



尤伦斯当代艺术中心
Center for Contemporary Art

Koki Tanaka: Provisional Community

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UCCA Center for Contemporary Art presents “Koki Tanaka: Provisional Community” from September 27, 2025, to January 4, 2026, a survey of the artist’s practice over the past two decades with a particular focus on works created since 2020. The exhibition invites visitors into a setting shaped by fleeting encounters and continual transformation, encouraging reflection on the connections formed between people and opening up possibilities for coexistence and solidarity.

Exhibition Period:

2025.9.27 – 2026.1.4

Location:

UCCA Beijing

West, New, Central Galleries

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BEIJING, China—From September 27, 2025, to January 4, 2026, UCCA Center for Contemporary Art presents “Koki Tanaka: Provisional Community,” a solo exhibition by the Japanese contemporary artist. The exhibition surveys over twenty years of Koki Tanaka’s (b. 1975, Tochigi, Japan) practice, featuring more than ten artworks, including early video projects, and presenting for the first time a new commission by UCCA Center for Contemporary Art. The exhibition focuses on how Tanaka explores the complex relationships between people through temporary gatherings and open-ended collaboration. While encounters initiated by chance, crisis, or workshops are often brief, the flow and tension of human emotion still emerge in flux. Rather than providing definite answers, “Koki Tanaka: Provisional Community” creates situations that allow visitors to experience a “provisional” coexistence with one another in orchestrated situational settings. This exhibition is curated by UCCA Curator Neil Zhang.

Koki Tanaka’s practice has evolved from an initial focus on the relationship between objects, to the interactions between people and objects, and ultimately to connections between people. His works across video, photography, site-specific installations, and thematic workshops capture everyday behaviors, objects, and ideas often overlooked or forgotten. These elements, through chance encounters or the removal of intended function, reveal hidden meanings and tensions. In Tanaka’s work, ordinary objects and actions act as catalysts rather than passive subjects of observation.

In his early work, the artist focused on the materiality of everyday items as a means of disrupting established cognitive frameworks. In *123456* (2003), a die continuously rolls and collides within a glass bottle in an endless loop of sound and image. This piece, through repetition and chance, constructs a non-linear viewing experience that transforms the seemingly trivial movements into a reflection of flow and uncertainty. *Watch the Water Go*

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Away (2006) captures the evaporation of water in near-still imagery. In this minimalist work, fleeting moments become the sole visual landscape, and time emerges as the primary medium. In *Everything is Everything* (2006), Tanaka and his assistants improvise with everyday objects on the street—brooms, rolls of paper, mattresses—liberating them from their intended uses to become both playful and subtly subversive agents that prompt viewers to reconsider relationships between things, between people and things, and between various objects themselves. These early experiments anticipate Tanaka's later—and now current—engagement with collective dynamics, setting the stage for his ongoing exploration of human connection.

Since 2011, Tanaka has gradually shifted his artistic focus toward interpersonal connections, investigating how individual experiences circulate, collide, and dissolve within temporarily gathered groups through multi-participant workshops. He does not position himself as a “creator” in the conventional sense, but rather as a facilitator of a “moment”—setting the context and stepping back to observe as participants construct a provisional micro-society within an unpredictable, uncontrollable process.

Three representative works are presented in this exhibition, bringing forth multiple facets of this creative ethos. *A Piano Played by Five Pianists at Once (First Attempt) (re-edited version)* (2012/2025) transforms what was originally a solo act into a collaborative scenario requiring negotiation, adaptation, and mediation; *A Poem Written by Five Poets at Once (First Attempt) (re-edited version)* (2013/2025) captures the tension between individual style and collective outcome within shared creative language; *A Pottery Produced by Five Potters at Once (Silent Attempt) (re-edited version)* (2013/2025) presents a gradual dissolution of individual consciousness within a collective focus in a group creation. Through these multi-participant settings, complex relational and psychological dynamics emerge layer by layer to produce a sense of disappearance along with renewal: when all involved share an objective, individual presence seems to vanish at certain moments to leave a purity in collective action in its wake.

