

ACT Report Notebook

We present reports on a variety of programs—visual art, music, theater, traditional culture, local art projects, symposia and more—organized in areas around Tokyo by Arts Council Tokyo.

Civic Creative Base Tokyo (CCBT), a new creative hub combining art, technology and design, is born in Shibuya!



Photo courtesy of CCBT

About seven minutes on foot from Shibuya Station. Walking up Koen-dori street towards NHK, Shibuya Tobu Hotel is just before the top of the hill. Civic Creative Base Tokyo (CCBT) was opened on the hotel's second sub-level (B2) floor in October 2022. Run by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Arts Council Tokyo (Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture), CCBT is a new facility created on the themes of art, technology and design. What sort of place is it? Our reporting team went to find out.



Photo courtesy of CCBT

As we headed down the hotel's outer staircase, the CCBT sign came into view. It looks like the entrance of a hideout.



Photo courtesy of CCBT

Arriving at the entrance on sub-level two, we saw the stylish CCBT logo next to the glass doors.



Photo: Studio Amon Ishihara

Fumi Hirota of Arts Council Tokyo came to greet us. We asked her about CCBT in detail as she showed us around the facility.

CCBT is a “digital community center” open to the public”

- First, what kind of facility is CCBT?

Fumi Hirota (hereafter “Hirota”) : CCBT is a facility designed as an activity base for “civic creatives” that will demonstrate people’s creativity to society through the application of digital technology.

- To put it a little more simply...?

Hirota: If I call it a “digital community center,” is the image clearer? Mr. Tosa, president of the art collective Maywa Denki, used this expression at the time of the special project commemorating the opening of CCBT.

- **That feels much more accessible.**

Hirota: To the residents of an area, a community center is a familiar base [facility] for learning and creative and cultural activity, right? CCBT is basically the same. It’s a facility open to everyone, where people can take part in various programs with the themes of art, technology and design. CCBT also aims to be a hub that, through these experiences, brings out the creativity (hence the word “creative”) not just of artists and creators but of all participating residents regardless of age (hence “civic”).

- **I see. What kinds of programs are there?**

Hirota: Currently there are four core programs—“Art x Tech Lab,” “CCBT Meetup,” “Future Ideations Camp” and “Art Incubation.” We carry out a variety of events centered around these programs. Art x Tech Lab presents various workshops, mainly for children, on the themes of art and technology. In CCBT Meetup we hold talks and lectures on various art, technology and design topics. Future Ideations Camp is a workshop about five days long, where artists, engineers, researchers and people from the public learn about art and technology and work together to engage with social issues. Art Incubation is an artist fellowship program that recruits artists and projects to partner with CCBT, and carries out special exhibits by selected fellows as well as workshops run by fellows. Sometimes there are fellows working on their projects inside CCBT, and if the timing is right this work can be observed by visitors.

- **So these are programs that can only be experienced at CCBT.**

Hirota: CCBT is organized through the cooperation of a four-person collaboration team—Takayuki Ito, R&D director of Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media (YCAM); Seiichi Saito, director of Panoramatiks; Taichi Sugiura, CEO of CINRA, Inc. and CEO of Inspire High, Inc.; and Hiroko Tasaka, curator of Tokyo Photographic Art Museum. With technology advancing at remarkable speed, the perspectives of people active in various fields are incorporated in discussions about management methods and CCBT’s wide-ranging roles.

Kids have a great time in the “Art x Tech Lab” Workshop!



Photo courtesy of CCBT

- **What has impressed you about the workshops held so far?**

Hirota: As part of “Maywa Denki Shibuya Factory in CCBT,” a special project commemorating the opening of CCBT, we held an electronics production workshop for building a “GumBass,” the world’s smallest bass guitar. The target age was elementary school third-graders and over, and many of the participants were kids.



Photo courtesy of CCBT

- What was the response like?

Hirota: The instructor was Mr. Tosa, president of [art group] Maywa Denki. The children listened to what he said with rapt attention. It was really striking to see them using Maywa Denki’s unique soldering technique, called “ichi, ni, san, pon.” In the future I hope they’ll look back at the day with emotion and think, “I learned soldering from the guy in the blue uniform—the Maywa Denki man!” We were happy that, in the questionnaire, most participants wrote comments like “I really enjoyed it” and “I want to join the next workshop, too.” Children are the leaders of the future, and we’d like them to enjoy learning about technology and enhance their creative power through the experience of making things themselves.

- Where was this workshop held?

Hirota: In the “Open Space.” CCBT is made up of four spaces—Studio A, Studio B, the Tech Lab and the Open Space. Each space is divided up with movable partitions, so they can be used in a flexible way according to the purpose.



<Studio A>

A white cube space with completely white walls and floor. Maywa Denki’s products were exhibited here in the period when “Maywa Denki Shibuya Factory in CCBT” took place.

Photo courtesy of CCBT



<Studio B>

A blackout space with all black walls, floor and ceiling. “Maywa Denki also performed a live mini-performance here,” said Ms. Hirota.

