



Olafur Eliasson, *Object defined by activity (then)*, 2009, water and strobe light. Photographer: Studio Olafur Eliasson. Courtesy of the artist, neugerriemschneider, Berlin; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York © 2009 Olafur Eliasson

# OLAFUR ELIASSON

*Objets définis par l'activité*

Espace Muraille

24 January – 28 April 2018

A project initiated by Laurence Dreyfus

We are pleased to announce a solo exhibition by Olafur Eliasson at Espace Muraille, opening 24 January 2018. Founded by collector Caroline Freymond, Espace Muraille is a unique space dedicated to contemporary art, located in the heart of Geneva's Old Town. Eliasson's exhibition continues the space's programme of high-calibre exhibitions, which to date have included French artist Monique Frydman, Iranian artist Shirazeh Houshiary, Argentine artist Tomàs Saraceno, American artist Sheila Hicks, and British artist Edmund de Waal.

*Objets définis par l'activité* (Objects defined by activity) is organized around representative elements of Eliasson's artistic vocabulary – notably his work with perception, light, water, and colour – and includes several new installations produced especially for the space. Initiated by Laurence Dreyfus, the exhibition was developed in close collaboration with the artist and his studio. The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue.

Caroline and Eric Freymond are important patrons of Eliasson's work, which they have followed closely for many years. In the words of Caroline Freymond, 'Olafur Eliasson's art combines thought and action to create connections between different perceptions of the world at both the individual and collective scale; his interventions always enable us to reflect on the space we inhabit in a more considered and engaged manner. It is our great pleasure to present an exhibition at Espace Muraille devoted to "objects defined by activity". Beyond the purely aesthetic appeal of the works, the exhibition offers visitors a procession of experiential encounters as they move through a space transformed by experimentation with sensory perception, physical form, and movement in time.'

Olafur Eliasson

*Objets définis par l'activité* (Objects defined by activity)

Espace Muraille

from 24 January to 28 April 2018

Place des Casemates 5, 1204 Geneva, Switzerland

Tuesday-Friday from 10:00am to 12:00pm and from 1:00pm to 6:00pm

Saturday from 11:00am to 12:00pm and 1:00pm to 6:00pm

Access: Bus 3 and 5 to the Athénée stop

Free entry

For further information: [www.espacemuraille.com](http://www.espacemuraille.com)

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# *Olafur Eliasson: Objets définis par l'activité*

## Espace Muraille

*Olafur Eliasson: Objets définis par l'activité*, at Espace Muraille, brings together a selection of 16 artworks which attest to Olafur Eliasson's research on time, perception, space, movement, and the relativity of reality.

Eliasson is an artist who understands our era not only from a scientific and aesthetic point of view but also with a sense of communal ecological urgency, as exemplified by his projects *Little Sun*, *Ice Watch*, and *Green light – An artistic workshop*. The works in this exhibition are good examples of what the artist refers to as 'experimental setups' – they trigger viewers' perceptions, encourage them to move about and examine the works from various perspectives. This reflects Eliasson's idea that viewers play a key role in coproducing the artworks.

In the first room, a series of small sculptures explore Eliasson's geometric vocabulary as well as his experiments with reflection, refraction, and painting with light. Among these are a work comprising panes of coloured, hand-blown glass that depict two overlapping sets of ellipses; a new painting from Eliasson's colour experiment series that presents viewers with a confrontation between deep black and the colours of the rainbow; and a work that plays – via the magnifying capacity of a shallow concave mirror – with viewers' sense of scale.

The next room introduces watercolours that explore the effects of overlapping washes of colour or were created by allowing a fragment of glacial ice to melt atop a wash of watercolour pigment. Time is momentarily suspended when faced with the grace of these works, which encourage viewers to question humanity's impact on nature.

On the lower floor, visitors are greeted by *Black glass sun*, made from a dark circle of convex glass ringed by a bright halo of monofrequency light, and *The gaze of Versailles*, two golden eyes that gaze back at the viewer. Passing through a curtain into a darkened space, viewers encounter the final works in the exhibition: *Object defined by activity (now/soon/then)*. These three water-sculptures are revealed by the rhythmic flash of stroboscopic lights. Seemingly suspended by the flashes of light, the aquatic arrangements appear to freeze in time, although the sound of splashing droplets in the dark allows viewers to discern the ongoing process.

# OLAFUR ELIASSON

## Biography

Olafur Eliasson's art is driven by his interests in perception, movement, embodied experience, and feelings of self. Eliasson strives to make the concerns of art relevant to society at large. Art, for him, is a crucial means for turning thinking into doing in the world. Eliasson's diverse works – in sculpture, painting, photography, film, and installations – have been exhibited widely throughout the world. Not limited to the confines of the museum and gallery, his practice engages the broader public sphere through architectural projects and interventions in civic space.

