



[art21.org/akisasamoto](https://art21.org/akisasamoto)

# Aki Sasamoto

## ABOUT

### Born

1980 (Kanagawa, Japan)

### Education

Wesleyan University, BA  
Columbia University, MFA

### Lives and Works

New York, NY

### About the Artist

Often collaborating with scholars, mathematicians, and other artists, Aki Sasamoto performs her installations, which can take place in galleries, theaters, or outside of traditional art venues. The artist builds these installations from commonplace found objects, and her performances actively engage viewers, occasionally transforming them into participants. Sasamoto's ongoing thematic fascinations with food, health, hygiene, and orderliness are reflected in her formally precise and narratively rich practice.

## TEACHING CONNECTIONS

### Media and Materials

installation  
performance  
sculpture

### Key Words and Ideas

context  
found objects  
gesture  
limitation  
movement

order  
physicality  
storytelling  
transformation

### Related Artists

Marina Abramović  
Tanya Aguiñiga  
Janine Antoni  
Nick Cave  
KING COBRA (Doreen  
Lynette Garner)  
Abigail DeVille  
Miranda July  
Hiwa K

Kimsooja  
Shaun Leonardo  
Cannupa Hanska Luger  
Mary Mattingly  
Whoop Dee Doo  
Bryan Zanisnik

"I use performance to get deeper into  
my interest in storytelling." —Aki Sasamoto

**How to Use This Guide**

Art21 encourages active engagement when teaching with our films. The questions and activities below are recommendations for incorporating Art21 films featuring Aki Sasamoto into your classroom. Each class will likely require different adaptations for best results.

**NOTE:** Please view all films before sharing them with your students. In the film *Aki Sasamoto: An Artist Walks into a Bar of*, there are mentions of alcohol consumption.

**Before Viewing**

Establish key ideas, in anticipation of viewing the film(s):

- ① What aspects of your life feel chaotic, and which aspects feel controlled?
- ② How do stories get told? In what ways do we experience storytelling?
- ③ When do you experience tension? What does it feel like?

**While Viewing**

Support active viewing, and pause the film to clarify particular ideas:

- ① How does Sasamoto work with the ideas of control and chaos in these films?
- ② What kinds of stories is Sasamoto interested in telling? Why?
- ③ Why is Sasamoto drawn to the idea of tension? How does this connect to aspects of her own life?

**After Viewing**

Follow-up on key ideas and synthesize information learned from the film(s):

- ① Describe from your perspective the aspects of chaos and control you see in Sasamoto's work and performances. How are viewers engaged? How do they occasionally become participants?
- ② How do you identify with some of the stories the artist shares?
- ③ Where else might this interest in tension and a "yield point" lead in Sasamoto's work?

**Related Activities**

Engaging in creative activities after watching Art21 films can reinforce learning and stimulate ideas. Art21 encourages educators to adapt these activities to their classrooms.

- ✓ Develop a plan for reducing tension, or working with tension, in your own life. This plan can take the form of a diagram, reminder list, written story, or even a work of art. Share your plan with others and compare how classmates work with, and even work *through*, the challenges that different kinds of tension present.
- ✓ On your own or with your partner, create a work of art that incorporates physical limitation(s). For example, create a work of art with your non-dominant hand, or write a short play that relies on physical movements to tell a story but has no specific dialogue.