

YCAM PRESS RELEASE

YCAM presents
Interactive Art Installation
"gravicells - gravity and resistance"

Author: Seiko Mikami + Sota Ichikawa

Curator: **Kazunao Abe (YCAM)**

Production: **YCAM InterLab**

Organized by **Yamaguchi Cultural Promotion Foundation**

Co-organized by **Yamaguchi City, the Board of Education of Yamaguchi City**

Period: **May 15 (Saturday) to June 20 (Sunday), 2004**

*Note: **Closed Tuesdays**

Time: **10:00 - 22:00**

Venue: **Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media / Studio B**

Admission: **Free**

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media (YCAM) starts a project entitled "Dialogue between Science and Art." It aims to present universal science and artistic expressions in experience able forms through the latest interfacing media technologies.

As the first exhibition of this series, "gravicells - gravity and resistance" is held from Saturday, May 15 to Sunday, June 20, 2004. It is a new installation to be experienced, and collaboration by artist Seiko Mikami and architect Sota Ichikawa. Seiko Mikami has been active as an artist working mainly on perceptive interfaces. Sota Ichikawa is an architect leading experimental architectural units "double Negatives."

The key concept of "gravicells"

Gravity and Resistance: We are in the life environment which is not escaped from gravity. The project is advanced having a new appreciation of them anew. This work presents the dynamic processes of the interactions between gravity and resistance and aware of our bodies and feel the potential of new perception.

In Studio B at YCAM is provided a hypothetical dynamic field, in which gravity and its resisting power are felt, made by means of specially arranged equipment and sensors. Walking and standing freely inside this space, participants can feel gravity on their bodies and its resisting force that they are normally unaware of. They can also sense the forces that other participants cause. This is an installation in which the real time movements and changes of all the participants generate and affect directional sound, LED light, and projection images of geometrical data, and the participants experience the whole space change. This new work was produced by the artists while they stayed and worked at YCAM. Therefore, the gravity sensors and equipment used in this exhibition are all developed originally and shown to the public for the first time.

Note: gravicells: "Cell" is a technical term to represent a space and architectural unit, or the smallest part of life forms or plant. The name of this work comes from the relations between gravity and space, because the artists have tried to visualize gravity and its resisting force felt in the whole exhibition space- – from a sensor unit space to human cells.

Contents Overview:

In the center of the installation space is a 6m x 6m floor with a built-in sensor. The moment a participant stands and moves on it, the variation of his or her position, weight, and speed is automatically and continuously measured, analyzed, and reflected on light, sound, and image, generating substantial spatial changes. Overlapping the real space, this simultaneous imaginary space reconstructs the spatial geometry, and distorts the coordinates through the participant's weight and position.

On the floor screen is projected a grid image to measure density. It constitutes the geometry that generates and modifies in real time the coordinates linked to the participant's position and movements. In addition, the body index is represented by both the multi-channel sound degree and a level line created by LED light, and set on one's eye level. Through this continuous data in the light change and sound direction, the space changes.

The place of the installation is simultaneously surveyed by GPS satellites, so it has the observatory point outside the earth. It expands our area of perception, and reveals that the installation site itself is no longer static but always moving by gravity in relativity. The installation provides us with a device to sense the possibility of the dissolution of gravity, which has multiple meanings.

The spatial expression of "gravicell- gravity and resistance" is rendered consistently by the real time calculation of the dynamics that continues with no interruption (even while no participants are experiencing the space). The on-going dynamic movements are composed of the counter powers around gravity, involving the participants as the third terms. Gravity is not materialized without the reaction force.

■ Representation about the gravity used as a background

As it is said, we look up when we are happy, while we look down when we are sad. Our space is rendered by the orientations of top/bottom and left/right, which derive from the fact that our bodies function within the environment of gravity. Our spirit is expressed/bound by gravity. We believe gods always exist above us, and hell is always underneath us. Our language is also coming from this directivity regardless of Japanese/foreign language, for example, it is supposed that an upper class/lower class, a right wing/ left wing, top player/bottom price etc...It is supervised from the word of sinking, falls, goes up etc. It is generated from the reality that the body is functioning in the environment which gravity commits, and the directivity of space called right and left under besides clings deeply to our space concept, no separates to it. We were just powerless only by merely seeing in front of the figure of "gravity and resistance" say/"the collapsing twin tower in NY".

Thus, we are in the life environment which is not escaped from gravity. The rule who's all that exist on the ground to the form of a building, indoor space, all of products, the body, internal organs and cell and all organic matters are gravity changes a form. Gravity is "1 of four powers to exist in a nature", and is the weakest power and all existence things are pulling well to each other. Gravity is not materialized without the reaction force and this work applied this physical action.

