

**First solo museum exhibition by internationally acclaimed video artist Yu Araki**

## Yu Araki: LONELY PLANETS

December 9, 2023 – March 31, 2024



The Towada Art Center is pleased to present *LONELY PLANETS*, the first solo museum exhibition by internationally acclaimed video artist Yu ARAKI, from, December 9, 2023, to, March 31, 2024.

Having spent his youth moving between Japan and the United States, Yu Araki explores the nuances of language and culture, examining the mistranslations and misunderstandings that arise, as well as the dynamics between originals and copies and the power structures they reveal. His film and video works, which often employ a blend of documentary and animation, are known for their humorous yet insightful approach.

The exhibition's title, *LONELY PLANETS*, was inspired by a misheard song lyric that resonated with Araki due to its similarity to the name of the globally recognized travel guidebook series. This title reflects Araki's journey through Aomori and his experiences and encounters with the people, landscapes, and motifs that appear in the exhibition as if he were a traveler exploring unfamiliar territory. The exhibition showcases four new video works developed through Araki's extensive research, alongside three past works (tentative). These pieces, like independent planets, each with their own orbits, coincidentally converge in the heart of winter in Towada, inviting viewers into one galaxy within Araki's creative universe.

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### Contact

Towada Art Center Communications: Otani Sae  
Tel. +81(0)176-20-1127 Fax. +81(0)176-20-1138  
[press@towadaartcenter.com](mailto:press@towadaartcenter.com) [www.towadaartcenter.com](http://www.towadaartcenter.com)

## About the Artwork

### New Video Work *NEW HORIZON* Filmed in Aomori with Locally Cast Performers

This exhibition marks the premiere of *NEW HORIZON*, a new work filmed with the support of residents near Towada through interviews set against the backdrop of Aomori's majestic landscapes. The work delves into the humorous cultural gaps encountered by those living in Aomori as "outsiders," spanning from the modern and contemporary histories of Japan and the US to their current interrelations. *NEW HORIZON* stands out as a must-see new work that combines local and universal perspectives.

### New Series of Oscar Statues Inspired by Tohoku Motifs

Two past works on display are *Ólafur* (2014) and *JB* (2022), in which Araki commissioned artisans from around the world to replicate the Oscar statuettes that are awarded to Academy Award winners. For this exhibition, Araki has also created two new works inspired by his research on various artisans from the Tohoku region. These charming Oscar statuettes and video works, while adorable, are a unique interpretation that playfully blurs the lines between the original-copy dichotomy.

### First Attempt at an Animation Installation

The exhibition features the debut of a new installation that finds the artist incorporating animation for the first time. Previously, Araki has used installations to unfold narratives in works like *THE LAST BALL* (2019) and *HONEYMOON* (2020), and this new work continues this approach, creating a viewing experience that leverages the unique characteristics of the medium of film and the phenomena that shape it.

## Artist Statement

I'm incredibly happy and grateful to be holding my first solo museum exhibition at the Towada Art Center. Tohoku is my ancestral home. The profound silence of its winters, especially the unique way light interacts with snow, has etched itself into my senses as a primal landscape. Whether returning home from a school club or a skiing trip, I often found myself alone in these snowy scenes, a solitary figure amidst the white.

A quarter-century has passed since then, and as I've wandered through the forest, looking back, I see my works scattered behind me like breadcrumbs.

I've scattered them intentionally to ensure I wouldn't lose my way, yet the familiar forests of my past have transformed into a vast cosmic space, and these breadcrumbs have become planets, each embarking on its own orbit.

For some of the works on display here, more than a decade has passed since their first presentation. In today's fast-paced world, where days fly by and information rains down like a meteor shower, some news burns up before it even reaches the ground. Other news hits hard, leaving a profound, crater-like impact, marking both our personal lives and the world at large with its significant and sometimes sorrowful imprint. These days, I find myself enveloped in a whirlwind of stardust, almost too much to grasp. It's through the cyclical process of creation that I manage to maintain my sanity amidst this chaotic flurry. I invite you to explore this latest endeavor, uncertain as it might be, together with the deep snows of Tohoku.

\*The term "planet" originates from the Greek word "πλανήτης" (planētēs), meaning "wanderer." The translation of this concept into the Chinese characters for "wandering star" (惑星) is credited to MOTOKI Yoshinaga, a Japanese scholar who worked as a Dutch interpreter in Nagasaki, and has been traced back to the year 1792, in the Japanese Kansei era.

