

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

Increasing globalization and digitization have brought us into a fast-paced way of living with little respite from the barrage of information we can receive through our devices at any given moment. Never before has humanity been this connected, yet it seems that discontent has grown with technological advancement. Social media allows us to see destruction and misfortune from the other side of the globe, and AI tech has become a part of countless digital tools despite concerns over its extreme environmental impact.

Especially since AI has become rampant in our own realities, it would seem that even language itself is being coopted and distorted. As our own consciousness forms language, language too shapes our consciousness. For example, before we used the term “climate crisis”, we would interchangeably use global warming and climate change. However, George Marshall, the author of *Don't Even Think About It: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Ignore Climate Change*, would write how global warming suggests that the planet is warming up instead of how science suggests the extreme and unpredictable weather patterns, and how climate change merely suggests a slow and steady change in our planet (BBC Radio 4). It is, thus, important to properly articulate the problem to resonate with the values of people. And narratives and storytelling become important mediums to make people care.

The exhibition of Olafur Eliasson advocates for viewers to continue to be environmentally conscious. The changes that are happening around the world are there to be perceived and observed and are happening whether you look at them or not. As the artist attempts to put these phenomena on center stage, it is the audience's perception and interaction that will illuminate the global crisis happening all around us.

III. REFLECTION GUIDE

- What sort of reactions to the climate crisis have you observed from those around you 10 years ago compared to today?
- What changes did you observe that businesses and people around you did to help mitigate global warming?
- How did your neighborhood and your environment change over the last decade or so amidst the climate crisis? Did flora and fauna disappear or increase? How did globalization affect your own neighborhood and experience?

IV. RECOMMENDED MEDIA

DON'T LOOK UP (2021)

Don't Look Up is an American satirical black comedy film about two scientists who attempt to warn the world about a planet-killing comet set to collide with the Earth, only for their efforts to be met with a mix of apathy and opposition from both the government and the public at large through social media.

Director Adam McKay meant for the comet to be a metaphor for the current climate emergency. The impetus to make the film came from his direct experience with the Palisades Fire and media outlets failing to draw attention to climate change.

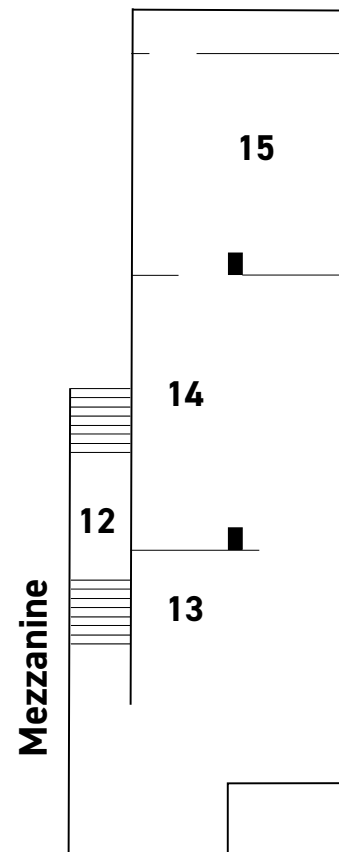
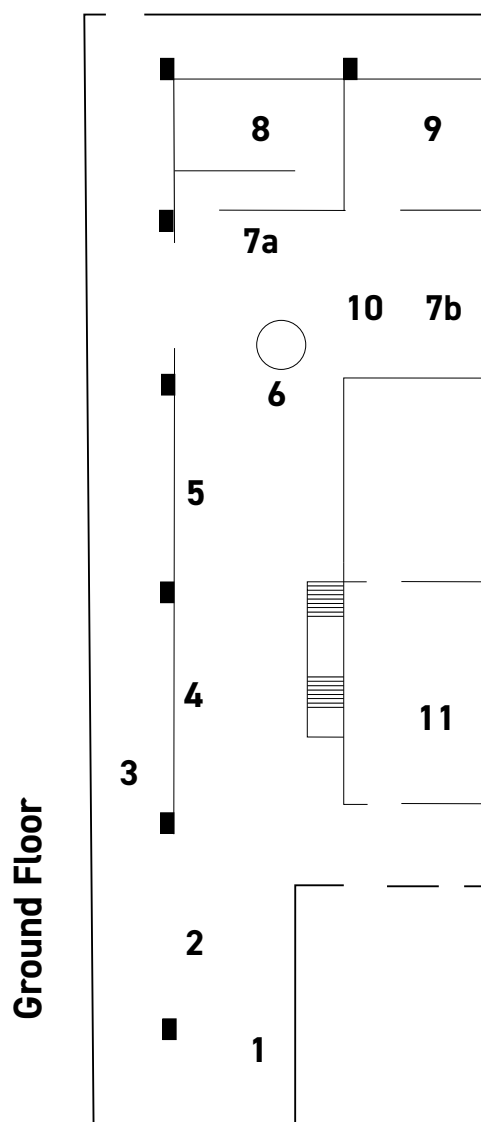
- Is the public reception to the comet depicted in the film something you can see happening in real life? Why or why not? How might social media have changed the language or mediums with which serious news is broadcast to the masses?
- Has social media been a boon to the fields of science and broadcasting, or has it been detrimental to them?
- How has social media affected how people decide who to pay attention to or find credible?

