

## Learning Resource for Sunderland Exhibitions



AV Festival forms part of North East England's world-class festivals and events programme



The exhibition(s) that you are going to see and experience are part of the AV Festival 2008. AV means audio visual, audio can be heard, visual can be seen. AV Festival is an international festival of electronic arts featuring visual art, music and moving image. A biennial event, (this means that it happens every two years) the festival takes place in Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland and Middlesbrough in the North East of England between 28th February and 8th March 2008 and has the theme of Broadcast.

We have just entered the second century of broadcasting and are in a time of great change. The change to digital will create endless possibilities for communities and people to be part of broadcasting and it is already an area that artists are exploring in their work.

The internet has become another area for broadcasting and sharing sound, film, video and photography, through the many online sites. This is moving at a very fast pace. We now receive broadcasts on the move, podcasts, tv and radio on our phones, PDA's and hand held computers. For AV Festival 08, artists, filmmakers and musicians have created works which illuminate all aspects of broadcasting. You will become part of this as the audience for the work. Enjoy AV Festival 2008!



**University of  
Sunderland**

## You are visiting the Design Centre at The University of Sunderland

The design centre was opened in 2007. It was placed at the heart of the city so that it will attract residents and communities to the world of design. It is hoped that people living in the City of Sunderland will visit the Design Centre and understand how important design can be to their future and to the future of the city and the world. The new Design Centre is a wonderfully vibrant environment in which to work, with staff and students who are passionate about design.

# The name of the exhibition you are going to see is “Prepared Radios”



The artist and designer is **Ryota Kuwakubo**

Ryota is a Japanese artist and designer who's work fuses technology, function and aesthetic \*. He creates work which are simple, but provocative and take the form of spaces, sculptures and jewellery. Because he makes devices, he is sometimes known as a device artist.

He shows his work online at [www.vector-scan.com/](http://www.vector-scan.com/)

\* aesthetic means: the appreciation of beauty

## “Prepared Radios”

Prepared Radios are handmade and programmed to extract only consonant sounds from the broadcast. A consonant is a sound, the idea being that consonants don't sound on their own, but only occur with a nearby vowel.

The word consonant is also used to refer to letters of an alphabet that denote a consonant sound. It's the opposite of a vowel. Vowels are **A, E, I, O** and **U**. Consonants are all of the other letters.

A way to remember this ‘**CONSON**ants **CONSTR**ict the air flow’. **VOWELS** on the other hand, are characterised by how they **SHAPE** the sound, by positioning of the tongue and shape of the mouth, but **WITHOUT** severely constricting the air flow.

Consonant letters in the English alphabet are **B, C, D, F, G, H, J, K, L, M, N, P, Q, R, S, T, V, W, X, Z**, and sometimes **Y** - the letter **Y** stands for a consonant in the word “yoke” but for a vowel in “myth”, for example.

Ryota has designed the radios to filter out the sound of the vowels, the result is unsettling and very strange. All meaning and information is removed, only breath remains: a human essence. We only live because we breathe.

## “Prepared Radios”

Sometimes when we are listening to the radio, there is too much going on, too much information and too much noise. Ryota has taken away some of the sounds and gives your ear and mind a rest from what you normally hear. But, because he has filtered out the vowels, you can only hear the consonants. This creates an unfamiliar and strange sound. You can not process what you hear because parts are missing. This might make you curious, it might make you uncomfortable.

Ryota says that his work is all about observing the world of innovation. He is interested in how new technologies change the way we live and behave, for example the mobile phone used in public places when telephone conversations used to be in our private spaces.

