

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM]

Otomo Yoshihide + YCAM

New Installations 'IMPROVISATION!'

Sat 17 Oct 2026 – Mon 1 Mar 2027

Introductory Exhibition: "without records" | From Fri 24 July 2026

Venue: Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM]

An exhibition unfolds the trajectory of Otomo Yoshihide's creative practice, featuring unpredictable, improvisational installations that span 136 days. The Introductory Exhibition, "without records" starts on 24 July 2026.

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM], an art center that dedicated to new forms of artistic expression through media technology, will host the new exhibition "IMPROVISATION!" by Otomo Yoshihide + YCAM from Saturday, October 17, 2026, to Monday, March 1, 2027. Otomo Yoshihide is a musician who has been active in various domestic and international scenes, including free jazz, improvised performance, noise music, and film scores, continually pushing the boundaries of expression. Centered around the theme of "improvisation," which is the backbone of Otomo's creation and the foundation of his ensembles, this exhibition features new collaborative works between Otomo, YCAM, and five artists from various genres.

YCAM InterLab, an internal research and development team specializing in the creation of artistic expressions, is also co-producing the exhibition. Responding to the architectural features of the YCAM building designed by Isozaki Arata and its surrounding environment, the exhibition opens up a rich world of improvisation where diverse sounds and presences collide and resonate with one another.

Ahead of the main exhibition, an introductory program showcasing a sound installation titled "without records" — a collaboration between Otomo Yoshihide, artist Aoyama



Otomo Yoshihide + Aoyama Yasutomo + Ito Takayuki "without records" (2008)
Photo by Maruo Ryuichi (YCAM)

Yasutomo, and sound engineer Ito Takayuki — will open on Friday, 24 July. This early activation sets the baseline tone for the project before the full scale of the exhibition unfolds on Saturday, 17 October. From that point, the exhibition expands into three distinct dialogues: "DUO," an automated performance piece honoring the late Sakamoto Ryuichi; a physical, space-altering installation collaborating with contemporary artist Mochida Atsuko; and "filaments in the Park," an outdoor sound installation by Filament, the long-running duo of Sachiko M and Otomo. Open your senses and look forward to these unpredictable 136 days of practice, where improvisation with diverse others unfolds.

INQUIRIES

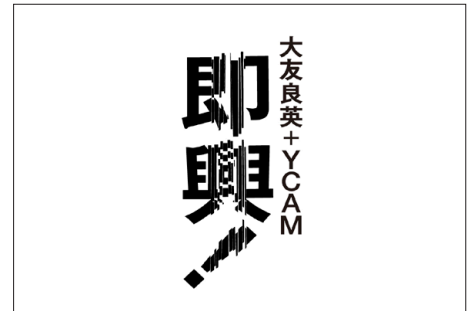
Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM] PR representative

TEL: +81-(0)83-901-2222 / Email: press@ycam.jp7-7 Nakazono-cho Yamaguchi-shi Yamaguchi 753-0075 JAPAN <http://www.ycam.jp>© Please apply for access to the press images for this exhibition via the URL below. <https://tinyurl.com/6navadn2>

Exhibition Highlights

1. A Large-Scale Exhibition as the Culmination of Otomo Yoshihide's "Improvisation"

For Otomo, "improvisation" lies at the very core of his creative concepts. Rather than reproducing something predetermined, Otomo's idea of improvisation is grounded in communication and expressions generated through interaction with various elements that make up the venue, including fellow performers, the audience, and the environment. At its foundation is the philosophy that an artwork does not exist merely as an individual expression, but is born as a result of a collaborative process that could itself be described as improvisational. This exhibition serves as a culmination of Otomo's concepts and practices of improvisation in the form of installation works, emphasizing the significance of being "improvisational" as a mode of expression, communication, and connection with people and society.



Exhibition Logo "IMPROVISATION!"
Design: Tarui Miho

2. Tribute Work: Generating Improvised Performances with Sakamoto Ryuichi

Musician Sakamoto Ryuichi, who also had been collaborating with YCAM, and Otomo have performed numerous improvisations in the past with a simple configuration of piano and guitar. Otomo's tribute work to Sakamoto, "DUO," recreates the characteristics of their improvisations from the 2010s by physically driving the guitar and piano without using any acoustic analysis or reproduction technologies like AI. For this work, YCAM InterLab extracted the traits of Otomo's guitar improvisations and developed an automated performance device. Under Otomo's supervision, the characteristics of the improvised performances are also recreated from the piano keystroke data (MIDI) left behind by Sakamoto. In the absence of the artists themselves, this piece continuously generates performances for eternity.



