



Ryoji Ikeda - Biography

Japan's leading electronic composer and visual artist, Ryoji Ikeda, focuses on the minutiae of ultrasonics, frequencies and the essential characteristics of sound itself. Fascinated by data, light and sound, he shapes music, time and space by mathematical methods and explores these phenomena as sensation, pulling apart their physical properties to reveal their relationships with human perception.

Ikeda has gained a reputation as one of the few international artists working convincingly across both visual and sonic media. Since 1995, he has been intensely active through concerts, installations, and recordings, integrating sound, acoustics and sublime imagery. He has been hailed by critics as one of the most radical and innovative contemporary composers for his live performances, sound installations and album releases. His albums +/- (Touch, 1996), 0°C (Touch, 1998) and matrix (Touch, 2000) pioneered a new minimal world of electronic music, employing sine waves, electronic sounds, and white noise. Using computer and digital technologies to the utmost limit, his audiovisual concerts datamatics (2006 – present), C⁴I (2004 – 2007) and formula (2000 – 2006) suggest a unique orientation for our future multimedia environment and culture.

His ongoing body of work, datamatics, is a long-term programme of moving image, sculptural, sound and new media works that use data as their theme and material to explore the ways in which its abstracted view of reality is used to encode, understand and control the world. In spectra II (2002), a narrow, ceiling-covered corridor fitted with strobe lights and coursed by high frequency sounds, continuously alters the visitors' sensory experience of the space. In a later adaptation, spectra [for Terminal 5, JFK], the installation emanates an aura of almost total invisibility and inaudibility due to its intense brightness and ultra-frequencies.

In Spring 2008, Ikeda presented his first solo exhibition in Japan at the Yamaguchi Center for Arts & Media, featuring a number of works in the datamatics series including data.film, a sculptural wall installation consisting of a series of 35mm film mounted in a light box, and data.tron, an audiovisual installation where each single pixel of visual image is strictly calculated by mathematical principle and projected onto a large screen. The exhibition premiered test pattern, an installation comprising visual patterns converted and generated from sound waveforms in real-time. Ikeda released his eighth solo album test pattern (raster-noton) in April 2008 to coincide with the exhibition.

In Summer 2008, Ikeda produced a series of large-scale public realm works for Dream Amsterdam, lighting four cultural and civic spaces with intensely bright white light. This concept - spectra - was then adapted for Nuit Blanche, Paris' all night arts festival. In this version, Ikeda installed powerful vertical beams of bright white light, and an accompanying sound installation within a grid next to Tour Montparnasse, the city's tallest skyscraper. In June 2010, spectra formed part of Sonár / Grec Festival de Barcelona, and it was exhibited in September 2010 at the Aichi Triennale in Nagoya, Japan. Ikeda intends to continue the series through site-specific works commissioned for locations across the world.

A solo exhibition of Ryoji's work was presented at Le Laboratoire in Paris (October 2008 – January 2009). The exhibition was inspired by discussions with Harvard number theorist Benedict Gross about mathematical definitions of infinity, and took for its title the mathematical and philosophical concept $V \neq L$. The exhibition featured new works including a prime number, a natural number, line and spectra III.

In April 2009, Ikeda presented his largest solo exhibition to date at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo. +/- [the infinite between 0 and 1] included three adaptations of a prime number / a natural number, in a series entitled the transcendental; data.film; data.matrix [no1-10], a ten- screen installation featuring video sequences from datamatics [ver.2.0]; matrix [5ch version], a pure sound installation formed by a grid of speakers through which visitors walked; and data.tron [3 SXGA+ version], a three -channel version of data.tron. A selection of these works toured to the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (February – March 2010).

data.tron [8K enhanced version] was commissioned for the Deep Space Gallery at Ars Electronica Center, Linz. It has been screened there regularly since January 2009.

In September 2009 data.scan was exhibited at the Surrey Art Gallery, Vancouver, followed by exhibitions at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (December 2009 – April 2010), Seconde Nature Festival, Aix en Provence (June – July 2010), Museum of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing (October – November 2010). data.scan is currently showing at the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow.

In September 2010 Ikeda presented his first New York Exhibition, the transcendental, at the FIAF Gallery. Ikeda will be back in New York in May 2011 to present the transfinite, a new commission by the Park Avenue Armory. In the Wade Thompson Drill Hall, the artist will create a visual and sonic environment where visitors are immersed in projected synchronised data.

The versatile range of Ikeda's research is demonstrated by his collaborations with Carsten Nicolai on the project cyclo. and with choreographer William Forsythe/Frankfurt Ballett, artist Hiroshi Sugimoto, architect Toyo Ito and artist collective Dumb Type, among others.

The first complete catalogue of Ikeda's seminal work, formula [book + dvd] (Forma) was published in 2005. In 2009, a catalogue of +/- [the infinite between 0 and 1] was published alongside the exhibition at MOT, and provides a history of Ikeda's work to date.

In 2001, Ikeda was awarded the Ars Electronica Golden Nica prize in the digital music category and he was short-listed for a World Technology Award in 2003, and then again in 2010.