Eliasson was born in 1967. He grew up in Iceland and Denmark and studied, from 1989 to 1995, at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. In 1995, he moved to Berlin and founded Studio Olafur Eliasson, which today encompasses some ninety craftsmen, specialised technicians, architects, archivists, administrators, programmers, art historians, and cooks.

Since the mid-1990s, Eliasson has realised numerous major exhibitions and projects around the world. In 2003, Eliasson represented Denmark at the 50th Venice Biennale, with *The blind pavilion*, and, later that year, he installed *The weather project* in Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, London. *The body as brain: Project Sammlung*, a series of site-specific interventions, took place at Kunsthaus Zug from 2003 to 2009. *Take your time: Olafur Eliasson*, a survey exhibition organised by SFMOMA in 2007, travelled until 2010 to various venues, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York. *Innen Stadt Aussen* (Inner City Out), at Martin-Gropius-Bau in 2010, involved interventions across Berlin as well as in the museum. In 2014, *Riverbed* filled an entire wing of Denmark's Louisiana Museum of Modern Art with stones and water, emulating a river in a rocky landscape; later that year, *Contact* formed the inaugural exhibition at Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris. *Verklighetsmaskiner* (Reality machines), at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm in 2015, became the museum's most visited show by a living artist. In 2016 Eliasson created a series of interventions for the palace and gardens of Versailles, including an enormous artificial waterfall that cascaded into the Grand Canal.

Eliasson's projects in public space include *Green river*, carried out in various cities between 1998 and 2001, and The New York City Waterfalls, commissioned by Public Art Fund, installed on the Manhattan and Brooklyn shorelines during summer 2008. *Ice Watch* brought melting icebergs from Greenland to Copenhagen in 2014 and to Paris on the occasion of the COP21 Climate Conference in 2015. *Your rainbow panorama*, a 150-metre circular, coloured-glass walkway situated on top of ARoS Museum in Aarhus, Denmark, opened in 2011, and Harpa Reykjavik Concert Hall and Conference Centre, for which Eliasson created the facades in collaboration with Henning Larsen Architects was completed that same year.

As a professor at the Berlin University of the Arts, Eliasson led the Institut für Raumexperimente (Institute for Spatial Experiments; 2009–14), a five-year experimental programme in arts education located in the same building as his studio ([www.raumexperimente.net](http://www.raumexperimente.net)).

In 2012, Eliasson and engineer Frederik Ottesen founded Little Sun. The social business and global project provides clean, affordable energy to communities without access to electricity through sales of solar-powered lamps and mobile chargers and raises global awareness of the need for equal access to energy and light ([littlesun.com](http://littlesun.com)).

Eliasson and architect Sebastian Behmann founded Studio Other Spaces, an international office for art and architecture, in Berlin in 2014. As an architectural counterpart to Studio Olafur Eliasson, Studio Other Spaces focuses on interdisciplinary and experimental building projects and works in public space ([studiootherspaces.net](http://studiootherspaces.net)).

Eliasson lives and works in Copenhagen and Berlin.

## Recent Publications

*Studio Olafur Eliasson: Open House*, published by Studio Olafur Eliasson, 2017, (EN)

*Olafur Eliasson: Green light – An artistic workshop*, published by Sternberg Press, 2017, (EN)

*Your Glacial Expectations*, published by Thames and Hudson, 2017, (EN)

*Olafur Eliasson Versailles*, published by Studio Olafur Eliasson, 2016, (EN)

*Studio Olafur Eliasson: The Kitchen*, published by Phaidon, 2016, (EN/FR)

*Studio Olafur Eliasson: The Kitchen*, published by Knesebeck, 2016 (DE)

*Studio Olafur Eliasson: Unspoken Spaces*, published by Thames & Hudson, 2016 (EN)

## Selected recent exhibitions

*Olafur Eliasson: Green light – An artistic workshop*, 57<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia VIVA ARTE VIVA, May 13 - November 26, 2017

*Olafur Eliasson: Nothingness is not nothing at all*, Long Museum, Shanghai, People's Republic of China, March 20 – June 26.

*Olafur Eliasson Versailles*, Palace of Versailles, France, June 5 – October 30.

*Olafur Eliasson: The parliament of possibilities*, LEEUM, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul, South Korea, September 28, 2016 – February 26, 2017.

*We have never been disembodied*, Mirrored Gardens, Hualong Agriculture Grand View Garden, Guangzhou, People's Republic of China, March 13 – July 15.

*Olafur Eliasson: Verklighetsmaskiner*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden, October 3, 2015 – January 17, 2016.

*Olafur Eliasson: BAROQUE BAROQUE*, The Winter Palace of Prince Eugene of Savoy, Vienna, Austria, November 21, 2015– March 6, 2016.

*Olafur Eliasson: Contact*, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, France, December 17, 2014 – February 16, 2015.

*Olafur Eliasson: Riverbed*, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark, August 20 – January 1, 2015.

## Save the date 2018

*Tree of Codes* by Wayne McGregor, Olafur Eliasson and Jamie xx with dancers from Company Wayne McGregor and Paris Opera Ballet, Sydney Festival 6-28 January, Australia, 2018

*Olafur Eliasson: Objets définis par l'activité*, Espace Muraille, Geneva, Switzerland, 24 January – 30 April 2018

*Olafur Eliasson: Reality projector*, Marciano Art Foundation, 1 March – August 2018, Los Angeles, US

*Olafur Eliasson*, Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany, / June – 2 September, 2018

*Olafur Eliasson: Northwest Passage*, permanent work at MIT.nano Building, Massachusetts, US, fall 2018

# Olafur Eliasson at Espace Muraille

By Caroline Freymond, founder

The first Olafur Eliasson work we acquired – *Bhutan borrowed view* (light purple, light orange, yellow, light purple) – dates from 2012. Although the artist was hardly unknown to us – he was preceded by his worldwide exhibitions since the mid-1990s – following that acquisition, we became acutely interested in him and in his creations.

We first met in his Berlin atelier, a former brewery and chocolate factory transformed into a research laboratory effervescent with creativity, where a vast team of scientists, artists, film-makers, architects, craftsmen, archivists – even chefs – actively work in service of an experimental and innovative vision of the world.

Olafur Eliasson's art combines thought and action to create connections between different perceptions of the world at both the individual and collective scale; his interventions always enable us to reflect on the space we inhabit in a more considered and engaged manner.

Thus, it is our great pleasure to present an exhibition at the Espace Muraille devoted to 'objects defined by activity'. Beyond the purely aesthetic appeal of the works, the exhibition offers visitors a procession of experiential encounters as they move through a space transformed by experimentation with sensory perception, physical form, and movement in time.

We have experienced this ourselves through each new encounter with Olafur and his experimentations (*Turner colour experiments* at the Tate Britain in 2014; *Contact* at the Fondation Louis Vuitton in 2015; *Olafur Eliasson Versailles* in 2016; *Tree of Codes*, a ballet performed at Opéra Garnier in 2017). In particular, we remember his very striking exhibition *Riverbed* at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark in 2014, where the museum space, overrun with stones and currents of water, completely changed our relationship to this space, to space itself, to time, to nature and to their respective meanings.

Like the first work we acquired, composed of a superposition of colourful plates of glass and shifting reflections, Eliasson's productions and installations possess ever-deepening meanings. We discover them layer after layer, consideration after consideration, experience after experience, and absorb them into the heart of a life in motion, engaged in a responsible present and future.

Lastly, we rejoice at the prospect of going to Iceland next summer, a country that serves as such a fundamental source of inspiration for Eliasson; it will surely enable us to perceive, with greater acuity, the importance that light, time, and nature play in the artist's approach.

As for the environs, I will never forget the rainbow that welcomed us in Denmark, when we attended the opening of *Riverbed* at the Louisiana, a sort of wink at this experience of colour, so dear to Eliasson and such a tribute to the light-source of life.

# Espace Muraille

## a singular space devoted to contemporary art in Geneva

Located in the old fortifications at the foot of Geneva's old town, Espace Muraille is a creative, animated and open space devoted to international contemporary art. It was created by Caroline and Eric Freymond, a couple of passionate and engaged art collectors.

Temporary exhibitions, artists' personal projects and works from a rich permanent collection succeed each other over two levels and 275 square metres. The project is situated in the foundations of an 18th century private hotel. This place charged with history was rethought and remodelled by MVT – a local architecture firm – in order to be turned over to contemporary art. A reinvention rather than a metamorphosis, aiming to preserve the magic of the old walls, which had long served as a cellar and were slumbering, forgotten, beneath layers of dust. According to Caroline Freymond, the creator and artistic director of Espace Muraille, the aim of the space is to "showcase contemporary artists and artisans as well as private collections, encouraging a rapprochement and dialogue between works; whether they have elements in common, or are diametrically opposed." Concerts, conferences, debates, meetings between creators and other cultural activities also take place in order to foster dialogue and exchange. The space tends to favour artists' personal projects which are imagined and carried out in situ.

