

"LIFE by MEDIA" Proposing new forms of life and living with media"

July 6 (Sat) - September 1 (Sun), November 1 (Fri) - December 1 (Sun), 2013 10:00 - 19:00
Yamaguchi Central Shopping District

Community transformed by media

Three projects selected at YCAM's public competition, realized in the streets of Yamaguchi

As part of its 10th Anniversary Program, the Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM] implemented the "LIFE by MEDIA" competition for projects proposing future ways of living.

A jury made up of Ryuichi Sakamoto, artistic director for the 10th Anniversary Program, and five other leading figures in the realms of art, architecture and community design, eventually selected three projects from among a total of approximately 140 entries from Japan and more than ten foreign countries in America, Europe and Asia, to be implemented in this program. (See column on the right)

Permanently installed as participatory art projects in a shopping area in central Yamaguchi, the three winners are going to unfurl and transform by involving and interacting with passersby. Each focusing on "media" from an individual point of view, the projects will cause vibrant transformations in communication among Yamaguchi citizens, and between residents and travelers visiting the area.

This will be a prime opportunity to experience original programs that personify an implementation of the 10th Anniversary Program's key concepts of "art / environment / life" in real life spaces.

Prize-winning works

Yoshinari Nisio "PUBROBE"

Takafumi Fukazawa "Tokuino Bank Yamaguchi"

Hiroshi Inukai + Ryoko Ando "Sports Time Machine"



(top left) Takafumi Fukazawa "Tokuino Bank"

(top right) Hiroshi Inukai + Ryoko Ando "Sports Time Machine" (drawing)

(bottom) Yoshinari Nisio related image of "PUBROBE"

[INQUIRY]

New forms of "life" and "living" for us living in the age of social media

There has been a lot of talk in recent years about new forms of "life" and "living" not based on private property or fixed dwelling, such as the concepts of "shared houses" – houses or apartments shared by multiple residents from different backgrounds – and "nomadic working" at coffee shops and other places without having a fixed office. While this is certainly related to developments in the infrastructure of communication environments, with information terminals getting smaller and smaller, in Japan, Facebook and other social networking services that became explosively popular and closely related to daily life after the great earthquake in 2011 are certainly playing an essential role as well.

The speed-up of communication through SNS has brought along great convenience, and at the same time, it has been facilitating the generation of new circuits and new layers in human relationships with other individuals, regions and communities.

LIFE by MEDIA – Proposing new forms of life and living with media



With these conditions in mind, YCAM celebrates its 10th Anniversary Program while focusing once again on media and information. "LIFE by MEDIA" is implemented within the local Yamaguchi community as a competition for platform-style projects proposing new forms of "life" and "living".

Six judges active in the front lines of art, architecture and community design, including Ryuichi Sakamoto and Jun Aoki From, reviewed a total of approximately 140 submissions from more than 10 countries including the USA, UK, Germany, China, Korea and Mexico, and eventually selected three projects to be awarded. Preparations for each project's implementation in the central Yamaguchi shopping district are now underway.

■ Shared house

A dwelling place shared by multiple residents. In many cases, deposits, key money and guarantors are not required. Increasingly diversified with internal club activities or a focus on communication among residents, the shared house is taking root as a lifestyle especially among young people in their 20s-30s who want to ease financial burdens.

■ Nomadic working

A novel type of spatially and temporally independent work, free from the limitations of fixed working places and hours. As more and more coffee shops and other public places are now offering wireless LAN environments and power sources, self-employed businesses are spreading rapidly.

■ Facebook

Web service launched in 2004 by American Mark Zuckerberg. Originally launched as a communication service for students at Harvard University, where Zuckerberg was enrolled, Facebook was made available to the general public in 2006. In addition to the general functions of other social networking services, such as uploading texts and photographs, and creating groups by topics, Facebook features a superior search function to be used for finding acquaintances. As of March 2013, the number of registered users amounted to one billion. The active use of Facebook (along with Twitter) as an information sharing tool for citizens at the time of the democracy movement in Tunisia became one major topic in 2010.

PUBROBE - Furnishings as media for developing communication



Yoshinari Nishio

In his work as an artist, Yoshinari Nishio has been focusing on clothes as a "hands-on media", and on the act of dressing as a common human behavior since recorded history, rather than fashion as a form of consumption. Has been exhibiting various projects at places around the world, including "Familial Uniform", for which he reproduced clothes worn in family photos several decades ago, and shot the same photos again at the same locations.

"PUBROBE", a project collecting personal wardrobes and creating one large public wardrobe for anyone to use, was inspired by market places in Nairobi, where Nishio is currently based. In addition to the try-on and rental of furnishings, the project embraces cleaning, repair and display design workshops aimed to establish an environment for vibrant communication using "clothes" as media. Experience a wardrobe that keeps changing throughout the event period, and see what sort of media Nishio produces in a creative space out of clothes and hangers contributed mainly by Yamaguchi citizens.

Winner's comment

My own explorations of clothes as communication media from a unique point of view seem to be overlapping with the decade-long work of YCAM. I decided to face the challenge of this project because I am seeing it as a good opportunity for sharing my peculiar experience working in Nairobi for the past couple of years with Japanese audiences.

Yoshinari Nishio



Born 1982 in Nara. Artist based in Tokyo and Nairobi. Obtained his Ph.D. in Fine Arts from Tokyo University of the Arts. Has been engaging in collaborative projects with citizen in and outside Japan with a focus on the relationship between deressing behavior and communication. Opened the Nishio Workshop Nairobi Office in 2009, and initiated various alternative art projects in Africa. Launched the fashion brand "FORM ON WORDS" in 2011, based on ideas about clothing that he has been exploring as an artist.

