

Studio Olafur Eliasson

Press release



Studio Olafur Eliasson – Open House TYT [Take Your Time], Vol. 7

Edited by Olafur Eliasson, Anna Engberg-Pedersen, Joanna Warsza, Christina Werner

Published 15 June 2017

Olafur Eliasson is an artist that you can't think about without thinking of his studio. The new book *Studio Olafur Eliasson – Open House* welcomes readers into the heart of his Berlin studio to consider lines of questioning that animate the studio's working processes. How is art made? What constitutes the journey from initial hunch to final artwork? How does art production play out when more hands and minds are at work than just those of the artist? And what is art's role in society today? How can art intensify its social and political engagement – while staying art?

Picking up on the Scandinavian tradition of an open house, in which the home is opened to all visitors, the book provides insight into how the studio works from the development of artworks and projects to research, communication, working conditions, outreach, and advocacy. Conceived and edited in collaboration with independent curator Joanna Warsza, who conducted extensive interviews with studio members, this book is a candid self-portrait of Eliasson's studio. Diverse texts and abundant photographs invite readers to explore the

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kitchen's hands-on take on the politics of food; the processes of the metal and wood workshops; the experimental approach to arts education at the Institut für Raumexperimente (Institute for Spatial Experiments); the strategies for spatial research at Studio Other Spaces, an office for art and architecture founded by Eliasson together with Sebastian Behmann; and the global dialogues of Little Sun, Eliasson's social business.

The publication focuses on both artistic processes within the studio and the studio's exchanges with the broader world. *Open House* follows ideas from their initial *emergence* to their *embodiment* as artworks or projects and shows the forms of *engagement* in which Eliasson and his studio are increasingly invested – research, dialogue, and ideas-turned-into-action. It sheds light on how some of Eliasson's recent interventions and projects came about – including *Ice Watch* and *Green light – An artistic workshop* (now at *Viva Arte Viva*, the 57th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia), two projects that address the vital issues of climate change and global migration.

Photographs of the studio, interviews with Eliasson and members of the studio team, excerpts from books that inspire the studio's daily practice, and texts from external collaborators – including neuroscientists, economists, social scientists, curators, playwrights, philosophers, psychologists, and climate scientists – bring readers into the very midst of the studio as a site of artistic production, intellectual exchange, and social engagement.

Alongside *Green light – An artistic workshop*, this book is a contribution by Eliasson to *Viva Arte Viva*, the 57th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, curated by Christine Macel.

Studio Olafur Eliasson – Open House is the seventh volume in the studio's *TYT [Take Your Time]* series

With contributions from Mohammad Al Attar, Eric Ellingsen, Mark Godfrey, Hadeel Ibrahim, Mihret Kebede, Jonathan Ledgard, Tim Morton, Boris Ondreicka, Claire Petitmengin, Andreas Roepstorff, Kazuyo Sejima, Pireeni Sundaralingam, Günther Vogt, Hortensia Völckers, and Elke Weber

And interviews by Joanna Warsza with studio members Sebastian Behmann, Bendix Carabetta, Jesper Dyrehauge, Caroline Eggel, Olafur Eliasson, Anna Engberg-Pedersen, Felix Hallwachs, Florian Hollunder, Biljana Joksimović-Große, Boris Maas, Lauren Maurer, Kerstin Palermo, Vajra Spook, Christian Uchtmann, and Christina Werner

Published by Studio Olafur Eliasson, Berlin
Available through Buchhandlung Walther König
190 x 255 mm; 396 pp.
Paperback
c. 250 colour photographs
€39.80

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About Olafur Eliasson

Olafur Eliasson works in a wide range of media, including installation, painting, sculpture, photography, and film. As a part of his practice, he engages with arts education, policy-making, and the issues of sustainability, access to clean energy, and climate change. Since 1997, his solo shows have appeared in major museums around the world. Eliasson's projects in public spaces include *The New York City Waterfalls* in 2008, and *Ice Watch*, shown in Copenhagen in 2014 and Paris in 2015.

About Studio Olafur Eliasson

Established in 1995, Studio Olafur Eliasson consists of about ninety craftsmen, specialized technicians, architects, archivists, art historians, web and graphic designers, film-makers, cooks, and administrators. They work with Eliasson to develop, produce, and install artworks, projects, and exhibitions, as well as on experimentation, archiving, research, publishing, and communications. The studio team works in a former brewery in Berlin alongside Eliasson's social business Little Sun and the office for art and architecture Studio Other Spaces, recently founded together with long-time collaborator Sebastian Behmann.

About Joanna Warsza

Joanna Warsza, who has collaborated on numerous projects with the Institut für Raumexperimente (Institute for Spatial Experiments), is an independent curator and the head of the Curator-Lab at Konstfack University, Stockholm. She is also artistic director of Public Art Munich 2018. She recently edited the reader *I can't work like this: On recent boycotts in contemporary art* (Berlin: Sternberg, 2017).

About Anna Engberg-Pedersen

Anna Engberg-Pedersen is head of Research and Communications at Studio Olafur Eliasson.

About Christina Werner

Christina Werner co-directed the Institut für Raumexperimente (Institute of Spatial Experiments) as part of the Berlin University of the Arts (2009–2014). She continues to do special projects for the institute.

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Notes to Editor

Selected quotes:

Olafur Eliasson:

‘[One of the] basic questions behind . . . *Open House* . . . stems from Christine Macel’s invitation to participate in her Viva Arte Viva Biennale this year. Christine has set out to explore the processes that occur in artists’ studios, believing them to be relevant to understanding and participating in the world today. I share that trust. My participation in the biennale has two tracks: the one, embodied by *Green light – An artistic workshop*, examines inclusion, exclusion, and social interaction; the other, central to this book, is devoted to the fuzzy feelings, rhythms, and processes of form-finding and decision-making involved in art-making. *Open House* examines and, hopefully, makes intelligible the artistic processes that take place in my studio and its exchanges with the world. The book focuses on making these processes felt from within the everyday studio work, rather than on presenting finished artworks.’

‘I have been pushing for art to act on its responsibility and for others to understand its potential. My motivation is simple: I think art and culture are incredibly robust and have so much to offer, also outside the cultural sectors. There is ultimately no space in which art cannot work. Culture has consequences for how we see the world and how we make the world. It is crucial to our feelings of being connected and of global responsibility, and it can build bridges between local and global contexts. The arts embrace diversity, often generate a sense of trust and inclusion, and even cultivate feelings of empathy and compassion. And we need more of that.’

Joanna Warsza:

‘The process [of making this book] resembled the old Scandinavian tradition of the open house, in which one simply, often at the “round birthday”, opens the doors of one’s own

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house and welcomes anybody to drop in. This book, the results of one of those occasional, slightly odd parties, is an exhibition of the domicile, both staged and honest.'

'What seemed to me like an exciting direction was a set of questions that are in some ways close to the interests of the studio: how can art become more than art? Can it really change anything? How does it relate to activism, politics, or business? Don't we overestimate its capacities in this regard, only because it makes us feel better to think it can have a greater effect? Can it become powerful on its own as part of a larger societal and political picture, especially now?'

'In keeping with Olafur's stamina for working, networking, and outreach, and the direction the studio is taking . . . we felt that it was worth asking what to do, here and now, in the current political climate, with all the means we dispose of? This question was sent out to many of the studio's associates and friends – scientists, political thinkers, artists, curators, and philosophers – who kindly returned a dense collection of ideas, methods, and practices.'