

Press Release

EVERYONE INVITED TO SHARE OLAFUR ELIASSON'S NEW ARTWORK AS PART OF SERPENTINE'S BACK TO EARTH INITIATIVE

Images of Earth perspectives available for [download](#)

Earth perspectives, a new participatory artwork by Olafur Eliasson, which invites people to reflect on the co-existence of multiple world views, launches today, Earth Day: Wednesday 22 April 2020.

[PRESS IMAGES AT SERPENTINEGALLERIES.ORG/PRESS](https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/press)



Image: Olafur Eliasson, Earth perspectives, 2020
The Earth viewed over the Great Barrier Reef, Australia

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The commission is a response to the Serpentine's 50th anniversary *Back to Earth* programme, inviting leading artists, musicians, architects, poets, filmmakers, scientists, thinkers and designers to propose artworks and projects that are also a call to action in response to the climate emergency. *Back to Earth* runs throughout the Serpentine's programmes onsite, offsite and online in 2020 and beyond.

Olafur Eliasson has created a series of nine images of the Earth, each of which has been abstracted by turning the planet on a different axis. Each image also denotes a particular spot on Earth with a "dot". If a viewer stares at the dot for about ten seconds and then trains their focus onto a blank surface, an afterimage appears in the complementary colours of Eliasson's visual - the viewer literally projects a new world view.

The first image will be unveiled at 10:00 BST on Instagram with eight further images posted subsequently every hour, each one a different view of the planet. The artwork will also be available for download at olafureliasson.net and serpentinegalleries.org and the [Bloomberg Connects app](#).

The work explores how maps, space and the earth itself are all to a certain extent construction, which we all have the power to see from other perspectives, whether individually or collectively.

Olafur Eliasson's relationship with the Serpentine dates to his commission for the Serpentine Pavilion made with Kjetil Thorsen in 2007 and his participation in the Experiment Marathon that autumn.

Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director and Bettina Korek, Chief Executive, Serpentine Galleries said: "For our 50th anniversary programme, we have invited artists, thinkers, designers and architects from across the world to create works that respond to the climate emergency. Ecology is an integral component of the Serpentine's history, and very much of our present, as well, as we now exist in a society adapting to a world changed by coronavirus. We must look to artists for guidance on how to shape the future and we are honoured that Olafur Eliasson has produced a new work for *Back to Earth*."

Olafur Eliasson said: "Today, 'the world as we know it' is a phrase of the past. The current health crisis has brought our societies close to a halt, affecting our economies, our freedoms and even our social ties. We must take the time to empathise with all those struck by the crisis and also seize this opportunity to imagine together the earth that we want to inhabit in the future - in all its wonders and beauty, in the face of all the challenges ahead of us.

Earth perspectives envisions the earth we want to live on together by welcoming multiple perspectives – not only human perspectives but also those of plants, animals, and nature. A glacier's perspective deviates from that of a human. The same goes for a river. On Earth Day, I want to advocate – as on any other day – that we recognise these various perspectives and, together, celebrate their co-existence."

Olafur Eliasson originally conceived one Earth perspective map for the magazine *Real Review*.

Sequence of posts for Earth Perspectives

1.

The Earth viewed over the Great Barrier Reef, Australia

The world's biggest single structure made by living organisms, now dying due to human activity and mass coral bleaching.

2.

The Earth viewed over the Mariana Trench, Pacific Ocean

The deepest trench on Earth, reaching almost 11,000 meters below sea level. Despite its extremity, both living organisms and human-made plastics have been found at its bottom.

3.

The Earth viewed over Yakutia, in Siberia, Russia

Rising temperatures are thawing permafrost in this remote region, deforming landscapes, releasing large quantities of methane, and disrupting animal migration patterns.

4.

The Earth viewed over the Ganges River, India

A sacred waterway granted the same legal rights as a human being by an Indian court in 2017.

5.

The Earth viewed over the Simien Mountains, Ethiopia

One of the rare places in Africa where snow falls regularly, this range is part of the Ethiopian Highlands, known as the 'Roof of Africa'.

6.

The Earth viewed over Chernobyl, in Pripyat, Ukraine

The site of the worst nuclear disaster in history, where rare and endangered species now thrive in the absence of humans.

7.

The Earth viewed over the Greenland ice sheet

A continent-wide ice sheet produced by falling snow over millions of years, now melting at staggering rates due to human-induced climate change.

8.

The Earth viewed over Ecuador

The first country in the world to recognize Rights of Nature in their Constitution, ratified in 2008. Nature has the 'right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles'.

9.

The Earth viewed over the South Pole

The pole is at the heart of the virtually uninhabited continent of Antarctica, a vital ice-covered wildlife haven that is under threat from rapid warming and ice loss.

Social media

@serpentineuk

Twitter: @olafureliasson

Instagram: @studiolafureliasson

#EarthPerspectives

#BackToEarth

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Press images at serpentinegalleries.org/press

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Olafur Eliasson biography

Olafur Eliasson's art is driven by his interests in perception, movement, embodied experience and feelings of self. He 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 works span sculpture, painting, photography, film and installation. Not limited to the confines of the museum and gallery, his practice engages the broader public sphere through architectural projects, interventions in civic space, arts education, policy-making and issues of sustainability and climate change.

