

Y-AIR case study Part 1, ArtCamp, International Summer School of Art, Pilsen, Czech Republic

# Japanese Participation in Czech Republic's ArtCamp



Youkobo Art Space, Tokyo



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- ArtCamp <http://fdu.zcu.cz/en/415-artcamp-about>
- Youkobo Art Space <http://www.youkobo.co.jp/>
- Microresidence Network <http://microresidence.net/>

## Reference

Microresidence! 2015 Case Examples of Y-AIR in Japan vol.1	2016
Microresidence! 2014 The possibilities of Y-AIR in a trial between Japan and ECoC 2015 Pilsen	2015

## Forward

**Tatsuhiko Murata** (Co-Director, Youkobo Art Space, Tokyo)

This booklet covers the joint effort between Youkobo Art Space and research labs at Japanese art schools to send students, essentially young artists, to ArtCamp, an international summer art program at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Czech Republic. Here we report on this experimental program, as well as expand on future possibilities. We initiated our involvement because we saw this program as an opportunity for students to experience international exchange through art, a kind of mock-A.I.R. experience, in hopes that these aspiring artists will acquire an understanding of foreign cultures, be exposed to international perspectives, and improve their English communication skills.

Youkobo Art Space, which had been involved in artist exchange programs with cultural capitals of Europe for some time, was introduced to ArtCamp through the EU Japan Fest Japan Committee. We sent our first art student in 2013, and in the three years since then, we have sent 16 students from 7 schools, thanks to the cooperation and support of those involved. This valuable, immersive program is made possible by the partnership with the university professors and the support of the EU Japan Fest Japan Committee. In 2015, not only did we send student participators, but we were also able to send Japanese lecturers, forging new paths for cross-cultural artistic practices.

To learn more about this international and flexible program, we invited the director of ArtCamp to Tokyo in 2014, and conducted symposiums at 3331 Arts Chiyoda, Joshibi University of Art and Design Suginami campus, and Youkobo Art Space. The progress reports by the participants also provided us with more insight into ArtCamp's history and transitions which have taken place at the local university over the course of the last 10 years.

Additionally, in the summer of 2015, we had the valuable opportunity to send an intern from our team to that year's program, to learn about the entire structure of ArtCamp's activities, from preparation, to implementation, to conclusion.

The current demand for Japanese institutions to embrace diversity pertains to art universities as well, and many have begun implementing methods other than the conventional structure of exchange programs with partnered schools. We believe that ArtCamp's program responds to these needs, and is a valuable opportunity for aspiring art students to not only experience art in a different environment, but also expand their worldview, and improve their communication skills in English. In order to encourage young artists to actively participate in these opportunities, there is a need to publicize programs such as ArtCamp even more widely. There is also a need for universities in Japan to diversify their courses, continuing education programs, and art departments, perhaps starting with inviting international artists to their classrooms. The cooperation between the field of arts education and A.I.R. programs can be a proponent of diversity, and we hope that the fruitful experience we have had from our committed involvement with ArtCamp can also contribute to this movement.

## Japanese artist and students at ArtCamp 2015

**Dr. Lenka Kodytkova** (ArtCamp Executive Director)

ArtCamp international summer school is held annually at the Ladislav Sutnar Faculty of Design and Art of the University of West Bohemia and it is the largest summer school of art in the Czech Republic. Since 2005 it has been giving both Czech and international participants the opportunity to spend up to three weeks in a creative and inspiring environment while discovering and developing their talent in various fields of art. Participants of different ages, nationalities and talents meet and work together on courses led by pedagogues of the faculty and by both Czech and international visiting artists. ArtCamp 2015 welcomed five Japanese students and one artist as part of the continuing cooperation between the Ladislav Sutnar Faculty of Design and Art, Pilsen 2015, the EU-Japan Fest Japan Committee and Youkobo Art Space which started in 2013 (1 student in 2013 and a group of 10 students in 2014).

The students came from five different Japanese art universities and participated in three one-week courses each. Working with respected Czech and foreign pedagogues in international groups of students, the young Japanese artists gained new knowledge and skills and new impulses for their own studies and creative work.

All Japanese students completed their courses successfully and received a Certificate of Attendance confirming completion of each course. Their ArtCamp experience also included participation in the eventful accompanying programme of the summer school which gave them the chance to meet with their new friends outside school and enjoy their stay in Pilsen, the European Capital of Culture 2015. The programme included lectures, artist presentations, student movie nights, sightseeing, visits to exhibitions and exhibition openings etc.

