RYUTA AOKI

ARTIST / INDEPENDENT CURATOR

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
Fellow, Salzburg Global Seminar
Fellow, MOTION GALLERY

CONTACT

contact@volocitee.com
ryutaaoki.jp
Instagram · X · Facebook · LinkedIn

BIOGRAPHY

Ryuta Aoki is a Tokyo-based Japanese artist and independent curator working in-between art, science, and technology. His practice seeks to render visible the "invisible structures"—fictions, codes, institutions, algorithms, ecological processes—that shape society, enabling critical intervention and delineating the contours of "societies as they could be."

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

My practice seeks to render visible the "invisible structures"—fictions, codes, institutions, algorithms, ecological processes—that shape society. By deliberately displacing technologies from their intended contexts and placing them into unforeseen ones, I create tools through which participants can critically intervene, momentarily unsettling cognitive frameworks and social contours, and thereby opening new possibilities.

This approach is informed by the spirit of chanoyu, the Japanese tea ceremony—a practice in which nature and artifice, reality and fiction intersect to destabilise ordinary order and allow other worlds to emerge. Drawing on this tradition alongside speculative imagination and contemporary technologies, I develop experiments that provisionally bring into being "societies as they could be."

For me, the artwork does not reside in the finished object but in the dynamic process that encompasses discussions, collaborations, and environmental changes. What is exhibited is a crystallised fragment of that continuum. Creativity is not a privilege but a force embedded in everyday life, and the capacity to sculpt society belongs equally to all.

CURRICULUM VITAE

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2026	Emergence(y), Science Gallery Melbourne, Australia (forthcoming)
	Alternative Computations — Worlds Otherwise Calculated, Quantum Art Festival Special Exhibition, Japan
2025	SOTOROJI #4, DENSO Advanced Research and Innovation Center, Japan (permanent collection)
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	Exhibition: Multi-Layered City Makuhari, Chiba City, Japan
	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

INSTALLATION WORKS

2026	Alternative Computations (Ryuta Aoki)
	Phantom Realities (Ryuta Aoki)
2025	SOTOROJI #4 (The TEA-ROOM)
2024	Simulated Consensus (Ryuta Aoki)
	SOTOROJI #3 (The TEA-ROOM)
	SOTOROJI #2 (The TEA-ROOM)
2022	Bio Sculpture — Scene of a Future Boutique — (SFC Tanaka Lab + METACITY)
2021	New Rousseau Machine — Kyoto Mounting Edition — (METACITY)
	Bio Sculpture — Scene of a Future Portable Lab — (SFC Tanaka Lab + METACITY)

New Rousseau Machine (METACITY)
Hello, Error! #1 (The TEA-ROOM)
SOTOROJI #1 (The TEA-ROOM)
UCHIROJI #0 (The TEA-ROOM)
ANH-01 (ALTERNATIVE MACHINE)
Bio Sculpture (SFC Tanaka Lab + METACITY)

2020   Artificial Moons (The TEA-ROOM + METACITY)
VOID SYSTEM (The TEA-ROOM)
SOTOROJI #0 (The TEA-ROOM)

2019   ANH-00 (ALTERNATIVE MACHINE)

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 (TAICOCLUB | 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)

CONFERENCE ORGANISATION

(C = Conference / S = Symposium)

2024	**S** Creative Futurists Initiative (University of Tokyo | 22 Feb)

2020	**S** Exhibition: Multi-Layered City Makuhari (DOMMUNE	30 Dec)
2019	**C** METACITY CONFERENCE 2019 (Makuhari Messe	18–19 Jan)
2018	**C** International Conference ALIFE 2018 (Miraikan	23 Jul)
2017	**S** Generative Ethics and Society (University of Tokyo	13 May)
2016	**C** COI 2021 Conference (Youth Education National Olympics Memorial Youth Center	29–30 Jan)
2014	**C** TEDxKids@Chiyoda 2014 (30 Nov)
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)

