

Hill Jephson Robb

'Beyond' is a complete environment to inhabit; a circle of white plastic ribbons suspended vertically from the ceiling, behind which an inner layer of vertically suspended ultramarine blue felt panels contrast in texture and colour. At the centre of the space lies a resin sculpture which the viewer is invited to occupy. In its circular form, a form understood to be a symbol of the immaterial world, 'Beyond' offers no direct focal point. The intense interior colour of ultra marine has featured in paintings for nearly 1500 years, from medieval altarpieces to Yves Klein in the 1950s, to connote the ineffable or immaterial, its use reserved for the boundless space of the heavens, or the clothing of divine figures. Robb notes the word ultramarine is derived originally from the medieval Italian word *ultramarino* meaning 'from beyond the sea'. For him, works of art should ask viewers to go beyond their normal patterns of thought and sensation, through a process of physical interaction. The encounter with his work is a process of intuitive discovery followed by slow contemplation. 'Beyond' invites us to enter a state of grace, where we can experience what Proust called an "interruption in our consciousness." The viewer is invited to push through, at any point, to the inner layer and enter 'Beyond'. Robb has described his intention as being to create "a temple for one" – a special, liminal place reserved for uninterrupted thought. The Roman writer Varro remarked that the word 'temenos'(temple) is "the name given to a place set aside... a piece of land marked off from common uses". 'Beyond' is precisely such a site, conducive to freeing our imagination. Historian John Lundquist also noted, "our words 'temple' and 'contemplate' are etymologically related – both referring to "a sacred" space.

Exhibited in the adjacent space is a computer-generated animation of Robb's linked project 'Temple for All', alongside preparatory sketches, paintings, and a scale model. 'Temple for All' will be a work of art built on an architectural scale. Robb's aim is to fund the work's creation by donations, symbolically bringing together as many individuals as possible to express a collective desire for future harmony. An earlier work, 'Cries and Whispers' arose from a biographical context and was made for the artist's infant niece, after her mother died unexpectedly. It takes the form of a womb/nest-like structure made from felt as a space representing motherly love; a felt cocoon offering comfort and security. It is now in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.