

secession

Vereinigung bildender KünstlerInnen Wiener Secession
Friedrichstraße 12, A-1010 Wien
T. +43-1-587 53 07, F. +43-1-587 53 07-34
office@secession.at, www.secession.at

Press release

Yuki Okumura

Yuki Okumura

8.3. – 18.5.2025

Hauptraum

Press conference: Thursday, March 6, 2025, 10 a.m.

Opening: Friday, March 7, 2025, 7 p.m.

Exhibition talk:

Yuki Okumura in conversation with Pierre Bal-Blanc

Friday, March 7, 2025, 6 p.m.

(in English)

An event organized by the Secession Friends

The so-called white cube is a seemingly “neutral” and “pure” space with plain-white walls that is supposed to ensure the undisturbed autonomy of art. The Hauptraum, the largest gallery of Secession, is one of the earliest and most representative examples of it.

Like many artists who have exhibited here, Yuki Okumura took its empty state as a departure point for his process. But instead of bringing works to this ideal backdrop to isolate art from the world, the artist conceived three site-specific projects to rediscover the space as a lived room interconnected with the world marked by its own conditions and contexts. For each project, Okumura designed a playful procedure and asked people related to the space to enact it.

Wilhelm as Hauptraum (2025) documents Okumura’s interview of Wilhelm “Willi” Montibeller, the former head of Secession’s installation team who worked here for more than twenty years. Instructed by the artist, Willi personifies the space by saying “my name is Hauptraum”, “I am the space”, and so on, yet sharing his own subjective recollections of some of the exhibitions he set up in the very space, in front of a miniature model of it. The camera focuses on his hands tracing in the air the forms of works that are absent in the scene yet exist in his memory.

For *Secession’s Hive Mind(s)* (2025), Okumura requested the board of Secession, consisting of artists and architects, to discuss a possible renaming of the Hauptraum, a name that connotes an unwanted hierarchy by literally meaning “main space”. Okumura then approached our press person Ramona “Mona” Heinlein (who is me myself, in charge of this very text co-edited by the artist) and had her translate a German transcript of the board’s meeting into English all alone, verbally. As a result, the speaker in the video seems to have multiple personalities, just like how the board has many voices internally yet speaks as

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one voice outwardly, mediated by the press office. In a nod to the “hive mind”, a sci-fi term for collective consciousness, the monologue is accompanied by footage of beehives on the roof of Secession. Several colonies of bees live there, taken care of by one of our current chief installers Hans Weinberger.

Entering the exhibition, you first do not see either video but only hear Willi's or Mona's voice, as if the space were talking to you directly or you were in the head of its mastermind.

If these two projects narrate the biography of the space by examining its historical and institutional contexts, respectively, then *Big White Empty Playground* (2025) aims at tackling its personality by testing its physical conditions. Okumura invited those who regularly or intensely work in the Hauptraum to participate in this project. The interested members of Secession's cleaning, education, security and exhibition set-up staff attended a series of workshop sessions conducted by Okumura that revolved around a chance-oriented, curiosity-driven, game-like method for art-making that he has developed with reference to conceptual art, experimental music, and postmodern dance. Each person was encouraged to conceive three sets of simple instructions for them to perform “auto-active”, “counter-active”, and “inter-active” actions in the empty Hauptraum, using only their own bodies and things readily available in the building. Every procedure is inspired by and interventional into certain material aspects of the space, based on the person's own relation with it over the years. Direct outcomes remain and constitute *Big White Playground*, a group exhibition taking over the room almost entirely.

Updating institutional critique in human terms, those projects explore how the conditions and contexts of the Hauptraum have been, can be, and will be shaped through personal, interpersonal, and transpersonal forces. Or, it is perhaps the other way around: as the artist states, it might be the space itself that uses us to reveal and renew its personality and biography, through each of our individual bodies and lives – conditions and contexts – as a unique agent or translator.

Participating artists of **Big White Playground**: Miriam Bachmann; Mario Batram; Paul Buschnegg; Said Gärtner; golden salamturtle; Grzegorz Kielawski; Emine Koza; Niklas Hofstetter; Yuki Okumura; Flavio Palasciano; Alex Pasch; Cristina Rüesch; Sebastian Scholz; Paul Spendier; Johanna Steiner; Lorenz Sutter; Kai Philip Trausenegger; Hans Weinberger; Marit Wolters; Márton Zalka

Yuki Okumura was born in Aomori in 1978. He lives and works mainly in the Central European Time zone.

