

“Public space in which things happen is vitally important now.”
—Olafur Eliasson

An Evening with Olafur Eliasson

Tuesday, February 27, 2018, at 6:30 p.m.
Ronald Tutor Campus Center, Grand Ballroom
University of Southern California

ABOUT OLAFUR ELIASSON

- Olafur Eliasson (b. 1967) is an Icelandic-Danish artist. His parents emigrated from Iceland to Denmark in 1966, and in the 1970s, Olafur’s father moved back to Iceland, and Olafur spent summers with him there.
- He studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts.
- Today he lives and works in Copenhagen as well as Berlin, where he founded Studio Olafur Eliasson in 1995.
- He says his art is “driven by his interests in perception, movement, embodied experience, and feelings of self.”
- He works in sculpture, painting, photography, film, and installations.
- Many of his projects have taken place in public space.
- Fun fact: As a teenager, he was the break-dancing champion of Scandinavia.

SELECTED PROJECTS

The Weather Project (2003)

An installation at Tate Modern consisting of a half-sun made of light bulbs, mirrors, and a mist machine. One critic called it “a romantic indoor weather scene.” More than two million people visited it.

New York City Waterfalls (2008)

Eliasson created four man-made waterfalls in New York Harbor.

Ice Watch (2015)

During the 2015 international Climate Change Conference, Eliasson installed a circle of icebergs from Greenland in Paris, the site of the conference. The ice was arranged like a clock face to symbolize the passage of time; observers watched it melt in real time.

STUDIO OLAFUR ELIASSON

Studio Olafur Eliasson, a Berlin-based “laboratory for spatial research,” encompasses about ninety craftsmen, technicians, architects, archivists, administrators, programmers, art historians, and cooks. They collaborate on research, experiments, and artwork. Olafur Eliasson has said he works, and thinks, better in collaboration with others than alone.

Ice Watch, 2014
Place du Panthéon, Paris, 2015
Photo: Martin Argyroglo





Ice Watch, 2014, Nuuk, Greenland, Photo: Group Greenland



Your Rainbow Panorama, 2006-2011
ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Denmark



The New York City Waterfalls, 2008, Brooklyn Bridge, New York
Photo: Rochelle Steiner / Courtesy Public Art Fund



The Weather Project, 2003, Tate Modern, London

PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCES

Eliasson was influenced by the idea that art and design shape how people experience their surroundings, an idea that pervaded Nordic culture in the twentieth century and influenced the artistic design of things like furniture and buildings.

In a 2006 profile, *The New Yorker* reported that as a young art student, Eliasson “was deeply affected by the work of the phenomenologist philosophers, especially Edmund Husserl—with their emphasis on the individual experience of reality—and by Lawrence Weschler’s biography of Robert Irwin, *Seeing Is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees*.”

VOCABULARY CORNER

INTERDISCIPLINARY: Drawing on or working in multiple fields.

INTERVENTIONIST ART: Art that interacts with a previously existing artwork, audience, venue/space, or situation. The term sometimes refers to art that enters a space or situation outside the art world.

PHENOMENOLOGY: The philosophical study of the structures of experience and consciousness.

PUBLIC ART: Art that is created to be in public space. Public art can include anything from murals to monuments. The meaning of this term became increasingly political in the 1960s and ’70s, as people active in the civil rights movement sought to reclaim public space, intervene on dominant narratives, and center the creative traditions and expressions of marginalized communities in highly visible ways.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- ⦿ According to *The New Yorker*, Eliasson wonders about the relationship between data and cognition: “How is data translated into doing? Thinking into feeling? Are we more likely to act on knowledge or emotion?” What do you think?
- ⦿ What role can art play in addressing climate change?
- ⦿ Why do you think Eliasson feels that “public space in which things happen is vitally important now”?
- ⦿ Do the borders between “the art world” and “the world” seem rigid or blurry to you?

TO LEARN MORE OR TAKE ACTION, CHECK OUT THESE RESOURCES:

- ⦿ “Playing with Space and Light,” a TED Talk by Olafur Eliasson [ted.com/talks/olafur_eliasson_playing_with_space_and_light](https://www.ted.com/talks/olafur_eliasson_playing_with_space_and_light)
- ⦿ Studio Olafur Eliasson olafureliasson.net
- ⦿ “Seeing Things: The Art of Olafur Eliasson” by Cynthia Zarin, *The New Yorker* [newyorker.com/magazine/2006/11/13/seeing-things-2](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2006/11/13/seeing-things-2)
- ⦿ USC Sustainability green.usc.edu
- ⦿ The Environmental Student Assembly uscesa.com
- ⦿ Communities for a Better Environment cbecal.org/organizing/southern-california
- ⦿ Global Green Grants greengrants.org

DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

ANDRZEJ RUTKOWSKI of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about Eliasson and tonight's event. Those with a call number are physical items which you can find in our campus libraries. Those without a call number (e.g., databases, journals, and journal articles) are electronic resources, which you can access through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- ◉ Madeleine Grynsztejn, ed. *Take Your Time: Olafur Eliasson*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2007.
ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: N7053.O43 A4 2007
- ◉ Ólafur Eliasson. *Your Mobile Expectations: BMW H₂R Project*. Baden, Switzerland: Lars Müller Publisher, 2008.
ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: N7053.O43 A4 2008
- ◉ Olafur Eliasson, Günther Vogt, and Josefine Klougart. *Your Glacial Expectations*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2017.
ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: N7053.O43 A4 2017
- ◉ Olafur Eliasson. *Unspoken Spaces*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2016.
ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: N7053.O43 A4 2016
- ◉ Engberg-Pedersen, Engberg-Pedersen, Anna, and Ólafur Eliasson. *Studio Olafur Eliasson: An Encyclopedia*. Köln; London: Taschen, 2008.
ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: N7053.O43 A4 2008
- ◉ Hans Ulrich Obrist and Olafur Eliasson. *Experiment Marathon*. Reykjavik, Iceland: Reykjavik Art Museum, 2009.
ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: N6496.3.I2 E9 2009

RECOMMENDED ARTICLES

- ◉ Eliasson, Olafur. "The Future Is Curved." *Architectural Design* 84, no. 5 (2014): 86-93.
- ◉ Eliasson, Olafur. "Reality Is Ephemeral." *Tate Etc*, no. 32 (2014): 88-89, 11.
- ◉ Eliasson, Olafur, and Kurt W. Forster. "In Conversation." *Perspecta* 42 (2010): 177-90.
- ◉ Lippens, N. "Take Your Time (Olafur Eliasson)." *Architectural Record* 196, no. 2 (2008): 191.

RECOMMENDED DATABASES

Arts & Humanities Full Text

This database features hundreds of titles covering Art, Architecture, Design, History, Philosophy, Music, Literature, Theatre and Cultural Studies.

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy is a freely available online encyclopedia pertaining to all issues in philosophy and written by contemporary philosophers from various institutions of higher learning.

Art Full Text (H.W. Wilson)

Art Full Text is a comprehensive resource for art information featuring full-text articles from more than 300 periodicals dating back to 1995, high-quality indexing and abstracting of over 600 periodicals dating as far back as 1984, including 280 peer-reviewed journals, as well as indexing and abstracting of over 13,000 art dissertations.

