

May 19, 2015

ART AFTER FUKUSHIMA: KEN AND JULIA YONETANI TO SPEAK AT RMIT GALLERY 26 MAY



Installation image of work by Ken and Julia Yonetani by Mark Ashkanasy, RMIT Gallery, 2015.

Artists Ken and Julia Yonetani's **eerie light display** is part of the [Japanese Art After Fukushima: Return of Godzilla](#) (20 March – 30 May) exhibition at RMIT Gallery. The artists will be making a special visit from Japan to RMIT Gallery to talk about their work in the exhibition, which has captivated audiences.

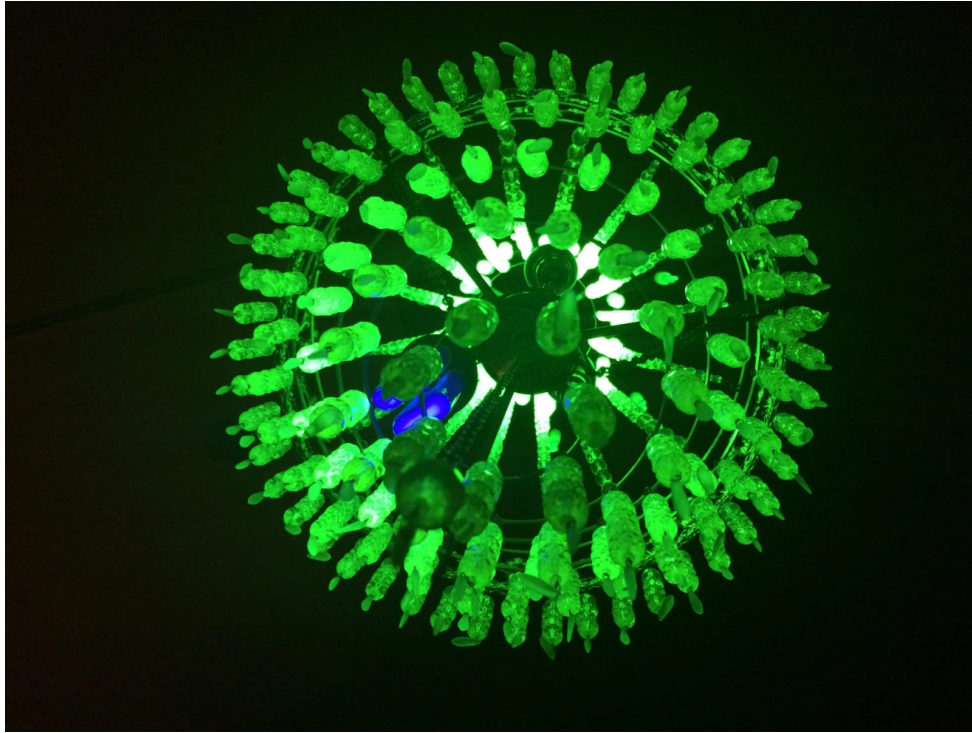
Their stunning works use **vintage uranium glass** borosilicate tubing and emit a green, unnatural glow which is made by the uranium reacting to a UV bulb.



RMIT Gallery
20 Mar 2015 – 30 May 2015
Japanese Art After Fukushima: Return of Godzilla. Photo: Mark Ashkanasy, RMIT Gallery, 2015

Renowned art critic Robert Nelson (The Age, SMH) [wrote at length](#) about the poetic qualities in the Yonetani's work on May 19, and called the exhibition, curated by Linda Williams, "collected and thoughtful", praising its relevance to the environmental themes presented in the thought provoking festival, Art + Climate = Change, which gathers local and international artists working with environmental ideas.

Ken + Julia Yonetani are an Australian / Japanese creative partnership whose work explores the interaction between humans, nature, science and the spiritual realm in the contemporary age.



Ken + Julia YONETANI
Crystal Palace: The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nuclear Nations (Hungary), 2012
Antique chandelier frame, uranium, glass beads, wire, UV light bulbs and electric component
44 x 44 x 44 cm. Photo Evelyn Tsitas

Conceived in response to the **Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster in Japan in 2011**, the work is comprised of 31 chandeliers. Antique chandelier frames have been refitted with uranium glass and UV lighting; once switched on, the UV bulbs cause the glass beads to glow with a haunting green. The pieces signal the 31 nuclear nations of the world, in the RMIT Gallery exhibition, Hungary and South Africa.

The size of each chandelier corresponds to the number of operating nuclear plants in each nation. The overarching title of the work references the grandiose building designed for the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London, hinting at the **tension between human ambition, technological development and its costs and consequences**.

Ken and Julia Yonetani will talk about the **unusual materials** they use in their works, such as uranium glass to provide thought-provoking contemporary installations.



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As Ken Yonetani explained to artradarjournal.com (16/01/2015) about working with uranium glass (**which is slightly radioactive**) in the chandeliers – two of which are on display at RMIT Gallery; “Some specialists say it is safe for our health, but we wanted to work quickly to finish the installation...the number of chandeliers we had to do was 31 and it took two years. **We are still alive!**”

Japanese Art After Fukushima: Return of Godzilla is part of the **Art + Climate = Change 2015 Festival** presented by **Climarte: Arts for a Safe Climate**, celebrating and identifying Australian and international artists working with environmental ideas.

This exhibition focuses focus on the work of six contemporary Japanese and Japanese-Australian artists responding to the events at the Fukushima nuclear power plant in 2011 and its

environmental implications; Yutaka Kobayashi; Ichi Ikeda; Manabu Ikeda; Takashi Kuribayashi; Finger Pointing Worker; and the collaboration of Ken and Julia Yonetani.

What: Ken and Julia Yonetani – Artist floor talk

Date: Tuesday 26 May

Time: 12.30 – 1.30 pm

Venue: RMIT Gallery, 344 Swanston Street Melbourne

Bookings: Free. Bookings (03) 9925 1717



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