**Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM]**

SAKOKU [Walled Garden] Project
Lauren Lee McCarthy + Kyle McDonald New Performance

# Unlearning Language  In collaboration with YCAM

**2022 November 12th (Sat) – 2023 January 29th (Sun)**
**Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM], Studio B**

### How are AI (Artificial intelligence) and Humans different?
### Thinking of the future of the relationship between technology and human through performance

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM] presents a new performance, "Unlearning Language," by Lauren Lee McCarthy, Kyle McDonald, and YCAM.

Since 2020, YCAM has conducted the "SAKOKU [Walled Garden] Project," a research and development project that explores the future of information and the internet with experts such as researchers. This event is held as a result of a three-year-long project. The performance is an experiential work that explores the theme "what are the human qualities that AI (artificial intelligence) does not have?" In this work, AI takes a role in asking various questions to the audience. By responding to AI, the audience deepens their thought on the difference between humans and machines. This event also hosts exhibitions and events related to today's situation of the internet and AI.

The audience will be able to glimpse a vision of humanity prioritized over AI and technology in today's world, where AI and network technology have developed, and we spend our everyday lives unconsciously surrounded by such technologies. Please visit YCAM and participate in the experience.

YCAM would like to invite you to particitpate in these experience and conduce interviews and publish articles regards to this project.


Back Stage Tour" held in July 2022 (Photo: Yasuhiro Tani)

For any inquiries for an interview or press photos, please contact us at the following address.

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# Collaboration between internationally renowned artists and YCAM



Lauren Lee McCarthy "The Changing Room" (2021)

YCAM's main activity includes staging performing arts, such as dance and theatre plays, alongside holding exhibitions and film screenings. Since its opening, YCAM has introduced cutting-edge performing arts from in and out of Japan. YCAM has produced and presented many new works that apply media technology in collaboration with artists such as Mansai Nomura, Yoko Ando, and Israel Galván. The latest event presents new works by Los Angeles-based artists Lauren Lee McCarthy and Kyle McDonald.

Both McCarthy and McDonald are artists who use code (computer programs) as a means of expression. They have presented many video works, installations, and performances that bring a critical take on the advanced information society. Their works have been exhibited and presented in museums and international art festivals worldwide with high regard. In parallel to their art creation, the two are also known for actively developing tools for diverse people to create their own expressions using codes. The developed tools are not only used by people involved in art but also in educational settings around the world.

McCarthy and McDonald worked with YCAM for over a year on this performance and created a new piece, "Unlearning Language." This piece will be shown to the public for the first time.

## ▌Lauren Lee McCarthy

She is an artist examining social relationships in the midst of surveillance, automation, and algorithmic living. Her work "SOMEONE" was awarded the Ars Electronica Golden Nica and the Japan Media Arts Social Impact Award, and "LAUREN" was awarded the IDFA DocLab Award for Immersive Non-Fiction. Lauren's work has been exhibited internationally at places such as the Barbican Centre, Haus der elektronischen Künste, SIGGRAPH, Onassis Cultural Center, IDFA DocLab, Science Gallery Dublin, and Seoul Museum of Art, and many other international exhibitions.

Lauren holds an MFA from UCLA, a BS in Computer Science, and a BS in Art and Design from MIT. She is also the creator of p5.js, an open-source art and education platform that prioritizes access and diversity in learning to code. Lauren is an Associate Professor at UCLA Design Media Arts.

## ▌Kyle McDonald

Kyle McDonald is an artist working with code. He is a contributor to open-source arts-engineering toolkits like openFrameworks, and builds tools that allow the artist to use new algorithms creatively.

McDonald has a habit of sharing ideas and projects in public before they're completed. He creatively subverts network communication and computation, explores glitches and systemic bias, and extends these concepts to the reversal of everything from identity to relationship. He frequently leads workshops exploring computing vision and interaction.

In 2011, McDonald participated in a resident research program, "Guest Research Project vol.1" implemented by YCAM and developed a software assembly, "ProCamToolkit" that facilitates projection mapping.

# Perfect machine, Inperfect me



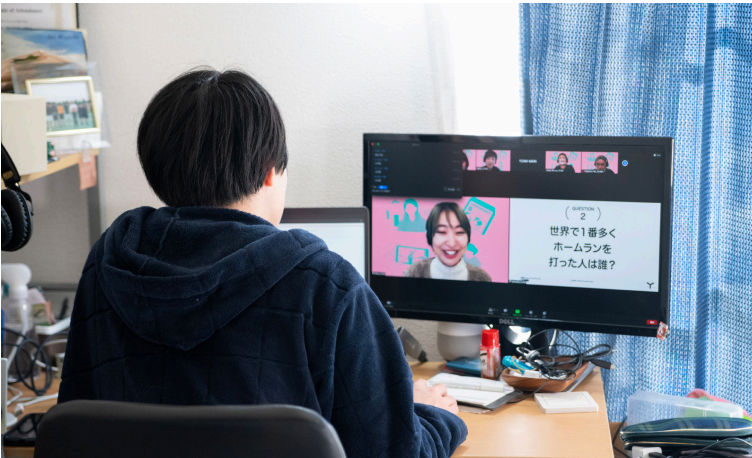Back Stage Tour" held in July 2022 (Photo: Yasuhiro Tani)

"Unlearning Language" is an experiential performance that explores the theme of "What are the human qualities that AI does not have?"

