

# RYUTA AOKI

ARTIST / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



## CURRENT POSITIONS

Founder & CEO, VOLOCITEE Inc.  
Co-founder & Artistic Director, METACITY  
Co-founder & Executive Director, Mucha-Kucha Inc.  
Founder & Artistic Director, ArtHackDay.jp  
Co-founder & Artistic Director, The TEA-ROOM  
Co-founder, ALTERNATIVE MACHINE Inc.  
Co-founder, ALIFE Lab.  
Fellow, Salzburg Global Seminar  
Fellow, MOTION GALLERY

## CONTACT

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## BIOGRAPHY

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Ryuta Aoki is a Tokyo-based Japanese artist and artistic director working in-between art, science, and technology. He extends *mitate* — the technique of seeing one thing as another, inherited from the view of nature in the Way of Tea — into the ecology of contemporary technology, creating spatial devices and programmes that intervene in the invisible structures shaping society.

In 2000, Aoki co-founded a tech startup. Over the following decade he worked as an engineer and director at several startups specialising in embedded OS, middleware, and high-performance computing.

In 2011 he launched TEDxKids, the first TEDx programme for children in Japan, operating it with more than 100 volunteers. His community building and event production were widely recognised within the global TEDx network. In 2014 he initiated Art Hack Day, Japan's first art hackathon, giving rise to more than 70 artist collectives—many of which went on to be invited to art festivals in Japan and abroad, with some receiving awards including the Excellence Prize at the Japan Media Arts Festival.

In 2016 he co-founded The TEA-ROOM, an artist collective reinterpreting the philosophy of chanoyu for the present day, and ALIFE Lab., a community of artificial life researchers. In 2018 he co-founded ALTERNATIVE MACHINE, a deep-tech startup applying artificial life research to society, and launched METACITY, a research collective exploring possible urban futures. In 2019 he co-founded Mucha-Kucha Inc. with members of The TEA-ROOM to support artists working with chanoyu.

Aoki served as Director of ALIFE 2018, the first international conference on artificial life following the merger of European and American academic societies. He subsequently served as Creative Producer for Japan Media Arts Distributed Museum (Agency for Cultural Affairs, 2020) and as Artistic Director of the exhibition Jack into the Noösphere at

Chiba City's inaugural art festival (2021). In 2022 he contributed to the conceptual design of the international art festival succeeding the Japan Media Arts Festival.

Awards include the Social Impact Award (Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Prize) at the 25th Japan Media Arts Festival, Art Division (2022)—the first awarded to a Japanese group—and the Public Prize at the WIRED Creative Hack Award (2021).

## ARTIST STATEMENT

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My practice consists in creating spatial devices and programmes that intervene in the invisible structures shaping society — institutions, algorithms, ecological processes. By detaching technologies from their intended functions and placing them in unfamiliar contexts, I unsettle fixed cognitive frameworks and social contours.

At the root of this method is *mitate* — the technique of seeing one thing as another. Inherited from the view of nature in *chanoyu*, the Way of Tea, this operation dissolves the boundary between nature and artifice, reality and fiction, allowing alternative orders to emerge. I extend this stance into the ecology of contemporary technology.

A work does not conclude at the moment of its exhibition. It continues to change through interaction with its environment and participants. An exhibition is one scene from a possible world. What I seek to sculpt is not an object, but society itself.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

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### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 Alternative Computations — Worlds Otherwise Calculated, Quantum Art Festival Special Exhibition, Japan
- 2020 Exhibition: Multi-Layered City Makuhari, Chiba City, Japan

### GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 Emergence(y), Science Gallery Melbourne, Australia (forthcoming)
- 2024 AI · Human · Multiverse, National Asia Culture Center, South Korea  
Trusting the Unseen, Ethereum Foundation, Thailand  
Reframing Exhibition, DESIGNART 2024, Tokyo, Japan
- 2022 25th Japan Media Arts Festival Exhibition of Award-winning Works, Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan
- 2021 2121 Futures In-Sight, 21\_21 DESIGN SIGHT, Japan  
Ars Electronica 2021 Garden Tokyo, Online  
Chiba City Festival of Arts, Japan  
ART for SDGs: Kitakyushu Art Festival Imagining Our Future, Kitakyushu City, Japan
- 2020 Next World ExhiVision × 23rd Japan Media Arts Festival, Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan  
Japan Media Arts Distributed Museum, Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan
- 2019 MUTEK.jp 2019, Japan

### COLLECTIONS

- 2025 SOTOROJI #4, DENSO Advanced Research and Innovation Center, Japan
- 2021 Bio Sculpture, Kitakyushu City, KIGS, Japan

## AWARDS / FELLOWSHIPS / RESIDENCIES

(A = Awards / F = Fellowship / S = Scholarship / R = Residency / H = Honorary Mention)

- 2025 F WAN: Art & Tech Creators Global Network (Agency for Cultural Affairs, New York, USA)
- 2024 S Devcon 7 Scholars Program Artists and Writers Cohort (Ethereum Foundation, Bangkok, Thailand)
- R ACC CREATORS Residency 2024 (Asia Culture Center, Gwangju, South Korea)
- F Curatorial Research Program (Lithuanian Culture Institute, Vilnius/Kaunas, Lithuania)
- 2023 F MOTION GALLERY
- 2022 A 25th Japan Media Arts Festival, Art Division, Social Impact Prize — Bio Sculpture
- 2021 A WIRED Creative Hack Award 2021, Public Prize — Bio Sculpture
- H WIRED Creative Hack Award 2021, Finalist — Artificial Moons
- 2017 F Salzburg Global Seminar
- 2015 H Great TEDx Stage Design — TEDxKids@Chiyoda
- 2012 H Best Practice of TEDx — TEDxKids@Chiyoda
- H Best Stage Design of TEDx — TEDxKids@Chiyoda

## CURATORIAL PROJECTS

(E = Exhibition / P = Performance / C = Concept Design / A = Award)

- 2026 E Alternative Computations — Worlds Otherwise Calculated (Quantum Art Festival | 29 Jan – 1 Feb)
- 2025 P STACK TOKYO (WPÜ HOTEL | 11 Sep)
- 2024 E Reframing — Official Exhibition of DESIGNART 2024 (DESIGNART | 18–27 Oct)
- 2022 C Basic concept design for the international festival & ecosystem that will succeed the Japan Media Arts Festival (Agency for Cultural Affairs | Sep 2022 – Mar 2023)
- 2021 E Exhibition: Jack into the Noösphere — Chiba City Festival of Arts (Jul – Aug)
- 2020 E Exhibition: Multi-Layered City Makuhari (Chiba City | Dec 2020 – Jan 2021)
- E Japan Media Arts Distributed Museum — airport editions: Centrair / Naha / Fukuoka (Agency for Cultural Affairs | Feb–Mar)
- 2018 A ALIFE Art Award 2018 (Miraikan | 14 May – 25 Jul)
- E ALIFE Art Award Exhibition “Being There” (ALIFE 2018 | Jul)
- P Shipboard Tea Ceremony (Mar)
- E Art Hack Day Exhibition 2018 “Being There” (Miraikan | Mar)
- 2016 E Art Hack Day Exhibition 2016 “Technology as Organism” (Nov)
- P Glowing Tea Ceremony (Sanrio Puroland | Oct)
- P Sound Tea Ceremony (TAICOCUB | Jun)
- 2015 E 3331α Art Hack Day Exhibition 2015 (3331 Arts Chiyoda | Sep)
- 2014 E Art Hack Night 2014 (Loftwork | Sep)
- E 3331α Art Hack Day Exhibition 2014 (3331 Arts Chiyoda | Sep)
- 2012 E Exhibition: Design to Change the World — Trans Arts Tokyo (3331 Arts Chiyoda | Sep – Oct)

## CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

(C = Conference / W = Workshop / SF = Sci-Fi Prototyping)