Creation process for the exhibition (2026)
Photo: Aoyama Shinya

3. Re-ensemble with YCAM after 18 years

Otomo's first exhibition at YCAM in 2008, "Otomo Yoshihide/ENSEMBLES," was themed around collaboration with many artists and citizens as an attempt to further expand his musical activities up to that point. Displayed throughout the entire YCAM building, all four sound installations featured systems developed in collaboration with YCAM InterLab that generated music on the spot, ensuring that no two moments would ever be the same. Since then, YCAM has continued to collaborate with numerous artists from Japan and abroad, including Sakamoto Ryuichi, and now, after 18 years, a collaboration with Otomo is happening once again.



Creation process for the exhibition (2026)
Photo: Aoyama Shinya

Introductory Exhibition "without records"

Dates: Fri 24 July 2026 –



Otomo Yoshihide + Aoyama Yasutomo + Ito Takayuki "without records" (2008)
Photo by Maruo Ryuichi (YCAM)

An Ensemble Performed by Portable Record Players

Ahead of the main exhibition, an introductory exhibition of the sound installation "without records" by Otomo Yoshihide, artist Aoyama Yasutomo, and engineer Ito Takayuki will be held in the foyer of YCAM starting Friday, 24 July. This work is the very first installation piece Otomo created back in 2005. It has since evolved into various forms and been presented both in Japan and internationally, including a large-scale exhibition of "without records" at YCAM in 2008. Grounded in "improvisation" and "collaboration," this work remains the core of Otomo's installation practice to this day. Serving as the roots for the three new installation works to be unveiled in the main exhibition starting Saturday, 17 October, "without records" acts like a corridor or a neuron connecting the three upcoming pieces. The main characters of this piece are numerous used portable record players that circulated around the 1970s and have already fulfilled their original purpose. All the players are modified by many hands in various ways so that they emit their own unique sounds without any records. Arranged like a constellation, these players perform an orchestra-like ensemble through automated playback. Though it is a highly analog work, a unique system enables an eternal, improvisational ensemble of portable record players where no two moments are identical.

*"without records" will continue to be on display during the main exhibition starting 17 October.

Otomo Yoshihide (大友良英)

Born in Yokohama in 1959. His style varies widely, spanning from experimental music to the realms of jazz and pop, and his activities have attracted significant attention overseas. He also has an extensive career as a soundtrack composer for films and television. In recent years, under the name "Ensembles," he has focused on collaborations with various people to create exhibition works and unique concert formats, while also putting effort into public-participation projects. Following the Great East Japan Earthquake, he launched a project in Fukushima, where he spent his teenage years. In 2012, he received the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's Art Encouragement Prize (Art Promotion Division) for his work with Project FUKUSHIMA!. In 2013, he won the Japan Record Award for Composition and numerous other awards for the music of the TV drama "Amachan." In 2014, he launched Ensembles Asia, working dynamically to build an Asian network through music. He served as the artistic director for the Sapporo International Art Festival in 2017 and as the director for the reform of Fukushima's iconic summer festival, the "Waraji Matsuri," in 2019.

Aoyama Yasutomo (青山泰知)

Born in Asahikawa, Hokkaido in 1960. Based in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture. In addition to working as an artist, he also participates in musical activities such as live performances and DJing. He has been collaborating intermittently with Otomo Yoshihide since 1995.

Ito Takayuki (伊藤隆之)

Born in 1978. From Tokyo. Until 2022, he served as the R&D director at the Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM], directing overall research and development projects. He has been involved in numerous projects, including artwork creation, without limiting his fields, ranging from sound design and system engineering to software development and biotechnology. He currently works at Civic Creative Base Tokyo [CCBT].

Otomo Yoshihide + YCAM New Installations "Improvisation!" Main Works

Dates: Sat 17 Oct 2026 – Mon 1 Mar 2027

New Work 《DUO》

Artists: Otomo Yoshihide, Sakamoto Ryuichi

Venue: Studio B

A new sound installation that uses performance data from piano improvisations performed by Sakamoto Ryuichi during his lifetime to perform alongside Otomo's automated guitar. A signal-controlled piano custom-built for Sakamoto and an automated guitar replicating Otomo's playing style developed by YCAM InterLab generate an improvised duo performance.



