

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

Ryuta Aoki is a Tokyo-based Japanese artist and artistic director working in-between art and technoscience. His practice centres on large-scale installation, crossing into curation and community building.

In 2000, Aoki co-founded a tech startup. Over the following decade he worked as an engineer and then as a director at tech startups specialising in embedded OS, middleware, and high-performance computing. In 2011 he launched TEDxKids, the first TEDx programme for children in Japan, running it with more than 100 volunteers. 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 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. That same year he served as Director of ALIFE 2018, the first international conference on artificial life following the merger of European and American academic societies. In 2019 he co-founded Mucha-Kucha Inc. with members of The TEA-ROOM, an artist management company for practitioners working with chanoyu.

Major works include the Alternative Computations series (2026—, Quantum Art Festival Special Exhibition, Spiral Garden, Tokyo), which sculpts the cosmologies of vernacular computing cultures using quantum computers; Simulated Consensus (2024, National Asia Culture Center, South Korea), in which AI agents simulate approximately 100,000 virtual voters to interrogate the assumptions underlying democracy; the SOTOROJI series (2020—), which summons the spiritual threshold of the tea garden through tens of thousands to over 130,000 QR codes; Artificial Moons (2020), projecting artificial moonlight trembling to the rhythms of the three-body problem onto a 150-metre building, inaugurating the rituals of a fictional city within the play of chance; the Bio Sculpture series (2021—), using a massive soil 3D

printer extendable to 30 metres to bring three-dimensional wetland environments into being within the city; and the ANH series (2019—), acoustic ecosystems of digital agents evolving through genetic algorithms.

As a curator, Aoki 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 and fellowships include the Social Impact Award (Minister of Education Prize) at the 25th Japan Media Arts Festival, Art Division (2022) — the first awarded to a Japanese group; ACC CREATORS Residency (National Asia Culture Center, South Korea, 2024); Devcon 7 Scholars Program (Ethereum Foundation, 2024); and WAN: Art & Tech Creators Global Network (Japan Arts Council, 2025).

ARTIST STATEMENT

Invisible structures condition society. *Kuuki*, the pressure of collective mood that compels conformity without reason, moves people, preconceptions close the world, boundaries partition perception, and every one of them can be rewritten. I know this. I create scenes and programmes that intervene in these structures and bring alternative ways of being into lived experience. That is my practice.

Two stances sustain this work. One is *mitate* — seeing one thing as another — deeply rooted in Japanese culture. I extend this into the ecology of contemporary technology, placing marginalised orders in unfamiliar contexts to dissolve the boundaries between nature and artifice, reality and fiction, past and present, allowing what has been suppressed to surface. The other — as life itself does — is to set systems in motion and attend to what emerges, rather than designing outcomes. My material is exactly this — systems whose behaviour exceeds human intention.

A work does not conclude at its exhibition. It continues to change through interaction with its environment and participants, each time evoking visions of pasts that could have been and futures that still could be. What I seek is an irreversible shift in perception: the recognition that the world could have been, and still can be, organised otherwise. I resist the convergence of ways of seeing into a single view. I make visible what has been rendered invisible, so that the diversity of ways of knowing does not quietly disappear.

CURRICULUM VITAE

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

COMMISSIONS / 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 (WPŪ 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 (TAICOCLUB | Jun)
- 2015 E 3331α Art Hack Day Exhibition 2015 (3331 Arts Chiyoda | Sep)
- 2014 E Art Hack Night 2014 (Loftwork | Sep)

- 2012 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

- 2021 C Catalog of ART for SDGs: Kitakyushu Art Festival Imagining Our Future
 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.