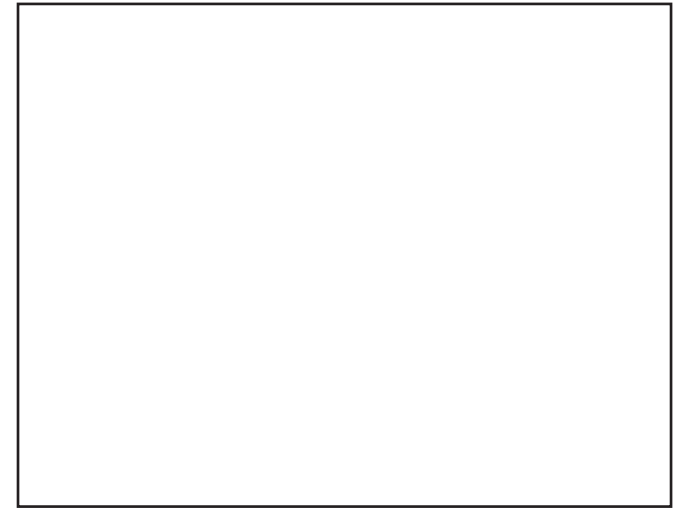
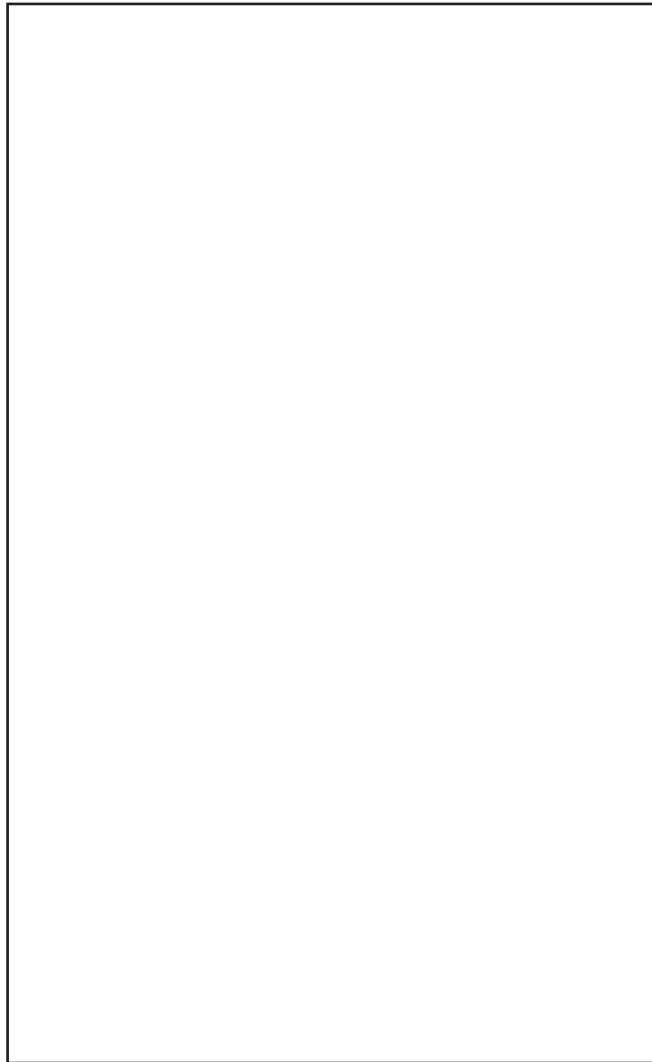
With the radio project, he is observing how sounds are made with consonants and vowels to create words we understand and has taken this away by removing part of the way that we talk. It's like trying to read a book with lots of the words blanked out. It frustrates us a bit because we want to hear what we recognise. This makes us feel secure. The prepared radios make us feel differently though. These radios are all hand made.

Ryota is a designer, so it is important that he designed and made the radios.

## Individual activity

Look at the different radio designs that Ryota has made. They are strong geometrical shapes. Can you come up with some ideas for designs which are **different** from the ones you see, but which would fit in with the ones in the gallery space? Use the boxes to draw out your design ideas.

