

GPC Members Meeting 2018: Building Trust for Philanthropic

Impact

Asia Society, 725 Park Avenue, New York, NY

Wednesday, May 9, 2018

9:00 am – 4:30 pm



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. 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. Similarly, in 2011, Seu corpo da obra (Your body of work) engaged with three institutions around São Paulo – SESC Pompeia, SESC Belenzinho, and Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo – and spread out into the city itself. 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 Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2007, designed together with Kjetil Thorsen. The New York City Waterfalls, commissioned by Public Art Fund, were installed on 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. In 2012, Eliasson and engineer Frederik Ottesen founded Little Sun. The social business and global project provides clean, affordable light to communities without access to electricity; encourages

sustainable development through sales of the Little Sun solar-powered lamp, designed by Eliasson and Ottesen; and raises global awareness of the need for equal access to energy and light.

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.

Eliasson lives and works in Copenhagen and Berlin.

John Heller works in Consulting Services at Synergos. He leads our efforts to partner with global corporations to build sustainable businesses and create social impact.

Previously he served as our Senior Director, Partnerships, where he was instrumental in the creation of a growing portfolio of inclusive partnership initiatives; examples include the African Public Health Leadership & Systems Innovation Initiative in Namibia, the Partnership for Child Nutrition in India, and the Aboriginal Multi-Stakeholder Leadership Initiative in Canada. Prior to heading the Partnerships Program, Heller directed the Synergos Senior Fellowship program, a global service and learning initiative for senior-level social leaders from around the world; he also led efforts to strengthen civil society organizations in Southeast Asia.

Prior to joining Synergos, Mr. Heller worked with the Council on International Educational Exchange, the Open Society Institute, the Population and Community Development Association and with his own family's commercial real estate firm. He served for two years as a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer in rural Thailand working on village-level income generation, nutrition and sanitation projects. Heller speaks fluent Thai and Spanish and holds a BA in Sociology from Haverford College and an MA in International Affairs from Columbia University.