

for immediate release

Olafur Eliasson

Your now is my surroundings

October 24 to December 2, 2000

Opening reception: Tuesday, October 24, 5-8pm

Bonakdar Jancou Gallery is pleased to present 'Your now is my surroundings,' Olafur Eliasson's third exhibition with the gallery.

In 'Your now is my surroundings,' Eliasson has converted the interior of the main gallery space into an exterior courtyard. The glass panels from the skylight have been removed. Beneath the skylight, a space has been constructed to the exact dimensions of the opening in the ceiling. Glass mirror has been installed onto each of the four walls of the constructed space, starting at 68 inches above the floor (an approximation of 'eye-level') and spanning to the mouth of the open skylight.

The 'courtyard' is entered and exited through the same front door. A darkened corridor, created by the space between the exterior of the courtyard and the interior of the main gallery, leads the visitor to a window-like opening in an internal gallery wall. Channelling daylight into the darkened space, the opening offers a kaleidoscopic view out across 21st street from the main gallery, by way of a mirror-lined shaft that runs through an adjacent second gallery that continues through the gallery office. The second gallery offers an external view of the of this mirror shaft, as does the office area.

Clearly engaged in an architectural discourse, 'Your now is my surroundings' presents architecture as an experience, an investigation of the individual perception of space and orientation. Eliasson has effected the function of the space so that it acts as a veritable 'viewing machine,' or camera, with the individual visitor as the iris, and memory as film. The experience of the visitor is utterly reconfigured, even reversed, as the visitor does not only look at an object set within the gallery, or an architectural space, from the outside - in; but rather, the gaze is re-directed from the inside - out. This raises the issue of a 'double perspective,' that is, 'seeing yourself seeing,' elucidating our capacity not only to see, but to see from where it is we stand and look.

The installation further deals with issues of movement, social relations and individual freedom, or rather, the freedom from homogeneity of the heavily coded public space. Eliasson is interested in shifting the way in which our surroundings are laid out and perceived according to convention, emphasizing that perhaps our greatest commonality is that we are different. Our experiences are then understood and given meaning through representational layers that are individually assigned. But universally, experience (be it rooted in the past in the form of memory, or the future in the form of anticipation) is perceived in the present, in the 'now,' as informed and projected by the sensory stimuli put forth by the surroundings. Here, Eliasson has created an 'open' space, or 'decoded' chamber, for the visitor to enter and perceive architecture as experience.

In the past year, Eliasson's numerous one-person museum exhibitions included the Neu Galerie, Graz; Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg; the Irish Museum of Modern Art and the Art Institute of Chicago; while also participating in the Venice Biennial and the Carnegie International, among other international survey exhibitions. Later this year, Eliasson will have a museum solo exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston.