

## Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM] Exhibition

Yoshihide Otomo + Norimichi Hirakawa + Yuki Kimura + Ko Ishikawa + Yoshimitsu Ichiraku +  
Jim O'Rourke + Kahimi Karie + Sachiko M + Axel Dörner + Martin Brandlmayr + YCAM

### quartets online

Wednesday, September 9, 2020 - Wednesday, September 8, 2021

Special Website: <http://quartets.ycam.jp/>

## A continuously updated ensemble

## Installation piece from 2008 reincarnated online

YCAM announces the opening of "quartets online," a new online version of musician Yoshihide Otomo's collaborative "quartets" installation project with numerous other artists.

The first "quartets" installation was produced and unveiled in the "Yoshihide Otomo / ENSEMBLES" exhibition at YCAM in 2008. Videos of individual improvised performances by eight musicians, including Otomo himself, were edited together in real-time, into one permanent improvised session. Unveiled this time as part of YCAM's participation in the Ars Electronica Festival, one of the world's largest annual media art spectacles in Linz, Austria, is an online version of this work, reconfigured to be viewed on a web browser.

After its initial presentation in Yamaguchi, and subsequent exhibitions at places around the world, the work resurfaces in a new form, to be experienced at any time and any place.



Yoshihide Otomo + Norimichi Hirakawa + Yuki Kimura + Ko Ishikawa +  
Yoshimitsu Ichiraku + Jim O'Rourke + Kahimi Karie + Sachiko M + Axel  
Dörner + Martin Brandlmayr + YCAM "quartets online"

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## New forms of art as part of the “new normal”



"YCAM OpenLab 2020: Understanding Living Culture 2"  
9th Talk Session "Arts after Pandemic: Solidarity and Constituencies"(Guest: Bojana Piškur)

The world is continuously facing the global spread of COVID-19. In Japan, the spread of the infectious disease imposed a heavy burden on the medical system, led to the declaration of a state of emergency, and otherwise affected people's daily lives on an unprecedented scale. Various aspects in regard to social gatherings have been scrutinized, which ultimately inspired a reconsideration of methods and forms of community culture, including events at museums, theaters and live music venues.

Since March, YCAM closed its doors twice for extended periods of time, while continuing to host several events according to the circumstances. Events that were held online during that period include the "YCAM Sports Hackathon 2020" implementing new ideas for sports based on media technology, and "Understanding Living Culture 2," a talk event on the present state of art, technology, research and development.

While it remains to be seen how the situation will develop from here, YCAM is going to continue to draw on its knowledge and experience, and carry out online programs for which we will invite various experts to discuss matters of art and culture in the "new normal" that is life with the coronavirus.

Launched this time in the context of these recent endeavors is a new edition of "quartets," an installation piece based on improvised ensemble performances that musician Yoshihide Otomo created and unveiled in 2008 at YCAM. The piece was remodeled into "quartets online," a version that offers the unique features of a work to be experience via a web browser. It will be online for one year.

### YCAM Sports Hackathon 2020 +Yamaguchi Future Sports Day 5

The "YCAM Sports Hackathon 2020" was a three-day creative sports camp held with the aim to work out new ideas for sports incorporating media technology. It was followed by the "Yamaguchi Future Sports Day 5," where the ideas developed in the YCAM Sports Hackathon were implemented in actual sports events. Both of these events were the respective latest editions of programs that YCAM has been implementing continuously since 2015.

Normally taking place at YCAM's theater space (Studio A), and attracting large numbers of visitors, this time the events were offered online only. Participants in the Hackathon could join from their homes via a video conferencing system, work out new sports competitions together with other participants, and eventually try them out in an online sports meeting.

### YCAM OpenLab 2020 Understanding Living Culture 2

This was a talk event discussing the state of art, technology, research and development today.

While this event is normally held in a conference style on a specific topic, this time it was done in the form of an online discussion on Covid-19 and the way labs and other private institutions deal with it. Participating were representatives of biolabs and museums engaging in various grassroots type activities in response to the coronavirus, who illustrated the situations and corresponding actions in their respective regions.

## A permanent ensemble fed from a database



Norimichi Hirakawa + Yoshimitsu Ichiraku + Sachiko M + Jim O'Rourke + Kahimi Karie + Benedict Drew + Yoshihide Otomo + Yuki Kimura + Ko Ishikawa + Axel Dörner + Martin Brandlmayr  
 "quartets" (2008) Photo by Ryuichi Maruo (YCAM)