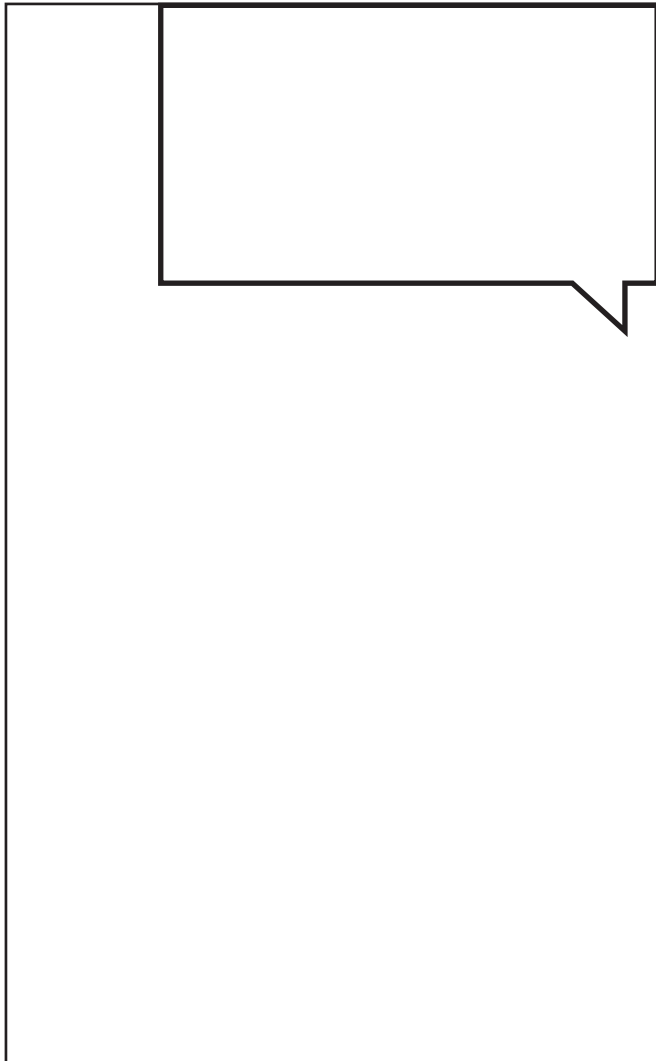
Name



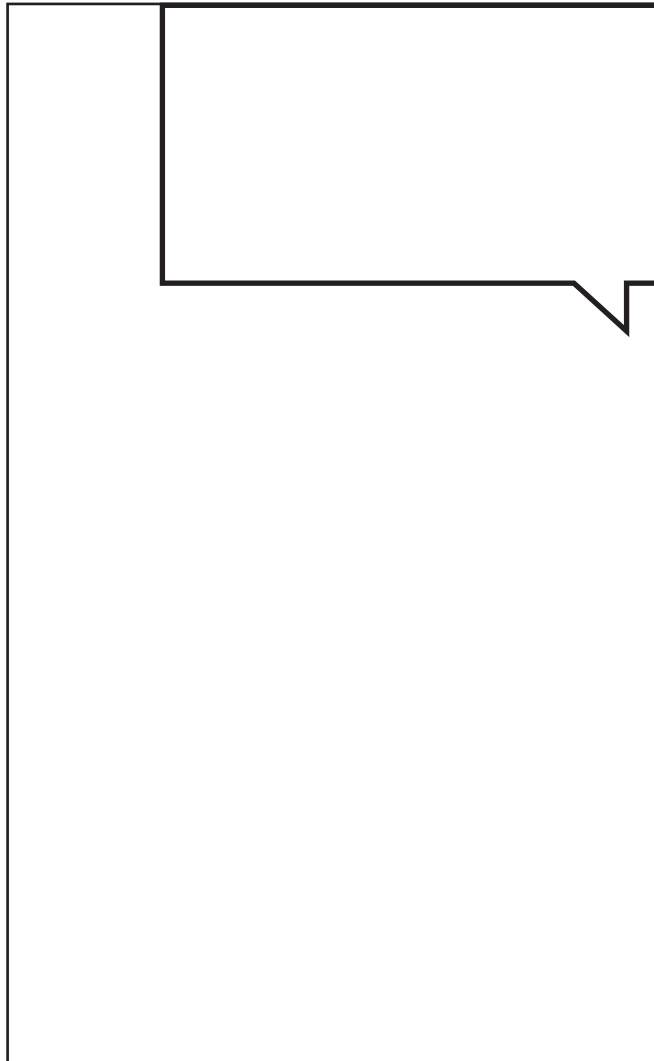
# Individual activity

In the boxes, **sketch** some of the radios. Use the speech bubbles to try and write down some of the sounds that you hear from the radios.

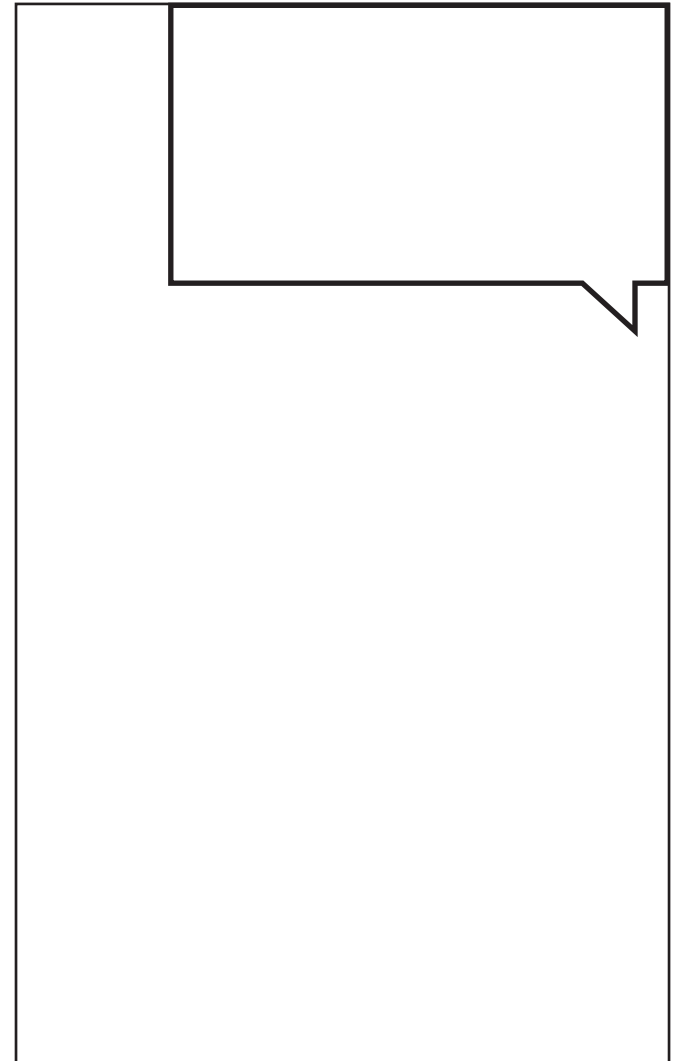
Name



A large rectangular box for sketching a radio. At the top right corner of the box, there is a speech bubble shape with a tail pointing towards the center of the box.



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# Group Presentation

## Group activity: Groups of 4

My group is

1. Work in groups of four. Your teacher will tell you how long you have to prepare.

2. Spend some time discussing the installation and what you have found out about the artist.

3. Plan a short (5 minutes ?) presentation which involves all the group. Involve everyone in this, be considerate to those who may be less confident when presenting.

4. Explain why the group liked the (or disliked) the art work. Express your opinions and points of view. Invite your "audience" to ask questions.

5. Listen very carefully to other group presentations because you will expect them to listen to yours. Support each other at all times. Show your appreciation of each group's presentation. Say "well done" and "thank you".

# AV Festival 08 Broadcast



Reg Vardy Gallery



north east  
england

