Akio Suzuki

b. 1941 in Pyongyang, North Korea

Akio Suzuki is a Japanese artist born in North Korea. At the age of four he moved to Japan, to a town called Aichi. He became well known as a pioneer of sound art, but the breadth of his activities and the form of his works far exceeds the normal boundaries of sound art. It is perhaps more as a “quester after sound and space” that he has received the most attention from artists in many fields. Suzuki’s journey as an artist began in 1963 with a performance at Nagoya station, in which he threw a bucket full of junk down a staircase. The inspiration behind this performance - the idea that if one were to hurl an object down a well-balanced stairway, a pleasant rhythm might be the result - took the desire to “listen” as its subject. That desire to hear, to listen has remained the one constant in Suzuki’s stance as an artist.

During the sixties, Suzuki’s sense of playfulness led him to undertake a series of Self-Study Events, where he explored the processes of “throwing” and “following”, taking the natural world as his collaborator. The experiences he gained in these events led him in the seventies to invent an echo instrument he named Analapos. The instrument’s structure resembles that of two mirrors facing each other, reflecting into infinity. As an extension of the principles underlying Analapos, Suzuki constructed the Space in the Sun in 1988. This space consists of two huge parallel walls, in between which the artist can sit all day and purify his hearing by listening to the reflected sounds of nature. This space leads the artist to discover a new method of listening. Suzuki himself comments, “Sound, which had been conceptually imprisoned in various spaces, is freed to circle the world.”

From the late seventies and through the eighties, Suzuki also developed a form of performance he refers to as Conceptual Soundwork. Applying a number of self-imposed, simple and austere rules, he uses objects close at hand in a mode of “intellectual play”. While these events do on the one hand express a critique of meaningless improvised performance, at the same time Suzuki is constantly aware of the audience’s process of listening and he attempts to create contemporaneous connections with the site of performance. It was
around this time that Suzuki began to travel frequently to Europe, and his performances at leading music festivals, Festival d’Automne (Paris, 1978) and Documenta 8 (Kassel, 1987) were rapturously received.

As sound art enjoyed a period of prosperity in the nineties, Suzuki was given the chance to create many installations, particularly in Europe. Worthy of special note were his soundless installations, such as Otodate (since 1996) in Berlin, Paris, Strasbourg and Wakayama, Hana (since 1997) in Saarbrucken and Trino. These soundless pieces were not designed to critique the old perceptual theories of music, rather they questioned the very location of music.

To run simultaneously with these experiments, Suzuki has started the Mogari series since 2002. This series centres around unbelievably powerful performances on iwabue - ancient and naturally-sculpted stone flutes which have been handed down in Suzuki’s family. Using these ancient instruments Suzuki sculpts time and place, and through their music he searches for his own end. Suzuki’s performances and installations have been presented by numerous top class festivals and museums in several continents since the seventies such as The National Museum of Modern Art (Kyoto, 2007), Resonant Space (various locations in Scotland, 2006), Musee Zadkin (Paris, 2004), British Museum (London, 2002), Donaueschingen Festival (Donaueschingen, 1998), Japan House (New York, 1983), and many others. He has awarded many grants and residencies including DAAD (Berlin, 1994) and Rockerfeller (Asian Cultural Council) Grant (New York, 1981).

Museum and Gallery Exhibitions

2012 stone, Audio Visual Arts, New York, USA
Otodate, Tajimi, Japan
3331 ARTS CYD, Tokyo, Japan
2011 Otodate, Kashiwa, Japan
2010 Akio Suzuki / Yagi Ryota exhibition, Yokohama City Art Gallery, Yokohama, Japan
Around Sound Art Festival and Retreat, Hong Kong
2009 Nagoya City Art Museum, Nagoya, Japan
Kyoto Art Center, Kyoto, Japan
2008 Wasserturmquatier, Berlin, Germany
20 Jahre Romanischer Sommer Koln, Cologne, Germany
Ki-date, Ichinomiya City Memorial Art Museum of Setsuko Migishi, Ichinomiya, Japan
2007 Sentier des Lauzes, Ardeche, France
Noiseless Akio Suzuki + Rolf Julius, The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan
Gelbe Musik, Berlin, Germany
2006 Oto-Date inDeutzer Bridge, Scorecologne Festival, Cologne, Germany
E/static gallery, Turin, Italy
Haus der Berliner Festspiele, Berlin, Germany
Centre d'Art Passerelle, Brest, France
Arllge Kunst Galleria Museo, Bolzano, Italy
Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Aichi, Japan
2005  *Oto-Date in Wakayama*, The Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama, Japan  
*Oto-Date, Sound Out*, Cork, Ireland  
Gallerie Stella A., Berlin, Germany  
*Playing John Cage Exhibition*, Arnolfini, Bristol, UK.  