Due to technological development, we can now receive AI assistance according to individual tastes and lifestyles. However, behind the scenes, there is an enormous system that collects, analyzes, and predicts our activity through the internet. This work is focused on this situation.

When the audience steps into the performance space, AI prompts them to participate in an experiment. The audience will communicate with each other in response to the AI's narrative. In the meantime, the AI will try to detect and analyze the audience's facial expressions, words, and body movements through cameras and microphones. If the AI recognizes such features, it guides the audience to discover new ways of communicating. For the audience to continue to interact with each other, it is necessary to find ways of communication that are difficult for AI to recognize, such as clapping, humming, and actions that are not typically used in daily life.

This performance offers a place to discover the difference between humans and machines through clumsy and sometimes enjoyable communication. Also, it reflects on the system behind the technology that maintains the convenience of our everyday life, questioning the human qualities that AI does not have.

# A platform to think about the future of information and the internet



Am I nothing but net? (Photo: Kazuma Yoshiga)

## ▍Surveillance Capitalism

In 2019, social psychologist and philosopher Shoshana Zuboff (Professor Emeritus, Harvard Business School) published the book "Surveillance Capitalism". Zuboff analyses an economic system in which AI predicts user behavior based on their activity on the internet and companies that provide such data profit from companies that sell products. She warned about the crisis of free will and democracy.

YCAM's research and development project, "SAKOKU [Walled Garden] Project" is the basis of this performance. The project explored how personal data and privacy are treated, a subject many people feel uncomfortable and uneasy about in today's world, where the internet is positioned as one of our lifelines.

"Surveillance Capitalism" was chosen as a topic of exploration. Through a workshop in 2021, "Am I Nothing but Net?" was developed by Kyle McDonald. Activities online, such as sending emails, posting on SNS, and searching, are tracked and analyzed by service providers to optimize information. The workshop described this situation and discussed the future of information, which inspired the creation of "Unlearning Language".

In addition to the performance, there will be an exhibition introducing the project's trajectory and an installation, "Unintended Emissions," by an artist group, The Critical Engineering Working Group, based in Berlin. Also, many screenings, events, and workshops will be held to gain a multifaceted perspective on the current state of technology, such as the internet and AI. We create a platform to share and discuss opinions about the future of information and the internet.

## ▍The Critical Engineering Working Group

In 2011, artist and engineer Julian Oliver, Gordan Savicic, and Danja Vasiliev published the "Critical Engineering Manifesto". With this manifesto at its core, Sara Grant, Bengt Sjolen, and Joana Moll joined the group and formed a "Critical Engineering Working Group". This manifesto which begins with "The Critical Engineer considers Engineering to be the most transformative language of our time, shaping the way we move, communicate and think" brings many insights into the specifications of critical engineering.

開催概要

SAKOKU [Walled Garden] Project
Lauren Lee McCarthy + Kyle McDonald New Performance
## Unlearning Language    In collaboration with YCAM

2022 November 12th (Sat) – 2023 January 29th (Sun)
[Sat-Sun/Holidays] 10:30 / 11:00 / 11:30 / 12:00 / 12:30 / :00 / 13:30 / 14:00 / 14:30 / 15:00 / 15:30 / 16:00 / 16:30 / 17:00 / 17:30
[Mon-Fri] 12:30/13:30/14:30
Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM], Studio B
Closed on Tuesdays
Tickets: No reservations, sold at the venue on the day of the performance
Age: 10 years old +          Seat: 2-7 people per slot

Some effects include blackouts, sudden blinking lights, and loud sounds
As part of the experience, we film and record the audience
November 15th will only be performed from 15:00

Organized by Yamaguchi City Foundation for Cultural Promotion, The Association of Public Theaters and Halls in Japan
In association with Yamaguchi City, Yamaguchi City Education Committee, Goethe-Institut
Supported by Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan
Cooperation with Rhizomatiks, BACKSPACE Productions In., Pacific Basin Arts Communication
Co-developed with YCAM InterLab
Produced by Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM]]

### Ticket information

**Price:**
General audience          500 JPY
"any" members / Under 25 years old / Members with disability and one accompanying person
                Free

*Tickets will be sold at the venue on the day of the performance
*Numbered tickets will be given out at the venue on the performance day. Audience will then be informed which slot they may participate
*November 12th-13th, December 3rd-4th, and January 28th-29th will require reservations, first comes first, available from September 21st (Wed). Please find more information on the website

Pre Events

### Related Screening
2022 October 29th (Sat) – 30th (Sun), November 2nd (Wed) – 4th (Fri)
Venue: Studio C, Ticket required (No reservation)
*Please find the schedule and ticket information on the YCAM website. There will be more films screened.

