



**ARTIST AND COMPOSER RYOJI IKEDA CREATES
IMMERSIVE VISUAL AND SONIC ENVIRONMENT FOR ARMORY'S VAST DRILL HALL**

Opening May 20, *the transfinite* is a Dynamic Meditation on the Concept of Infinity



Installation view of *the transfinite* by Ryoji Ikeda at Park Avenue Armory.
Photo by James Ewing.

New York, NY - May 19, 2011 - Park Avenue Armory has commissioned artist and electronic composer Ryoji Ikeda to create a large-scale digital installation and sonic landscape as their third annual visual arts commission. Within the Armory's immense 55,000-square-foot Wade Thompson Drill Hall, Ikeda has created a transformative environment that subsumes visitors within abstract expressions of digital information and binary code. Accompanied by a tightly synchronized musical composition, the two-part installation explores how data defines the world we live in and how it is a beautiful artistic material in its own right. On view from May 20 through June 11, 2011, *the transfinite* is Ikeda's most ambitious installation to date and marks the first time that American audiences are

able to experience the work of this multidisciplinary artist on such a large and immersive scale.

"*the transfinite* promises to be a sublime experience, engaging the senses through the presentation of a rich, abstract tapestry of intertwined sound and image," stated Rebecca Robertson, President and Executive Producer of Park Avenue Armory. "The all-encompassing work immerses visitors in an environment filled with comprehensible information presented on a scale that defies comprehension. Taking advantage of the drill hall's expansive space, this piece builds on the tremendous success of our first two ground-breaking commissions by Ernesto Neto and Christian Boltanski."

A meditation on the concept of infinity, *the transfinite* takes its name from the mathematical notion of transfinite numbers, which are larger than any finite numbers, yet quantitative and ordered. The exhibition comprises two large-scale works, which transform a continuous stream of scientific data into digital sound and abstracted images to create two very different sensory experiences. Through Ikeda's orchestration of shifting binary code, binary color, data visualization, and digital sound, these contrasting works create a powerful audio-visual experience intended to ignite a physical response in the viewer.

"Ikeda's visual and sonic installation expresses the concept of transfinite numbers through a work of art rather than a traditional mathematical proof, confronting visitors with a physical manifestation of this complex and difficult to comprehend idea," stated Kristy Edmunds, Consulting Artistic Director at the

Armory. “The installation encourages the viewer to rethink the way we understand scientific data by transforming it into an abstract visual and aural experience.”

Upon entering the drill hall, visitors find themselves immersed in a pulsating projection of black and white strips, which race across the length of the floor and up a 45-foot-tall and 60-foot-wide screen that bisects the immense space. The movement of these barcode-like lines is keyed to a vibrant soundtrack and reflects a real-time binary analysis of the music notes. The result is an intense and highly synchronized experience and a dynamic introduction to the world at the level of binary code, a building block of modern science and mathematics.

In contrast to the light and activity in the first part of the installation, on the other side of the dividing wall Ikeda creates a more tranquil and contemplative sensory experience that offers a controlled visualization of vast amounts of data—drawn from the human genome sequence, the astronomical coordinates of the universe, and a range of other sources. Accompanied by a subdued soundtrack, this installation includes a large-scale projection of data on the dividing wall as well as nine screens, mounted on individual 28-inch-high plinths, enabling visitors to interact with endlessly scrolling data on a more intimate level. Together, the two parts of the exhibition present data in a multitude of forms to create an immersive and mind-altering experience.

About Ryoji Ikeda

Ryoji Ikeda is a composer, musician, and artist who creates large-scale installations and public artworks around the world that push the limits of digital technology. Marking his largest installation to date, *the transfinite* integrates these three distinct threads of Ikeda’s work into one completely immersive and comprehensive experience. Ikeda’s installation work has been shown previously at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo (2009), the Victoria & Albert Museum in London (2009), Centre Pompidou in Paris (2010), and the French Institute Alliance Française in New York (2010).

