“extraordinarily beautiful and reverent”
Gary Michael Dault, CANADIAN ARCHITECT

“floated like a waking dream…suspended in an opalescent membrane”
Robert Everett-Green, GLOBE AND MAIL

“symphony of pure sensation”
Ben Lensink, SCHREEF DE TWENTSCHE COURANT TUBANTIA

“hard to believe it was designed by a person and not born of nature”
SHAPE & COLOUR World Press

“arresting”
LEONARDO Journal of the International Society of the Arts, Sciences and Technology

“the power to be the dominant aesthetic of 21st century landscapes”
Hannah Devlin, LONDON TIMES

“the future of architecture”
Michael Slezak, NEW SCIENTIST

SUMMARY
Philip Beesley creates sculpture, wall panels, canopies and framed works for gallery spaces, public buildings and private acquisitions. Exhibited internationally, his recent Hylozoic Series explores living environments that raise fundamental questions about how architecture might behave in the future. Might future buildings begin to know and care about us? Might they start, in very primitive ways, to become alive?

Beesley’s sculptures act on an emotional and poetic level, creating intimate gestures that draw the artwork, space and individual together. The artwork incorporates innovative technologies including lightweight digital fabrication, distributed computation and experimental textiles.

The studio of Philip Beesley Architect Inc. combines sculpture, architecture, engineering and science. Interactive electronics and integrated lighting details are special features within these projects, supporting a range of qualities from quiet contemplation to dynamic, complex expressions. The studio works with individual and institutional clients to create artworks that precisely meet venue and budget specifications. Scales vary to compliment small private works to major public spaces, with budgets ranging from $10,000 to $1M.

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Hylozoic Ground, 2010
Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy
40m x 14m x 5m
Immersive environments create intimate sculptural spaces that envelop viewers in floating forms. Above, a grove of interactive meshwork columns and filters are installed within the chapel space of a Baroque convent in Mexico City for the 2010 Festival de Mexico. 'Ghost' meshwork columns expand the area of the grove space while a passive cloud-like layer of glass and mylar filter elements hover above, weaving in and out of the column grove. A series of liquid-filled glass vessels rest throughout the environment to create a dew-like filigree.

A. IMMERSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Epiphyte Chamber formed part of the inaugural opening at the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Seoul, Korea. The work is envisioned as an archipelago of interconnected halo-like masses that mimic human sensations through subtle, coordinated movements. Interactive kinetic systems respond to an occupant’s movement in ripples of choreographed motion and light. Here, audiences are gathered and guided by small clusters of activity into a highly intimate and shared sculptural space.
A series of suspended canopies have been installed in museums, galleries and commercial spaces by the studio. Structural cores employ hexagonal and pentagonal skeletons that are linked together to create quilt-like patterns. Custom glasswork vessels and translucent filtering elements expand these structures, creating hovering surfaces. Assemblies employ transparent acrylic, flexible silicone and custom-fabricated aluminum hardware. The extremely lightweight, durable construction permits installation directly upon existing building finishes.

Epiphyte Spring (above) at the Hangzhou Triennial of Fiber Art, uses crystalline forms that follow diagrids and textile forms in order to make lightweight, resonant scaffolds. Flowing in waves across the length of the space, the structure imparts a fertile turbulence.
Epiphyte Membrane, 2014
Photography Playground, Berlin, Germany
12m x 3m x 4m
Aurora, 2013
Simons Department Store, West Edmonton Mall, Canada
15m x 10m x 6m
C. SMALL SCULPTURAL WORKS

Small sculptural compositions are formed by modular clusters of lightweight material. These compositions can create striking expressions at a modest scale. Individual works and small groups can be installed within relatively small spaces.

The modular form of these elements permits flexibility in designing arrangements that precisely relate to particular spaces. Dramatic lighting and shadows can extend the effect of these installations.

Small-scale sculptures are designed to work with plinth and wall locations or as simple suspensions. These works are often conceived as models for large-scale architectural compositions.

Aerial Well Study (above) is a floating scaffold of elongated acrylic spines laden with dense masses of glass vessels and interspersed with custom acoustic devices. Internal vinegar cells arrayed overhead generate pulses of current that trigger gentle cascades of LED lights and whispering sound.
D. SUSPENDED TAPESTRIES

The most recent generation of Philip Beesley's work features new sculptural tapestries that function like paintings. Suspended vertically on a wall, these tapestries are conceived as ‘geotextile’ canvases that combine interlinking skeletons, intricate glasswork, LED lighting and immersive whispering soundscapes. The interactive systems woven into the work invite conversations with viewers. Akin to the functions of a living system, these interactive geotextiles include embedded machine intelligence that trigger softly rippling patterns of light and enveloping sounds. When undisturbed, soft murmuring sounds and faint lighting populate the work. The work carries influence from Beesley’s early work where he was immersed in late abstract expressionist and ‘action’ painting, influencing the hovering gestural fields within the tapestries.

The personal dimensions of the tapestries offers a radical intimacy where the skin is only one boundary amongst many. These luminous works are especially effective when displayed with dramatic lighting, encouraging subtle associations and dynamism. Projects range from small private works to major public spaces.

Sargasso Field (above) is a wall mounted sculpture relief composed like a miniature ocean including reef-like landforms and floating island masses. Upwelling forms accreted from masses of thermally formed acrylic alternate with transparent spiral skeletons of acrylic clothed with delicate toothed mylar fronds.
Cellular Dew Field (left) is a wall-mounted sculpture relief composed of thermally expanded cells made from octagonal and tetrahedrons laser-cut acrylic, grouped in intersecting tripods that link together into a hybrid diagrid space-truss field. Masses of miniature glass vessels make a saturated field akin to condensed dew, creating subtle glistening and shadow play.