### Public talk
How Digital Surveillance Will Change Society: Thoughts from Snowden's Accusations
2022 October 30th (Sun) 12:30-14:00
Venue: Studio C, Free admission
Speaker: Midori Ogasawara (Journalist and Sociologist) *Online participation

### Public talk
"Unlearning Language" Coming Soon! Recommended Films to Learn More
2022 November 3rd (Thu - Holiday) 14:55-15:25
Venue: Studio C, Free admission
Speaker: Keina Konno (YCAM)

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Related Events

## Exhibition 1

### SAKOKU [Walled Garden] Project Archive Exhibition

2022 November 12th (Sat) – 2023 January 29th (Sun) 10:00-19:00

*Open until 20:00 on November 12th (Sat) and 13th (Sun)

*Unable to enter during the public talks

Venue     Foyer, 2nd floor gallery        Free admission

The exhibition will introduce workshops developed by SAKOKU [Walled Garden] Project and Surveillance Capitalism, which is a topic that inspired "Unlearning Language". Essayist Satoshi Kisawa's "E!!!!! Animal Fortune Telling" will also be held as a special online event.

### Opening Performance

2022 November 12th (Sat) 13:00 Start

Venue: Studio B     Free admission

Performers: Chika Araki, Wataru Naganuma (Nuthmique, Sansakusya), Mari Fukutome, Megumi Miyazaki (Gekidan Shibainu)

**Public Talk**

### What is Critical Engineering?

2022 November 12th (Sat) 17:00-19:00

Venue: Foyer       Free admission

Speakers: Danja Vasiliev and Bengt Sjolen (The Critical Engineering Working Group) Yohei Miura (YCAM)

*JP-EN Interpretation included

**Public Talk**

### Learning and unlearning words – how are humans and AI different

2022 December 4th (Sun) 14:00-15:30

Venue: Foyer       Free admission (Reservation required)

Speakers: Ai Kawazoe (Linguist, Novelist)

**Workshop**

### secrets of me in.ter.net

2022 November 23rd (Wed), December 10th (Sat), December 11th (Sun)

2023 January 21st (Sat), January 22nd (Sun) / All 13:00-16:00

Venue: Online       Free admission (Reservation required)

Navigator: Daichi Yamaoka, Keina Keina, Izumi Hara (YCAM)

**Closing Panel Discussion**

### Beyond Surveillance Capitalism – Future of the Internet

2023 January 28th (Sat) 13:00-15:00

Venue: Online *With live streaming

Free admission (Reservation required)

Speakers: Surya Mattu(Artist, Engineer, Journalist), Taeyoon Choi (Artist, Educator, Organizer) *Both participating online

## Exhibition 2

### The Critical Engineering Working Group Installation – Unintended Emissions

*Details same to the left

The exhibition is an installation that visualizes and analyzes the user data automatically shared by the auto search function of wifi pertained in mobile devices such as smartphones.

**Opening Talk**

### Seeing and Listening with Machines

2022 November 12th (Sat) 14:00-16:00

Venue: Foyer        Free admission (Reservation required)

Speakers: Dominick Chen (Informatics researcher), Lauren Lee McCarthy, Kyle McDonald *JP-EN Interpretation included

**Public Talk**

### The transition and current of the Internet in Japan

2022 December 3rd (Sat) 14:00-15:30

Venue: Foyer        Free admission (Reservation required)

Speakers: Sayawaka (Critique, Comic author)

**Triangle Talk Session**

2022 November 13th (Sun), December 3rd (Sat), December 4th (Sun)

2023 January 28th (Sat), 2023 January 29nd (Sun) / All at 16:00-18:00

Venue: Foyer        Free admission (Reservation required)

Navigator: Daichi Yamaoka, Keina Keina, Izumi Hara (YCAM)

**Gallery Tour**

2022 November 27th (Sun), 2023 January 28st (Sat)

All at 16:00-16:40

Venue: Foyer

Navigator: Daichi Yamaoka, Keina Konno, Izumi Hara, Yohei Miura (YCAM)

▌**Registration**

Please find the registration form from the following URL

## www.ycam.jp

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