

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM] Exhibition

"MEDIA/ART KITCHEN YAMAGUCHI - Open Call Laboratory: An Exploration into Social Anthropology in Asia"

July 5 (Sat.) - September 28 (Sun.) 10:00-19:00

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM] Foyer, Studio B, Gallery 2F

The New Possibilities of Media and Art in Local Communities - Laboratory Prompting Cooperation Between Asian Artists and Local Residents Opened by YCAM

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM] will be holding the MEDIA/ART KITCHEN YAMAGUCHI - Open Call Laboratory: An Exploration into Social Anthropology in Asia, an exhibition inviting the public's participation and presenting young Asian artists' projects that are rooted in the local community.

This exhibition follows the exhibitions held last year by the Japan Foundation in 4 ASEAN countries as part of celebrations for the 40th anniversary of the ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, and was planned by YCAM from a community design-oriented perspective. Participants include artists from Japan, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia. The venue will host each artist an individual space, called "laboratories". Through dialogue with local residents, these spaces will serve as starting points for research on local issues and resources encompassing agriculture, forestry, history and culture. In turn, this will serve as practical opportunity to explore new possibilities in the context of daily life through media and art, such as holding workshops as the exhibition progresses. We hope you will not miss this opportunity.



One of the participating artists, Venzha Christ (left) during his research
(March 2014)

■ Participating artists and Laboratories

- Bani Haykal (Singapore)
Sound Laboratory
- HONF Foundation (Indonesia)
Bamboo Laboratory
- Operasi Cassava (Malaysia)
Food Laboratory
- Yuichiro Tamura (Japan)
Inout Laboratory
- YCAM Regional Research Lab (Japan)
Community Development Laboratory through Media Technology

INQUIRIES: Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM] PR representative
TEL : +81-(0)83-901-2222 FAX : +81-(0)83-901-2216 email : press@ycam.jp
7-7 Nakazono-cho Yamaguchi-shi Yamaguchi 753-0075 JAPAN <http://www.ycam.jp>

Seeing by Diving- Toward a New Type of Creation in the Post Global Era



The workshop carried out in Atō area, Yamaguchi city

The exhibition will be much like a community, made up by 5 teams of artists from Japan and 3 other Asian countries together with the residents of Yamaguchi City.

Through the long-term fieldwork in Yamaguchi city, these artists have identified several local issues and resources, and use the "laboratories" to develop new ideas while working with local residents. Several workshops will also be carried out in Atō area, Yamaguchi city. This approach has several aims. The first is to have Yamaguchi residents with vastly different backgrounds to visit Yamaguchi and conduct fieldwork to locate and highlight issues and resources that may go unnoticed by the locals. Another aim is to make it easier to express the "Asian values" that is latent in Yamaguchi and in Japan at large. The process of modernization after Meiji Restoration and subsequent wave of globalization have compelled us to forget the "Asian side" of Japan as a geographical and cultural part of Asia. With the emergence of risks entailed by globalization, such as economic disparity, many Japanese will need to reconsider the values and view of life that are based on globalization. The key to do so lies in the "Asian values" hidden in the lifestyle of our historical past. With an eye to the opportunities for new ways of cooperation opened up by such multi-layered "research", the exhibition will explore new possibilities in the fields of media and technology.

■ Laboratory

The exhibition's venue will be formed by 250 bamboo poles picked within Yamaguchi city. In addition to the "laboratories" - spaces made available to each artist for the purpose of dialogue - the venue will house a deck-shaped space, "square" in its center. This space will host talk sessions, and will serve as a relaxation space for visitors when no events are being staged. Osaka-based construction team "dot architects" was in charge of the venue, and the venue's signposts were designed by "UMA/design farm", a graphic design team also based in Osaka.

Bamboo Laboratory- HONF Foundation (Indonesia)



Venzha Christo visiting farms in Atō area of Yamaguchi city for research purposes (to the left)

The HONF Foundation is a technology and art laboratory founded in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 1999 by Venzha Christ and several other artists. Its distinctive feature lies in its openness to people from all walks of life, developing ideas of considerable scope with the involvement of artists, scientists and other specialists, as well as activists, educational organizations and students. In recent years, the HONF Foundation has established HONFablab, the first FabLab in Southeast Asia, and has engaged in activities aimed at creating from the prototype stage up systems that are capable of effectively functioning at local community-level. In particular, its agricultural projects based on a self-sufficient energy model and the low-cost development of artificial legs have attracted worldwide attention. This exhibition will focus on the bamboo that grows spontaneously in large quantities in Yamaguchi city's mountainous regions. While bamboo is used for daily necessities and as a raw material for buildings, the speed at which groves grow makes it difficult to contain them, eventually resulting in groves encroaching on agricultural and residential lands. The artists have used the bamboo obtained during grove maintenance to design spaces where people could gather, and have experimented on wide range usages of bamboo by involving local residents and formulating development plans for new products while sharing information and conducting workshops. In tune with this, installation "Your History Has a Surprise Beginning", composed of speakers made of bamboo, will be on display at Studio B.