The feedback from the Japanese participants has confirmed that taking part in similar summer programmes helps young artists to broaden their perspective, get new skills and inspiration, gain new friendships and cultural experience important for their future life and creative activities. Such experience might also influence their personal lives, views and future decisions about studying abroad or participating in an artist in residence programme.



The international atmosphere of the ArtCamp summer school is created not only by its participants but also by the visiting artists. ArtCamp 2015 welcomed artists from the USA, Canada, Poland, France, Italy, Portugal, the Slovak Republic and this year for the first time also from Japan thanks to the continuing Czech-Japanese cooperation. Kumi Machida is a highly appreciated artist both in Japan and abroad for her unique drawing techniques and compositions. In her ink paintings, she updates traditional Nihonga style with contemporary composition and subject matter to form a very personal style with a very tense and sometimes slightly disturbing atmosphere. Ms. Machida taught a one-week course of traditional Japanese ink painting for ArtCamp 2015. She introduced the participants of her course to the traditional tools and materials – sumi ink, Japanese brushes, washi paper – and to the „suibokuga“ technique. They made traditional Japanese hanging scrolls and learned decorating techniques using gold and silver leaves and powder. Kumi Machida also had a possibility to meet with the students and other ArtCamp teachers outside school during the afternoon and evening programme. ArtCamp participants and the general public could learn more about her art during the ArtCamp 20x20 presentation evening where she introduced her work in a PechaKucha format. Together with her Italian and Canadian colleagues she also took part in the ArtCamp closing event with live drawing performance. Based on the very positive feedback from the participants of her course and from Ms. Machida herself it is possible that she will come back to teach for ArtCamp in the future again.

The project of Czech-Japanese cooperation has also brought the first Japanese intern to ArtCamp 2015. ArtCamp 2014 participant Makiko Tsuji, who studies at the Joshibi University of Art and Design in Tokyo and cooperates with the Youkobo Art Space, came back to experience the summer school from the organizer´s point of view and to do her research in the field of artist support and artist in residence programmes.

Over the eleven years of its existence the ArtCamp summer school has become a popular destination for summer studies for art students, practicing artists and the general public. It keeps on developing and participation of international visiting artists is an important part of this process. ArtCamp has proved to be a strong platform for building and developing international relations of the Ladislav Sutnar Faculty of Design and Art which also reflects in increasing opportunities for student and teacher mobility. It is a strong tool in search for new talents and in opening the school to new international possibilities and projects.

Cooperation with Japanese universities and artists is thus very important not only for the summer school and its development but for the Ladislav Sutnar Faculty of Design and Art itself. The continuing cooperation with the Japanese partners will hopefully lead to more Japanese art students and artists coming to Pilsen in the future.

### III ArtCamp – Opportunities for Young Aspiring Artists to Experience Different Cultures

#### 1-(1) Summary

ArtCamp, a summer course held in the Faculty of Art and Design of UWB (University of West Bohemia) in Pilsen, Czech Republic, was the first trial took place in 2013. This program has since continued three years with the support of the EU-Japan Fest Japan Committee, so far giving 16 people the valuable experience of participating in ArtCamp under consultation with teachers of art universities. And in 2015, the program has developed to include the dispatch of a Japanese instructor and an intern whose role it is to understand the mechanism of ArtCamp.

We are considering the continuation of this trial with a more directed vision for its development, both as an opportunity for young people to experience creative activities overseas and as a means of generating possibilities for artists to undertake creative leadership overseas.

- Japanese experiences in ArtCamp 2013/2014/2015 and plan for 2016

		2013	2014	2015	2016
ArtCamp	Participants	1	10 / 5 schools	5 / 5 schools	TBD
	Course Leader			1	1
	Internship			1	TBD
	Researcher to Tokyo		2		TBD
in parallel	OPEN A.i.R., Pilsen		1	1	TBD
	Youkobo AIR, Tokyo			1	TBD
	Greeting to Pilsen		2		TBD

case of 2015

Participated course : Animation Art, Art Therapy, Book Binding, Toy Design, Figure Drawing, Clay Modeling, Body Movement, Ceramic Design

Course Leader : Kumi Machida (Artist), 'Japanese Ink Drawing' (25 - 31 July)

Internship : Makiko Tsuji (Youkobo Art Space) at ArtCamp organization (8 July to 7 August), Research and internship for ArtCamp program management. She participated ArtCamp2014.

#### • Overview of Expenses

Participants and Instructor of Art Camp costs supported by the University of West Bohemia, City of Pilsen and EU-Japan Fest Japan Committee. Internship and research program supported by the University of West Bohemia and Youkobo Art Space.