PLASTIC BEACH BY THE GORILLAZ

Plastic Beach by the Gorillaz is an album by a virtual band made by musician Damon Albarn and the artist Jamie Hewlett. Instead of actual musicians, four fictional characters make up the band: 2-D, Murdoc Niccals, Noodle, and Russel Hobbs. *Plastic Beach* is a concept album released in 2010 which fictionalizes and tells the story about a floating island deep in the Pacific inspired by the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. The album touches on themes such as consumerism, pollution, human nature, and our response to the climate crisis whilst fictionalizing real and existing problems in our own reality.

- Is there a particular song in the album that you related to? Describe your personal connection to the song, and your own realizations towards it.
- Given how the members of the band are fictional and not real, does this way of representation still give weight to the themes the album discusses?
- How does the floating island and the concept album mirror our own reality and current climate crisis?
- How does the title *Plastic Beach* establish the mood and themes of the album given how Plastic is synonymous with fake, synthetic, and man-made while Beach is of a natural existence? What sort of juxtaposition is being described in the album, and how do they portray this sort of paradox?

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
(Berlin–Singapore, no. 1–6)
Singapore–Auckland, no. 1–6) | 11 | <i>Movement microscope</i> , 2011 |
| | | 12 | <i>Adrift compass</i> , 2019 |
| | | 13 | <i>Circumstellar resonator</i> , 2018 |
| | | 14 | <i>Your pluralistic coming together</i> , 2024 |
| | | 15 | <i>Life is lived along lines</i> , 2009 |

Beauty

- The rainbow seen in *Beauty* is a result of the curtain-like mist reflecting and refracting the waves of light coming from a spotlight. The colors of the rainbow are dependent on the viewer's position. The surrounding darkness may cause a sense of disembodiment, but this darkness is what further illuminates the rainbow formed by the interaction between light and water.
 - Other than the water and light that interact and form the rainbow, how did the darkness and the space leading up to the exhibit form your reaction and response to the work that you see?
- Much like how the colors of the rainbow seen in *Beauty* change depending on the angle, a research team at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa also found that by 2100, there will be a 5% increase in rainbow formation for those in higher latitudes due to snow turning to water, and areas that experience more drought will see fewer rainbow sightings (Carlson et al). Location, context, phenomena, and perception of the viewers amidst the global climate crisis are what further immerse us in how our own body reconstructs the reality that we live in, and further illuminate our own climate reality.
- Olafur Eliasson's further writes that "the viewer is a necessary coproducer of [this] artwork." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

Object Defined by Activity (Then)

- *Object Defined by Activity (Then)* is a fountain of water illuminated by a strobe light, a kind of light that flashes on and off at regular intervals.
- How different are the fountains you encountered outside the exhibit compared to the fountain in this one? What seems to be the cause of this difference?

- What do you observe about this installation in terms of movement, light, speed, and water? How does the artwork impact your senses?

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.
- How might *Your Curious Journey* cater to such “transcendent” or “spiritual” ideas? How might it directly confront globally pressing matters?
- After going through the entire exhibit, what discoveries did you make along the way about yourself and your own personal surroundings? Describe your own personal journey?
- Just as stories help deepen the human experience and consciousness to advocate for the current climate crisis, do you think the hero's journey is still relevant in light of the crisis? How do we use stories and narratives in our own daily lives, and how do you see these mediums being used? Do you believe them to be relevant and help in advocating for change?

VII.
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