

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM]

Oron Catts + Ionat Zurr + Steve Berrick

PROJECT MRT

Natureless Solution / 太陽と土と糞^{くそ}から切り離れたテクノロジーの再考

In collaboration with YCAM

11 October 2025 (Sat) - 23 February 2026 (Mon) 10:00-19:00

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM], Foyer, Patio, Gallery second floor

Unveiling a new installation by internationally renowned bio-art pioneers!

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM] presents a new exhibition titled **PROJECT MRT – Natureless Solution** – 太陽と土と糞^{くそ}から切り離れたテクノロジーの再考, created by Australian-based artists Oron Catts, Ionat Zurr, and Steve Berrick.

Oron Catts and Ionat Zurr are pioneers of bio-art based on tissue culture engineering, having exhibited numerous experimental works both in Japan and internationally. Their experimentation also stems from their activities at SymbioticA, where they frequently collaborate with Steve Berrick.

The exhibition showcases their interest in exploring recent trends in food production systems. At the venue, they present a set of input-dependent elements commonly found in Agricultural Technology (AgTech), designed not to harvest food but to harvest data. Through this contestable food system, the artists aim to raise critical questions about our trajectory toward a “Natureless Solution” — a future of food production independent from nature.

This exhibition offers an opportunity to reconsider the intersections of technology and nature, ethics and practice, and to rethink the future of food. We warmly invite you to take part in this experience.



Photo: Daniel James Grant Courtesy of the artist

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

INQUIRIES

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A project exploring our natureless food production system



Steve Berrick, Ionat Zurr, and Oron Catts
Courtesy of the artist

Rapid technological advancement is significantly shaping our daily lives, particularly in the realm of food. Changes are accelerating across every stage of the process — from production and distribution to the ways we cook and consume. For the Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media (YCAM), an institution dedicated to connecting technology with local issues, food is a vital and immediate subject. In 2021, YCAM launched the "Food and Ethics Research Project" to investigate these themes, culminating in an exhibition in 2023 that presented its findings.

To deepen this exploration, YCAM has partnered with bio-artists Oron Catts and Ionat Zurr, pioneers in creating art from biological materials that blur the boundaries between science and art. In 2000, they established SymbioticA — the world's first bio-art laboratory at the University of Western Australia. There, they collaborate with artists and scientists, including Steve Berrick, on innovative research projects. Recently, three of them collaborated on a project related to Agricultural Technology (AgTech), which won the Award of Distinction at Prix Ars Electronica 2023. Additionally, the documentary film capturing the process won the Western Australian Screen Culture Award.

Building on this acclaimed research, the new exhibition presents their process as an installation. Developed in partnership with local producers and researchers, the exhibition incorporates experimental and circular food production throughout its duration. By openly sharing the insights and questions that emerge, the installation aims to provoke critical reflection at the intersection of food, ethics, technology, and society.

■ Oron Catts

He is the Director of The University of Western Australia's Institute of Advanced Studies. He Co-founded and directed SymbioticA, a biological art research center at UWA (2000-2024), now an independent lab. In 1996 he launched the Tissue Culture and Art Project which is considered a leading biological art project. He is a Visiting Professor in the Visual Identities in Art and Design Research Centre, University of Johannesburg. Catts was a Research Fellow in Harvard Medical School, a visiting Scholar at the Department of Art and Art History Stanford University, a Professor at Large in Contestable Design at the Royal College of Arts, London. Catts curated more than a dozen exhibitions, developed numerous artistic projects and performances. His work was exhibited and collected by museums such as Pompidou Centre, MoMA NY, Mori Art Museum, Ars Electronica, National Art Museum of China and more.

■ Ionat Zurr

Dr Ionat Zurr is the Chair of the Fine Arts Discipline at the School of Design, The University of Western Australia. Zurr is an Australian artist, researcher, curator, who together with Oron Catts, founded the Tissue Culture & Art Project in 1996 and is a pioneer of making art with living, engineered tissue. Zurr instigated the Master of Science (Biological Arts), an interdisciplinary program involving both art and biology. Zurr, together with Catts, often works in collaboration with other artists and scientists and have developed a body of work and projects which reach beyond the confines of art; their work is often cited as an inspiration to diverse areas such as new materials, textiles, design, architecture, ethics, fiction, and food.

■ Steve Berrick

Steve Berrick is a West Australian artist whose practice merges code, interactivity, and public engagement. He builds responsive digital systems that transform audiences into active participants, using custom software and electronics to create playful, immersive environments. His works - presented across theatres, galleries, public spaces, and app stores - explore the tension between control and chaos, embracing glitch, improvisation, and tactile input to spark curiosity and collective presence.

Understanding the rift: Data as our new food ingredient

The term MRT in the title stands for Metabolic Rift Technologies, a concept coined by the artists and inspired by the Metabolic Rift theory proposed by John Bellamy Foster. This theory describes a fundamental rupture in the ecological relationship between human society and the environment. The theory itself is an expansion of Karl Marx's observation of the disruption of nutrient cycles caused by industrial agriculture and urbanization.

This exhibition unveils the process of PROJECT MRT, an experimental initiative by the artists Oron Catts, Ionat Zurr, and Steve Berrick in collaboration with YCAM. The venue is conceived metaphorically as a "lab" for conducting scientific experiments and research. Multiple circular food-production systems that are commonly found in AgTech and in regenerative agriculture practices — such as compost heating system and hydroponic systems — are installed and are operated thoroughly during the exhibition period.

Additionally, a control room that continuously harvests data in real time from various sensors attached to the systems monitoring parameters, such as temperature, pH level, voltage, etc., is set up as the central element of the exhibition. Complementing these installations, a range of programs — including hands-on workshops and guided tours — are offered, creating a structure that allows visitors to engage systematically with the exhibition's themes.