Rehearsal for the 2012 concert at YCAM,
"Music Imaging 2050: Inspired by Debussy and Cage"
Left: Otomo Yoshihide / Right: Sakamoto Ryuichi
Photo: Tanabe Rumi

New Work 《"filaments" in the Park》

Artists: Filament (Sachiko M & Otomo Yoshihide)

Venue: Patio, Yamaguchi City Central Park (Chuo Park)

Filament is a unit formed by Sachiko M and Otomo. This outdoor sound installation is by the unit, which has practiced improvisational music centering on the act of "listening." Amidst ambient sounds and bustle, by listening closely and focusing on subtle changes, the audience's auditory experience connects various sonic elements.



Creation process for "filaments in the Park" (2026)
Photo: Aoyama Shinya

New Work 《Dance》 *working title

Artists: Otomo Yoshihide, Mochida Atsuko, Ito Takayuki

Venue: Studio A

A new installation comprising a vast array of speakers confronts the physicality of space-altering structure created by contemporary artist Mochida Atsuko. The soundscape will create a complex blend, featuring an expansive range of audio quality, performance styles, densities of data, including the physical resonance generated from the installation structure itself. The works will also add a performance element combining automated computation and human manipulation.



Mochida Atsuko, "Dancing Teahouse" (2025)
Photo: Lloyd S. Lee

General Information

Otomo Yoshihide+YCAM New Installations 'IMPROVISATION!'

Sat 17 Oct 2026 – Mon 1 Mar 2027 | 10:00 – 19:00

Venue: Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM]

Closed: Tuesdays*, Year-end and New Year holidays*

*The following day if Tuesday is a public holiday; open 23 Sep

*Year-end and New Year holidays: 29 Dec 2026 - 3 Jan 2027

Artists: Otomo Yoshihide/ Aoyama Yasutomo/ Ito Takayuki/

Sakamoto Ryuichi/ Sachiko M/ Mochida Atsuko

Admission: Paid (Some areas free*)

Introductory Exhibition

Otomo Yoshihide + Aoyama Yasutomo + Ito Takayuki "without records"

Fri 24 July 2026 – | 10:00 – 19:00

Venue: Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM] Foyer

Admission: Free

**"without records" will continue to be on display during the main exhibition starting 17 Oct.

Organized by: Yamaguchi City, Yamaguchi City Foundation for Cultural Promotion

In Association with: Yamaguchi City Board of Education

Supported by: The Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan, Fiscal Year 2026

Co-developed with: YCAM InterLab

Planned and Produced by: Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM]

Curated by: Nishi Tsubasa (YCAM)

Concurrent Events

Yamaguchi Seasonal 2026

Ryuichi Sakamoto + YCAM Forest Symphony

Fri 24 July – Sun 6 Dec 2026 | 10:00 – 16:30

Joeiji (常栄寺/ Jōeiji) 2001-1 Miyanoshimo, Yamaguchi City

YCAM OpenLab 2026

Sat 25 July 2026 | 13:00 – 16:00

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM] Foyer

*Registration required

Korogaru Playful Department Store 2026

Sat 11 July – Sun 13 Sep 2026 | 10:00 – 17:00

Yamaguchi Izutsuya (山口井筒屋) 3-3 Nakaichicho, Yamaguchi City

< Contact >

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM]

7-7 Nakazono-cho, Yamaguchi, 7530075 JAPAN

TEL: +81-83-901-2222 / Email: information@ycam.jp / <https://www.ycam.jp/>

< Access >

◎ By Shinkansen (Bullet Train): Shin-Yamaguchi Station → (JR Yamaguchi Line) → Yudaonsen Station

◎ By Air: Yamaguchi Ube Airport → (Bus) → Shin-Yamaguchi Station → (JR Yamaguchi Line) → Yudaonsen Station

◎ From the Nearest Station (Yudaonsen Station): By Taxi- Approx. 5 minutes or On Foot- Approx. 25 minutes

◎ Parking: Free parking available (Capacity: 161 vehicles)

Tickets

-Adults	1,000 yen
-Yamaguchi City Residents	500 yen
-Ages 29 and under	500 yen
- "any" Members	Free
-Ages 18 and under	Free
-Visitors with a disability certificate and one caregiver	Free

*Foyer, Patio, and Yamaguchi City Central Park are free of charge.