■ Bamboo in Yamaguchi



Atō area of Yamaguchi city

All bamboo used in this exhibition are from the Atō area and other places in the city of Yamaguchi. These areas covered by bamboo in Yamaguchi prefecture is the third largest in Japan, making the maintenance difficult and overgrowth contain. In view of such conditions, the idea was to employ an unused material to build the exhibition's venue that in hope resulted to a great impact on the event exerted by a material that had thus far remained dormant in the area.

Food Laboratory- Operasi Cassava (Malaysia)



The cassava field inside YCAM

Operasi Cassava, a project started by Lim Kok Yoong and Yap Sau Bin, explores Malaysia's cultural identity through cassava. Cassava, known in Japan as an ingredient for tapioca, is an extremely common food across Southeast Asia, South America and Africa. Brought to Southeast Asia from South America, cassava subsequently came to produce in much larger quantities under British colonial rule for industrial starch products. During the Second World War, cassava is said to have been a staple in the diet of Southeast Asian people due to the Japanese Army monopolizing rice in all regions (the local staple food), and thus, in a way, symbolize the Southeast Asian history.

Cassava is also widely used in Malaysia, where many different ethnicities and religions converge. While cassava's usage vary to suit the characteristics of each ethnicity, it shares a common place in the memories of different populations, of which it can be seen as a connecting symbol. Taking into account of such history and circumstances, Operasi Cassava is an attempt to express Malaysia's cultural and historical background through using the Internet to gather one's memories involving cassava. At the exhibition, a field of cassava has been setup within the laboratory. By growing, harvesting and eating cassava, participants will be able to vicariously experience another country's memories and history, creating new communities around fields and cassava, and accumulating new experiences and memories involving the latter.

Inout Laboratory- Yuichiro Tamura (Japan)



A trumpet shell installed in the Inout Laboratory,
with built-in microphones and speaker to create and spread stories

Yuichiro Tamura has conducted fieldwork across history and culture of several regions, mainly expressing himself through photography and video. He has also unveiled installations and sculptures that recompose and repropose local past and present. Tamura says, in the course of research done prior to this exhibition, he felt a sense of "honesty" in Yamaguchi city and its inhabitants. At the same time, he felt that there might be an unknown, latent aspect behind such honesty. Yamaguchi city, known as a "city of governance", evokes images of integrity and tranquility, but local residents also have a distinctive side that contrasts with such images. Inout laboratory started with the idea that practically seek out this gap and draw a "story" out of it.

Drawing inspiration from Sagi kyōgen, the laboratory hosts a project "Occurrences of Y city", which entails an imaginary town based on Yamaguchi city ("Y city"), and then having its residents ("Y's People") gather stories from the exhibition's visitors and spread them around. Through this "IN/OUT" process, the visitors' stories are spread and infinitum, and hopefully a new image of Yamaguchi city and its inhabitants appear. An event titled "Occurrences of Y city" is scheduled to be held by "Y's people" at Studio A during the exhibition's final stage on September 13-14.

■ Yamaguchi's Sagi school kyōgen

In the Edo period, kyōgen encompassed three schools: Ōkura, Sagi and Izumi. With the collapse of the feudal system (Bakufu), kyōgen lost its patronage. While the Ōkura and Izumi schools were eventually revived, the Sagi school disappeared in Edo. Yamaguchi's Sagi kyōgen, however, which has its roots in the kyōgen patronized by the Hagi Domain, has been kept alive to this date. Its history began with the Chōshū Domain's kyōgen performer Shōsaku Shun'ichi teaching kyōgen to amateurs, and was perpetuated through "training meetings" where town residents would instruct each other.

Sound Laboratory- Bani Haykal (Singapore)



Takeshi Ito, a folk song researcher and expert on the prefecture's folk songs
(May 2014)

Based in Singapore, Bani Haykal is a musician and sound artist who studies and researches perceptions of culture, language and sound. In this exhibition, his work (Sound Laboratory) presenting two different tracks, give an expression of Yamaguchi's diverse regional features in hope to encourage participants to think of Yamaguchi in terms of sound. The first track is a work song hummed since ancient times by the people of Yamaguchi during their toils. In the past, work songs would be sung to match the rhythm of the workers' tasks in order to improve their efficiency. For example, many songs relates to agriculture and forestry have been passed down in mountainous region, while an array of songs relates to salt and masonry have been left to coastal areas. These songs not only tell us about the types of work which these people used to engage, but can also serve as a medium for vividly sketching Yamaguchi's natural environment and bodies of those working within it. The second track was recorded in 2012 by the students of Yamaguchi city's three urban elementary schools in the areas where they lived. Yamaguchi's sounds, recorded with the vibrant sensitivity of children, evoke Yamaguchi's scenery and, at the same time, offer much to be discovered. Bani Haykal uses these as a start for research at various locations around the city. He will delve deeper on the subject of Yamaguchi, and will also participate in live concerts by Yoshihide Otomo's FEN Orchestra scheduled during the exhibition along with other Asian musicians.

