

MEDIA RELEASE

Brisbane and Japan meet in new ceramic exhibition

From Brisbane's Mount Coot-tha to the Seto Inland Sea of Japan, artist Kenji Uranishi has sought inspiration from both his homeland and adopted home, in *Kenji Uranishi: Momentary*, an exhibition of beautiful ceramic works running from 19 February to 22 May 2016 at Museum of Brisbane.

Commissioned by the Museum, Kenji has pushed his practice to create more than 50 new forms and shapes, responding to the importance of place and the role of the city through his artwork.

Hailing from Nara, Japan, Kenji started studying ceramics at age 18 when he began his Degree in Fine Art (Ceramics) at the Nara College of Fine Arts. Initially, he worked mostly with stoneware clay, a natural material familiar to him from childhood.

A move to Australia in 2004 provided Kenji with inspiration to explore new materials, devoid of cultural expectations. Ever since, he has worked almost exclusively with porcelain – from large-scale public architectural commissions, to smaller-scale sculptural work – and has been captivated by the translucency and purity of the medium.

Momentary marks the first exhibition in which the Japanese-born artist has incorporated slip-cast sculpture in his practice, after learning new techniques from a master mould maker during an artist residence in Arita in 2014.

Museum of Brisbane Director Peter Denham said *Momentary* was a spectacular cross-cultural exhibition.

"Our 2016 program is all about giving visitors a global view of our city and exploring Brisbane's ever-growing presence in the Asia-Pacific region," Mr Denham said.

"Kenji's work is intricate in its design and hints at high rise buildings and urbanisation. It is the perfect companion for our other exhibition *Living in the city*, and both headline the inaugural Asia-Pacific Architecture Forum in Brisbane."

Mr Uranishi said inspiration for *Momentary* came from both his Australian and Japanese experiences.

"From the things I saw riding my bike through the city, to the lookout at Mount Coot-tha, to areas around the Seto Sea where built-up cities meet the ocean's edge, I have examined the playful relationship between light and form in nature and the built environment in each work," Mr Uranishi said.

"For me, the connection between the built and natural world is an important one – I am captivated by the patterns and forms found in both worlds and finding that beautiful space or moment where these worlds collide."

Kenji has exhibited widely and his works have been featured in public spaces, including 400 George Street in Brisbane and the redeveloped Ipswich Courthouse. He was a recipient of a 2014 Asialink Artist Residency program and spent 12 weeks in Arita, Kyushu – widely considered to be the birthplace of porcelain in Japan.

He has delivered workshops to arts organisations, universities, galleries and conferences, and was an artist-in-residence at the Australian National University in Canberra. His works are held in many public collections including National Gallery of Australia, Bendigo Art Gallery, Caboolture Regional Art Gallery, Newcastle Regional Gallery and Gold Coast City Art Gallery.

A program of events will accompany the exhibition, including artist talks, and workshops. For more information visit museumofbrisbane.com.au.

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Museum of Brisbane is open daily from 10am to 5pm, on level three of Brisbane City Hall - entry is free.

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