

JAPAN UN LAYERED

JAN 27 – FEB 28
FAIRMONT PACIFIC RIM
VANCOUVER, CANADA

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Introduction

Japan Unlayered offers a glimpse into an interesting and influential part of Westbank's world that is leading the practice in new and exciting directions, supported by development partner, Peterson. It is designed to be a sensory experience that invites one to experience Japanese culture through touch, taste, sight, sound and smell. Japan Unlayered introduces the elements of Japanese culture that particularly inspire Westbank, especially the design philosophy of layering and its manifestation in architecture.

Depth, rigour, and unrelenting effort to achieve artistic synthesis are central to layering, similar to the total work of art philosophy of 'Gesamtkunstwerk' explored in Westbank development projects, like Vancouver House and TELUS Garden. Gesamtkunstwerk, was also the title of our last exhibition which brought tens of thousands of people together in Vancouver to engage in a dialogue about what city building could look like. Japan Unlayered builds upon that exhibition's success, and our vision of more equitable and beautiful cities, where artistry is celebrated.

We have long admired Japanese culture, but over the last few years we have immersed ourselves further within it, with five projects, both large and small under development in Vancouver and Tokyo with master Japanese architect Kengo Kuma's team, including Alberni by Kengo Kuma, a proposed new 43-storey residential building in downtown Vancouver. Westbank has also recently opened an office in Tokyo to help us continue this exploration. Our hope is that this collaboration will help further Westbank's growth and that the concepts and spirit of Tokyo will bring an aesthetic and cultural richness that Vancouver, as a very young city, will embrace with open arms.

Inspired by this interaction with Japanese design, Westbank and Peterson, developers-owners of Fairmont Pacific Rim, invited Kengo Kuma & Associates (KCAA) to curate Japan Unlayered. The exhibition explores the in-depth collaboration between KCAA and Westbank, to present Japanese craftsmanship alongside contemporary design to illustrate that the defining principles of Japanese design remain the same despite the evolution of technology.

The exhibition brings together old-world Japanese traditions and new world brands highly sought after by global consumers, displayed across two levels, and beginning at the hotel's exterior. Our wish when engaging with the exhibition, is that the guest will experience a taste of the incredibly rich Japanese ethos that we are most passionate about, and understand it's potential to add a layer of cultural depth to Vancouver that is important to younger generations.

Exhibition Curator

“With any scale, I always start with the details. I think about the materials and the members; how the characteristics of the constituents could aggregate to create a whole.”

- Kengo Kuma 隈研吾

In the architectural world, Japanese architects are considered the penultimate of the profession. Amongst the very top tier of Japanese architects, Kengo Kuma is a master, a title reserved for very few in the world and earned with an extraordinary portfolio of outstanding projects of all sizes, in Japan and now across the globe.

His recent awards include the “Decoration Officier de L’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres” from France in 2009, and the Mainichi Art Award for “Nezu Museum” in 2010. Kuma was recently awarded the commission for the 2020 Olympic stadium in Tokyo, widely considered the top architectural commission in the world.

Kuma’s sensitivity and ability to respect the past and present inhabitants of a place, as well as its natural context, is what sets his work apart from many global architects. His desire to understand natural forces and systems, and our relationship as humans to these forces, gives his work longevity beyond the fashion of this day.

Kuma’s first major tall tower project in North America is Alberni by Kengo Kuma, a new 43-storey residential building in downtown Vancouver, proposed for completion in 2020.

A retrospective look at the architecture of KKAA, from its small beginnings to its current large-scale works, is on display in the form of building models. Among them is a model of Alberni by Kengo Kuma.

Another Kuma designed project in collaboration with Westbank is their first development in Tokyo, near Westbank’s new office in the city – Kitasando – with details under development.

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Location

Fairmont Pacific Rim – a destination for art, architecture and design

For the art initiated, the artistry of Fairmont Pacific Rim is all encompassing, bringing back the traditional union of art and architecture.

Even before you enter Fairmont Pacific Rim, you will be captivated by its exterior. Two pieces – one by hotel architect and photographer Jim Cheng, creates the illusion of tree trunks and leaves on 9,500 square feet of texturally rich perforations, bumps and dimples; the other, by British artist Liam Gillick – a hypnotic, continuous thread of words encircles the facade from floors five to 22 and ‘speaks’ to passersby who glance up.

All speak to the art and artistry of the growing international collection – eclectic in nature – that is housed within Vancouver’s definitive luxury hotel.

Under the direction of developers-owners, Westbank and Peterson, and curated by Westbank, the collection is not themed, rather driven by interest and passion. Started in 2010 with the hotel’s opening, the collection now includes works by Jody Broomfield, Neil Campbell, Jim Cheng, Liam Gillick, Fred Herzog, Zhang Huan, Ian Wallace and Jason Wu.

Whether you are captivated by the works that hang on the walls, the ever-changing piece poised prominently above the bar or encircling the exterior. The hotel celebrates art at every turn and touch – beautiful and functional – from matchbook marble walls in public corridors to high-top Corian tables etched with Bob Dylan song lyrics, and a Fazioli piano, handcrafted for the hotel to art books in every room.