#### • A summary of feedback from the participants and their teachers who recommended to join

There was strong consensus about how meaningful the opportunity to interact with people of different cultures, ages and positions was while participating in this international education program. Many expressed sentiments in relation to experiencing differences and commonalities between cultures and living environments, and being able to observe Japan and the world from a macroscopic perspective and of being stimulated by the experience of working in an environment different from that within Japanese universities. In many cases, such experiences were taking place for the first time, and some participants expressed difficulty in digesting them while there, only being able to reflect on them upon their return home.

#### 1-(2) Future developments

While becoming a valuable experience for participants to undertake a short period of stay and production within a summer course in a foreign country, support for this trial was expressed in feedback gathered from within universities through university instructors, giving value to participation in ArtCamp. Reflecting both on the differences in the consciousness of the participants and the insufficient thoroughness of purpose conveyed about this trial, we have considered it necessary to implement an introductory course for the participants. Compared to similar opportunities offered in art universities, it is also true of this program that little discussion has taken place about the necessity of holding an international ArtCamp. Together with the proliferation of experiences of having participated, we are certain that there are important themes inherent in the holding of an art camp, which offers possibilities for a domestic and overseas survey of the situation of similar short-term periods of stay and production, possibilities for the globalization of universities, and a unique framework for public lectures. Suggestions for the future direction and development of this initiative, based on existing links between ArtCamp and Pilsen, are summarized below.

#### • Plan for 2016

- Continuation of opportunities for young people to participate in ArtCamp (for the next two years, 2016 and 2017)
- Continuation of participation of artists who can undertake the role of instructors of courses in the camp
- Survey of domestic and overseas summer courses and public lectures (2016)
- Development of an international summer course in Japan (target is for a trial to be carried out in 2016 and a full event in 2017 through collaboration between AIR and art universities)
- Establishment of an overall image for the initiative
- Implementation of an introductory course to ArtCamp helping to diffuse the Y-AIR concept

#### • Prospected study items

Universities do have systems for international exchange, such as exchange programs with partner schools, but they are not actively being pursued due to differences in school semester and credit systems, and insufficiencies in language skills. Since various AIR exist overseas, the opportunities they provide which are not tied to university systems surely offer greater freedom. Since it is also a time when universities are exploring avenues for international exchange opportunities and collaborations off-campus, there are possibilities to carry out the trial in conjunction with AIR programs. The program is also significant for universities in terms of its contribution to the development of students' careers. It is necessary to consider how it is possible to network while also actually producing results, how to organize the program in alignment with the structural frameworks of respective universities, and to create a framework that is made possible through universities both in a financial and organizational capacity.

## Voice of the Participants and teachers



Mihoko Sasaki ( Doctor course, Participant of 2013)

I realized that it is not so much about accurate language skills but more about being clear of what one wants to say, and being mindful of what the other wishes to tell. When my thoughts and feelings were communicated to others I was most glad and also made me want to brush up on my language study. Although it was only a short time it allowed me to view things which I had always taken for granted in Japan from a new perspective, proving to be a most valuable time for me.



Takumi Kato (Artist, Participant of 2014)

It was a good opportunity to use techniques that I wasn't familiar with. It was the first time for a while since I made art works in an education a situation. It felt fresh, but at the same time I thought I would learn little unless I acted actively. I felt that I would be able to learn a lot if I built valuable relationships in the short term and had the ability to react quickly and take action for what I needed to do.



Shima Watanabe (Graduate Student, Participant of 2014)

At ArtCamp, I managed to experience making artwork using a method that I never tried before. At the same time, it was such a precious experience to talk and exchange ideas with course mates and lecturers. It was my first stay in Czech Republic and there were so many things such as language and lifestyle that I had no idea about. As I had to rely on someone else to move on, I felt miserable for myself and sometimes felt down. But through the 3-week stay, I found it was important to think about what to do to solve such problems rather than feeling down because of something I didn't know.



Eri Yagi (Bachelor Student, Participant of 2015)

I think "Camp" has some meanings. One is pitching a tent by seashore, riverside or mountain area as a recreation. Another one is that an explorer staying at an unstable place challenges to discover unknown things. I think "ArtCamp" is exactly a "Camp" for me. It satisfied my curiosity and mind of inquiry. I absolutely never forget this experience.

