

Morgan Quaintance

Available Light

John Hansard Gallery
31 May–6 September 2025

#JHGQuaintance

John Hansard Gallery, part of the University of Southampton, is proud to present a major new project by artist Morgan Quaintance.

Exploring themes of home and belonging in contemporary society, *Available Light* features interviews with workers at the Edo Tokyo Open Air Architecture Museum in Japan, alongside fragments of conversations with renters in both Tokyo and London. These elements spark a thought-provoking dialogue between the museum's preserved historical ideal of the domestic and the often-unsettling realities of temporary accommodation in modern cities. Through Quaintance's signature immersive sound design, combined with impressionistic images and abstractions filmed on 16mm, the artist creates an austere, dreamlike, and subtly poignant portrait of residential precarity.

Two short films accompany *Available Light*. *Seikokan III* is a direct animation work, using the technique of ink drawing on film to make use of the left-over, or unused, 16mm material shot in Tokyo. Whilst *Walking Distance* takes footage of Mount Fuji and combines it with subtitles that explain the distances from Quaintance's temporary home in Tokyo and the most frequently visited sites during his stay in 2024.

Available Light was shot and produced as part of a parallel collaboration with Anniversary Fellow and University of Southampton's Senior Research Fellow, Laura Harris. Designed as a research experiment, Harris proposed the question: what would happen if an artist and sociologist were to embark on research together, on equal footing? What emerged was not a collaboration as such, but rather a scenario that allowed them to work on parallel tracks – treating interdisciplinarity as a way of 'letting in more light'.

Both Harris and Quaintance were interested in the preservation and production of 'atmosphere' at a given location, and chose the Architecture Museum as their subject. Since opening in 1993, the museum has been a unique institution in Tokyo, with a mission to relocate domestic and commercial buildings of high historic value (19th and early 20th century) to its park site. The pair were interested in how the different buildings on site function as vessels for historic periods of time, and how visitors walking through the site are essentially engaging in a form of embodied time travel.

Emerging from the same time and place, their collaboration produced distinct outputs, refracted through their different ways of viewing the world.

Whilst Quaintance produced a sequence of films, Harris wrote *When Buildings Move*, an essay that explores the consequences of when place and location are severed. Copies of the essay will also be available in the exhibition to read and takeaway.

Available Light forms part of a year-long touring project that expands on themes from the film. This will include new formal and conceptual elements, encompassing writing and sound compositions, all developed by Quaintance. Adaptations from a core body of work will show at multiple venues. Confirmed dates include: 13 March, Cafe Oto, London, UK; 24–27 March, CPH: DOX, Copenhagen, Denmark; 29 March, Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival, Berwick-upon-Tweed, UK; 4 April; Courtisane Festival, Ghent, Belgium; 19–20 November, Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts, Brighton, UK.

Project supported by John Hansard Gallery and University of Southampton.

For more information, please contact:

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Notes for Editors

Morgan Quaintance

Morgan Quaintance is a London-based artist and writer. His moving image work has been shown and exhibited widely at festivals and institutions including: MOMA, New York; McEvoy Foundation for the Arts, San Francisco; Konsthall C, Sweden; David Dale, Glasgow; European Media Art Festival, Germany; Alchemy Film and Arts Festival, Scotland; Images Festival, Toronto; International Film Festival Rotterdam; and Third Horizon Film Festival, Miami.

Over the past fourteen years, his critically incisive writings on contemporary art, aesthetics and their socio-political contexts have featured in publications including *Art Monthly*, *the Wire*, and *the Guardian*, and helped shape and influence the UK's new landscape of progressive cultural discourse and debate. Quaintance's films are distributed by LUX, London..

Laura Harris

Laura Harris is an Anniversary Fellow in the Department of Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology at the University of Southampton. Her research explores the work of making places meaningful. She often uses visual methods, such as photography, to conduct her research.

With a background in the sociology of art and art theory, Harris is interested in exchanges between artists, arts organisations and sociologists. She has worked with multiple galleries across the UK to bring sociology and contemporary art practice closer together.

Harris has previously held an ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Edinburgh and has been a Digital Engagement Fellow at *The Sociological Review* where she initiated their *Image-Maker in Residence* programme. Harris completed her PhD in 2020 which was a collaboration with Bluecoat, Liverpool's centre for the contemporary arts.

John Hansard Gallery

John Hansard Gallery is a locally engaged and internationally recognised contemporary art gallery in Southampton. Being part of the University of Southampton, the Gallery aims to create extraordinary encounters with the rich diversity of contemporary art that inspire people and communities to change the world for the better. To realise this, the Gallery creates innovative and critically acclaimed contemporary art exhibitions, events, engagement and research projects that excite, challenge, represent and reach the widest possible public audience. Learning and engagement are at the heart of the Gallery and underpin all its activities. The innovative education and public programme is accompanied by special community-focused projects, including activities for all ages and levels of experience. John Hansard Gallery was established in 1979 and is a National Portfolio Organisation supported by Arts Council England. jhg.art

University of Southampton

The University of Southampton is one of the UK's leading teaching and research institutions, with a global reputation for research and scholarship across a wide range of subjects. The University combines academic excellence with an innovative and entrepreneurial approach to research, supporting a culture that engages and challenges students and staff in their pursuit of learning.

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The Anniversary Fellowship

The Anniversary Fellowship scheme provides an exciting opportunity for exceptional early-career researchers to advance their research careers and gives them an opportunity to become future research leaders in their field. Bringing their own unique vision of how to make a difference to society, Anniversary Fellows help shape the future of research, both at the University of Southampton and in their own field. The University is committed to employing a diverse workforce and building an inclusive culture and the scheme is key to supporting this ambition by attracting researchers from around the world from a variety of backgrounds and walks of life whose common goal is to achieve the remarkable and build an inclusive world.