

Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo

Olafur Eliasson: Sometimes the river is the bridge

14 March – 14 June 2020

"I am holding a small power station in my hand with sunshine I brought from Berlin to Japan," said Olafur Eliasson at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo (MOT) in April 2019, as he illuminated his surroundings using a Little Sun lamp – a solar-powered mobile light he created to provide clean, affordable energy to those without access to electricity.

MOT is pleased to announce Eliasson's upcoming solo exhibition *Olafur Eliasson: Sometimes the river is the bridge*, the Danish-Icelandic artist's first exhibition in Japan in ten years.

Eliasson is highly regarded for his efforts to advance sustainable development through his art, and this is reflected in the exhibition title. "*Sometimes the river is the bridge* is about a fundamental shift in perspective that allows us to see that which is not obvious, the invisible. In the face of the collapse of our planetary boundaries, there is an urgent need to redesign the systems in which we live, to re-engineer the future. For that to happen, we need to reconsider fundamentally how we see everything. Up until now, we have organized our present based on the past; we now need to shape our present according to what we want from the future. The potential of this perspective shift is that it can help us reconsider the traditional idea of progress.", the artist states. His interests in renewable energy and climate action form an integral part of the exhibition.

Since the early 1990s, Eliasson (b. 1967) has built up a wide-ranging artistic practice that spans the fields of photography, sculpture, drawing, installation, design, and architecture. *Sometimes the river is the bridge* features a representative selection of his works, many of which have never been seen before in Japan. This includes early and recent installations that use natural materials; sculptures that reflect Eliasson's long-held interest in light and geometry; photographic series; drawings and watercolours; and documentation of several of the artist's interventions in public space.

As a child Eliasson spent a considerable amount of time in Iceland, which led to his ongoing project of documenting the landscapes and natural phenomena there. His photographic work "The glacier melt series 1999/2019" (2019) makes tangible the shrinking of Iceland's glaciers over the last 20 years.

Influenced by our complex relationship to nature, Eliasson's installations often use natural phenomena – such as light, water and mist – to heighten our understanding of the way we perceive and co-produce the world around us. At MOT, visitors are invited to view the artist's earliest work in the exhibition, "Beauty" (1993), where a rainbow emerges in a darkened space. Two major installations created specifically for the exhibition will utilize the cavernous space of MOT's atrium and the sunken garden.

The activities of Studio Olafur Eliasson (SOE) are not limited to the production of artworks. Ideas and projects are developed through daily experimentation, collaboration and research. *Sometimes the river is the bridge* will integrate some of this process into the exhibition through a display of the studio's recent research into new sustainable and biodegradable materials as well as recycling techniques.

The accompanying catalogue features a curatorial essay by Yuko Hasegawa, Artistic Director of the MOT, and conversations between Olafur Eliasson and philosopher Timothy Morton.

Contact

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Highlights

1 New and old works

For his solo exhibition at MOT, Eliasson presents several new works, including two major installations that are located inside and outside the museum, photographic series, and documentation from several of Eliasson's interventions in public space. The exhibition features several experiential artworks and installations, such as Eliasson's key early work "Beauty" (1993).



1
Olafur Eliasson, *Beauty*, 1993
Installation view: Moderna Museet, Stockholm 2015
Photo: Anders Sune Berg
Courtesy of the artist; neugerriemschneider, Berlin;
Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York / Los Angeles
© 1993 Olafur Eliasson



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Test for new work for *Olafur Eliasson: Sometimes the river is the bridge*, 2019
Photo: María del Pilar García Ayensa / Studio Olafur Eliasson

2 Works from Iceland exploring the landscape

Eliasson has photographed the Icelandic landscape for more than two decades. "The glacier melt series 1999/2019" (2019) is irrefutable proof of the changes in Iceland's glacier ice masses over the last 20 years.



