

November 27, 2025

KOIAS Talk at the Centre for Sensory Studies (CSS), Concordia University

KOIAS member **Alberto Parisi** was invited to give a talk at the **Centre for Sensory Studies (CSS) of Concordia University, Montréal**, one of the core institutes of the **JSPS Core-to-Core Program (Advanced Research Network) World Networking Project for the Establishment of Atmospheric Studies** (Grant Number: **JPJSCCA20250001**).

The talk, entitled **“The Breath of Poetry: From Europe to Japan,”** was delivered as part of the *Talking Sense Lecture Series*. In his presentation, Parisi explored the material and atmospheric dimensions of poetic breath, building on recent scholarship in literary studies and the environmental humanities that rethinks poetry beyond its traditional spiritualist interpretation. Rather than remaining within the European canon, the talk developed an intercultural perspective by turning to Japanese poetry, focusing in particular on the **kireji** (cutting word) in early haiku. Approached through the philosophy of **Keiji Nishitani**, the kireji was interpreted as a poetic operation that restores the world to its breathing, sensorial, and atmospheric materiality.

By bringing European poetic theory into dialogue with Japanese literary and philosophical traditions, the talk exemplified the Core-to-Core project's aim of fostering sustained international collaboration and developing Atmospheric Studies as a genuinely transdisciplinary and intercultural field.

Through events such as this, **KOIAS** continues to strengthen its role as a global hub within the JSPS Core-to-Core network, promoting research exchange across literature, philosophy, and atmospheric studies.



CENTRE FOR SENSORY STUDIES

TALKING SENSE LECTURE SERIES



Section from Matsuo Basho's "Nozarashi Kiko", Fukuda Art Museum

The Breath of Poetry: From Europe to Japan

Alberto Parisi

27 November 2025
3:00—4:30 PM EST
H-1120 Hall Building
Concordia University
Zoom: <https://bit.ly/49yX1sV>

Building on recent scholarship that—emerging out of the turn to sensoriality, respiration, and atmospheres—has begun to recover the long-overlooked material dimensions of breath in European poetics (Ford; Heine), this talk argues that these reflections open new ways of thinking about poetry beyond the traditional conception of it as something “spiritual,” namely as one of the highest expressions of the human “spirit.”

Rather than pursuing these implications further within the European canon, the talk turns to a Japanese case study to develop a different formal and intercultural perspective. By focusing on the *kireji* (cutting character or word)—an exclamation that produces a break between the poetic lines—as it developed at the origins of the haiku tradition in the *hokku*, and by approaching it through the philosophical perspective of Keiji Nishitani, the talk suggests that it is through *kireji* that the Japanese haiku returns the world to its breathing and atmospheric materiality. In this way, Japanese poetry may open new intercultural pathways for understanding the relationship between poetry and breath.

Alberto Parisi is Specially Appointed Assistant Professor at the Kobe Institute for Atmospheric Studies (KOIAS) of Kobe University, Japan. He received his PhD in Comparative Literature from Harvard University (2023) and a BA in Philosophy and Literature from the University of Warwick (2017). His research lies at the intersection of Comparative Literature, Philosophy, and Environmental Humanities, with a focus on breath, voice, air, and atmosphere as concepts that bridge materiality and meaning across traditions. His forthcoming book *The Intention of the Spirit: From Intention to Atmosphere* (Routledge, 2026) offers the first genealogy of intention as a material and respiratory concept, tracing its transformation from ancient and late-antique pneumatologies (Stoics and Augustine) to modern European poetics and contemporary philosophy.

<http://centreforsensorystudies.org/>