Official Websites

www.ycam.jp

Special Exhibition Website

<https://otomo-sokkyo.ycam.jp>

SNS

Official Instagram : @ycam_jp

Event Account : @otomo_sokkyo

Musician | Otomo Yoshihide Guitarist / Turntablist / Composer / Film Composer / Producer

The development of Otomo's music and performance style has closely synchronized with the evolution of recording, playback, amplification, and editing technologies over time. His music has repeatedly innovated by incorporating sonic approaches previously considered outside the boundaries of "music" — such as sampling, noise, and feedback — into composition and performance, allowing them to coexist within a single musical style. At the same time, he has boldly challenged areas left untouched by previous avant-garde musicians, such as collaborating with the general public and people with disabilities, and building networks with cutting-edge musicians across Asia. The culmination of these efforts was the "Otomo Yoshihide / ENSEMBLES" exhibition held jointly with YCAM in 2008. Using this exhibition as a major turning point, and in light of the Great East Japan Earthquake, he explored various ways to collaborate with citizens in disaster-affected areas based on his previous activities, receiving the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's Art Encouragement Prize in 2012 for these efforts. He has also worked as a film and television soundtrack composer since the 1990s. Winning the Japan Record Award for Composition in 2013 for the music of "Amachan," he is an artist who spans a wide range of genres, from avant-garde music like noise to pop and film scores.



Otomo Yoshihide

Message from Otomo Yoshihide for the Exhibition

The theme of this exhibition is "IMPROVISATION!"

The "ENSEMBLES" exhibition in 2008, my first full-scale collaboration with YCAM, was a major turning point in my creative career, and "collaboration = ensemble" with diverse people was the overarching theme at the time. Having gone through disasters and the pandemic, I have come to strongly feel that it is "improvisation" that makes "collaboration = ensemble" far richer. While "IMPROVISATION" is vital enough to be considered the root of my music, I have come to believe that it is also crucial for many creative endeavors — and even more so, for our future society. If it serves as a foundation, society will become much richer. Eighteen years after the last exhibition, focusing on the theme of "IMPROVISATION," which will undoubtedly look back at my own starting point, I would like to begin a new ensemble with YCAM and various people.

Otomo Yoshihide

*The comment has been translated from Japanese.

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM]



Photo: Yamanaka Shintaro (Qsyum!)

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media, commonly known as "YCAM," is an art center located in Yamaguchi City, Yamaguchi Prefecture. In addition to art spaces, it houses a movie theater, a library, and workshop spaces. Since its opening on November 1, 2003, YCAM has centered its activities on exploring new expressions using media technology, hosting a wide variety of events including exhibitions, performances, film screenings, and workshops for children. With a philosophy of creating and learning alongside citizens and experts from various fields, YCAM explores wide-ranging approaches regarding the appropriate relationship with media technology, the potential of information as a cultural foundation, and the meaning of information for humanity.

What is YCAM InterLab?

A research and development team that is composed of diverse YCAM staff ranging from curators, educators, engineers, and designers that is involved in the creative process behind various YCAM projects. Crossing multiple disciplines, the team works alongside citizens, artists, researchers, and other external collaborators, from concept creation, artwork production, and workshop development.

They have collaborated with numerous artists from Japan and abroad, including Sakamoto Ryuichi, and in recent years, Oron Catts (Australia), Wendelien van Oldenborgh (Netherlands), Hsu Chia-Wei (Taiwan), and Ho Tzu Nyen (Singapore).

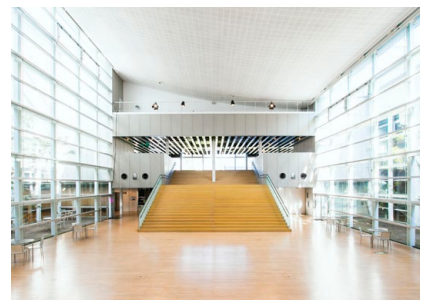


Photo: Katsumura Yuki



Photo: Miyamoto Tsuyoshi

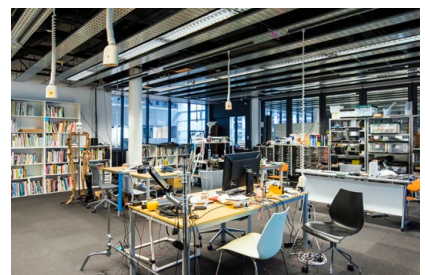


Photo: Katsumura Yuki