- 2024 SF Sci-Fi Manga Design Research for Quantum Computing
- C Creative Futurists Initiative (University of Tokyo | 22 Feb)
- 2021 SF Civic Vision Sci-Fi Workshop
- 2020 C Exhibition: Multi-Layered City Makuhari (DOMMUNE | 30 Dec)

- 2019      **W** Future+Design for ALIFE research Vol.2  
**SF** Sci-Fi Manga Design Research for ALIFE research  
**C** METACITY CONFERENCE 2019 (Makuhari Messe | 18–19 Jan)
- 2018      **C** International Conference ALIFE 2018 (Miraikan | 23 Jul)  
**W** ALIFE for Kids | Future Biology for kids  
**W** Art Hack Day 2018  
**W** Future+Design for ALIFE research Vol.1
- 2017      **W** Kogei (Craft) Hackathon  
**C** Generative Ethics and Society (University of Tokyo | 13 May)  
**SF** School for ALIFE
- 2016      **W** 3331α Art Hack Day 2016  
**C** COI 2021 Conference (Youth Education National Olympics Memorial Youth Center | 29–30 Jan)
- 2015      **W** KENPOKU Art Hack Day — a social programme of KENPOKU ART  
**W** LED Bulb Speaker Ideathon  
**W** 3331α Art Hack Day 2015
- 2014      **C** TEDxKids@Chiyoda 2014 (30 Nov)  
**W** 3331α Art Hack Day 2014
- 2013      **C** TEDxKids@Chiyoda 2013 (4 Nov)
- 2012      **C** TEDxKids@Chiyoda 2012 (28 Oct)
- 2011      **C** TEDxKids@Tokyo 2011 (1 Oct)
- 2010      **C** TEDxTokyo yz 2010 Theater (17 Nov)

#### RESEARCH PROJECTS

- 2020–2021    **New Rousseau Machine R&D** (MIT Media Lab City Science Group + METACITY)
- 2019–2022    **Bio Sculpture R&D** (Keio University SFC Hiroya Tanaka Lab + METACITY)  
**Acoustic Niche Hypothesis R&D** (ISID + ALIFE Lab)
- 2019–2020    **Software for android Alter 3** (ALTERNATIVE MACHINE)
- 2018–2021    **Research on Flourishing Mind** (JT + ALTERNATIVE MACHINE)
- 2018          **Prototype House Becomes Family** (LIFULL + VUILD + ALTERNATIVE MACHINE)
- 2017–2020    **ALIFE Engine — generative dynamics engine** (ALTERNATIVE MACHINE)
- 2017–2018    **Citizen-cooperative distributed logistics** (DENSO + ALTERNATIVE MACHINE)

#### VENUES & SPACES

- 2018–2021    **Nausicaä House — Co-working hub** (Shibuya, Tokyo)
- 2016–2017    **Life Space UX Showroom, Sony Building Ginza** (Chuo-ku, Tokyo)
- 2015–2017    **3331α Studio — production & event space** (Chiyoda, Tokyo)

#### PUBLICATIONS

*(S = Scientific Paper / B = Book / A = Article)*

- 2021          **S** Attempt of Sculpture for Social and Biological Environment by Japanese Style “Soil” 3D printing  
**A** WIRED Japan Vol.42
- 2020          **S** Evolving Acoustic Niche Differentiation and Soundscape Complexity Based on Intraspecific Sound  
Communication  
**A** WIRED Japan Vol.36

- 2019      **B** A-Life — Implementing artificial life model using Python
- 2018      **S** ALife as a Tool for Cooperative Society Between People and Machines
- 2017      **B** ALife - Build and Run: Introduction to Artificial Life Model Theory through Implementation
- A** What is Artificial Life (ALife)
- S** Constructing the co-creation community ALife Lab. for the co-evolution of humans and information technology

