

Media release
Zurich, 16 January 2020

Kunsthaus Zürich presents 'Olafur Eliasson: Symbiotic seeing'

From 17 January to 22 March 2020 the Kunsthaus Zürich presents a major solo exhibition by Olafur Eliasson. At its centre is a new, space-filling installation that addresses a key issue of our times: the relationship and interplay between human and non-human actors on Earth. The exhibition is exclusive to the Kunsthaus Zürich.

Olafur Eliasson (b. 1967) is one of the most important artists working today. In a new, atmospherically dense installation developed specifically for the exhibition at the Kunsthaus Zürich that extends over more than 1,000m², the Danish-Icelandic artist speaks directly to the viewer's senses. The central installation is accompanied by new sculptures and light works.

SYMBIOSIS – A NEW FORM OF COEXISTENCE

Developed in close dialogue between Eliasson and curator Mirjam Varadinis, 'Symbiotic seeing' tackles themes such as coexistence and symbiosis and aims to achieve a fundamental shift of perspective. Eliasson invites us not only to reflect on climate change – as a consequence of human action – but also to comprehend the human being as part of a larger system. He sets out to critically interrogate the relationship and hierarchy between humans and other species on Earth, and create space for other ways of living together. He successfully translates these complex theoretical deliberations into spatial situations that not only appeal to people rationally but also touch them emotionally and move them physically.

NEW INSTALLATION

In the central work 'Symbiotic seeing', tiny whirls, currents and eddies form above visitors' heads, as the mist reacts to the body heat and movements of the people standing beneath. Audio accompaniment comes from a specially composed sound score by Hildur Gudnadottir played live on a cello by a robotic arm – a gesture towards artificial intelligence and the creation of non-organic substitutes for humanity that will be new actors shaping our future. 'Symbiotic seeing' creates space for reflection and sharing: #symbioticseeing.

AN ARTIST IN DIALOGUE

Olafur Eliasson is a socially and environmentally committed artist who engages in dialogue with politicians and NGOs. He was appointed a Goodwill Ambassador for climate action by the UN in September 2019. Eliasson is convinced that the language of art has the potential to get people moving. He is known for space-filling works that prompt audiences to reflect on themselves and the world as they experience them. From his studio in Berlin, Eliasson has been working since the mid-1990s with a large team of specialists in fields spanning design, architecture, research and multimedia. In addition to the teams and workshops, the studio has its own kitchen in which meals are taken communally.

PUBLICATIONS

Exhibition catalogue

'Olafur Eliasson: Symbiotic Seeing' (Snoeck-Verlag, 160 pages, CHF 39) offers an insight into the development of the exhibition and brings together texts that served as inspiration for both the concept and the new works. Authors include the art historian Caroline A. Jones, feminist and historian of the natural sciences Donna J. Haraway, evolutionary theorist and biologist Lynn Margulis, and the philosopher Timothy Morton. There is also an interview in which curator Mirjam Varadinis and Olafur Eliasson share thoughts. The publication, in German and English, is available from the Kunsthaus shop. From mid-February it will be complemented by a photo documentary element that has still to be completed.

Digitorial

What lies behind the art of Olafur Eliasson? How does he work, and how does his work touch us? The exhibition is accompanied by an online digitorial, available at eliasson.kunsthaus.ch, containing information and background on Eliasson and his work – ideal preparation for those new to the artist and keen to visit the show.

EVENTS

'Black Out': on 23 January and 6 February, open until 11 p.m.

Some years ago, Olafur Eliasson launched the 'Little Sun' project, an initiative that uses small, solar-powered lamps in the form of a flower to bring light to parts of the world that have no, or only irregular, access to electricity. The two 'Black Out' events accompanying the exhibition illustrate what that means. The electric lighting in the museum will be turned off and visitors will be able to visit part of the Kunsthaus Collection in the dark, equipped only with 'Little Sun' lamps. Part of the proceeds of this action will go to the Little Sun project.

Guided tours for all. Workshops for schools

Public guided tours in German take place on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. and Sundays at 11 a.m. A guided tour for English-speaking visitors takes place on Saturday 8

February at 4 p.m. Registration is not required. Appointments for private guided tours with a choice of languages, as well as workshops for schools, are available on request.

Supported by Swiss Re – Partner for contemporary art and Art Mentor Foundation Lucerne.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Kunsthaus Zürich, Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zurich

Tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 84, www.kunsthaus.ch

Fri–Sun/Tue 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Wed, Thu 10 a.m.–8 p.m. For public holiday opening see www.kunsthaus.ch.

Admission CHF 23 / CHF 18 (concessions and groups). Combination tickets including the collection and exhibition CHF 26 / CHF 19. Admission free to visitors under the age of 17. Information subject to change.

Advance sales: Zurich Tourism, tourist information office in Zurich main railway station, tel. +41 44 215 40 00, info@zuerich.com, www.zuerich.com.

SBB RailAway combination ticket, with discount on admission when travelling by public transport: www.sbb.ch/kunsthaus-zuerich.

NOTE TO EDITORS

This media release, illustrations of works and photos of the current exhibition as well as a portrait of the artist are available for download at www.kunsthaus.ch/en/medien-bereich/media-corner/. Contact and further information on the exhibition:

Kunsthaus Zürich, Björn Quellenberg

bjorn.quellenberg@kunsthaus.ch, +41 (0)44 253 84 11

For more information about Olafur Eliasson see: www.olafureliasson.net.

Twitter: [@olafureliasson](https://twitter.com/olafureliasson). Instagram: [@studiolafureliasson](https://www.instagram.com/studiolafureliasson) and [@SOE_Kitchen](https://www.instagram.com/SOE_Kitchen)