



powell street festival society

パウエル祭協会

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For Immediate Release (12th July, 2022, Vancouver): Powell Street Festival Society, in association with New Media Gallery, Anvil Theatre, and Formscape Arts Society, proudly present Studio Programsounds' Kūsou/空相, a new immersive audio-visual installation drawing on Japanese calligraphy and western flute. Through real-time computer graphics, calligraphic *kanji* characters are represented as continuously transforming visual scenery, backed by an auditory landscape of acoustic and electronically transformed flute sounds. Interfacing with an embedded interactive system, the audience plays a special role in Kūsou—traversing the exhibit space creating unique events within the audio-visual scenery and realizing the collective interaction between them and the world that the artwork represents.

Kūsou/空相 is made up of three scenes comprised of 12 pairs of calligraphic *kanji* with opposite meanings. “*Kanji*” or Japanese characters “communicate beyond the boundaries of language: they are often pictographic and, when executed as expressively, the varied shapes, lines, tones, and textures offer a very wide array of subjective interpretations to the viewer” says Yota Kobayashi, soundscape artist and interactive system developer on this piece. How do these opposite words evoke the Zen Buddhist concept of “emptiness,” how might one embody their own unique reality in this piece, and what notions come from two opposing forms shown together? See this exciting exhibit at the **Anvil Theatre** in New Westminster, on view **July 28 through August 3** for this dynamic sensory experience!

The Kūsou/空相 production team was formed through an international and interdisciplinary collaboration of four artists in Japan and Canada, each member bringing their expertise from the respective artistic field. The team comprises Japanese calligrapher **Aiko Hatanaka** (Tokyo), flutist **Mark Takeshi McGregor** (Vancouver), video artist **Ryo Kanda** (Tokyo), and soundscape artist and interactive system developer **Yota Kobayashi** (Vancouver).

Celebrate at the **exhibition opening talk** with the artistic team at **6:30 PM on July 28** as Japanese calligrapher Aiko Hatanaka, flutist Mark Takeshi McGregor, video artist Ryo Kanda, and soundscape artist and interactive system developer Yota Kobayashi share insight into their creative process and international collaboration for this piece.

Back on the Powell Street Festival grounds at the **Firehall Arts Centre**, attend an **artists' talk and panel** with Giorgio Magnanensi, Artistic Director of Vancouver New Music and internationally renowned composer and conductor, in conversation with flutist Mark Takeshi McGregor (Vancouver), video artist Ryo Kanda (Tokyo), and soundscape artist and interactive



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system developer Yota Kobayashi (Vancouver) of the Kūsou/空相 artistic team as they share insight behind the scenes of this innovative installation. **Saturday, July 30, 3:45 PM.**

Plus, Powell Street Festival, in collaboration with New Media Gallery, will be hosting two days of *AI Workshops for Families* on the Festival grounds at the Vancouver Japanese Language School and Japanese Hall during the Festival Weekend. Facilitated by designer and educator Hope Akello and inspired by Kūsou/空相, this workshop will explore the fundamentals of machine learning and combine person-to-person and person-to-machine communication; beginning by teaching a computer to respond to your movements and ending with a computer-generated work of art. Adult supervision and advance registration required. To reserve your spot, register at ai-workshop-for-kids.eventbrite.ca

Kūsou/空相 is produced by Studio Programsounds and presented in collaboration with Powell Street Festival Society, New Media Gallery, Anvil Centre, and Formscape Arts Society with financial and in-kind support from Canada Council for the Arts, Vancouver New Music, ICICS, University of British Columbia School of Music, and the Vancouver Art Gallery.

For more information on this exhibit and opening hours, visit our website at <https://powellstreetfestival.com>.

For interview requests or media inquiries, please contact Duston Baranow-Watts, Communications Coordinator, at media@powellstreetfestival.com or phone (604) 343-0269.

About Powell Street Festival Society:

The Powell Street Festival Society's (PSFS) mission is to celebrate Japanese Canadian art and culture to connect communities. The main activity is producing the Powell Street Festival, an annual celebration of Japanese Canadian arts, music and culture in Vancouver's historic Japanese Canadian neighbourhood, Paueru Gai in the Downtown Eastside. With the support of over 250 volunteers, this two-day free event is the largest of its kind in Canada and the longest running festival in Metro Vancouver, entering its 46th year. PSFS is a non-profit professional arts presenter that is progressive, diverse, contemporary, and compelling.