

OLAFUR ELIASSON

Your engagement sequence

April 28-May 27, 2006

Opening Reception, April 28, 6-8pm

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is very pleased to present *Your engagement sequence*, Olafur Eliasson's fifth solo exhibition at the gallery.

Through his installations, sculpture and photography, Olafur Eliasson suggests that perception must be studied and understood within the context of one's environment and as a construction of culture. The artist has created numerous works, or situations, that present opportunities for visitors to engage with basic, familiar elements such as water, light, wind, temperature or vegetation and to observe them in an unfamiliar context. Often these situations provoke experiences and interactions to which the visitors themselves contribute, as much as any element or environment provided by the artist. Indeed, it is the realignment and reconfiguration of the traditional subject / object relationship within the context of contemporary art that serves as the core of Eliasson's artmaking practice. Eliasson is also interested in the effect of time upon the understanding of space, thus making art that can be considered "temporal." It is widely understood that time, is perhaps the fourth dimension and we cannot understand the universe without acknowledging that space (and our surroundings in general) changes over a given duration. Further, if we agree that every individual, indeed every fragment of energy or mass, has an effect upon every other fragment of energy and mass in the universe, then Eliasson suggests that this "effect," must also be taken into consideration as we attempt to understand the world. Eliasson has even proposed a new metric, or term, for this "effect:" *Your engagement sequence*, or YES, for short. In the artist's words:

"...YES, or the fifth dimension, creates a perspective that is personal; it functions to individualize the other dimensions of space. I am interested in the potential inherent in giving the individual subject this dimensionality as a sort of tool that relativizes the other existent, presumed static dimensions upon which our conception of space is based.... By including YES as a central element of perception, the governing dogma of timelessness and static objecthood may be renegotiated, thus making your responsibility for an active engagement in the concrete situation apparent... In other words, engagement has consequences and these entail some feeling of responsibility."

"Your negotiable panorama," installed in the main space of the ground floor exhibition galleries is an exceptional model of the individual's effect upon and responsibility for her surroundings. First, the artist constructs a nearly 360-degree, or spiral, room for the visitor to enter, immediately negating a certain comfort zone of experience, particularly at a contemporary art space, which has become synonymous with the white cube. At the center of the space, a light source projects from the middle of a large table supporting a circular pool of water. The elements are configured so that light projects off the water's surface, onto the curved walls, which results in a slightly wavering 360 degree band of light. A spectacular wavelike pattern is generated each time someone enters or exits the space, as a trigger (step) is set up to agitate the surface of the water at this single point of entry. Fantastic in terms of visual stimulation, the model experiments with the relationship between cause and effect, individual experience and the construction of perception.

Just behind "Your negotiable panorama", in the rear ground floor gallery, Eliasson has installed "The uncertain museum" which continues to challenge the viewer's traditional notions of perception. A spiral of translucent scrim defines the walls of "The uncertain museum"; within this room, there are three circular glass disks, that hang from slowly spinning motors attached to the ceiling. The surface of each disk is both translucent and reflective, alternating in concentric circles between clear glass and mirror. Light from a single bright spotlight, shines on the disks, simultaneously penetrating and reflecting off of them as they turn, the concentric patterns of light and shadow created are projected onto the scrim and can be seen from the interior and exterior of the room. In "The uncertain museum", again the visitor will be able to interact with the piece, viewing themselves reflected on the surface of the discs, while at the same time observing the space through the discs as the patterns of light and shadow fall upon their surroundings.

Upstairs, in the large gallery space on the second floor, Eliasson has installed a work entitled "The inverted mirror sphere." As illustrated in the artist's 2003 exhibition at the gallery, titled *Modelroom*, Eliasson is fascinated with the influence of architecture upon experience in general, and particularly celebrates architecture that allows the individual to renegotiate her experience within its confines. In this sense, the artist takes inspiration from Buckminster Fuller as perhaps the greatest anti-Modernist of architectural theory. Eliasson has referenced Fuller's geodesic domes in numerous works and this process has led to a series of projects involving mathematical patterns and symmetries. "Inverted mirror sphere" represents the height of Eliasson's study in spatial construction, presenting a sphere composed of a torqued spiral of steel tubes and geometric patterns of steel and mirror. Set within the sphere is a source of bright light. With the inclusion of the light source, a 360-degree projection is achieved, revealing the negative spaces on the sphere's surface while simultaneously projecting the sphere's pattern onto the surrounding gallery floor and walls.

In the small gallery of the second floor, Eliasson has designed another room installation that takes the image of a neon compass as a point of departure. An arrow flashing briefly in each position on the compass, suggests that one's orientation, or the sense of one's place in the landscape, is similarly an issue of construction and one that requires study and appreciation in order to attain greater consciousness. In this work, we are left to ponder the direction where the arrow points and the fact that there is no single answer, or truth, to the arrow's orientation.

Olafur Eliasson is among the most influential and widely acclaimed artists of his generation. Important early exhibitions include *Manifesta 1*, Rotterdam (1996); *Truce*: SITE Santa Fe (1997); Johannesburg Biennial (1998); Sao Paolo Biennial (1998); The Carnegie International 99/00; and each of the past four Venice Biennales (represented Denmark in their national pavilion in 2003) among numerous others. Eliasson has had solo exhibitions at the Art Institute of Chicago (1999); the ICA Boston (2001); Turbine Hall, Tate Modern (2003); Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg (2003); Kunsthalle Zug (2004); the Aspen Art Museum (2004); Boijmans van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam (2005); Malmö Konsthall (2005) and many more. Eliasson will have his first major survey exhibition in 2007 that will open at San Francisco, MoMA and travel.

We are very pleased to announce that Olafur Eliasson's *Your Engagement Sequence* will serve as the inaugural show of the gallery's newly expanded exhibition space on the ground floor of our current premises.

Upcoming exhibitions:

THOMAS SCHEIBITZ, June-July, 2006, ground floor

DIRK STEWEN, June-July, 2006, second floor