### **O JUN (Tokyo University of the Arts)**

As I talked to students who returned to Japan, I knew that they had had a good experience. But it was nice to learn the details of the structure. Each participant has their own speciality for making art, but ArtCamp's system is good as it lets participants work in different places and with different people and reach out to areas other than the ones they are familiar with. It's been run for over 10 years now. It's easy to say that 10 years have passed but it wouldn't have lasted this long without the effort of organisers and passion of the young people who participate in the project. I look forward to seeing their development.

### **Hideyuki Nagasawa (Musashino Art University)**

Since 2013, we have been organising a seminar called "art & communication". In this seminar, artists who stay at Youkobo Art Space are invited to give presentations and Q&A sessions. The purpose of this seminar isn't to study English. It started from the sense of danger that Japanese artists may have a narrow view of the world if they stay and make work only in Japan. I found the participant was so much grown up when she came back. When artists are invited to the seminar, now she asks questions actively. So I think it was good for her to join ArtCamp. I hope such a system will bring out the possibilities of Japanese art. Art cannot be confined in a sanctuary. I think the general public's participation can create something interesting. And at the same time, it wouldn't be interesting without expertise. These two elements are contradictory. But I feel the challenge is how to keep a balance between the contradiction, whose parts should be considered at a fairly general level and at an expert level.

### **Teiko Hinuma (Joshi University of Art and Design)**

How do you create a future network in your generation and how do we support and approach it in an interesting way? I feel communication across generations has huge possibilities. Universities in cities should not be closed down. It's important to connect our diversified forms with overseas by extensively promoting exchanges between universities. Building a structure will be critical in order to make a cross-disciplinary network.



## New Endeavors: Sending Artist Lecturers Abroad

Ever since we began sending students to participate in ArtCamp, there have been discussions about the possibility of sending professional artists from Japan as lecturers, and lead workshops with topics relating to Japan. In 2015, based on ideas suggested by art university professors, we were able to introduce the first workshop abroad, with contemporary artist Kumi Machida. After discussing in detail with ArtCamp, the title of the workshop was settled on “Japanese Ink Drawing.” This five day workshop was well received, and garnered much popularity. We believe that this opened another path for artists to broaden their career and practice.

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### Having finished my internship at ArtCamp2015 “Japanese Ink Drawing”

Kumi Machida (Artist)

Pilsen is the 2015's cultural capital in Europe. Luckily my first lecture of sumi ink drawing was at the art camp. That turned out to be a great experience. I had no stress in my class getting set up because everyone related to the art camp were so cooperative and friendly. The participants in my class were interested in Japan or things related to Japan and some have stayed in Tokyo and Kyoto. This gave the class a very warm atmosphere. It was most thoughtful of them and the organizers to support my lecture given my limited English.

I made a schedule for the course but the participants were quick to understand and well above the assignments that I gave them. So I changed the original schedule and carried out the lecture of ink drawing, sunago and kirigane techniques to fit their high level. It was a wonderful to see the participants decide on a theme for drawing without being told to do so, and they kept on trying and moving on without fear of failure. They had rock-solid intention and their own style. That was a freshening surprise to me because I also learned a lot from them.

The participants chose the hanging scroll frames they liked, and the exhibition of their art on the final day was spectacular! A wide variety of themes - Czech issues, original stories and interesting styles of expression. I hope that they enjoyed their fantastic art works after the course.

Many other teachers were invited and joined the camp from many countries in the world. This was also very exciting to me. The participants – students and teachers, Czechs and foreign guests were able to have deep multilateral dialogue and cooperation in the Pilsen setting. That was a great motivation for all. I really appreciate the honor of joining the program at the art camp 2015 in Pilsen.



## Experiencing ArtCamp as an Intern, and the Possibilities for ArtCamp in Japan

The unique, international programming of ArtCamp caught our attention at Youkobo. Since then, we have been involved in many ways, from sending Japanese student participants, to our director visiting the hosting university, to sending Japanese instructors. We also invited Dr. Lenka Kodytkova, the director of ArtCamp, in November 2014, to further deepen the relationship. This involved a micro-residence forum held at 3331 Arts Chiyoda, and training sessions held at Youkobo. ArtCamp agreed to accept an intern from us to be involved in the implementation of the program from beginning to end. Thus, in 2015, we sent Makiko Tsuji, an ArtCamp participant of the previous year and now a Youkobo staff member, to intern at that year's program and gain further insight.