In recent years, Tanaka's moving image practice has increasingly turned toward broader social themes such as parenting and the lives of office workers. *Reflective Notes (Reconfigured)* (2021), adapted from his collection of essays, weaves together reorganized video archives and text to reflect on the fragility of human interdependence, as well as remind viewers that genuine change always begins in the subtle bonds between individuals and communities. *Mobility and Extinction* (2024) intertwines personal experience with public debate, drawing on interdisciplinary dialogue to prompt reflection on how, in a world of



constant change and volatility, new forms of coexistence might be found across borders and species. In a work examining gender roles, divisions of domestic labor, and workplace power dynamics, *Acting is Sharing Something Personal* (2025) brings light to the challenges individuals face when confronting questions of identity and divergent values. The most recent creation featured in this exhibition, *10 Years* (2025) is a commission by UCCA that brings together several narrators who had previously participated in his projects. Through their accounts of personal memories and social events, the work traces the crosscurrents of private lives and public history over the past decade.

The exhibition's spatial design also continues the theme of "Provisional Community": works are presented on minimalistic wooden structures instead of mounted on fixed walls, while chairs are scattered throughout the gallery can be freely moved by visitors. This opens opportunities for viewers to shift their vantage points at will—whether in gatherings or solitude. Through this openness and indeterminacy, "Koki Tanaka: Provisional Community" the exhibition becomes a "provisional community"—one that is continually in formation, yet always at the verge of disintegration.

About the Artist

Koki Tanaka (b. 1975, Tochigi, Japan; lives and works in Kyoto) graduated from Tokyo Zokei University (BFA) in 2000 and Tokyo University of the Arts (MFA) in 2005. His major solo exhibitions include "Vulnerable Histories (A Road Movie)" (Art Sonje Center, Seoul, 2020); "Precarious Tasks" (Mirrored Gardens, Guangzhou, 2019); "Vulnerable Histories (A Road Movie)" (Migros Museum of Contemporary Art, Zurich, 2018); "Provisional Studies (Working Title)" (Kunsthaus Graz, Graz, 2017); "Potters and Poets" (Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, 2016); "Possibilities for being together. Their praxis." (Art Tower Mito Contemporary Art Gallery, Mito-shi, Ibaraki, 2015); "A Vulnerable Narrator" (Deutsche Bank Kunsthalle, Berlin, 2015); "Abstract Speaking – Sharing Uncertainty and Collective Acts" (Japan Pavilion, the 55th Venice Biennale, 2013). His work has also been shown extensively in group exhibitions and biennales including "Antibodies" (Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2021); "Though it's dark, still I sing" (Bienal de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2021); "Every Step in the Right Direction" (Singapore Biennale, Singapore, 2019); "Taming Y/Our Passion" (Aichi Triennale, Aichi, Japan, 2019); "Action!" (Kunsthaus Zurich, Zurich, 2017); "Viva Arte Viva" (the 57th Venice Biennale, 2017); "Trace of Existence" (UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, 2016); "Mobile M+: Moving Images" (M+, Hong Kong, 2015). His work is held in the collections of institutions including M+, Hong Kong; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; and Van Abbemuseum, Netherlands.



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Public Programs

On the opening day of the exhibition, artist Koki Tanaka will give a talk on his artistic practice, followed by a conversation with Neil Zhang, curator of the exhibition, and Andrew Maerkle, writer, editor, and translator.

Later in the exhibition period, on November 8, UCCA will host a special guided tour led by Dr. Chang Yuanqing, Boya Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Sociology, Peking University. Titled "Aging in Togetherness," this tour will consider the exhibition through the lenses of aging, care, and interdependence, reflecting on the individual, the group, and the community. Anchored in social realities, it will offer a perspective on how the future of growing old together might be imagined and shaped within the public sphere.

Support and Sponsorship

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About UCCA

UCCA Center for Contemporary Art is China's premier museum of modern and contemporary art. Committed to the belief that art can deepen lives and transcend boundaries, UCCA presents a wide range of exhibitions, public programs, and educational initiatives across four architecturally and programmatically distinct locations. Owned by a group of committed patrons, it is funded by donations, sponsorship, ticketing, and proceeds from the commercial activities of UCCA Lab. UCCA has presented more than 200 exhibitions and welcomed more than ten million visitors since its founding in Beijing in 2007 as the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art.

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