## TALKS & LECTURES

*(T = Talk / L = Lecture / W = Invited Workshop)*

- 2026      **T** Digital Signals Summer School (Melbourne, Australia)
- T** FACT 2026 (Melbourne, Australia)
- 2025      **T** ALIFE 2025 (Kyoto, Japan)
- T** FuturaCanvas 2025 (Seoul, South Korea)
- T** EDCON 2025 (Osaka, Japan)
- T** ACT Festival 2025 (Gwangju, South Korea)
- T** EXPO 2025 Osaka “Entangle Moment: [Quantum, Earth and Universe] × Art”
- T** THACCA SPLASH Soft Power Forum 2025: VISIONARY STAGE (Bangkok, Thailand)
- T** Quantum Art Festival: Talk Session 6 (Online)
- T** Quantum Art Festival: Talk Session 4 with ZKM (Online)
- T** Quantum Art Festival: Opening (Online)
- 2024      **T** University of Creativity (Tokyo)
- T** Embassy of Lithuania to Japan (Tokyo)
- T** DESIGN ART & DESIGN TOUCH 2024 (Tokyo)
- T** Today at Apple (Tokyo)
- T** ACT Festival 2024 (Gwangju, South Korea)
- L** Tokyo Zokei University
- 2023      **T** The Exhibition: Proof of X (Tokyo)
- T** Sonoaida (Tokyo)
- 2022      **L** International College of Technology (Kanazawa)
- T** Consulate of Switzerland, Swissnex in Japan (Osaka)
- T** The 25th Japan Media Arts Festival (Tokyo)
- T** Consulate of Switzerland, Swissnex in Japan (Tokyo)
- 2021      **L** International College of Technology (Kanazawa)
- T** CIC Tokyo
- T** WIRED Japan Editors Lounge (Online)
- L** Ikubunkan Global High School (Online)
- 2019      **T** The 22nd Japan Media Arts Festival (Tokyo)
- W** CECAN (USA / Arizona)
- W** CECAN (UK / Surrey)
- T** METACITY CONFERENCE 2019 (Chiba)
- T** News Picks (Tokyo)
- 2018      **T** AGC Studio Design Forum (Tokyo)
- T** CEATEC (Chiba)
- W** Ars Electronica Future Innovation Summit (Tokyo)
- T** 078 (Kobe)
- 2017      **T** Lexus (Tokyo)

- T DOMMUNE (Tokyo)
- T The 31st Annual Conference of the Japanese Society for Artificial Intelligence (Nagoya)
- W Salzburg Global Seminar (Austria / Salzburg)
- 2016 T Web Science Society Vol.2 (Yokohama)
- T YouFab Global Creative Awards 2016 (Tokyo)
- W TEDSummit 2016 (Canada / Vancouver)
- 2014 T Co-Creation Platform Study Group (Tokyo)
- T TEDxKobeSalon (Kobe)
- T Startup Weekend Education Tokyo
- W TEDActive 2014 (Canada / Whistler)
- 2013 L Rikkyo University Graduate School (Tokyo)
- 2012 L Rikkyo University Graduate School (Tokyo)
- W TEDxSummit (Qatar / Doha)
- W TEDActive 2012 (USA / California)
- 2011 T TEDxYouth@PortauPrince (Online)
- T Qi Global (Singapore)
- T TEDxEarthquake 9.0 (Kitakyushu)

#### PRESS

*(B = Book / C = Catalog / M = Magazine / P = Newspaper / R = Radio / T = TV / V = Video / W = Web)*