Cellular Whispering Field (above) is a wall-mounted sculpture relief that integrates distributed responsive sound, emitted through 3D printed transparent transducers in wall-coupled horns. Proximity sensors are tied to a meshwork of microprocessors, providing delicate rippling choruses of synthetic whispers that respond to viewer gestures, accompanied by softly glowing LEDs that provide reflex responses.
Sentient Canopy is conceived as a baldacchino, transforming its space into a hybrid urban chapel. The work is composed of digitally fabricated cellular textile lining floating over the ceiling surface of the space. Sentient Canopy is composed of finely detailed interlinking skeletal components containing distributed computational controls, LED lighting and interactive sound functions. Movement within the space triggers choruses of whispering responses emanating from miniature custom acoustic resonators integrated within the fabric of the sculpture.
E. MATERIALS, PERMANENCE, OPERATION

Materials used in works are of archival quality designed for low maintenance. Materials include archival mylar and tyvek polymers, aluminum, impact-resistant borosilicate glass, load-rated stainless steel and galvanized suspension hardware. Detailed design and construction occurs in close dialogue with clients. The technical details and installation of sculptures are executed under the professional stamp of Philip Beesley Architect Inc., ensuring a professional process throughout.

The enclosing structures for mechanisms are durable, allowing a range of curatorial decisions to guide maintenance and renewal of the work. Core materials are similar to architectural finishes and have life-spans often exceeding the buildings that house them. Screens and canopies are constructed using archival materials that assure permanence. Like the delicate husks and shed skins of natural organisms, the option of an ‘aged’ presentation as an alternative to active maintenance might be chosen. This option retains its striking appeal, shading and filtering everchanging light as a permanent hanging static sculpture.

Kinetic and lighting details can be uniquely influenced with chosen patterns of operation. Very active behaviour cycles can occur during a major public event, for example, whereas a quiet cycling with regular ‘rest’ states can be programmed for a long term installation, reducing energy use.
Philip Beesley’s studio produces meticulously constructed drawings and panoramic photography for private and public collections. Limited edition drawings illustrate the technical and structural complexity of sculptures and their technological systems. Available photography provide visually striking panoramas of sculptural environments and are available at custom sizes.
Sibyl: Projects 2010-12 was published to accompany the Hylozoic Series: Sibyl installation at the 18th Biennale of Sydney, Cockatoo Island, Sydney, Australia, 2012. Featured projects were developed by Philip Beesley and collaborators since the Hylozoic Ground installation at the 2010 Venice Biennale for Architecture, and include work recently presented in Enghien-les-Bains, Madrid, Salt Lake City, Toronto, Rotterdam and Wellington. Included are comprehensive summaries of recent innovations to Textile Systems, Embedded Intelligence and Living Systems within the sculptures.

The Hylozoic Series brings together researchers and industry collaborators from Canada, USA and Europe in an inter-disciplinary research cluster attempting to develop a potent new kind of architecture. The group is devoted to developing new technologies and new aesthetics for responsive, adaptive building systems. Building on early steps that have integrated lightweight digitally fabricated structures, interactive mechanisms and sensor networks within new building structures, the group is now developing functions that pursue empathic feelings and that contain self-renewing metabolisms. This book gathers together working papers for this increasingly ambitious collaboration.

Hylozoic Ground is an immersive, interactive sculpture environment organized as a textile matrix supporting responsive actions, dynamic material exchanges, and ‘living’ technologies - conceived as the first stages of selfrenewing functions that might take root within this architecture. The Hylozoic Ground environment can be described as a suspended geotextile, gradually accumulating hybrid soil from ingredients drawn from its surroundings.

“A key term for my pursuit is empathy. My use of this term draws upon aesthetic theory that examines nuanced relationships involving projection and exchange. Combining terms of mechanism and empathy, I hope to develop a stance in an intertwined world that moves beyond closed systems. By drawing upon recent revisionist readings of cultural history, I want to develop a sensitive vocabulary of relationships. In the terms of figure-ground relationships the figures I compose are riddled with the ground…”

-- Introduction by Philip Beesley

H. ABOUT THE STUDIO

Philip Beesley is an experimental sculptor and architect whose work is widely cited in the rapidly expanding technology of responsive architecture. He has appeared on the cover of Artificial Life (MIT), LEONARDO and AD journals. Recent international press coverage includes BBC Click, national CBC news, Casa Vogue and WIRED. Beesley’s work has been exhibited in over 30 exhibits across North America, Europe, Asia and Australasia. His work was selected to represent Canada at the 2010 Venice Biennale for Architecture and the 2012 Biennale of Sydney, where he appeared as Biennale Keynote. He has been recognized by the Prix de Rome in Architecture, ViDA 11.0, FEIDAD, the 2015 Architizer Av Art Award, the 2015 AZ Award, and two Governor General’s Awards.

Philip Beesley leads PBAI, an interdisciplinary design firm based in Toronto. The studio’s work involves the research of aesthetics, technologies and ethics related to interactive architecture and artificial life systems. A new role for architectural environments is sought by transforming portions of static buildings into dynamic responsive generative surfaces that possess primary ‘metabolic’ functions. Large scale works incorporate immersive digitally fabricated lightweight ‘textile’ structures and feature interactive kinetic systems that use dense arrays of microprocessors, sensors and actuator systems.

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