Programmed by the board of the Secession
Curated by Bettina Spörr

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Format: 21 x 29,7 cm

Details: Softcover hand-painted by Yuki Okumura, transparent dust jacket, 120 pages

Series design concept: Sabo Day

Grafik: Sabo Day

Texts: James Gatt, Aaron Amar Bhamra/Monika Georgieva/Yuki Okumura (conversation)

Languages: German, English

49 images

Secession 2024

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Concurrent with the exhibition *Yuki Okumura*, a publication features a conversation among the artist, Aaron Amar Bhamra, and Monika Georgieva, an essay by James Gatt, and numerous illustrations. On the cover, the Secession name is hand-painted by the artist through a stencil, with the special white paint that is used to cover the walls of the Secession, making each copy unique.

The digital publication is available for free at: https://secession.at/category/digital_publication

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Permanent presentation

Gustav Klimt, *Beethoven Frieze*

Beethoven – Painting and Music in cooperation with
Wiener Symphoniker

Opening hours

Tuesday – Sunday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Admission

Regular € 12,00 | Students under 26 € 7,50

Seniors 65+ € 10,00 | Free admission for children under 12

Press contact Secession

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Press images

download at <https://secession.at/presse>

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Yuki Okumura

Biography

Yuki Okumura was born in 1978 in Aomori, Japan, and lives and works mainly in the Central European time zone. Fascinated by our fundamental confinement to a particular body that itself is chained to the here and now and informed by his own experience as a translator, Okumura's oeuvre comprises a growing list of escape attempts from identity, individuality, and egocentrism by exploring language, memory, chance-oriented methodologies and site-specific conditions and contexts. His recent projects explore a set of simple instructions after conceptual art as a translational device to go beyond time, space, and biography and, through its ultimate failure, to generate the most genuine form of self-portraiture and auto-biography of the performer as a lived body or embodied life.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Aftermath of Hands-on Sessions on Various Nonactive Pos+tures to Keep Oneself Somehow Carried Away*, gallery αM, Tokyo, 2024; *136 Locations – 956 Intersections*, 20 Albert Road, Glasgow, 2024; *Yuki Okumura*, Saint-Martin Bookshop, Brussels, 2022; and *The Man Who, An Ephemeral Archive*, Keio University Art Center, Tokyo, 2019. Recent group exhibitions include *u – New Project Spaces*, Kunsthalle Zürich Backrooms, Zurich, 2024; *A Snowball's Chance in Heaven*, Kyoto University of the Arts, Kyoto, 2023; *November, 2-12-4 Higashiazabu, Minatoku*, Tokyo (taking part as a member of N.E. One &c), 2023; *Last Terminal: Reflections on The Coming Apocalypse, Part 6: The Siphon*, Rib, Rotterdam, 2022; *Aichi Triennale 2022*, Aichi Arts Center, Aichi, 2022; and *Landslide to be lived off and/or tongues to be deadpan*, MISAOKO & ROSEN, Tokyo, 2021.

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Yuki Okumura
Yuki Okumura

List of works

Yuki Okumura

Wilhelm as Hauptraum

2024–25

Audiovisual installation unfolding in the main space of the Secession comprised of the sound and the imagery of a high-definition video file (colour, sound, English with English subtitles, 22:34 min.) audible from multiple loudspeakers all around the space and visible on a flat-screen monitor in the rear section

Direction: Yuki Okumura

Recollection: Wilhelm 'Willi' Montibeller

Maquette: Miriam Bachmann, Hans Weinberger

Camera for Willi's hands: Luciana Janaqui

Camera for others, sound recording, video editing: Yuki Okumura

Audio cleanup: Yuki Okumura, Paul Machek

Title text consultation: Sabo Dahy

Coordination: Bettina Spörr

Commissioned by the Association of Visual Artists Vienna Secession

Courtesy of MISAKO & ROSEN, Tokyo

Yuki Okumura

Secession's Hive Mind(s)

2024–25

Audiovisual installation unfolding in the main space of the Secession comprised of the sound and the imagery of a high-definition video file (colour, sound, English with English subtitles, 23:51 min.) audible from multiple loudspeakers all around the space and visible on a flat-screen monitor in the rear section

Direction: Yuki Okumura

Original discussion: Board of the Association of Visual Artists Vienna Secession

Discussion transcript recomposition: Yuki Okumura

Interpretation: Ramona 'Mona' Heinlein

Beekeeping: Hans Weinberger

Camera, sound recording, video editing: Yuki Okumura

Audio cleanup: Yuki Okumura, Paul Machek

Coordination: Bettina Spörr

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Courtesy of MISAKO & ROSEN, Tokyo