WORKSHOP FACILITATION / PROGRAMME DESIGN

(H = Hackathon / I = Ideathon / S = SF Prototyping / E = Education)

2024	**S** Sci-Fi Manga Design Research for Quantum Computing
2021	**S** Civic Vision Sci-Fi Workshop
2019	**I** Future+Design for ALIFE research Vol.2
	S Sci-Fi Manga Design Research for ALIFE research
2018	**E** ALIFE for Kids	Future Biology for kids
	H Art Hack Day 2018
	I Future+Design for ALIFE research Vol.1
2017	**H** Kogei (Craft) Hackathon
	S School for ALIFE
2016	**H** 3331α Art Hack Day 2016
2015	**H** KENPOKU Art Hack Day — a social programme of KENPOKU ART
	I LED Bulb Speaker Ideathon
	H 3331α Art Hack Day 2015
2014	**H** 3331α Art Hack Day 2014

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

(D = In-house Development / R = Collaborative Research)

2020–2021	**R** New Rousseau Machine R&D (MIT Media Lab City Science Group + METACITY)
2019–2022	**R** Bio Sculpture R&D (Keio University SFC Hiroya Tanaka Lab + METACITY)
	R Acoustic Niche Hypothesis R&D (ISID + ALIFE Lab)
2019–2020	**D** Software for android Alter 3 (ALTERNATIVE MACHINE)
2018–2021	**R** Research on Flourishing Mind (JT + ALTERNATIVE MACHINE)
2018	**R** Prototype House Becomes Family (LIFULL + VUILD + ALTERNATIVE MACHINE)
2017–2020	**D** ALIFE Engine — generative dynamics engine (ALTERNATIVE MACHINE)
2017–2018	**R** Citizen-cooperative distributed logistics (DENSO + ALTERNATIVE MACHINE)
2006–2011	**D** Software for multi-core Cell BE / SpursEngine (Fixstars)
2002–2006	**D** Digital TV / STB middleware (Zentek Technology Japan)
2000–2002	**D** Business-card management cloud service (Hash System)

SPACE PRODUCTION & MANAGEMENT

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)

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS & PAPERS

(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 |

(T = Talk / L = Lecture / W = Invited Workshop / R = Research)

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)
	R CECAN (USA / Arizona)
	R 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)
	R The 31st Annual Conference of the Japanese Society for Artificial Intelligence (Nagoya)
	W Salzburg Global Seminar (Austria / Salzburg)
2016	**R** Web Science Society Vol.2 (Yokohama)
	T YouFab Global Creative Awards 2016 (Tokyo)
	W TEDSummit 2016 (Canada / Vancouver)
2014	**R** 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)

SELECTED MEDIA APPEARANCES

(T = TV / R = Radio / Y = Youtube)

2026	**T** BS NTV: Conbiz! Content × Business Information Bureau
2025	**R** J-WAVE: TOPPAN INNOVATION WORLD ERA
2022	**Y** Japan Media Arts Festival: The 25th Japan Media Arts Festival
2021	**T** BS Fuji: Esprit Japon: The Theme of Ryuta Aoki (Also broadcast in NZ / AU / FR)
	R BayFM: Bay Morning Glory
2020	**Y** 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)
2017	**Y** DOMMUNE: Art Hack Day — A Future of Technology × Art
2015	**T** Nippon TV: SENSORS
	R J-WAVE: THE HANGOUT
2012	**R** Tokyo FM: blue ocean

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY & PRESS

(M = Magazine / P = Paper / B = Book / C = Catalog / V = Video / W = Web)

2025	**W** Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry & Forbes JAPAN: ART & BUSINESS PLAYERS FILE
	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	**B** 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	**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	**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	**M** AXIS Vol.205
2015	**B** How to make Hackathon
2014	**M** TRUNK Inaugural Issue
2013	**P** Japan Daily News - The Mainichi
	M Weekly Toyo Keizai

JURY & ADVISORY ROLES

(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 HISTORY

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.