



Ars Electronica Festival 2012

# Featured Artist: SEIKO MIKAMI

August 30-September 30, 2012

at Lentos Art Museum Linz

With queries, please contact

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## 2012 Featured Artist: Seiko Mikami (JP)

(Linz, August 30, 2012) The featured artist at this year's Ars Electronica Festival is Seiko Mikami. "Desire of Codes," the Japanese artist's installation at the LENTOS Art Museum, opens on Thursday, August 30, 2012 at 2:30 PM.

### Seiko Mikami

Seiko Mikami was born in 1961. Information, society and the human body are the themes of her work. She focuses on the human-machine interface, human perception as well as perception by machines. Her artistic explorations since the 1990s have been realized mostly in the form of large-format interactive installations including "Molecular Informatics" (1996), "World, Membrane and the Dismembered Body" (1997), "Gravicells" (2004) and "Desire of Codes" (2010). Seiko Mikami has exhibited her work at such renowned museums as the Miró Museum in Barcelona (1999), Musée des Beaux Arts de Nantes (2000), Kulturhuset in Stockholm (2006) and the National Art Museum of China (NAMOC) in Peking (2011), as well as at important media art festivals: the Dutch Electronic Art Festival (DEAF) in Rotterdam (1995, 1996, 2004), the transmediale in Berlin (2002, 2005, 2007), the Piemonte Share Festival in Turin (2005), the MoisMulti in Quebec (2007) and Ars Electronica Linz (2005, 2012). Seiko Mikami lives in Tokyo. She has been a professor at the Tama Art University's Media Art Lab since 2000.

### Honors and Prizes

2012	Featured Artist Ars Electronica Festival 2012, Linz, Austria
2006-07	Artist Residence and Grant Foundation of International Art and Science Program Germany and Japan
2005	Honorary Mention in Interactive Art Prix Ars Electronica, 2005, Linz, Austria
2004	Published Fund Diputación Provincial De Málaga, Spain
1999	Artist in Residence and Grant Fundació Joan Miró, Centre d'Estudis d'Art Contemporani Barcelona, Spain

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Seiko Mikami: Desire of Codes (2010)

Thursday, August 30, 2012 / 10 AM-9 PM

Friday, August 31 to Monday, September 3, 2012 / 10 AM-7 PM

Lentos Art Museum Linz (Lower Level)

“Desire of Codes” considers the interrelationship between humankind and the machines with which we have surrounded ourselves. Machines that keep their eyes on us and their ears peeled 24/7, registering every move we make and following our conversations with no attention deficit. It all gets recorded, everything is saved to memory. There’s nothing that’s so insignificant or irrelevant that it can be erased. Because this isn’t a matter of particular details but rather of gathering as many of them as possible and interrelating them in ways that permit certain conclusions to be derived. To do so, enormous quantities of data are gathered, sorted by computer programs into categories, and interlinked. The results are comprehensive personal profiles that grow by the day and become increasingly precise, data record by data record. Our completely automated, highly observant hunter-gatherers are on the case in virtually every nook and cranny of the cityscape—no retail space without video surveillance ready to blow the whistle on shoplifters; no parking deck in which we’re not being filmed for our own safety. Of course, the price we pay for this security is total oversight. And if that’s the way it’s gotta be, then at least the supervisors have gotten so small that we don’t even notice them anymore. Out of sight, out of mind ... But what does our world look like from the opposite perspective, from the point of view of the millions of surveillance cameras? Seiko Mikami’s “Desire of Codes” provides an inkling. The angst-inducing setting she creates in her walk-through installation consists of three parts.

#### Wriggling Wall Units

90 mechanical feelers, each with a built-in surveillance camera, are mounted on a white wall several meters in length. Like the sensory appendages of an insect, these curious components extend their high-tech tips towards passers-by, whose movements are recorded by highly sensitive cameras and microphones capable of detecting motion and sound far beyond our perceptive threshold.

#### Multi Perspective Search Arms

These six swiveling robotic arms hanging down from the ceiling resemble tentacles. A camera and a miniature laser projector are mounted on the end of each one. These meter-long movable surveillance feelers also track every movement in their vicinity. The images they record are saved to a databank and also projected in real time onto the Compound Eye Detector Screen.

#### Compound Eye Detector Screen

A fly’s multifaceted eye seems to have inspired the circular screen on which passers-by can scrutinize themselves. It’s several meters in diameter and consists of 61 honeycomb-like

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“picture hexagons.” Some display live images from the exhibition space; others show older material in the “Desire of Codes” databank; and then there are those that screen photos and videos taken by surveillance cameras throughout the world—in airports, parking garages and banks, on public streets and squares. With her Compound Eye Detector Screen, Seiko Mikami enables viewers to behold a new reality in which space and time are fragmentarily intermingled. We human beings see ourselves here in a double role: as invisible initiators of the surveillance and, simultaneously, as its visible objects, constantly framed and kept in focus.

#### The Sound

In Seiko Mikami’s surveillance scenario, not only images are captured and saved; all sounds and noises are too. Regardless of whether they’re made by people or the machines themselves, highly sensitive directional microphones react to the slightest changes in sonic pressure and frequency, register them and forward them to the databank for analysis. If these patterns are identical or similar to ones on file, they’re used to generate a new tonal space.

#### Ars Electronica Festival 2012: THE BIG PICTURE

THE BIG PICTURE is the theme of the 2012 Ars Electronica Festival running August 30-September 3 in Linz. The focus will be on images of a world with a viable future, images that capture the progressive globalization and networks interlinking our planet’s inhabitants, and take into account contradictions and discontinuities as well as the extent to which humankind is growing together. This year’s conclave will showcase inspiring best-practice examples from art and science in calling for a new, open perspective conducive to the development of a viable vision for our future. The festival is an inquiry into what it takes to compose such a Big Picture and just how it can be implemented.

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Ars Electronica Festival 2012: <http://www.aec.at/thebigpicture/en/>  
Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz: <http://www.lentos.at/en/index.asp>

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