"quartets online" is a new version of the "quartets" installation that musician Yoshihide Otomo unveiled at YCAM in 2008. The original installation consisted of images showing only the silhouettes of eight performing musicians. Their performances were based on the instruction to "play solo while imagining the presence of other players," and ultimately projected as shadow images onto the sides of a big cube at the exhibition venue, according to a certain algorithm. Displays on the walls reflected how objects made of wood and iron vibrate in response to the oscillating sounds. As visitors could hear the audio of all performing musicians at once, but not look at the cube and the surrounding walls at the same time, it was not possible to grasp the total picture visually. Furthermore, as the solo performances were put together in constantly changing combinations based on a computer program, visitors witnessed at any given moment a "one-off improvised set." "quartets online" is a remodeled version that comes with the unique features of a work to be viewed on the Internet. This time, viewers can enjoy an unlimited number of improvised performances at any time on their own devices. Even though Otomo and the YCAM staff started discussing the idea soon after the initial exhibition of "quartets," it took a long time to realize it. The viewer is inspired to think about the contemporary meaning of space and time within experience, and about the physical distance between human individuals, as the fleeting ensemble performances reverberate – differently from the original "quartets" – across the World Wide Web.

### quartets

A large cubic object is installed in the center of the exhibition venue. Projected onto each side of this cube are shadow images of musicians, while audio playbacks of their individual performances come from inside the cube. All of these materials were previously made video and audio recordings of each of the eight musicians' solo performances, which were then sequenced based on a computer program, in order to perpetually generate ensembles that interfere and penetrate each other. In addition, detailed images of objects made of wood, iron, liquid or other materials, vibrating and floating in concert with the music, are projected onto large screens mounted to the walls opposite from each side of the cube.

As visitors can hear the audio of all solo performances, but not look at the four sides of the cube and the surrounding walls at the same time, it is at no point possible to look at all aspects of the exhibition at once.

Direction, sound composition: Yoshihide Otomo

Art direction (cubic screen): Yuki Kimura

Video/objects (outer screens): Benedict Drew

Algorithm & system design/programming: Norimichi Hirakawa

Guitar, turntable: Yoshihide Otomo

Voice: Kahimi Karie

Synthesizer, guitar: Jim O'Rourke

Sho: Ko Ishikawa

Percussion: Yoshimitsu Ichiraku

Trumpet: Axel Dörner

Drums, percussion: Martin Brandlmayr

Sinewaves: Sachiko M

## Profile

**Yoshihide Otomo**

Musician, born 1959 in Yokohama. Has been attracting a lot of attention around the globe with his endeavors across genres and styles, from experimental music to jazz and pop, while also being renowned for his musical contributions in the realms of cinema, TV and theater. In recent years, his focus has been on musical works and sound installations, as well as collaborations with various artists and regular citizens under the name “Ensembles,” presented in a rather unique concert style. At the same time, he continues to engage in a range of participatory projects. After the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, he launched a project in the Fukushima area, where he spent his teens, and in 2012, received a Ministry of Education's Award for Fine Arts for his work on the “Project FUKUSHIMA!” His numerous other awards include a Japan Record Award for the score for the TV program “Amachan” in 2013. Since 2014, Otomo has been devoting himself to Ensembles Asia, launched as a vehicle for establishing a network across Asia through music. He was the artistic director of the Sapporo International Art Festival 2017, and in 2019, director of the reorganized Waraji Matsuri, a popular local festival in Fukushima.

**Yuki Kimura**

Yuki Kimura was born in 1971 in Kyoto. She completed her graduate studies at Kyoto City University of Arts in 1996. Her installation works have continued to explore the theme of time and dimension in concurrence to the present space where the installations have placed. She continues to exhibit her art work worldwide, major group shows including: California-Pacific Triennial, the Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach (2017); “Ocean of images: New Photography 2015,” The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2015) and 30th São Paulo Biennial (2012).

**Norimichi Hirakawa**

Born in 1982, his interest lies in the most primitive of technologies, calculation. His work is focused on installations that use either mathematical processing itself as conducted through computer programming or the results of that processing. In 2016, he began creating the series datum at a residency at The Kavli Institute for the Physics and Mathematics of the Universe (Kavli IPMU), and datum was shown at the Toyota Municipal Museum of Art and at a pre-event of the Sapporo International Art Festival. In 2017, he created one of the works in that series through a residency at the ALMA telescope, located at Chile's highest point of approximately 5000 meters and it's awarded as Excellence Award in Art Division of the 22nd Japan Media Arts Festival. He has also participated in creating the work of Japanese artists, such as Ryoji Ikeda and Seiko Mikami, and is the artistic director for ARTSAT: Art and Satellite Project.

**Sachiko M**

Sinewave artist, improvised performer, composer. The minimalist sound of “Sine Wave Solo,” released in 2000, instantly put her in the center of the music world's attention. She went on to win a Golden Nica at Ars Electronica in 2003, and present live performances and sound installations at festivals around the world. The piece “Shiosai no memory” (co-written with Yoshihide Otomo), produced for the TV program “Amachan,” initially inspired her to pursue a career as a composer. Sachiko M curates and directs the Open Gate exhibitions investigating the area between “music” and “art,” and continues to explore various new possibilities.