3
Olafur Eliasson, *The glacier melt series 1999/2019*, 2019
Courtesy of the artist; neugerriemschneider, Berlin; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York / Los Angeles
© 2019 Olafur Eliasson
Photo: Michael Waldrep / Studio Olafur Eliasson



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Olafur Eliasson photographing *The glacier melt series 1999/2019*, 2019 in Reyjavik.
Photo: Studio Olafur Eliasson / Alcuin Stevenson

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3 Sustainable practice

From the use of solar-powered lights to his efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from the transportation of artworks, Eliasson addresses in this exhibition the urgent need to act on the global climate crisis. "Sunlight Graffiti" (2012) invites visitors to create drawings with sunlight stored in Eliasson's Little Sun solar-powered lamps. The activities of Studio Olafur Eliasson are not limited to the production of artworks. They also encompass a variety of experiments carried out on a daily basis that tackle design and architectural questions as well as research into new materials. The exhibition will display the studio's research into new sustainable and biodegradable materials and recycling techniques.



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Olafur Eliasson, *Sunlight graffiti*, 2012
Installation view: Tate Modern, London
Photo: Zan Wimberley, 2019
Courtesy of the artist; neugerriemschneider, Berlin;
Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York / Los Angeles

About Olafur Eliasson

Olafur Eliasson was born in 1967 in Copenhagen, Denmark, and is currently based in Berlin and Copenhagen. After a childhood spent in Iceland and Denmark, Eliasson studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts from 1989 until 1995. In 1995, he moved to Berlin and founded Studio Olafur Eliasson, which consists of a large team, including craftspeople, architects, researchers, cooks, and art historians. In 2014, Eliasson and architect Sebastian Behmann founded Studio Other Spaces, an office for art and architecture.

Eliasson often uses natural phenomena and is internationally renowned for works like "The weather project" (2003), installed in the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern, London, or his public art project "The New York City Waterfalls" (2008), for which he installed four artificial waterfalls along the East River and on Governors Island, New York, US.

In recent years, Eliasson has increased his efforts to advance sustainable development. In 2012, Eliasson and engineer Frederik Ottesen founded the social business Little Sun to replace fossil-fuel lighting with solar energy in communities living without electricity and to raise awareness of the need to expand energy access to all. For the public installation "Ice Watch", Eliasson and geologist Minik Rosing transported massive blocks of glacial ice from Greenland to Copenhagen (2014), Paris (2015), and London (2018) to raise awareness of climate change. Eliasson was appointed as a Goodwill Ambassador for renewable energy and climate action by the United Nations Development Programme in 2019.

Eliasson has held exhibitions at Hara Museum of Contemporary Art in 2005 and 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa in 2009-2010 in Japan.

Visit olafureliasson.net; soe.tv; studiootherspaces.net; or littlesun.com or follow @olafureliasson on Twitter; @studiolafureliasson and @soe_kitchen on Instagram; and @studiolafureliasson on Facebook.

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Portrait of Olafur Eliasson
Photo: Brigitte Lacombe, 2016
© 2016 Olafur Eliasson

Message from *Kvadrat*

Kvadrat is honored to support Olafur Eliasson with textiles for this exhibition. Olafur Eliasson has closely collaborated with Kvadrat's product development team and together, they have worked on experiments that translate his artistic interests and research in sustainability into the world of textiles.

About Kvadrat

Kvadrat was established in Denmark in 1968 and has deep roots in Scandinavia's world-famous design tradition. A leader in design innovation, Kvadrat produces high-performance, design textiles, rugs, acoustic and window covering solutions for both commercial and residential interiors. Olafur Eliasson and Kvadrat have worked together on numerous projects for more than ten years, a journey that started with the Serpentine Gallery Pavilion in 2007 and has continued ever since.

www.kvadrat.dk

Public programme

Lecture by Olafur Eliasson

Date & Time | Saturday, March 14, 11:00 - 12:30

Venue | Museum Contemporary Art Tokyo

*Please check our website (www.mot-art-museum.jp/eng/) for further details.