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### Having finished my internship at ArtCamp2015

Makiko Tsuji (Youkobo Art Space)

"ArtCamp is not just a summer school, but it is a marketing tool." This is something that the management director often mentioned. Through the internship program I observed that ArtCamp served these three purposes: **1.** As a marketing tool to highlight the school's character to increase applicants, and provide current students with a rich experience. **2.** To make the school available to the public and create opportunities for a broader audience to engage in art. **3.** To foster the public's interest in the city of Pilsen, and to foster an interest in art among Pilsen residents. These three things lie at the core of operations.

#### **1. As a marketing tool to highlight the school.**

##### **- Increasing the amount of prospective applicants through various on-campus experiences.**

The global tendency among prospective university applicants is to choose schools in big cities. The University of West Bohemia is about an hour bus ride from Prague, the capital, and the Faculty of Design and Art (FDA) is a very young department, founded only a little over 10 years ago. Therefore, there is a great need to publicize the university both in the Czech Republic and abroad. ArtCamp provides courses to prepare for university applications, so participants can receive instruction directly from the professors, as well as experience the campus, facilities, cafeteria, and dorms, and really grasp a feel for what university life will be like.

##### **- Understanding social needs to enhance the quality of the school.**

Based on feedback and surveys, it became clear that subjects such as photography and media art have been gaining popularity in the recent years. They respond to this by adding relevant courses to ArtCamp and majors in the university, as well as improving current programs. The feedback ArtCamp receives serves as a tool to gain insight into what universities and students desire.

##### **- Strengthening partnerships with schools abroad, or jumpstarting international exchange.**

Instructors from partnered schools participate as guest instructors during ArtCamp, or alternatively, they inquire what the students are looking for, and construct courses accordingly. The communication involved between the invited guest instructors and ArtCamp management from preparation to realization, enhances the relationship between the instructors and the program. Additionally, by providing students at the University of West Bohemia an opportunity to receive courses led by instructors from partnered schools, creates an environment that encourages studying abroad. Furthermore, ArtCamp may serve as an impetus for international programs or partnerships at the host university, especially if none existed prior to ArtCamp. The partnered school instructors can understand the host school from various angles from the direct involvement in the program. This builds a relationship of trust between the University of West Bohemia and the guest instructors, nurturing an environment for possible future steps. The correspondence between the schools and program placed an extreme importance on personal contact. Fostering relationships allows it to develop into something more than just a temporary experiment.

## Having finished my internship at ArtCamp2015

### 2. To make the school available to the public and create opportunities for a broader audience to engage in art.

It is possible to meet people from a diverse range of backgrounds and exchange fresh perspectives because ArtCamp is precisely such a place that is open and available. One of the biggest merits of this residency program are the opportunities provided both in and out of the classroom that allow participants to interact with peers, after school program participants, and the local residents. Furthermore, each course holds an exhibition on Friday afternoons, which are open to the public. Family, friends, and local residents visit the university, increasing its visibility as a very public space.

### 3. To foster the public's interest in the city of Pilsen, and foster an interest in art among Pilsen residents.

ArtCamp management has observed that the residents of Pilsen are not as keen about art compared to those in big cities. In light of those circumstances, the FDA at the local university is considering how they can effectively implement art as a way to revitalize the community, while also fostering a positive experience of art among the public. ArtCamp participants can reside from one week to three weeks, which gives them the chance to develop an affinity and interest in the city of Pilsen, creating the potential for future visits in the form of pursuing further studies there, or merely visiting again.

Of course, ArtCamp is a great experience for the participants, and an opportunity to engage with people from all around the world, but I felt that the real pleasure is in being the hosting entity. A network is built out of hosting this program, which is not only effective during the summer events, but can also prove helpful in initiating various programs throughout the year, and is a tool for boosting diversity and international reach for the university. ArtCamp also became an opportunity for student supporters to be substantially involved in the program organization, and was a great learning experience for those interested in event management.

It is also an opportunity to communicate with other artists and participants in English, a non-native language for many. By putting English into practice, one can understand the importance, as well as the fun, in communicating in this language.

ArtCamp can function as a marketing tool for newly established art departments in suburban or rural areas, that want to strengthen their institutional identity as well as promote their program both domestically and internationally, like the FDA at the University of West Bohemia. I believe one of the interesting potentials of this program is that it invites people from various places to reside in the area for a limited time, which naturally attracts local attention. This can encourage the local government administration to lend their cooperation, and build a systematic structure in the long run. At the same time, it could also fuel an interest in international exchange among the local residents.

There are many art universities in Japan that are already holding special summer and winter courses, but no precedent has been set yet of inviting instructors from overseas. If there are any schools that would like to host ArtCamp, even on a very small scale, we would love to support the efforts by offering our experience and insight.