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## Yu Araki



Photo: Kuroda Natsuki

Artist / filmmaker. Born in 1985, Araki graduated with a major in sculpture from the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts at Washington University in St. Louis in 2007, and received his master's in Film and New Media Studies from Tokyo University of the Arts in 2010. Araki is fascinated by the transmission of culture and encounters between different cultures,

and the possibilities he perceives in the mistranslations and misunderstandings that occur in the process. His recent video installations have been characterized by a particular focus on identifying discrepancies in the gap between historical events and fantasy, and exploring through the lens of reenactment, restage, and remake. Notable recent exhibitions and film festivals include *Yebisu International Festival for Art and Alternative Visions 2023 Commission Project* (Tokyo Photographic Art Museum), *Home-Video Project: Tails Out* (Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka, 2022), 31st Marseille International Film Festival (France, 2021), *Connections: 150 years of Modern Art in Japan and France* (Pola Museum of Art, Kanagawa, 2020), *Le Souvenir du Japon* (Shiseido Gallery, Tokyo, 2019), *The Island of the Colorblind* (Art Sonje Center, Korea, 2019), and 47th International Film Festival Rotterdam (Netherlands, 2018).

## Public Program

### Artist's talk

Date & Time: Saturday, December 9, 2023 14:00–15:00

Location: *Towafuru* (Towada Municipal Community Center) Large Gallery

Admission: Free \*Ticket for the exhibition is required. / Capacity: 30

### Curator Gallery Talk

Date & Time: Saturday, December 16, 2023, 13:00–14:00 (more dates TBD)

Location: Towada Art Center – Special Exhibition Room

Admission: Free \*Ticket for the exhibition is required.

### Film Screening & Artist Talk

Date & Time: Saturday, March 16, 2024, 14:00–16:00

Location: *Towafuru* (Towada Municipal Community Center) Large Gallery  
(Subject to change)

Admission: Free \*Ticket for the exhibition is required.

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## About the Exhibition

<b>Title</b>	Yu Araki: LONELY PLANETS
<b>Dates</b>	December 9, 2023 – March 31, 2024
<b>Hours</b>	9:00 – 17:00 (Last admission at 16:30)
<b>Closed</b>	Mondays (Except for National Holidays, in which case the art center will close the following day). *Please check our website for the latest information
<b>Admission</b>	1,800 yen 200 yen discount a for groups of 20 or more Under 18: free
<b>Location</b>	Towada Art Center
<b>Organized by</b>	Towada Art Center
<b>Sponsored by</b>	Yamaguchi Tsumie
<b>Supported by</b>	BenQ Japan Co., Ltd., MUJIN-TO Production
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Asahi Broadcasting Aomori Co., Ltd., Aomori Broadcasting Corporation, Aomori Television Broadcasting Co., Ltd., Aomori Fm Broadcasting, The Daily-Tohoku Shimbun Inc., The To-o Nippo Press, and Towada City Board of Education
<b>Curator</b>	Nakagawa Chieko

### Towada Art Center

The Towada Art Center opened in 2008 as the first contemporary art center in Japan's Tohoku region. The art center's permanent exhibition is comprised of 38 works by world-class artists, including Kusama Yayoi, Nara Yoshitomo, Shiota Chiharu, and Ron Mueck. The collection expands beyond the art center to the Art Square, a park-like area where children and adults alike can stroll, relax, and interact with the outdoor artwork.

10-9 Nishi-Nibancho, Towada, Aomori 034-0082  
TEL: 0176-20-1127 FAX: 0176-20-1138



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Towada Art Center Communications: Otani Sae

[1]



Main Visual

[2]



*ALMOST DOWN*, 2012  
16mm film, installation  
\*Reference work

[3]



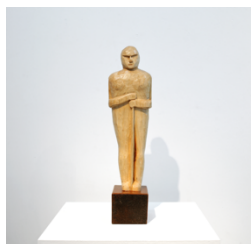
*Bivalvia: Act II*, 2022  
HDV installation  
photo: Morita Kenji  
\*Reference work

[4]



*The Last Ball*, 2019  
Three-channel HD video  
photo: Kato Ken  
\*Reference work

[5]



*ÓLI*, 2013  
wood sculpture  
\*Reference work

[6]

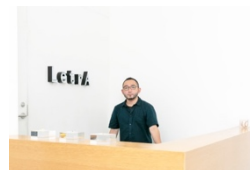


Photo: Kuroda Natsuki

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Towada Art Center

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