■ Workshop “Walking Around Surround – Lending Your Ears to the Sound of Yamaguchi”



Field recording (2012)

The workshop had elementary school students living by Yamaguchi city's sea, forests and streets conduct field recordings in their respective areas, and encouraged them to think about the diversity of Yamaguchi city's areas by spatially reconstructing the sounds they had recorded.

Date/time: July 31, 2012 (Tue.)

Participating elementary schools: Ōdono Elementary School, Aio Elementary School and Kane Elementary School

Lecturer: Ryuichi Sakamoto (musician)

Community Development Laboratory through Media Technology- YCAM Regional Research Lab



YCAM Regional Research Lab

■ Tokuji-washi

Japanese paper produced in Tokuji area of Yamaguchi city. Tokuji's Japanese paper boasts a long history. At the time of the Ōuchi clan during the Muromachi era, Tokuji was producing paper of outstanding quality, known as Tokuji-washi. Even now, the tradition of hand-made paper is still being passed down, albeit to few, and is designated as one of Yamaguchi city's intangible cultural assets.

The YCAM Regional Research Laboratory was established in April 2014 by YCAM InterLab, an R&D team affiliated to YCAM. YCAM collaborates with artists to produce works and unveil them at different venues across the world. In parallel with this, YCAM created a system to give back to local communities in the form of media education such as Korogaru Pavilion and original workshops. Along with this tradition, Regional Development Laboratory's activities aim to directly connect solutions to local issues with media technology skills which YCAM excels. In this exhibition, YCAM set up a workshop, a square and a radio station, and run them actively throughout the exhibition. This way, YCAM hopes to have a dialogue with the residents to identify local issues and create new vision of how these issues are to be addressed.

At the workshop, 3D printers and other manufacturing equipment are used to make "paper lanterns" with Yamaguchi's bamboo and Japanese paper, and also develop new forms of play at the Korogaru Pavilion. In the square, talk sessions are conducted by experts in various fields with whom it has come into contact in the course of this research and gathering insight from the visitors. At the radio station, managed by local residents, YCAM will hold public recordings and live broadcasts from Library Radio and Internet radio station Radio Money, which focuses on topics related to "economies" based on Yamaguchi city, and also to transmit information about the exhibition within the venue.

Event Outline

**"MEDIA/ART KITCHEN YAMAGUCHI - Open Call Laboratory :
An Exploration into Social Anthropology in Asia"**

July 5 (Sat.) - September 28 (Sun.), 2014 10:00 - 19:00

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM] Foyer, StudioB, Gallery 2F

Admission free Closed on Tuesdays (or the following day if Tuesday is a national holiday)

Participating Artists:

Bani Haykal (Singapore)

Operasi Cassava <Lim Kok Yoong, Yap Saubin> (Kuala Lumpur / Malaysia)

HONF Foundation <Venza Christ, Yudi Asmoro> (Yogyakarta / Indonesia)

Yuichiro Tamura (Japan)

YCAM Regional Research Lab (Japan)

In Cooperation with YCAM for Research and Planning: FabLab Kitakagaya

Space Design: dot architects

Graphic Design: UMA/design farm

Organized by Yamaguchi City Foundation for Cultural Promotion, Japan Foundation Asia Center

In association with Yamaguchi City, the Board of Education of Yamaguchi City

Supported by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan in the fiscal 2014

Sponsored by TAIYO TORYO CO.LTD

Equipment cooperated by Color Kinetics Japan Incorporated

Cooperated by Aomori Contemporary Art Center [ACAC]

Co-developed with YCAM InterLab

Produced by Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM]



Related Exhibition

"MEDIA/ART KITCHEN AOMORI -Politics of Humor and Play"

Venue: Aomori Contemporary Art Centre [ACAC]

Date: July 26 (Sat.) – September 15 (Mon.), 2014

*Aomori Contemporary Art Centre [ACAC] will remain open on 15 September

Participating Artists:

Hagihara Kenichi (Japan), Bani Haykal (Singapore), Horio Kanta (Japan), Kuwakubo

Ryota (Japan), Mohri Yuko (Japan), Narpati Awangga a.k.a. oomleo (Indonesia),

Renan Ortiz (Philippines), Prilla Tania (Indonesia), Chulayarnnon Siriphol (Thailand),

FairuzSulaiman (Malaysia), Takeuchi Kota (Japan), Tamura Yuichiro (Japan)