arts and NAVA, as well as scholarships and international residencies including the Banff Centre in Canada and La Cité Internationale des Arts in France.

[www.ainsliemurray.com](http://www.ainsliemurray.com)

<sup>1</sup> Borrowing Karl Marx’s resonant phrase from *The Communist Manifesto*, describing how the verities of an older world dissolved under the transformations wrought by capitalism.

<sup>2</sup> Kengo Kuma, *The Anti-object: The Dissolution and Disintegration of Architecture* (London: Architecture Association, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Ainslie Murray, “Breathing Buildings: A practice-led response to the ‘dissolving’ architecture of Kengo Kuma,” in *Making Research, Researching Making* (Aarhus School of Architecture, Aarhus, Denmark. 2015.)

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## 01 [hanging works]

### *Particulate Matter (Conservatoire)*

2017

Dimensions variable

Hanging panels each 800mm x 500mm

Crushed glass, adhesive film, acrylic, Tyvek

## 02 [film]

### *Breathing Buildings*

2015

HD video

9' 52"

Shot on location at Z58 (Shanghai, China), Conservatoire Darius Milhaud (Aix-en-Provence, France), and Daiwa Ubiquitous Computing Building (Tokyo, Japan).

Video Editing : Joseph Florio and Kuba Dorabialski

Sound : Kuba Dorabialski

*Thanks to Suguru Watanabe, Kengo Kuma and Associates; Francis He and Julie Tao, Zhongtai Lighting Group; Jean-Philippe Dambreville and Cappucine Trotobas, Conservatoire Darius Milhaud.*

## 03 [installation on glass wall and floor]

### *Structural Adaptations*

2017

Dimensions variable

Approx. 3.66m wide x 2.44m high x 2.44m deep

Crushed glass, adhesive film, acrylic

## ARTIST STATEMENT | Ainslie Murray

Breathing Buildings is an exhibition of works investigating aspects of air, atmosphere and dissolution in response to three buildings by acclaimed Japanese architect Kengo Kuma. I visited these three Kuma buildings through 2014/15: Z58 (Shanghai, China, completed 2007), a striated commercial building of garden, glass and water; Conservatoire Darius Milhaud (Aix-en-Provence, France, completed 2014), a metal-clad conservatorium with an intensely geometric character; and the Daiwa Ubiquitous Computing Building (Tokyo, Japan, completed 2014), a research facility at the University of Tokyo with a striking timber facade. Each of these buildings mediates its environment in a unique way and allows for simultaneous experiences of interior and exterior. The works in this exhibition are intended as sites of reflection developed from embodied experience, and invite contemplation of connections between inside and outside, solidity and dissolution, and visible and invisible.

*Special thanks to Sasha Lesiuk and Penelope Fraser.*

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