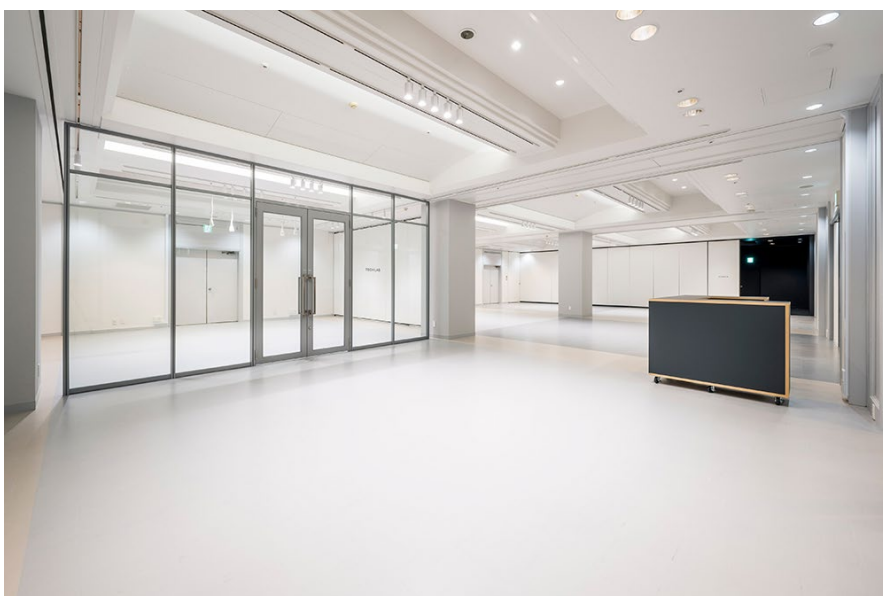
Photo courtesy of CCBT



<Tech Lab>

Furnished with an array of fabrication equipment, the Tech Lab can serve as a space for workshops and artists’ creative projects, among other uses. It seems the space was turned into a funny toy production factory in the period when “Maywa Denki Shibuya Factory in CCBT” was held.

Photo courtesy of CCBT



<Open Space>

The Open Space, which was the venue of the Maywa Denki Workshop, is also used for talks and lectures.

Photo courtesy of CCBT

Principal events held thus far

【CCBT Meetup】

Fantasy Reverse Engineering Vol. 1 - Digital Tech in Music Performances on TV: How do they do it?

This talk examines productions and creative works incorporating technology, from an engineering perspective.

<https://ccbt.rekibun.or.jp/en/events/meetup004>

【Future Ideations Camp】

Future Ideations Camp vol.1: Import *

Focusing on the themes of future parenting and play, community symbols and product development, and programming education, this five-day intensive workshop camp offers an opportunity to learn basic concepts of computational art and design applied in a variety of fields.

<https://ccbt.rekibun.or.jp/en/events/future-ideations-camp01>

【Art Incubation】

Asao Tokolo+Tomoki Hiramoto +Kota Iguchi “FORMING SPHERES” prototype unveiled

The new work by the currently active CCBT artist fellow team Asao Tokolo, Tomoki Hiramoto and Kota Iguchi will be presented at the Yebisu International Festival for Art & Alternative Visions 2023 (at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography). Along with the work's unveiling, CCBT will hold an exhibition explaining its creation process and more.

<https://ccbt.rekibun.or.jp/en/events/formingspheres>

Aiming to be a driving force in producing innovation from Tokyo



Photo: Studio Amon Ishihara

- How will CCBT evolve going forward?

Hirota: We'd also like to plan exhibits and lectures that will be unique to CCBT, reflecting the current state of art and technology. For instance, in the framework of CCBT Meetup we'd like to produce a program for creating hands-on NFT art (*1), based on the comment we hear that "I don't really understand what Web3.0 is." In cooperation with a university and other facilities, we're also planning a Future Ideations Camp focusing on new systems for information accessibility (*2)—a program particularly suited to arts and cultural forms involving various types of first-hand experience [such as viewing and listening].

CCBT also takes on the role of advancing the "Culture and Entertainment City Strategy," which is one of the

“‘Future Tokyo’ Strategies,” as well as “Tokyo Cultural Strategy 2030,” and has set forth the following four missions. Based on these missions, we aim to further expand the scope of events in each core program, including events currently being planned and envisioned; and as a creative hub of art, technology and design, we hope to become a driving force in producing innovation from Tokyo.

(*1) digital art using non-fungible tokens (NFT)

(*2) access to the world of telecommunications by anyone, regardless of factors such as whether they have a disability

CCBT’s four missions

- Inspire: CCBT creates settings where people experience art and technology and cultivate learning in order to live more creatively.
- Co-create: At CCBT, people of different backgrounds think collaboratively about the future of Tokyo and work together to design the society yet to come.
- Incubate: CCBT invites artists and creators as partners to create and transmit new forms of artistic expression.
- Network: CCBT connects with the city and people, forms networks in Japan and overseas, and creates a base for digital creativity.

- Finally, are there upcoming events that you recommend?

Hirota: We will hold an event on the theme of collaboration, titled “Hello from the Global Creative Laboratories! Vol. 01: Laboratory-driven Cultural Facilities.” This talk event will introduce artistic and cultural activities, with cultural hubs in five cities around the world as examples. I also recommend “Deviation Game: Competition vs. AI & Co-creation with AI Workshop,” by CCBT artist fellows Tomo Kihara + Playfool. This program, which is meant for elementary school fourth-graders and up, is an opportunity to learn ways for AI to perceive the world while playing. Both of these events are free of charge, and we encourage everyone to participate.

We’re planning other programs that could only happen at CCBT, offering a variety of enjoyable discoveries and creative activities, so stay tuned.

<https://ccbt.rekibun.or.jp>

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An editor/writer on the editorial production team, Ms. Yokoyama enjoys learning about new subjects and making new discoveries. An avid cook, she has also been a “weekend farmer” for 15 years.