Information

Exhibition Period	Sat. 14 March – Sun. 14 June, 2020
Closed	Mondays (except 4 May), 7 May
Opening Hours	10:00 - 18:00 (Tickets available until 30 minutes before closing.)
Admission	Adults – 1400yen / University & College Students, Over 65 – 1000yen / High School & Junior High School Students –500yen / Elementary School Students & Under – Free
Venue	Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo Exhibition Gallery B2F
Organized by	Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo operated by Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture / The Sankei Shimbun
Supported by	Embassy of Iceland, Japan / Royal Danish Embassy
Sponsored by	Kvadrat, Bloomberg L.P.
Grant from	The Scandinavia-Japan Sasakawa Foundation
Curated by	Yuko Hasegawa (MOT)
Exhibition Staff	Ai Kusumoto (MOT)

Concurrent Exhibitions

Collaborative exhibition with KADIST Things Entangling

The Potentiality of Drawing

MOT Collection : Present Day and in Times Past –Multiple Perspectives

*Tickets for Olafur Eliasson also include admission to MOT Collection.

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PRESS IMAGES



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Olafur Eliasson, *Methane matter*, 2019

Photo: Jens Ziehe

Courtesy of the artist; neugerriemschneider, Berlin; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York / Los Angeles



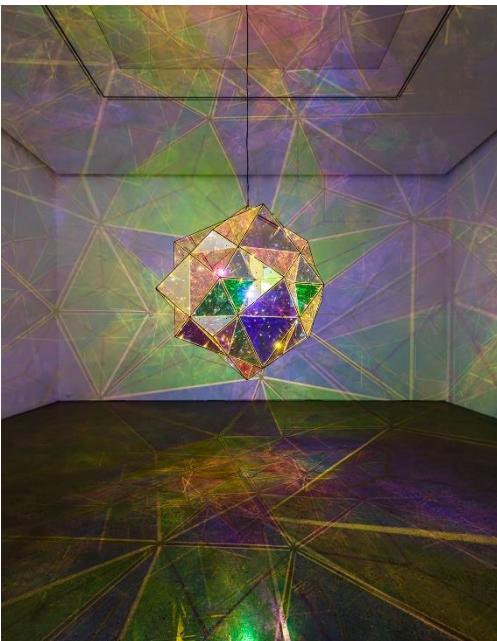
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Olafur Eliasson, *Slow-motion shadow*, 2009

Installation view: 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan, 2009-2010

Photo: Studio Olafur Eliasson, 2009

Courtesy of the artist; neugerriemschneider, Berlin; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York / Los Angeles



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Olafur Eliasson,

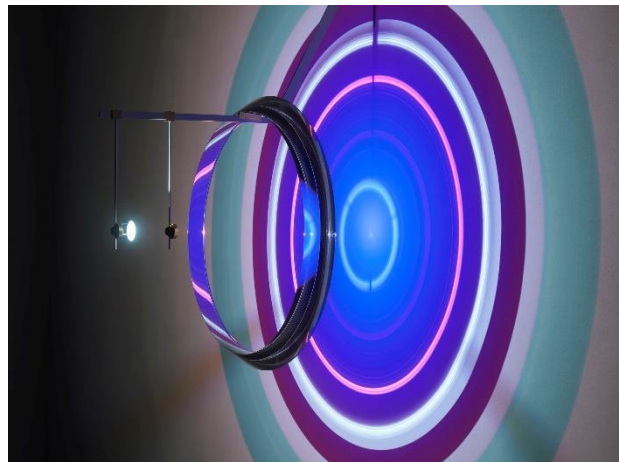
The exploration of the centre of the sun, 2017

Installation view: PKM Gallery, Seoul, 2017

Photo: Jeon Byung Cheol, 2017

Courtesy of the artist and PKM Gallery, Seoul

© 2017 Olafur Eliasson



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Olafur Eliasson, *Beyond-human resonator*, 2019

Photo: Jens Ziehe

Courtesy of the artist; neugerriemschneider, Berlin; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York / Los Angeles

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IMAGE REQUEST FORM

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