Tokuino Bank Yamaguchi - A bank trading citizens' "specialties"



Takafumi Fukasawa

Artist Takafumi Fukasawa has been implementing projects aiming to create new contexts by reconfiguring common-sense things at various locations. For the "Shogaibutsu Marathon 2012" in Hamamatsu, he set up a course with set missions for participants to run and clear together with so-called "masters of the street", visually impaired people, foreigners, and other distinct personalities. The result was a spectacle that highlighted the various unique characters to be found in the streets of Hamamatsu.

The "Bank of Specialties Yamaguchi" developed out of the "Bank of Specialties" project that Fukasawa launched in 2011 at the Toride-Ino housing complex in Ibaraki. At this bank, for which the artist himself assumes the role of president, customers can deposit and withdraw no money, but "things" that Yamaguchi's citizens are particularly good at. The deposits are managed while implementing a variety of projects based on the respective "specialties", with the aim to expose the region's latent intangible assets and generate a new economic/cultural zone. In addition to the trade and management of "specialties", one goal this time is to set up the virtual "Nanatsuboshi" shopping street, based on those specialties, within the central Yamaguchi shopping area where the "Bank of Specialties Yamaguchi" is installed.

Winner's comment

On the basis of my previous endeavors, I will keep on working to create new situations based on regional and individual characteristics.

Takafumi Fukasawa



Artist, born 1984 in Yamanashi. Mainly engages in projects reconfiguring modes of regular life and common sense in the field, including "Shogaibutsu Marathon 2012" (Hamamatsu 2012), a marathon course with all sorts of activities and places in the city centre functioning as obstacles (shogaibutsu); "Hijo bijutsu soko" (Echigo-tsumari 2012) translating critical emergency situations into artistic endeavors; "Tokui ginko" (Toride 2011), operating a bank for trading things that people are good at instead of currency; and various others. Plays nose flute as a hobby.

Sports Time Machine - Competing with oneself and other runners recorded in the past



Hiroshi Inukai and Ryoko Ando

Game creator Hiroshi Inukai and interior designer Ryoko Ando previously co-produced "Songs of ANAGURA – Missing Researches and their Remaining Devices" (2011), which has been on permanent display at the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation (Mirai) since 2011. Themed around research in the field of "spatial information science" by sharing data of the world obtained via sensors, and utilizing those to create new values, this work received an Excellence Award at the Japan Media Arts Festival, Entertainment Division.

In their next project, "Sports Time Machine", the artists developed a device for users to "race" against (footage of) all kinds of people stored in a database. On an actual running course, users race against video footage of themselves, friends or family members running, projected onto a screen of the same length installed next to the running course. In pursuit of an ideal marriage of "digital technology" and "space", with this gadget the artists aim to realize a platform for body communication spanning past, present and future, which in the long run is to take root in citizens' daily lives.

Winner's comment

This time machine for racing against loved people or animals in a time frame spanning more than 100 years is a gadget we've had in mind for quite a while. We are very happy to finally realize this new kind of play and futuristic type of sports together with the people of Yamaguchi and the YCAM staff.

Hiroshi Inukai



Born 1970 in Aichi. Game director, e-sports producer. Studied under film director Masaaki Yamamoto, and later became a game director. Focuses on the creation of competing games exclusively based on his perception of video games as communication tools connecting individual human beings. Has been hosting the Japanese qualifications for "computer fame Olympics" sort of games such as WCG or CPL, and participated in the world championships. Is recently focusing on "e-sports" emerging from the marriage of IT (games) and sports as a type of sports for the information society, and produces physical works for small video screen only, including "Songs of Anagura-Missing Researchers & Their Remaining Devices" (National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation 2011) themed around spatial information science.

Ryoko Ando



Born 1976 in Tokyo, grew up in Yamagata. Interior designer. Is mainly designing clothing and food shop interior, but also produces/directs exhibition spaces, shop display, brand CIs/VIs and packages among others. Specializes in playful handmade design, and has been involved in the production of installations, DIY workshops, and the creation and sales of braided flowers (hanaami) with her Wakayama-based grandmother, and other activities aimed to make practical use of designed ideas in daily life.



Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media[YCAM] 10th Anniversary
Competition / Exhibition

There are things we cannot see or feel even though they are right there. The tools that make such things visible or tangible we call media. A near-sighted person can only see distant sceneries with glasses, which means that glasses are media as well. Participants in "LIFE by MEDIA" proposed tools that conjure up rather colorful ways of life from within our daily lives. We hope you enjoy each of the three quite different "life glasses" we eventually selected.

In working towards realizing “life grasses” that will change the landscape of the Yamaguchi City’s main shopping street, which is the venue for this exhibition, the artists are currently living together in a house that is reasonably close to the shopping street and are starting production. The key to success for all of the plans is the cooperation of the people who own the shops on the shopping street and the people who use the shopping street. Thus, dialogues and cooperation between the artists and people are being conducted repeatedly, day and night. As details regarding this will be reported sequentially on the “LIFE by MEDIA” Web site, please take a moment to view the site.

Event Data

July 6 (Sat) - September 1 (Sun),
November 1 (Fri) - December 1 (Sun), 2013 10:00 - 19:00 close on Tuesday

Admission Free
Yamaguchi Central Shopping District
<http://lifebymedia.tumblr.com>

Yoshinari Nishio "PUBROBE"
Opposite Izutsuya Department Store
(1-23 Nakaichi-cho, Yamaguchi City)

Takafumi Fukasawa "Tokuino Bank Yamaguchi"
Opposite Mizuho Bank (2-4 Komeya-cho, Yamaguchi City)

Hiroshi Inukai + Ryoko Ando "Sports Time Machine"
Next to Oasis Domon (2-3-6 Dojomonzen, Yamaguchi City)

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