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Yuki Okumura

Big White Empty Playground

2025

Spatiotemporal framework unfolding in the main space of the Secession structured by *Conceptual, Performative, Personal* (2025), a workshop programme conducted on site by the artist for the interested members of Secession's cleaning, education, security, and exhibition set-up staff, as well as *Big White Playground* (2025), a collective exhibition organized by the artist comprising various objects and situations generated through diverse procedures conceived and performed on site by the workshop participants over the course of the process

Direction: Yuki Okumura

Participants: Miriam Bachmann, Mario Batram, Paul Buschnegg, Said Gärtner, golden salamturtle, Grzegorz Kielawski, Emine Koza, Niklas Hofstetter, Yuki Okumura, Flavio Palasciano, Alexander Pasch, Cristina Rüesch, Sebastian Scholz, Paul Spendier, Johanna Steiner, Lorenz Sutter, Kai Philip Trausenegger, Hans Weinberger, Marit Wolters, Márton Zalka

Text material translation: Yuki Okumura via ChatGPT

Co-translation: Ramona Heinlein

Interpretation: Lotte Lyon

Coordination: Bettina Spörr

Commissioned by the Association of Visual Artists Vienna Secession

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Art Education Programme

Friday, March 7, 2025, 6 p.m.

Exhibition Talk

Yuki Okumura in conversation with Pierre Bal-Blanc (in English)

An event organized by the Secession Friends

Video recordings of all exhibition talks are available at <https://secession.at/category/ausstellungsgespraech>.

Thursday, May 8, 2025, 4:30 p.m.

Tour in Austrian Sign Language (ÖGS) with Eva Böhm

Max. 15 participants

Admission and guided tour are free of charge. No prior registration required.

Video guide in Austrian Sign Language (ÖGS)

History of the Secession and its architecture

Realized with the kind support of Arbeiterkammer Wien



Sunday, May 18, 2025, 4 p.m.

Nearly missed it?

Guided tour of the exhibitions by Rochelle Feinstein, Ali Cherri, and Beatriz Santiago Muñoz

Every Saturday

Public Tours

History of the Secession and its architecture, Gustav Klimt's Beethoven Frieze and the current exhibitions

11 a.m.: guided tour in English

2 p.m.: guided tour in German

Costs, unless otherwise stated:

Admission plus € 3,- tour fee per person, children under 12 are free of charge

Meeting point: in the foyer of Secession

Individual guided tours are available by appointment, please contact

kunstvermittlung@secession.at.

Secession Podcast

Listen to conversations with artists, curators, and theorists, alongside insightful background information on Secession's programme – on our website, Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Google Podcasts.

Dorotheum is the exclusive sponsor of the Secession Podcast.



Miriam Bachmann

circa genau / educated guess

2025

Knoten in roter Maurerschnur markieren geschätzte und gemessene Längen, beschriftung auf Malertape zwischen den Knoten zeigt die Abweichung

Knots in red Mason's line marking estimated and measured lengths, notes on masking tape labelling the deviation in-between

Miriam Bachmann

draw in

2025

Blaues Papierband, Stahlnägel, Luftstrom

Blue paper ribbon, steel nails, airflow

Mario Batram

Let there be art

2025

Tabak (Pueblo), Zigarettenpapier, Filter, Blattgold, getrocknete Bananenschale, verschiedene gefundene Drucke, Fotos und Materialien aus dem Zusammenhang der Secession, menschliches Haar, Silberstift, Pfeifen der Songs während des Rauchens vor dem Hauptraum

Tobacco (Pueblo), tobacco rolling paper, filter, gold leaves, dried banana peels, various found prints and materials related to the Secession, human hair, silver marker, whistling songs while smoking outside the Hauptraum

Paul Buschnegg

***Diagramm meiner Tätigkeit als Kunstvermittler im Februar 2025 /
Diagram of My Work as an Art Mediator in February 2025***

2025

Vöslauer-Flaschen (PET), still (wenn niemand eine Frage stellt), mild (wenn niemand lächelt)
und prickelnd (wenn niemand ein Foto macht)

Vöslauer bottles (PET): still (when no one asks a question), mild (when no one smiles),
sparkling (when no one takes a photo)

Paul Buschnegg & Grzegorz Kielawski

Badminton in der Secession / Badminton at the Secession

2025

Zwei Exemplare des Katalogs zur aktuellen Ausstellung, eingelegte Fotokopien eines
Zeitungsartikels, Federball, Performance

Two copies of the catalogue of the current exhibition, inserted photocopies of newspaper
clippings, shuttlecock, performance

Said Gärtner

appealing:

1. attractive or interesting.

