

your curious journey

olafur
eliasson

I. INTRODUCTION

Your Curious Journey is a significant traveling exhibition by Icelandic-Danish artist Olafur Eliasson (b. 1967). On view from 9 July to 15 November 2026, the exhibition marks the final leg of an extensive international tour that included the Singapore Art Museum (SAM), Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Taipei Fine Arts Museum (TFAM), and Museum MACAN in Jakarta.

Your Curious Journey offers a comprehensive survey of Eliasson's three-decade practice, centering on themes of perception, embodiment, and the climate emergency.

II. PRE-VISIT

While the Earth's climate has and will always naturally fluctuate between colder glacial "ice ages" and warmer interglacial periods, a point of growing concern in recent years is global warming and its anthropogenic or human-made causes.

For the past two centuries, the Earth has been warming at a rate more rapidly than before. Modern global warming is mainly caused by the sun's heat getting trapped on Earth by an excessive build-up of greenhouse gases.

While greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide are naturally occurring, extreme amounts have been produced since industrialization, largely due to human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels like petroleum and coal for fuel. Deforestation is also a major cause of the changing climate, as trees are among the few key organisms that can replenish oxygen while absorbing carbon dioxide (Britannica).

Evidently, the natural world is made up of seemingly unrelated but interconnected parts, and humanity, despite technological leaps and advancements, will always remain a part of the ecosystem. This undeniable connection is something Olafur Eliasson is acutely aware of and interested in, which inspires much of the work seen here in *Your Curious Journey*.

III.

REFLECTION

GUIDE

- What are changes in temperature or seasons that you have observed? Have changes in weather become more dramatic?
- How have weather changes or naturally occurring events like storms affected your life?
- Are there any changes in the natural environment around you that you've noticed? Perhaps trees near your home have been cut down, or new flora have been planted. How has it affected your environment, your neighborhood, and your family?

IV.

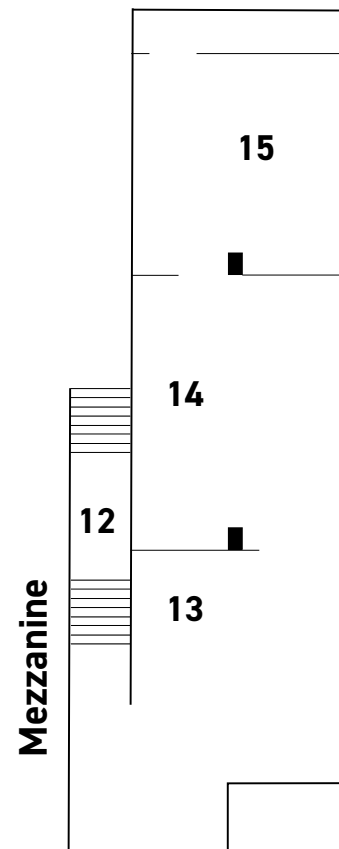
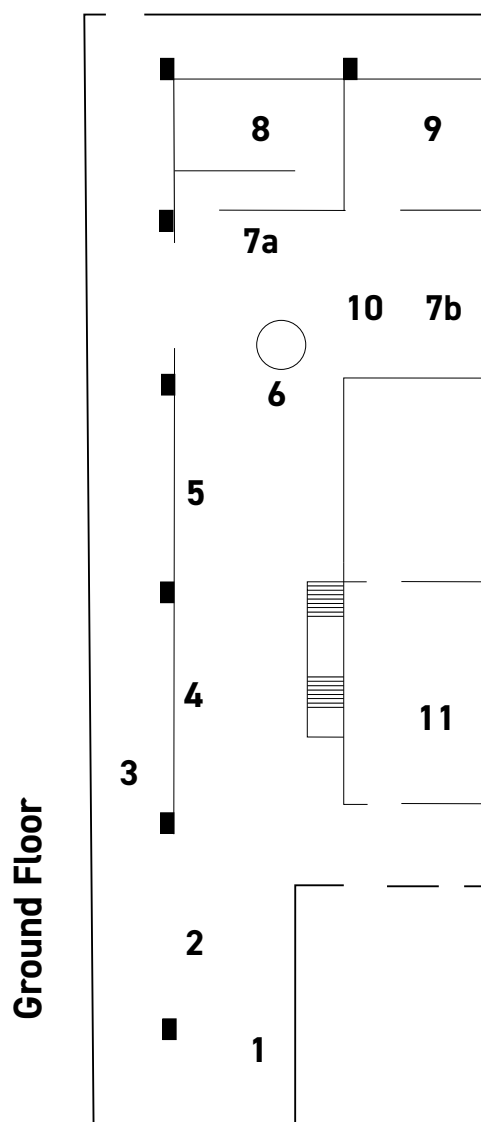
RECOMMENDED MEDIA

PRINCESS MONONOKE (1997)

Princess Mononoke is a Japanese animated movie about a young prince named Ashitaka who goes on a journey to cure his cursed arm. On the way, he comes across a settlement called Irontown, whose rapid industrialization directly harms the surrounding forest. Irontown is at odds with a young girl named San, who was raised by wolves and has sworn to protect the environment even through violent means.

- Lady Eboshi, the leader of Irontown, employs and shelters people outcast from traditional society. She is also responsible for mass deforestation and shooting Nago, which turned the former boar god into the demon we see at the start of the film. How would you describe Lady Eboshi and her goals or priorities? Would you call her a good person, or something else?
- Do you think San's methods of attacking Irontown are effective and just?
- What kind of person might San have been if she grew up with humans?
- Whose cause resonates with you more: Lady Eboshi's or San's? Why or why not?
- What was Prince Ashitaka's role in the movie? Would San have attacked his village as well?

