

IKON

Exhibition Guide

Takefumi Ichikawa *Fuyu 06*

13 July – 20 August 2006

Ikon Eastside

This is the first solo exhibition in the UK by Japanese artist Takefumi Ichikawa. Born in 1971 in Nagoya, he currently lives and works in Tokyo, making subtle sculptural work that plays off the nature of architectural interiors. In this case, his installation is a response to the roughness of a decommissioned nineteenth century Methodist chapel, ex-factory, now Ikon's interim Eastside home. For the first week of this project, the artist takes up residence in the space, offering visitors an opportunity to meet him and discuss his practice, as well as see his work develop.

At first glance, it appears that the space is unoccupied and then gradually we become aware of large sculptural forms, transparent plastic columns and bags filled with helium moving silently, drifting forms that impinge very slightly on our visual field. They are 'ghosts of sculpture', the antithesis of conventionally earthbound lumps of art, those supposedly self-contained objects with intrinsic artistic quality. It is impossible to look at his work without looking through it. Their near-invisibility has nothing to do with illusion; rather it encourages us to look more closely, both at the work itself and its circumstances.

Ichikawa's floating forms allow light to pass through them, whilst casting shadows upon the concrete floor below. They respond to air currents within the space, including those caused by visitors, and thus, despite their minimally abstract nature, they assume a kind of human relationship. They are subject to physical laws and they impress us as 'wonderful', in the way that blown bubbles, rainbows and waterfalls are apt to be enthralling, not through anything contrived, but because of the way they simply are.