2. showing or expressing a desire for help or sympathy.

2025

Farbe, Papier, Stift, würfeln

Paint, paper, pen, dice-rolling

Said Gärtner

***Vom zufälligen Übernehmen und riskierenden Möglichkeiten /
inheriting randomness and chancing possibilities!***

2025

Kordel, Holzteile mit Rollen, Metall-Haken, würfeln

Cord, wooden parts with wheels, metal hooks, dice-rolling

golden salamturtle

My True Story

2025

Bleistift, Marker, weiße Dispersionsfarbe auf der Vorderseite eines Secession-Notizbuchs, gefundener Rahmen

Pencil, marker, white emulsion paint on the front cover of Secession notebook, found frame

Grzegorz Kielawski

PERFORMANCE

2025

Kielawski wird von der Secession für Führungen bezahlt. Eine Überblicksführung dauert ca. 50 Minuten und beinhaltet die Geschichte der Secession, die Architektur, den Beethovenfries sowie die zeitgenössischen Ausstellungen. Diese Stapel der Secessionsmünzen aus nordischem Gold belegen seine Performance im Hauptraum, die bei einer Überblicksführung ungefähr 10 Minuten bzw. 1500 Worte dauert. Seine Worte zählen. Vom 8. März bis zum 18. Mai 2025 wird er jede arbeitsbedingte Wortperformance in einen Stapel Münzen übersetzen. Die Höhe des Regals wurde durch einen Stapel von Secessionsmünzen bestimmt, die Kielawski für die Konzeptualisierung der Performance verdient hat.

Kielawski is paid by the Secession for guided tours. An overview tour takes approximately 50 minutes and covers the history of the Secession, the architecture, the Beethovenfrieze and the exhibitions of contemporary art. These stacks of Nordic gold Secession coins give account of his performance in the Hauptraum – as part of an overview tour it normally takes about 10 Minutes or 1,500 words. His words count. From 8 March to 18 May 2025, he will translate every work related word performance into a stack of coins. The shelf's height was determined by a stack of Secession coins earned by Kielawski for conceptualizing this performance.

Emine Koza

Abdrücke – Eindrücke / Prints - Impressions

2025

„Ich habe jahrelang die Abdrücke der Nasen neugieriger Besucher auf dem Glas gereinigt und konnte jetzt selbst Abdrücke zum beeindrucken hinterlassen“.

‘I spent years cleaning the prints of the noses of curious visitors on the glass and I could now leave my own prints to impress’.

Niklas Hofstetter

***Verschiedene Wege zu Ähnlichen Zielen /
Different Ways to Similar Goals***

2025

A4 Druckerpapier (mit gedrucktem Raster), edding Stift (Schwarz), Mappe
A4 copy paper (with printed grid), edding marker (black), document folder

Yuki Okumura

Mirror Test

2025

Abgeschabte Dispersionsfarbschichten, polierte Chromstahloberfläche
Scraped layers of emulsion paint, polished chrome steel surface

Flavio Palasciano

So, what brings you here? (exchange)

2025

Ein Fundstück, das auf dem Weg von zu Hause zur Secession gesammelt wurde, und ein Materialrest, gesammelt in der Werkstatt der Secession, zusammen verkeilt in interstitiellen Zwischenraum außerhalb der Armreichweite – neun Paare.

One found object collected during the commute from home to Secession and one piece of discarded material collected in Secession's workshop, wedged together into interstitial gap beyond arm's reach – nine pairs

Alex Pasch

Squares jumping

2025

Vier ungebrauchte Objekte aus vorausgegangenen Ausstellungen, die bereits auf Hunden in der Werkstatt der Secession gefunden wurden. Ihre Bewegungen und Ziele werden auf dem Bodenraster nach vordefinierten Regeln bestimmt, wobei zufällig vorhandene Objekte verschiedenen Ursprungs/verschiedener Künstler im Arbeitsprozess hinzugefügt wurden.
Handsäge

Four unused objects found in Secession's workshop used in previous exhibitions, already placed on dollies. Their movements and destinations across the floor grid governed by pre-determined rules, with random existing objects of different origins/artists added during the work process. Handsaw

Alex Pasch

Square air

2025

-

Cristina Rüesch

Route Route

2025

Pastell auf Papier auf gefundenem gerahmtem Secession-Poster

Pastel on paper on found framed Secession poster

Sebastian Scholz

Sonnenfaden (8'20"/5,5h) / solar stitch (8'20"/5,5h)

2025

Schwarzer Faden und Knöpfe auf Rollo mit Kaffeeeflecken

Black thread and buttons on roller blinds with coffee stains

Sebastian Scholz

Noteingang / emergency entry

2025

Notausgangsschild

Emergency entrance sign

Paul Spendier

o.T. / Untitled

2025

Paketschnur entlang der Wand

Parcel string along the wall

Johanna Steiner

D.H.