V. VISIT



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| 1 | <i>Moss wall</i> , 1994 | | (Auckland–Taipei, no. 1–6) |
| 2 | <i>Ventilator</i> , 1997 | | (Taipei–Jakarta, no. 1–6) |
| 3 | <i>Yellow corridor</i> , 1997 | | (Jakarta–Manila, no. 1–6) |
| 4 | <i>The glacier melt series</i> . 1999/2019,
Ed. 6 2019 | 8 | <i>Beauty</i> , 1993 |
| 5 | <i>Wind writings and Sun drawings</i> , 2023 | 9 | <i>Object defined by activity (then)</i> , 2009 |
| 6 | <i>Double spiral</i> , 2001 | 10 | <i>The last seven days of glacial ice</i> , 2024 |
| 7 | <i>The seismographic testimony of distance</i> ,
2024–2026 | 11 | <i>Movement microscope</i> , 2011 |
| | (Berlin–Singapore, no. 1–6) | 12 | <i>Adrift compass</i> , 2019 |
| | Singapore–Auckland, no. 1–6) | 13 | <i>Circumstellar resonator</i> , 2018 |
| | | 14 | <i>Your pluralistic coming together</i> , 2024 |
| | | 15 | <i>Life is lived along lines</i> , 2009 |

- *Your Curious Journey* is inspired by Olafur Eliasson's interest in natural phenomena and how the human body experiences light, color, and movement. Many of the artworks in this exhibit address a person's perception and play with the body's fundamental senses. As you explore these pieces, try to pay closer attention to senses that you might be taking for granted and reconsider how your body relates to the world of humans and more-than-humans.

Ventilator

- *Ventilator* is a kinetic sculpture that consists of an electric fan swinging wildly on a cord suspended from the ceiling. When first entering the space, did you notice this artwork when you came in? It is typically the first work that viewers encounter in the exhibit. Did you or did you not notice it? What about the artwork made you notice it?

- What do you notice about the fan's movement in relation to its speed and movement? Are these movements predictable at all?

- What tone do you think this sculpture sets for the rest of the exhibit?

Glacier Melt

- In 1999, Olafur Eliasson photographed thirty glaciers around Iceland and revisited those same glaciers twenty years later.

- While Olafur captured numerous sites of glaciers over the years, the formation of these glaciers takes more than a hundred years. As the slow buildup of snow piles up and stacks itself on top of each other over a period of many years, the heavy weight of the new snow compresses and transforms the snow at the bottom into ice (National Snow and Ice Data Center).

- Given the hundreds of years that it took to form these glaciers, it might seem untouchable and timeless to everyone; these glaciers are most susceptible to the climate crisis and the rapidly increasing world temperature (Icelandic Mountain Guide). As such, if the glaciers continue to melt before it is given time to accumulate snowfall, they will keep on shrinking, much like Olafur's images.

- How are glaciers significant culturally to an Icelandic person like Olafur? What is the implication of their changes?

- Have you observed any changes in the areas you frequent?

- What could fewer glaciers/snow mean for animals and plants that need it?

- Maybe see if they can create a diagram of possible effects: climate change, habitat loss, plant and animal life.

Moss Wall

- *Moss Wall* is an installation of reindeer moss (*cladonia rangiferina*)- native to cold northern hemispheric regions like Iceland- woven into wire mesh. The width and height of *Moss Wall* is variable and is relative to the location it is exhibited in. By encompassing a large swath of the exhibition space itself, it raises questions about the relationship (or lack thereof) between nature and built environments, and how design can emphasize the environment's qualities and characteristics, such as height and length, etc.

- What are the benefits and disadvantages to both artificial and natural building materials?

- Are certain materials more appropriate for specific spaces? Could a certain material carry a sense of "legitimacy"? Why or why not?

- What are different spaces you frequent, and how might their building

materials, architecture, and overall design affect how you interact or conduct yourself in them?

- According to Dr. David Eldridge of the University of New South Wales, moss is key to soil health as it prevents erosion and keeps important nutrients and chemicals in for other larger and more complex plant life to feed off of.
- Moss is also able to absorb large quantities of carbon dioxide, all while using comparatively minimal resources, and can survive through drought (Gilbert).

VI. POST-VISIT

Now that you've explored the works in *Your Curious Journey*, your understanding of the relationship humanity has with nature might have changed or deepened.

- Curator Dieter Roelstraete wrote that the boom of the art market and of “transcendent” or “spiritual” themes in the recent past is reflective of “a desire for the mystical alternative to the present world (order)” (Roelstraete 32) His example starting point for such a trend was 2003- the year of both Olafur Eliasson's Weather Project and the globally protested U.S. invasion of Iraq.
- Do you feel that themes of escapism are present in much of the art that you see today both in and out of formal institutions? Why might it be or not be present?
- How might *Your Curious Journey* cater to such “transcendent” or “spiritual” ideas? How might it directly confront globally pressing matters?
- Why might socio-politically charged topics be explored through creative or even indirect methods?

- Were your preconceptions of what can be artworks and methods of mounting or exhibiting pieces challenged as well?
- What was your journey through the exhibit like? Which works struck you the most and why?

VII.
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FURTHER READING

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