

YCAM PRESS RELEASE

**YCAM presents**  
**Ryota Kuwakubo Exhibition**  
**“R/V”**(new installation)

**Title: “R/V”**

**Artist: Ryota Kuwakubo** (JAPAN)

Project Curator: **Kazunao Abe** (YCAM)

Production: **YCAM InterLab**

Organized by **Yamaguchi City Foundation for Cultural Promotion**

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

Date: **January 8 (Saturday) — February 21 (Monday), 2005**

\*Note: **Closed Tuesdays**

Time: **10:00 - 20:00**

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

Admission: **Free**

**Overview:**

**An affinity between humans and robots: Cute robots are equipped with monitoring screens reflecting participants' faces. YCAM opens an exhibition of artist Ryota Kuwakubo's new installation “R/V.”**

The title “R/V” represents the relationship between “Reality / Virtuality,” and at the same time, RV stands for “Recreational Vehicle.” In this work, participants who use remote control from console boxes to operate robots exchange their “visual and auditory senses” with the robots. A robot is attributed with a participant's “face” and having a “talk,” and moves around the space in the installation.

The participant can see images in the space through the eyes and ears of the robot, and the robots can talk with each other as persons do. In this environment, reciprocal actions and dialogues between “person and person,” “person and robot,” and “robot and robot” have influence on each other. This project tries to see how such strange physical feelings will be transformed through interaction with the surroundings.

**Ryota Kuwakubo**, one of the most promising artists who are currently active, won the grand prize in the category of works of art employing digital technology in the 7<sup>th</sup> Agency for Cultural Affairs Japan Media Arts Festival in 2004. He calls himself a “device artist.” In his work, he combines digital information technologies and manufacturing devices based on his own

viewpoint, adding to art the joy of expression attributed to not only computer programs but also movable machines and toys, adopting elements of games and subculture.

This “R/V” is the latest installation that YCAM has commissioned an artist to produce. As the devices and equipment have been developed specifically for this project, this is the first time that the work is introduced to the public.

### **Work description**

In the center of the installation is a playground, and in it are four console boxes to operate four robots. Each console box is equipped with a CCD camera and a microphone. The participant's face and voice are recorded on them, and are reproduced real-time on the liquid-crystal monitoring screen attached to the head of the robot that is formed like a caterpillar tank. In the same way, the view from the robot is transmitted and projected on the walls and the floor for the participant to see. The “visual and auditory senses” of the participant and the robot are reversed and shown for the other.

The participant in the console box is to use remote control to operate the robot in the playground, and he/she can also enter the playground where the robots are moving around to monitor its movement. As four participants can operate the devices simultaneously, the robots can talk to each other. Images of different kinds are projected on the floor and the walls, and as some of the images are infrared projection, they are visible only to the robots.

### **Profiles / Ryota Kuwakubo**

Artist. Born in 1971. Completed the master's course of the graduate school, Tsukuba University. Graduated from Institute of Advanced Media Arts and Sciences (IAMAS).

While producing works, mostly electronic devices, in the area dividing between the digital and the analogue, he provides engineering support for other artists, and is also engaged in the development of products and toys. His presence appeals to people because he sticks to the low-tech charms in this high-tech age. He introduced many works in which playfulness is integrated in a simple and sophisticated form; a mobile electric bulletin board “Bitman” for example. He is also involved in joint-development with corporations. His game machine “PLX” enabling battles between different stories, and “BlockJam,” an interface to produce music by combining blocks, won a prize at ARS Electronica in 2002 and 2003 respectively. In 2004, his work “HeavenSeed” was awarded the grand prize in “works of art employing digital technology” in the 7<sup>th</sup> Agency for Cultural Affairs Japan Media Arts Festival, and his cylindrical video game for battles, “loopScape” was nominated for “Nam June Paik Award” in Dortmund, Germany. He held many exhibitions both at home and abroad. (<http://www.vector-scan.com/>)

<INQUIRY>

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