

# RYOJI IKEDA

DATA.TRON

IKON EASTSIDE

15 OCTOBER — 8 NOVEMBER 2009

“As an artist and composer, my work has always focused on concepts of beauty and the sublime. For me, beauty is crystal: rationality, precision, simplicity, elegance, subtlety. And the sublime is infinity: infinitesimal, immense, indescribable, unspeakable. Mathematics is beauty in its purest form. Numbers, values and forms, when perfectly assembled, resist us. To explore the aesthetics of the sublime in mathematics is an impressive undertaking, comparable to when we contemplate the hugeness and scale of the universe, leaving us breathless.”

– Ryoji Ikeda, January 2009

Ikon Eastside's 2009 programme closes with Ryoji Ikeda's **data.tron** (2007–2009). Born in 1966, Ikeda initially became known for his work as one of Japan's leading composers, creating electronic scores that focused on the minutiae of ultrasonic frequencies and the reduction of sound into its pure, most fundamental elements. Latterly, through installations, performances and recordings, this approach to sound has been combined with images, often generated from the most modest of means – for example, the abstraction and visual reinterpretation of computer operating systems and technological communications.

**data.tron** immediately confronts us through its scale and audio-visual presence, continuing Ikeda's exploration of the vast universe of data in the infinity between zero and one. Beginning with a graphic representation of human DNA mapped into series of numbers and diagrammatic forms, the projection alters to become a flickering wall of interference. Moving closer we are engulfed in an intensely detailed image inciting a sense of awe – row upon row of individual numbers are revealed

which rapidly change to create random patterns. The viewer is drawn in, immersed in the innumerable permutations and billions of sequences of numbers 20mm high. A section towards the end abstracts random web pages into their primary building blocks – bit codes – asserting mathematics as the elemental quality that connects all matter. **data.tron** leads us to question our ability to comprehend such a vast possibility, challenging the thresholds of our perception. The sound accompanying this sea of ever-changing numerals also has a tangibly physical effect. Intermittent beeps regulate a continual electronic tone, ambient despite its odd quality.

**Ikon Eastside**  
**183 Fazeley Street, Digbeth**  
**Birmingham, B5 5SE**

0121 248 0708

[www.ikon-gallery.co.uk](http://www.ikon-gallery.co.uk)

Open Thursday – Sunday, 1–5pm, free entry

**data.tron** is co-produced by Le Fresnoy, Studio national des arts contemporains and Forma.

continues overleaf

# RYOJI IKEDA

**DATAMATICS [VER.2.0]**

**CBSO CENTRE, BERKLEY STREET**

**TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2009, 8.45–9.45 PM**

Following **data.tron** is a performance of a new version of Ikeda's ongoing work **datamatics [ver.2.0]**, an audio-visual concert at the CBSO Centre, hosted by Birmingham Contemporary Music Group. This will be the artist's first concert in the UK since 2006.

The sound and visuals generated in this performance are routed in the pure, invisible data surrounding us. Translated into a series of schematic representations, they are often reminiscent of constellations or some kind of galactic space. Exploring again the infinitesimal possibilities of numbers – like stars in the universe – Ikeda reveals everyday experiences as coded, life itself reduced to binary information. The sound ranges from the barely audible, high-pitched electronic tones, through to orchestral stabs of white noise. The multiplicity of the piece, both in concept and in realisation, reflects the complexity and sheer volume of data that permeates our material world. The demanding potential of this work is not reserved exclusively for the audience; its fast frame rates and rapid generation of information also test to their limits the processing capacity of the computer drive and working parameters of the technical equipment. Ikeda continues to operate at the very edge of our understanding.

**CBSO Centre, Berkley Street  
Birmingham B1 2LF**

**Tickets £10, £7 concs, £5 under 16s**

To book tickets call Ikon on 0121 248 0711. This performance contains strobe effects and high frequency levels (earplugs are provided).

**datamatics [ver.2.0]** is produced by Forma. Co-commissioned by AV Festival 06, ZeroOne San Jose & ISEA 2006. Co-produced by les Spectacles Vivants, Centre Pompidou, and YCAM. Supported by Recombinant Media Labs. Directed by Ryoji Ikeda. Concept, composition: Ryoji Ikeda. Computer graphics, programming: Shohei Matsukawa, Daisuke Tsunoda, Tomonaga Tokuyama, Norimichi Hirakawa.

Exhibition and performance supported by the Japan Foundation, The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation and Cloud One.

**IKON**



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