The project is advanced having a new appreciation of them anew. This work presents the dynamic processes of the interactions between gravity and resistance. It was made feeling the overwhelming difference of daily life space and the mass of the earth. It seeks to recompose of gravity by reconsidering the dialogue between the body and space.

■ Gravity as an interface of perception

Gravity could be called the 6th consciousness and our body keeps balance via the inner ears. The relation nature of gravity and the body is deep. This connection also with the theory used as the same subject matter as my past work "the interface itself exists inside us." Our body is equipped with a thing like the consciousness function which detects gravity, and a gravity sensor. It is said that these gravity sensors progress at the time of an fetuses when it is in a mother's belly.

And it works, when we have made a living for a long time, and the function becomes weak. However, if an artificial cochlea is attached, the investigation that an old man will not fall over is progressing. As an extended component of consciousness, it is that, "In an eye, they are glasses. In ears, it is a hearing-aid. In gravity, it is artificial internal ear". It seems that the body maintains balance by the internal ear although the semicircular canal is related also to carsickness. And it is closely related also to the sense of hearing.

Text by Seiko Mikami + Sota Ichikawa

Profiles of Artists

Seiko Mikami

<http://www.idd.tamabi.ac.jp/artworks/index.htm>

Artist. Born in 1961.

Since 1984, she has exhibited installation works centering on the theme of information society and body. She was based in New York 1992 to 2000. Since 1995 - present time, her works became interactive media art installation incorporating human perception. In 1996, she produced "Molecular Informatics" for Canon ARTLAB Project Exhibition, using the eye tracking technology. Since then, it has been modified to updated versions, and toured through Europe including Rotterdam DEAF (Dutch Electronic Art Festival, the Netherlands, 1996), Miro Museum (Spain, 1999) and Transmedialle, Berlin (Germany, 2002). In 1997, she showed "World, Membrane and the Dismembered Body," a work of hearing and internal-body sound, chosen as a permanent collection at the opening of NTT/ICC (Inter Communication Center) and Nantes Museum of Fine Arts (France, 2000). She is currently based in Tokyo, and teaching at Tama Art University of Department of Information Art and running Media Art Lab. The collection of works was published from Diputacion de Malaga of Spain in 2004.

Sota Ichikawa

<http://www.doubleNegatives.jp>

Architect. Born in 1972. The head of "doubleNegatives."

Since 1995, he has started a project on the theme of spatial expressions, to investigate different potentials in bringing architecture into existence, based on the relationships between body and viewpoint/observatory-point. In 1997, he participated in a project "IO_DENCIES" in Tokyo produced by Knowbotic Research, German media artist group. In 1997, he joined Lifescape Institute, and was engaged in the basic and practical architectural design of "Hinaya Project," a "sukiya" construction of Shusaku Arakawa and Madelaine Gins. In 1998, he founded "doubleNegatives," an architectural unit that consists of professionals with different backgrounds. While working as an architect and director, he personally develops software, net-art, and conducts VJ at club events. In 2000, he took part in "Kankaku (Sense) Museum" founded in Miyagi Prefecture, and produced "dqpb #2.0-dynamic quadruple phonic building," a permanent interactive work for the museum.

Seiko Mikami + Sota Ichikawa / Collaboration Project

<http://www.idd.tamabi.ac.jp/Gravity&Resistance>

"Gravity and Resistance," a collaboration series produced by Seiko Mikami + Sota Ichikawa, starting in 2003, is being developed into different versions. Currently it is an ongoing project, and in 2004, after the exhibition at YCAM, it will tour in Europe..

*YCAM InterLab plans a wide range of programs including project exhibitions, lectures, workshops, study courses, and other activities. As the programs proceed, the accumulation and research on the trends of the state-of-the-art media and information technologies will be conducted in the areas of new-concept-based production method, collaboration, development of software and hardware, interface design, and display. In further scenarios, the outcomes are to be developed beyond the framework in the past, to increase the information literacy and develop cultural activities in the whole district, as well as provide and promote new educational materials. In addition, YCAM InterLab aims to make contributions to generate new art scenes and the international cultural exchange through creating experimental artworks.

.....

<INQUIRY>

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media (YCAM)
7-7 Nakazono-cho Yamaguchi-city 7530075 JAPAN
tel: +81-83-901-2222 fax: 81-83-901-2216
email: info@ycam.jp
<http://www.ycam.jp/>

.....