Many projects have succeeded each other since the opening of the gallery in 2012, such as those conceived by the Parisian gallery owner Kamel Mennour – who gathered the artists François Morellet and Tadashi Kawamata for the "Carte Blanche" exhibition – or the Japanese plastic artist Yohei Nishimura and the pastellist Pierre Skira, who exhibited side by side around the theme of the book. The summer of 2015 saw an exhibition, which aimed to create a dialogue between the works of Anish Kapoor and Olafur Eliasson. Large-scale solo shows have been devoted to artists such as the French Monique Frydman, the Iranian Shirazeh Houshiary, the Argentine Tomàs Saraceno, the American Sheila Hicks or the British Edmund de Waal in January 2017.

Caroline Freymond, creator and artistic director of Espace Muraille, was a former international lawyer. After this first career, Caroline Freymond dedicated herself to her passion for the art. More than 10 years ago, she created at the same time Espace Muraille in Geneva and the gallery Menus Plaisirs in Gstaad. Her accurate look and her sharp sensibility allowed her to spot new talents upstream to their consecration on the international market.



# Laurence Dreyfus

## Initiator of the project

Laurence Dreyfus is an exhibition curator and advisor for the acquisition of works of art. She founded her company LDAC in 2000, which advises institutions, businesses and private collections in their approach to contemporary art. She travels the world all year round, searching for gems of contemporary art and modern masterpieces. She has curated several exhibitions in France and internationally, in such prestigious venues as the Lyon Museum of Contemporary Art for the Lyon Biennale, the Palais de Tokyo, and la maison rouge. She has also worked for the Lincoln Center in New York, the city of Geneva, the Caixa bank and the London art centre Parasol Unit. In 2015, she was selected as the exhibition curator for Espace Muraille in Geneva, where she put together *U-Topie de la couleur* by Monique Frydman, *Matière et sensation: Anish Kapoor et Olafur Eliasson* and *Aérocène* by Tomàs Saraceno, from November 17th, 2015 to February 13th, 2016.

Every year since 2006, Laurence Dreyfus has been invited to participate in the FIAC's VIP programme, within the framework of the *Chambres à part* exhibition cycle. Since 2009, she also showed some of Olafur Eliasson's artworks for this project. After more than 10 years of success in Paris, Laurence Dreyfus inaugurated the first American edition of *Chambres à part*, which took place during Art Basel Miami, from November 28th to December 3rd. The setting is as quirky as it is unprecedented: the exhibition happened in the heart of South Beach, in a 5-storey building renowned for having served as a backdrop in the legendary 1980s film Miami Vice.

In 2017, she set an exceptional exhibition at the Grand Musée du Parfum in Paris.

In the years to come, Laurence Dreyfus wishes to conquer new territories with international exhibitions.

Laurence Dreyfus follows the work of Olafur Eliasson since she discovered his work *Green river* in Bremen in 1998.

Since then, she constantly shows his artworks in her exhibitions *Chambres à Part* and advises her closest collectors to follow him.

## Media contacts

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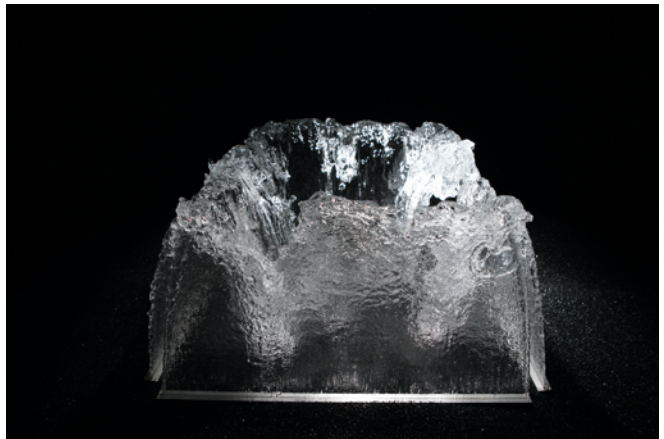
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Three small water fountains, each spouting in a different shape, are installed in a darkened space. Strobe lights placed immediately above each fountain illuminate the water droplets for an instant, producing the appearance of a static arrangement suspended in mid-air.

Olafur Eliasson, *Object defined by activity (now / soon / then)*, 2009

Water, stainless steel, foam plastic, plastic, pump, nozzles, strobe light. Dimensions variables

Installation view at 21<sup>st</sup> Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan, 2009

Photographer: Studio Olafur Eliasson

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

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