As Japan’s leading electronic composer, Ikeda’s musical work focuses on the essential characteristics of sound itself, which he manipulates in live concerts, recordings, site-specific installations, and publications. Since 1995 he has created sound art in concerts, installations, and recordings, including the albums +/- (1996), 0 degrees (1998) and Matrix (2000), which have been hailed by critics as the most radical and innovative examples of contemporary electronic music. Ikeda received the Golden Nica prize at Prix Ars Electronica 2001 in the Digital Music category.

Public Programs

Artist Talk: Ryoji Ikeda in Conversation with Kristy Edmunds

Saturday, May 21, 2:00 pm

Join Ryoji Ikeda, in conversation with Armory Consulting Artistic Director Kristy Edmunds, for a rare and informal discussion about his artistic process, collaborations, and the ideas informing his work including the creation of *the transfinite*. Free with purchase of installation tickets. Pre-registration required. For more information, visit www.armoryonpark.org/index.php/programs_events/detail/artist_talk_ryoji_ikeda/ or call (212) 933-5812.

Family Education Workshops (recommended for families with children 5-12 years of age)

Saturday, May 28, and Sundays, May 29 and June 5, 10:00am – 12:00pm

Interactive “data collection” stations led by teaching artists encourage Park Avenue Amory visitors and their families to work both individually and collaboratively to craft their own works of art in response to *the*

transfinite. \$5 material fee for each participant; free for Park Avenue Armory Members. Pre-registration required. For more information, email artseducation@armoryonpark.org or call 212-933-5803.

Organization and Credits

This program is supported by Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Ken Kuchin, Melva Bucksbaum and Raymond Leary, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council. Additional support provided by Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder, David Teiger, and The Surrey.

About Park Avenue Armory

Part palace, part industrial shed, Park Avenue Armory fills a critical void in the cultural ecology of New York by enabling artists to create, and the public to experience, unconventional work that could not otherwise be mounted in traditional performance halls and museums. With its soaring 55,000-square-foot Wade Thompson Drill Hall—reminiscent of 19th-century European train stations—and array of exuberant period rooms, the Armory invites artists to draw upon its grand scale and distinctive character to both inspire and inform their work.

Since its first production in September 2007—Aaron Young’s *Greeting Card*, a 9,216-square-foot “action” painting created by the burned-out tire marks of ten choreographed motorcycles presented with Art Production Fund—the Armory has organized a series of immersive performances, installations, and works of art that have drawn critical and popular attention, among them: Bernd Zimmermann’s opera *Die Soldaten*, Ariane Mnouchkine’s *les Éphémères* and Declan Donnellan’s *Boris Godunov*, as part of the 2008 and 2009 Lincoln Center Festivals; the 2008 Whitney Biennial with site-specific installations and performances by 37 artists; and an evening of Stravinsky’s *Sacred Masterpieces* presented in association with Columbia University’s Miller Theatre. In 2009, the Armory launched its annual visual art commission with Ernesto Neto’s *anthropodino*, which transformed the drill hall into a multi-sensory labyrinth of fabric and spice. The Armory’s second commission, *No Man’s Land* by Christian Boltanski, filled the drill hall with thousands of pieces of discarded clothing and a soundtrack of reverberating heartbeats.

In December 2010, the Armory opened its first full season of artistic programming with the epic installation, *Leonardo’s Last Supper: A Vision* by Peter Greenaway, and followed with the Tune-In contemporary music festival. The season also includes five plays in repertory performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company, site-specific performances by STREB and Shen Wei Dance Arts, and the final performances of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company.

Hours

Tuesday - Sunday: 12:00 - 7:00pm
Thursday: 12:00 - 9:00pm
Monday, May 30: 12:00 - 7:00 pm
(Closed all other Mondays)

643 Park Avenue (at 67th Street)
New York City

Admission

\$12 General Admission
\$10 Seniors (62 and older), Students (with valid ID), Groups (8 or more)
FREE: Park Avenue Armory Members
FREE: Children (10 and under)

To become a member call 212-616-3952

For more information or to request images, please contact Resnicow Schroeder Associates:

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