

# DESIGN CANBERRA FESTIVAL 2018

## DESIGN Canberra Announces Awe Inspiring Installation for This Year's Festival

One of the most significant Japanese figures in contemporary architecture, Kengo Kuma, has unveiled his installation titled 'NAMAKO' that will feature as the inaugural ephemeral architecture project to launch this year's DESIGN Canberra Festival in November. The highly anticipated project will activate Aspen Island in Lake Burley Griffin for the duration of the festival.

The acclaimed architect most recently recognised as the designer of Tokyo's Olympic Stadium for the 2020 Olympic Games will be joining other artists from Canberra's thriving craft and design community in the festival in November.

*"DESIGN Canberra is honoured to work with one of the world's leading architects to design the inaugural ephemeral architecture project. The project promotes experimental and authentic design, fostering international collaboration and design education," says Rachael Coghlan, CEO of Craft ACT and Artistic Director of DESIGN Canberra 2018.*

A prototype of what will eventually be a 2-metre-high, 12-metre-wide installation has today been revealed in Tokyo. The installation will be composed of a steel rod frame structure and mesh made with bio-acrylic rods woven together by zip-ties.

Inspired by the Japanese word for sea cucumber "namako", Kuma's installation reflects the unique characteristics of the animal's softness, transparency and form, allowing audiences to interact with the installation and creating a rich relationship to the surrounding context.

Like many of Kuma's designs, *NAMAKO* conceptually and physically follows his pursuit of different types of weaving, a process he believes underpins the fundamentals of architecture. His work weaves together different methods, materials, people, ideas and spaces to present innovative designs on a global scale, and has been supported by faculty and students at the University of Tokyo Kuma Lab.

*"Our laboratory investigates the possibilities of weaving through many projects and other activities. This includes our ongoing installation project in Australia that will be shown in DESIGN Canberra, which is produced through a reckless weaving process," says Kengo Kuma.*

This project will celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Canberra's treasured sister city relationship with Nara in Japan. Kuma's international reputation and considered approach to architecture was critical to his selection to design the installation. Kuma's belief that *'a place is rich not because of its natural environment, resources or skilled craftspeople, but instead gains its value through the relationship between those things'*<sup>1</sup> is a perfect expression of Canberra's distinct design identity which is distinguished by place, experimentation and craftsmanship.

Arts and Design students from the University of Canberra have been involved in the collaborative process as part of a Faculty Led Program to Japan, alongside fellow University of Tokyo students, weaving the Namako prototype and challenging them to think beyond the boundaries of the concept.

Holding significance to the city, Lake Burley Griffin was named after the architect who designed the city of Canberra in 1911, Walter Burley Griffin and his wife, fellow architect and creative partner Marion Mahony Griffin, who centred the city's design to sit within the landscape, rather than dominating it. The Parliament House Vista incorporating Aspen Island and the Carillon, is the core of the most ambitious and most successful example of twentieth century urban planning in Australia.

Soon to be the platform for *NAMAKO*, Aspen Island in Lake Burley Griffin intrinsically uses nature to best display the installation, encouraging people to interact with the site and its spirit of place. The project has been made possible with the generous sponsorship of platinum partners the University of Canberra and the National Capital Authority; the Canberra

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<sup>1</sup> Kengo Kuma, Preface to "Kengo Kuma: complete works" by Kenneth Frampton. Farnborough: Thames & Hudson, 2012, p8.

installation will be fabricated by architecture students at the University of Canberra; and Aspen Island has been made available for this project through the support of the National Capital Authority.

*"This notable project embodies education, experimentation and sustainability, a first for Australia's city of design, Canberra. It is the perfect opportunity to launch what has become the ACT's fastest growing festival, DESIGN Canberra," says Rachael Coghlan.*

Now showing (Tokyo):

*The prototype of the Kengo Kuma installation will be exhibited at LIXIL Gallery, Kyobashi Building 3-6-18, Kyobashi, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0031, from Thursday July 5 - Tuesday, September 25.*

Coming soon (Canberra):

The full-scale installation of Kengo Kuma's *NAMAKO* will be displayed on Aspen Island in Lake Burley Griffin at the DESIGN Canberra Festival from November 5 – 25, 2018. More information on the festival can be found at [www.designcanberrafestival.com.au](http://www.designcanberrafestival.com.au).

Craft ACT promotes and celebrates excellence and innovation in contemporary craft and design. Craft ACT: Craft + Design Centre is supported by the ACT Government; the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments; and the Australia Council for the Arts, the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body.

**DESIGN Canberra Festival 2018 is proudly sponsored by:**

**Platinum Partners:** Rolfe Classic BMW, home.by holly, University of Canberra

**Co-laboratory Partner:** National Capital Authority

**Government Partner:** ACT Government/Events ACT

**Accommodation Partner:** Vibe Hotel Canberra

**Design Partner:** Cre8ive

**Gold Partners:** Australian Institute of Architects, Australian National University (College of Arts and Social Sciences and Research School of Humanities and the Arts)

**Silver Partner:** Radford

### **About DESIGN Canberra**

DESIGN Canberra is an annual festival which celebrates and promotes Canberra as a global city of design.

Design is in Canberra's DNA. From the time of Walter and Marion Griffin's visionary design a century ago, to iconic experimental modernist architecture of the 1950s and 60s, through to contemporary and sustainable design developments today, Canberra has always been a living design laboratory.

Throughout November 2018, over 100 events, exhibitions, talks, tours, markets, artist studios and open homes will be showcased as DESIGN Canberra. The festival is for all interests and ages and most events are free.

Presented by Craft ACT: Craft and Design Centre. Program: [www.designcanberrafestival.com.au](http://www.designcanberrafestival.com.au)

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