- 2026 T BS NTV: Conbiz! Content × Business Information Bureau
- 2025 W Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry & Forbes JAPAN: ART & BUSINESS PLAYERS FILE
- R J-WAVE: TOPPAN INNOVATION WORLD ERA
- C ACC CREATORS Residency 2024
- V ACC CREATORS Residency 2024 Interview
- V ACC CREATORS Residency 2024 After Movie
- W Blockchain News
- W Ethereum Foundation
- 2024 C Proof of X — Blockchain As A New Medium For Art
- 2023 M BRAIN Nov. 2023
- C Japan Media Arts Festival 1997–2022: 25 Years of Progress
- 2022 V Japan Media Arts Festival: The 25th Japan Media Arts Festival
- P The Asahi Shimbun
- C 25th Japan Media Arts Festival Award-Winning Works Collection
- P The Tokyo Shimbun
- C Catalog of Chiba City Festival of Arts
- C Catalog of ART for SDGs: Kitakyushu Art Festival Imagining Our Future
- 2021 T BS Fuji: Esprit Japon: The Theme of Ryuta Aoki (Also broadcast in NZ / AU / FR)
- R BayFM: Bay Morning Glory
- B Hack the Government
- M The 40th-anniversary issue of Garden
- P Sustainable Japan by The Japan Times
- M WIRED Japan Vol.42
- M AXIS Vol.213 40th Anniversary Special Edition
- W JDN
- W Studio International

- W** VOGUE JAPAN  
**W** Bijutsutecho  
 2020 **V** DOMMUNE: Exhibition: Multi-Layered City Makuhari  
**R** BayFM: Bay Morning Glory  
**T** BS Fuji: Communicating Cultural Resources! Media Arts at the Gateway to the Sky  
**T** MBC every1: ART×TRIP (Korean Broadcaster)  
**M** AXIS Vol.205  
 2017 **V** DOMMUNE: Art Hack Day — A Future of Technology × Art  
 2015 **T** Nippon TV: SENSORS  
**R** J-WAVE: THE HANGOUT  
**B** How to make Hackathon  
 2014 **M** TRUNK Inaugural Issue  
 2013 **P** Japan Daily News - The Mainichi  
**M** Weekly Toyo Keizai  
 2012 **R** Tokyo FM: blue ocean

#### JURY & ADVISORY

*(J = Jury / A = Advisor / Am = Ambassador)*

- 2025 **Am** SEEEU 2025  
**J** ACT Festival 2025  
 2024 **J** The U-15 Science Fiction Contest Yoi Kono Anon Press Award 2023  
 2023 **A** The exhibition Invisibles in the Neo City hosted by Tokyo Metropolitan Government  
**A** The exhibition Does My Body Become My Mind? hosted by Tokyo Metropolitan Government  
 2018 **J** NHK Educational Emergent Cafe Start-up Venture Contest  
**J** ALIFE Art Award 2018 sponsored by International Society for Artificial Life  
 2016 **J** Chackathon@Roppongi & Azabu sponsored by Minato ward in Tokyo  
 2014 **J** Disaster Response and Prevention Hackathon Race for Resilience hosted by World Bank  
**J** TEDxSaku Speaker Audition  
 2013 **J** The Great East Japan Earthquake Restoration Support WA WA Project Start-up contest

#### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2025– Reappointed Executive Director, Mucha-Kucha Inc.  
 2023– MOTION GALLERY Fellow  
 2021–2024 Councilor, Tonakaima Research Society  
 2020– Co-founder & Director, METACITY Council (nonprofit)  
 2019–2021 Co-founder & Executive Director, Mucha-Kucha Inc.  
 2019–2023 Co-founder & Director, ALIFE Lab. (nonprofit)  
 2018–2020 Co-founder & Artistic Director, METACITY (collective incorporated 2020)  
 2017–2020 Co-founder & CEO, ALTERNATIVE MACHINE Inc.  
 2017 Salzburg Global Seminar Fellow  
 2016–2019 Co-founder & Director, ALIFE Lab. (collective, incorporated 2019)  
 2016– Co-founder & Artistic Director, The TEA-ROOM  
 2014 Organised Japan's first art hackathon Art Hack Day  
 2011 Organised Japan's first TEDxKids programme  
 2011– Founder & CEO, VOLOCITEE Inc.

2006–2011 Software Engineer / Director, Fixstars Corporation  
2002–2006 Software Engineer, Zentek Technology Japan  
1999–2002 Co-founder & Executive Director, Hash System Inc.