2004  *Résonances*, Musee Zadkin, Paris, Farnce  
*Izanai*, Strasbourg, France  
Roskilde Museum, Roskilde, Denmark  

*ANALAPOSPHERE 2003*, Osaka Arts-Aporia, Osaka, Japan  
Festival Archipel, Geneva, Switzerland  
Yokohama Port Side Gallery, Yokohama, Japan  

2002  *Otodate, The Landscape of Tamsuei, the City Encounters the River*, Chu-wei, Taiwan  
Klanggelerie, SFB, Berlin, Germany  
Art Space Niji, Kyoto, Japan  

2001  *Visual Sound*, Mattress Factory, Pittsburg, USA  

2000  Gelbe Musik, Berlin, Germany  
Singuhr, Parochialkirche, Berlin, Germany  

1999 – 2000  *Tubridge*, DAAD Galerie. Berlin, Germany  

1999  Soundculture 99, Auckland, New Zealand  
Klang Kunst Festival, Wiesbaden, Germany  

1998  *Otodate-room*, The 2nd Biennial of Contemporary Art, Enghien-Ies-Bains, France  
*Donaueschingen* Festival, Donaueschingen, Austria  

1997  *Otodate III*, Enghien-Ies-Bains, France  
*Otodate II on the River Rhein*, Strasbourg and Kehl, France and Germany  
Stadtgalerie Saarbruecken, Germany  

1996  Sonambiente Festival Foe Eyes and Ears, Berlin, Germany  
The 7th International Contemporary Music Forum of Kyoto, Japan  

1994  Museet for Samitidskunst, Roskilde, Denmark  
Kunstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Germany  

1993  Xebec, Kobe, Japan  

1988  *Space in the Sun (Hinataboko no kukan)*, Amino, Kyoto, Japan  

1978  Festival d’ Automne a Paris, France,  

1976  Minami Gallery, Tokyo, Japan  

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**Selected Performances**  

2013  Around sound art festival, Hong Kong  
*Soul Cleansing* Opening, Sin Sin Fine Art Ltd., Hong Kong  

2012  Send + Receive Festival, Winnipeg, Canada  
The Music Gallery, Toronto, Canada  
Abrons Arts Center, New York, USA  
Nameless Sound, Houston, USA  
Vancouver New Music, Vancouver, Canada  
CalArts, LosAngels, USA  

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PICA's, Portland, USA
Oki Shiosai Arts Festival, Shimane, Japan
Studies in Sonority and Space, Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media, Yamaguchi, Japan
ANALAPOS performance, ZKM_Media Museum, Karlsruhe, Germany
Dedicated - Music for Friends, MaerzMusik, Berlin, Germany
With Hiromi Miyakita, Kohei Suzuki, Kyoto City Museum, Kyoto, Japan

2011
Guggenheim House, Kobe, Japan
Fenn O’Berg (Fennesz, Jim O’Rouke, Peter Rehberg) featuring Akio Suzuki, Club Metro, Kyoto, Japan
Art at Tokyo Tech, Tokyo, Japan

2010
Mopomoso (with John Butcher, Lol Coxhill and others), Vortex Jazz Club, London, UK
Solo performance Ai-sha, The 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan
Cafe Oto, London, UK
Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre, London, UK
Creative Music Festival, Noro-Kougen Lodge, Hiroshima, Japan
CCA Kitakyusyu, Kitakyusyu, Japan
Around Sound Art Festival and Retreat, Hong Kong

2009
Kyoto Art Center, Kyoto, Japan
Around sound art festival and retreat, Hong Kong

2007
Asia Pacific Festival, Wellington, New Zealand
Auckland Festival, Auckland, New Zealand
Osaka Phoenix Hall, Osaka, Japan
Yokosuka Museum of Art, Yokosuka, Japan

2006
Resonant Spaces, site-specific performances in Scotland, UK

2005
Oto-Date in Wakayama, The Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama, Japan
Judith Wright Center of Contemporary Arts, Brisbane, Australia
Pelt Gallery, Sydney, Australia

2004
Nuit Blanche Festival, Paris, France

2003
Soundsphere 2003, British Museum, London, UK
ANALAPOSpHERE 2003, Osaka Arts-Aporia, Osaka, Japan
Stadtpark Gallery, Krems, Austria

2002
The Sound of Magari III, Tokyo, Japan
Brunel Gallery, London University, London, UK

2001
Concert with Ensemble Zwischentoene, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, Germany

1999
Adelaide Festival, Adelaide, Australia

1997
Performance on the lake in Enghien-les-Bains, France

1994
Festival Inventionen, Berlin, Germany

1993
Solo performance, Xebec, Kobe, Japan

1988
Autumnal Equinox Day, Meridian line, Amino, Kyoto, Japan

1987
Documenta 8, Kassel, Germany

1984
Pro Musica Nove, Bremen, Germany

1983
Japan House, New York, USA

1978
American Center, Tokyo, Japan
Award / Grant

1994  Residency at Berliner Kuestlerprogramm of the DAAD, Berlin, Germany
1981  Grant of the Rockefeller Foundation (A.C.C.), New York, USA