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 comprises a large team, including craftsmen, architects, archivists, researchers, administrators, cooks, programmers, art historians and specialised technicians.

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*. 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 and mounted two large-scale exhibitions: *Nothingness is not nothing at all*, at Long Museum, Shanghai, and *The parliament of possibilities*, at Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul. *Green light – An artistic workshop*, created in collaboration with TBA21 (Thyssen-

Bornemisza Art Contemporary), offers a response to the challenges of mass displacement and migration. Originally hosted by TBA21 in Vienna in 2016, the project was part of Viva Arte Viva, the 57th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, in 2017. Eliasson's site-specific installation *Reality projector* opened at the Marciano Foundation, Los Angeles, in March 2018, the same month as his solo exhibition *The unspeakable openness of things* at Red Brick Art Museum, Beijing. Olafur Eliasson: *WASSERfarben* opened at the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung in the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, in June 2018. In July 2019, Eliasson's *In real life* opened at Tate Modern, London, and, in 2020, the exhibition travelled to Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. In 2020 Eliasson also opened *Symbiotic seeing* at *Kunsthaus Zurich*.

Eliasson has also produced numerous projects in public space. *Green river* was carried out in various cities between 1998 and 2001. Eliasson designed Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2007 together with architect Kjetil Thorsen for London's Kensington Gardens. *The New York City Waterfalls*, commissioned by the Public Art Fund, were installed along the city's waterfronts in 2008. *Your rainbow panorama*, a circular coloured-glass walkway atop ARoS Museum, Aarhus, Denmark, opened in 2011. Harpa Reykjavik Concert Hall and Conference Centre, 2011, for which Eliasson created the facades in collaboration with Henning Larsen Architects, won the Mies van der Rohe Award 2013. *Ice Watch* brought melting icebergs from Greenland to Copenhagen in 2014 and to Paris on the occasion of the COP21 Climate Conference in 2015. Fjordenhus in Vejle, Denmark, the first building designed entirely by Eliasson, Sebastian Behmann, and Studio Olafur Eliasson, was completed in June 2018.

In 2012, Eliasson and engineer Frederik Ottesen founded the social business, Little Sun. This global project provides clean, affordable energy to communities without access to electricity, encourages sustainable development through sales of Little Sun solar-powered lamps and chargers, and raises global awareness of the need for equal access to energy and light. www.littlesun.com

In 2019 Eliasson was appointed Goodwill Ambassador for renewable energy and climate action by the United Nations Development Programme.

He lives and works in Copenhagen and Berlin.

About Back to Earth

serpentinegalleries.org/exhibitions-events/back-earth

Back to Earth is a new multi-year project that invites over sixty leading artists, architects, poets, filmmakers, scientists, thinkers and designers, to devise artist-led campaigns, protocols and initiatives responding to the environmental crisis, with the support of partner organisations and networks. Interdisciplinary at its very core, *Back to Earth* will manifest throughout all of the Serpentine's programmes onsite, offsite and online, sharing its resources to amplify ongoing projects or campaigns, or develop new ones.

Back to Earth is curated and produced by:

Rebecca Lewin, Curator, Exhibitions and Design
Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director
Jo Paton, Chief Producer
Lucia Pietroiusti, Curator, General Ecology
Holly Shuttleworth, Producer
Kostas Stasinopoulos, Assistant Curator, Live Programmes
with further collaborations taking place across the entire organisation of
the Serpentine Galleries.

Back to Earth emerges from the Serpentine's long-standing engagement with ecology and the entanglement of topics it touches. Key thematic commissions include artist Gustav Metzger's landmark solo show *Decades* (2009), and the 2014 Extinction Marathon, which Metzger co-curated. Now well established, General Ecology is the Serpentine's multi-disciplinary and multi-platform strand that embeds environmental and ecological concerns across the Galleries' programmes, infrastructure and networks.

About the Serpentine

Earth perspectives is part of *Back to Earth*, a long-term project by Serpentine Galleries inviting more than 65 leading artists, musicians, architects, poets, filmmakers, scientists, thinkers and designers to propose artworks, environmental campaigns and initiatives in response to the climate emergency. *Back to Earth* will unfold over the coming months, with new campaigns announced regularly, and will run throughout the Serpentine's programmes onsite, offsite and online, in 2020 and beyond.

Championing the possibilities of new ideas in contemporary art, the Serpentine has presented pioneering exhibitions for half a century from a wide range of emerging practitioners to the most internationally recognised artists of our time. The Serpentine's 50th anniversary year in 2020 looks to the future with a programme that responds to the urgent issues of today. Key themes include ecology and the climate emergency, equality and education and the impact of digital and new technologies.

Across two sites in London's Kensington Gardens, the Serpentine Galleries present a year-round, free programme of exhibitions, architecture, education, live events and technological innovation, in the park and beyond.

The Serpentine Galleries are closed until further notice in response to the COVID-19 situation.

Our office hours remain 10am–6pm, with staff working remotely.

While our buildings are closed and live programmes suspended, our work continues. Join the Serpentine's programme online through special broadcasts, podcasts and digital commissions via our social media @SerpentineUK and the Bloomberg Connects app.

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