## プロフィール

**Yoshimitsu Ichiraku**

After quitting his longstanding job as a professional drummer in 2012, Ichiraku returned into the spotlight when he unveiled “DORAnome” and “LaserGuitar,” two musical instruments developed together with tkrworks, Roland and Vestax. He spent the last few years developing, building and presenting the self-built “Laser Modular” synthesizer around the world in live performances and workshops, while at one organizing worldwide GIGANOISE, GIGAMODULAR and GIGADISCO festivals. He received an Honorary Mention in the Digital Musics department at Ars Electronica, and was invited to participate in the Venice Biennale and the Expo Zaragoza 2008. In 2019, he attracted public attention with three works that he curated at Art Setouchi. Ichiraku currently lives in Yamaguchi.

**Jim O'Rourke**

Born in 1969. He is an American musician and producer. Known for his idiosyncratic tastes, and regarded as something of an expert on modern experimental music, he has released albums of jazz, electronica, noise and guitar rock music. O'Rourke has collaborated with the likes of Derek Bailey, Stereolab, Loren Mazzacane Connors, Fennesz, Henry Kaiser, Flying Saucer Attack, and most recently produced Beth Orton's new album *Comfort of Strangers*. He has produced albums by artists as varied as John Fahey, Smog, Faust and Tony Conrad. He mixed Wilco's very successful *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot* album, which made many reviewers' top ten lists for 2002, and produced their 2004 album, *A Ghost is Born*, for which he won a Grammy for "Best Alternative Album". During the recording of *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*, O'Rourke collaborated with Wilco member Jeff Tweedy and pre-Wilco Glenn Kotche, a veteran of the Chicago scene and O'Rourke's own solo albums. O'Rourke has released a large number of albums and was once a member of Gastr Del Sol with songwriter David Grubbs and The Red Crayola. From 2000 he played bass guitar and guitar with New York City band Sonic Youth; he quit as a full member in 2005 to pursue his interest in filmmaking, but continues to play with them in their side projects.

**Kahimi Karie**

Musician, writer, photographer. Featured on the album “50ans de Saravah” celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the French label Saravah. Authored the essay *Kotori ga utau, watashi mo utau. Shizuka na sora ni hibiku kara* (Shufu to Seikatsu-sha). Translations include the French picture book *Oyasuminasai* (Anonima Studio), and American literature such as *Dear Santa* (Japanese edition published by Chronicle Books Japan). In 2018, she published her own child-rearing journal *Nikitama* (Shodensha), and serially contributed photographs and essays to the magazine *veggy*. Karie currently lives in New York. Having lived abroad for many years, she is particularly conscious about her balanced diet and physical health.

**Ko Ishikawa**

Sho player Ko Ishikawa studied Japanese traditional Gagaku music under his masters Mayumi Miyata, Hideaki Bunno and Sukeyasu Shiba. He is a member of Reigakusha Gagaku Ensemble. He has been performing not only Gagaku music but also contemporary and experimental music. He is widely acclaimed on the national and international scenes.

He had participated in the projects of Yoshihide Otomo, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Mamoru Fujieda, Toshiyuki Omori, Julio Estrada, Evan Parker, Bozzini Quartet, Antoine Beuger, Magnus Grandberg, Giorgos Varoutas.

## Profile

**Axel Dörner**

Born 1964 in Cologne, Germany. Studied piano and trumpet (with Malte Burba) at the Musikhochschule, Cologne, Germany. Moved to Berlin in 1994. He has worked together with numerous internationally respected figures in the fields of "Improvised Music", "Composed Contemporary Music", "Jazz" and "Electronic Music". He has developed a unique style of trumpet playing based in part on unusual, often self-invented techniques. Concert tours in Europe, North and South America, Asia, Africa and Australia. Appearance on numerous CD and record releases.

**Martin Brandlmayr**

Martin Brandlmayr, (\*1971 in Bad Ischl/Austria) works in the fields between improvisation and composition and on the intersection of electronic and acoustic soundworlds. As a drummer he is widely recognized for his distinctive style combining experimental methods and extended techniques with groove elements. Since the mid 90ies he is exploring hidden sounds and tonal aspects on his instrument. He is a member of the groups Polwechsel, Trapist, Kapital Band 1 and became internationally known primarily through the Trio Radian, founded in 1997. He has released 7 albums with Radian since the end of the 1990s, 5 of them on the US label Thrill Jockey. In 2018 he received the renowned Karl Sczuka Prize for his radio play "Vive les fantômes"

## General Information

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+ Ko Ishikawa + Yoshimitsu Ichiraku + Jim O'Rourke  
+ Kahimi Karie + Sachiko M + Axel Dörner + Martin  
Brandlmayr + YCAM**

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Wednesday, September 9, 2020 - Wednesday, September 8, 2021

Special Website: <http://quartets.ycam.jp/>

※ The work will be online all year round starting at 10:00 on September 9.

Access is free

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