2025

Verunreinigungen der Wand entfernt durch ausschneiden, dadurch werden die Farbschichten vorangegangener Ausstellungen freigelegt

Wall imperfections removed by cutting them out and revealing the layers of paint from previous exhibitions

Lorenz Sutter

Unlucky

2025

Kreidestift auf Glas

Chalk marker on glass panels

Lorenz Sutter

BITTE NICHT WEGRÄUMEN!!

2025

Sieben Scheinwerfer mit acht Schraubzwingen auf Mischmulde am Secessionsrücken, nur während der Eröffnung zu sehen

Seven spotlights with eight clamps on mixed garbage container behind the Secession, only on view for the vernissage

Kai Philip Trausenegger

Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus

2025

Per Zufall ausgewähltes Objekt mit Rädern in spezifiziertem Blickfeld, Per Zufall ausgewähltes hypermaskulines Objekt in spezifiziertem Blickfeld, Per Zufall ausgewähltes größtes Objekt in spezifiziertem Blickfeld, Secitape – Schwebend

Randomized object with wheels in specified viewport, randomized hypermasculine object in specified viewport, randomized tallest object in specified viewport, Secitape – floating

Kai Philip Trausenegger

Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus (Berlin 1999)

2025

Per Zufall ausgewähltes Objekt mit Rädern in spezifiziertem Blickfeld, Per Zufall ausgewähltes hypermaskulines Objekt in spezifiziertem Blickfeld, Per Zufall ausgewähltes größtes Objekt in spezifiziertem Blickfeld, Secitape – Schwebend

Randomized object with wheels in specified viewport, randomized hypermasculine object in specified viewport, randomized tallest object in specified viewport, Secitape – floating

Hans Weinberger

***Mein Umriss, 10 mal getaped im Hauptraum /
Taping my outline in the Hauptraum 10 times***

2025

Secitape

Hans Weinberger

Blumen für die Bienen / Flowers for the Bees

2025

Alte Bienenbeute, gefundene bemalte Bretter, saisonale Blumen aus dem Garten

Old beehive, found painted wooden panel, seasonal flowers from the garden

Marit Wolters

Chatter-Matter

2025

Spachtelmasse, Interaktionen mit den Kollegen mit unterschiedlicher Dauer, Platte und Röhren aus dem Ausstellungsraum

Plaster, interactions with co-workers for varying durations, chip board and aluminium tubes found on site

Márton Zalka

Calculated risk

2025

Von oben nach einem strengen Muster gegossene Acrylfarbe

Acrylic paint poured from above in a strict pattern

Márton Zalka

We are all counting

2025

Bleistiftnotizen zur Budgetierung der Ausstellung von Yuki Okumura in der Hauptraum der Secession auf der von Sabo Day gestalteten Einladungskarte

Pencil notes about the budgeting of Yuki Okumura's exhibition at the Hauptraum of the Secession on the invitation card designed by Sabo Day

Einminütige Video-Dokumentationen von:
One-minute video documentations of:

Sebastian Scholz

Fangen gehen / Playing tag walk

2025

Johanna Steiner

Linedance

2025

Hans Weinberger

artist, icecream

2025

Lorenz Sutter

Laute Post

2025

Said Gärtner

Dog Racing

2025

Miriam Bachmann

hit the pot

2025

Alex Pasch

Jumping Squares

2025

Flavio Palasciano

Room Collapses

2025

Marit Wolters

Circlepede

2025

Márton Zalka

Keeping notes

2025

Paul Spendier

Blank Page

2025

Grzegorz Kielawski

DIGITALES LAGERFEUER / DIGITAL CAMPFIRE

2025

Miriam Bachmann

endless wiping

2025

Wegeführung | Navigation: Yuki Okumura

Kamera | Camera: Luciana Janaqui

Alle Werke wurden am 3. März 2025 im Hauptraum aufgeführt.

All works performed in the Hauptraum on 3 March 2025