

# seeing sound, hearing time

## Ryuichi Sakamoto

Exhibition Period | December 21, 2024–March 30, 2025  
Organized by | Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo operated by Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture / The Asahi Shimbun / TV Asahi  
Sponsored by | Kakaku.com, Inc. / Digital Garage, Inc. / TOHO LÉO Corporation / Nissha Co., Ltd. / New Balance Japan Co., Ltd. / Yamada Bee Company, Inc.  
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Technical cooperation | HEXOGON JAPAN INC.  
Cooperation with equipment | ARTWIZ Inc. / Color Kinetics Japan Incorporated / Bricks & Company

### Exhibition Gallery, 1st floor

#### 1 Ryuichi Sakamoto + Shiro Takatani, *TIME TIME* 2024

*TIME TIME* is a new installation work created for this exhibition based on the theater piece *TIME*, which premiered in 2021. Creating a dreamscape inspired by *Ten Nights of Dreams*, and other stories, it pursues the question, “What is time?” – a theme Sakamoto long contemplated. The work features Min Tanaka representing mankind, who seeks to control nature—symbolized by Mayumi Miyata, her *sho*, and the water performers move through on stage.

#### 2 Ryuichi Sakamoto + Shiro Takatani, *water state 1* 2013

Rain falls into a water basin from a ceiling-mounted apparatus, controlled by condensed weather data from individual years. The sound transforms minutely with the lighting as time passes.

#### 3 Ryuichi Sakamoto with Shiro Takatani, *IS YOUR TIME* 2017/2024

Sakamoto, who encountered the piano at Miyagi Prefecture Agricultural High School after the school's devastation by the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake tsunami, saw it as a “piano tuned by nature” and gave it new life in this work. The piano, rendered an object by the forces of nature, without a role or functional ability to play music created by human hands and heart, performs the earth's rumbling.

#### 4 Carsten Nicolai, *PHOSPHENES, ENDO EXO* Music by Ryuichi Sakamoto 2024

Starting from 2002, Nicolai, who produces works of electronic music under the name “Alva Noto,” and Sakamoto collaborated in various forms, including releasing albums and touring live. Inspired by Jules Verne's science fiction novel *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, Nicolai has created his first full-length film, *20,000*, for which he wrote a script having 24 parts. Two of the parts, *PHOSPHENES* and *ENDO EXO* are exhibited at this exhibition in video form. Each video employs one of two tracks, “20210310” and “20220207,” from Sakamoto's final album, *12*.

### Exhibition Gallery, B2 floor

#### 5 Ryuichi Sakamoto + Apichatpong Weerasethakul, *async–first light* 2017 Apichatpong Weerasethakul, *Durmiente* 2021

While creating the album *async* in 2017, Sakamoto made a number of installation works in collaboration with Zakkubalan, Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Shiro Takatani, exploring the concept of “installation music”— music placed three-dimensionally in a space. Asked by Sakamoto to collaborate on the album *async*, Thai filmmaker Weerasethakul chose the two tracks, “disintegration” and “Life, Life.” He accordingly asked people close to him to shoot footage with the same pocket-sized “Digital Harinezumi” camera he himself uses in his work. The images thus captured are snippets of people's personal, everyday moments rendered in grainy, low-resolution with uniquely warm colors.

#### 6 Ryuichi Sakamoto + Shiro Takatani, *async–immersion tokyo* 2024

*async–immersion* is a large-scale installation first exhibited at AMBIENT KYOTO 2023, after Sakamoto's passing, that develops on his *async* series works. This time, the work has been reconstituted for a gallery at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo.

#### 7 Ryuichi Sakamoto + Zakkubalan, *async–volume* 2017

In this installation, the devices (24 iPhones and iPads) display videos of Sakamoto's home studio, living room, and garden in New York. The fragmented videos and their sounds—a mixture of sounds isolated from the album's songs and natural and environmental sounds captured in each space—constitute a single installation. Peering into Sakamoto's inner being through many small windows, each opening into a world, viewers feel a sense of being embraced by darkness inside a womb.

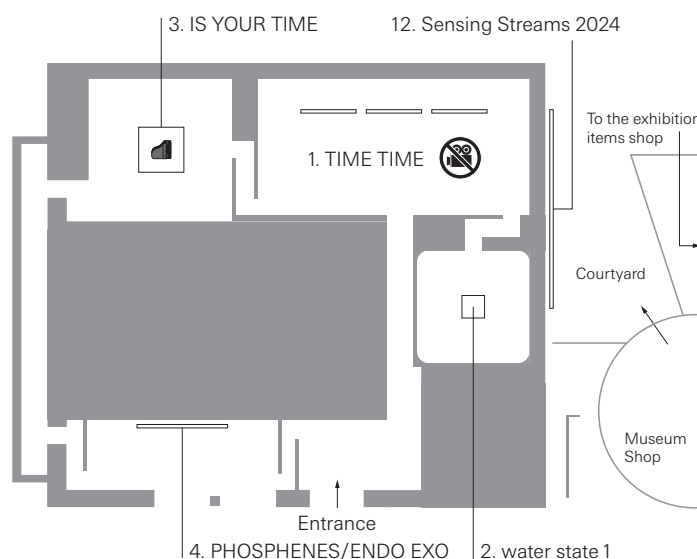
#### 8 Ryuichi Sakamoto + Shiro Takatani, *LIFE–fluid, invisible, inaudible...* 2007

Water and fog appear repeatedly as important elements in Sakamoto and Takatani's installations. *LIFE–fluid, invisible, inaudible...*(2007) is a video and sound installation whose production involved deconstructing Sakamoto's 1999 opera *LIFE*. Nine water tanks arranged in a 3 × 3 grid are suspended from the ceiling. The video images and sound derive mostly from the opera *LIFE*, and images are projected on fog generated inside the water tanks. Here, they experience an expanse of space-time unlike our conventional linear experience.

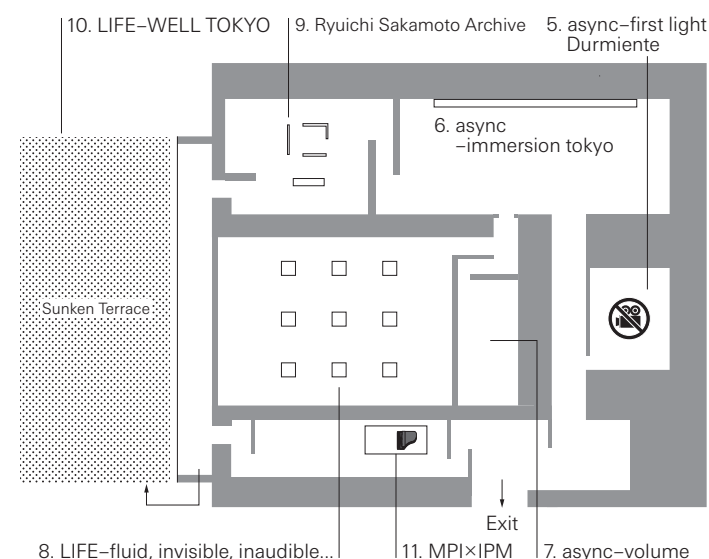
#### 9 Ryuichi Sakamoto Archive Supervisor: Shigeru Matsui 2024

*Ryuichi Sakamoto Archive* provides “auxiliary lines” to the exhibition that underscore the thinking behind his work, the era in which he lived, and his relationship with technology. It consists of unpublished materials, publications and simulations from the perspectives of “Ryuichi Sakamoto's Thinking,” “Postwar Avant-Garde Generation,” “Media Performance after YMO,” “At the End of Music History—the Opera *LIFE*,” “Post-Media Expression,” and “Post-Human Ecosophy.”

### 1st floor



### B2 floor



**Photography in the Venue:** Visitors can take photographs of all installations except for two works with “No Video” sign in this exhibition. Please observe the following rules and enjoy taking photographs. (Video recording should be limited to one minutes.)

**Notice:** Please be considerate of other visitors and the protection of artworks. Do not interfere with other visitors' enjoyment of the museum, also please do not use flash lighting / cameras except mobile phone camera / tripods / selfie stick. Publishing / uploading photographs that show other visitors may infringe their personality rights. Non-commercial use only. Use of the photographs is the responsibility of the user. The museum and the artist will not take any responsibility.

### Sunken Terrace

#### 10 Special collaboration Ryuichi Sakamoto + Fujiko Nakaya + Shiro Takatani *LIFE–WELL TOKYO*, Fog Sculpture #47662 2024

The exhibition features a special collaboration with Fujiko Nakaya, who is known for her “Fog Sculpture” (1970), which covered the Pepsi Pavilion at the Osaka EXPO'70 with artificial fog created by water, and who has been conducting fog projects around the world. In the outdoor Sunken Terrace, fog, light, and sound weave a dreamlike symphony eliciting feelings of love, respect, and awe for nature.

### Exhibition Gallery, B2 floor

#### 11 Special exhibit from archive Ryuichi Sakamoto×Toshio Iwai *Music Plays Images X Images Play Music* 1996–1997/2024

This work was originally a collaborative performance by Ryuichi Sakamoto and Toshio Iwai using music and images, first performed at Art Tower Mito in 1996. Tunes selected from MIDI data actually played by Sakamoto at Ars Electronica '97, which were discovered among Iwai's archives, will be recreated and presented along with video data captured from the scene at the time. Iwai will reconstruct the programming he employed back then and use Sakamoto's favorite MIDI piano to revive this legendary performance, which, in the form of an installation, has never aged. Sakamoto's origins as an artist who used cutting-edge media skillfully with playful creativity, and continually pursued and expanded the possibilities of expression through sound.

### Courtyard

\*Go outside through the automatic door at the back of the museum shop and visit the work.

#### 12 Ryuichi Sakamoto + Daito Manabe *Sensing Streams 2024–invisible, inaudible (MOT version)* 2024

As a collaboration with Daito Manabe, a LED display, accompanied by outdoor speakers, stretches 16m along the courtyard wall adjacent to the shop and cafe at the Museum. Electromagnetic wave data, imperceptible to humans, used by mobile phones, Wi-Fi, terrestrial digital, and FM radio is collected by antennas installed outside the museum and converted into image and sound in real-time through the LED display and speakers. Together, they make seen and heard the invisible streams of electromagnetic waves flying around the metropolis of Tokyo.

The opening hours of outdoor works are subject to change due to weather and other reasons. Please check the website and venue signage for details.

### Ryuichi Sakamoto

Born in Tokyo in 1952. Graduated from Tokyo University of the Arts, master's degree program, and making his debut in 1978 with the album *Thousand Knives*. In the same year, participated in the formation of the legendary techno group *Yellow Magic Orchestra*. Producing pop albums and numerous classical compositions, two operas, and nearly 45 original film/TV scores, his film soundtracks have won prestigious awards, including an Academy Award, two Golden Globes, a Grammy, and more. Sakamoto also made considerable contributions to the art world with his work exhibited in museums worldwide (Beijing, 2021; Cheng-du, 2023). As an activist for many decades, he focused on environmental conservation and world peace, including founding the forest preservation organization “more trees”, and the “Tohoku Youth Orchestra” to support the victims of the Tohoku Earthquake through music. Sakamoto passed away on March 28, 2023.