The possibility of independence from nature?

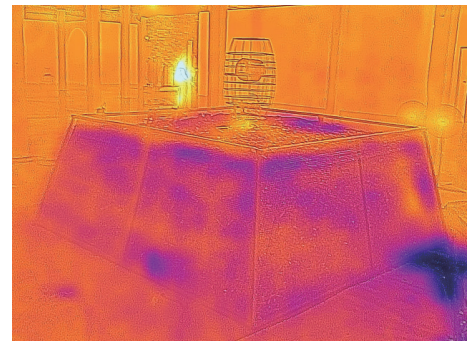
Within the venue, in collaboration with local educational institutions, researchers, and producers, installations such as soil-free hydroponic system and solar panel systems are set up — technologies that replace natural resources to enable food production. Other systems include aquaponic setups — in which aquaculture (fish farming) and hydroponics are combined to grow fish and plants simultaneously — and devices that culture mouse-derived muscle cells into artificial meat and convert their nutrients into fertiliser. Multiple technologies are combined and operated during the exhibition to explore pathways toward a "Nature-less Solution", a future of food that functions independently of nature.

More data, less food?

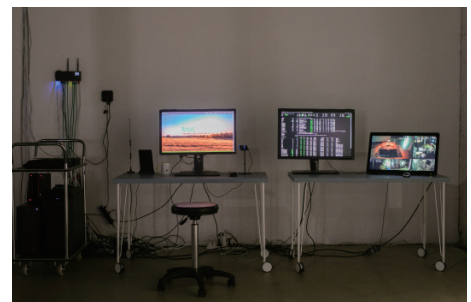
All food-production devices in the exhibition are equipped with custom-developed sensors. They measure in real time various environmental indicators: heat generated during compost decomposition; concentrations of CO₂ and methane produced by microbial respiration and fermentation; nitrogen-cycle data related to animal husbandry; and more. These are used to monitor decomposition efficiency, ecological balance, and optimal environmental conditions. As data is generated and accumulated day by day during the exhibition, the process becomes a critique of the contemporary condition in which data itself is valued over ecological reality in food production.



Alkaline extractor for meat components



Thermography of compost fermentation heat



Courtesy of the artist

開催概要

Oron Catts + Ionat Zurr + Steve Berrick

PROJECT MRT

Natureless Solution

／太陽と土と糞から切り離れたテクノロジーの再考

In collaboration with YCAM

October 11, (Sat) – February 23, 2026 (Mon) 10:00-19:00

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM], Foyer, Patio, Gallery second floor

Closed on Tuesdays (The following day if Tuesday is a public holiday) ,

October 27, December 29, 2025 – January 3, 2026

Organized by Yamaguchi City, Yamaguchi City Foundation for Cultural Promotion

Supported by Yamaguchi City Board of Education

Grant by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan, Fiscal Year 2025, The Government of Western Australia, The University of Western Australia, the School of Design, Goethe-Institut Tokyo

Co-developed by YCAM InterLab

Planned and produced by Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM]

Curated by Leonhard Bartolomeus

Related Programs

Artist Talk

October 11 (Sat), 2025 14:00~16:00

Venue: Studio A

Capacity: 30 participants *Note : No registration required

Speakers: Oron Catts, Ionat Zurr, Steve Berrick

PROJECT MRT Guided Tours

Farming the rift

October 17 (Fri) , 2025 10:00~12:00

November 16 (Sun), December 7 (Sun), 2025, January 17 (Sat), February 21 (Sat), 2026: 14:00~16:00

Meeting Point: Foyer

Capacity: 20 participants per session *Note : Registration required

These guided tours explore the theme of “the separation between nature and society.”

Participants will tour the exhibition with YCAM staff, experience the themes from multiple perspectives, and engage in group discussions.

Hands-On Workshops

October 12 (Sun), November 15 (Sat), December 6 (Sat), 2025, January 10 (Sat), February 22 (Sun), 2026 14:00~16:00

Meeting Point: Foyer

Capacity: 10 participants per session *Note : Registration required

Open to junior high school students and above

Oct 12 & Dec 6: “Let’s Build a Sensor Kit” (2-day course)

Nov 15: “Let’s Build a Hydroponic System”

Jan 10: “Exploring Personal Biotechnology”

Feb 22: “What is ‘Delicious Data’?”

All workshops are hands-on and guided by instructors.

How to apply

Please complete and submit the application form using the website below.

www.ycam.jp/en

Gallery Tours

Oct 12 (Sun), 18 (Sat)※, 19 (Sun), 2025 11:00~12:00

Nov 2 (Sun) 14:00~15:00

Nov 30 (Sun), Dec 21 (Sun), 2025, Jan 18 (Sun), Feb 22 (Sun), 2026 13:00~14:00

Meeting Point: Foyer

Capacity: 10 participants per session

*Note : Registration required

Take part in staff-led walkthrough of the exhibition.

(*Oct 18 tour will be conducted in English.)

Related Screenings

During the exhibition, films related to the themes will be screened. Please check the website for details.

Venue: Studio C

Admission: Paid (fees vary by film)

Concurrent Event

YCAM OpenLab 2025

October 17–19, 2025 13:00–18:00

Capacity: 50 participants *Note : Registration required

Venue: Studio A Language: Japanese & English

Speakers: Yuki Hanyu (Integriculture Inc.), Dr Bede Mickan (Professor, The University of Western Australia), Meredith Sattler (Assistant Professor, Cal Poly SLO), Hideo Iwasaki (Professor, Waseda University), and others.