

OLAFUR ELIASSON: BAROQUE BAROQUE

With works from Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (TBA21), Vienna
and Juan & Patricia Vergez private collections, Buenos Aires

The Winter Palace of Prince Eugene of Savoy

November 21, 2015 – March 6, 2016

Press Conference

Thursday, November 19, 10 am at The Winter Palace of Prince Eugene of Savoy

Opening

Friday, November 20, 7 pm at The Winter Palace of Prince Eugene of Savoy

Roundtable: Creating Worlds

Friday, November 20, 5 pm at the Marble Hall of Upper Belvedere



Olafur Eliasson
Yellow corridor, 1997
Monofrequency lights
Dimensions variable
Installation view: OLAFUR
ELIASSON: BAROQUE BAROQUE,
The Winter Palace of Prince Eugene
of Savoy, Vienna
The Juan & Patricia Vergez
Collection, Buenos Aires
Photo: Anders Sune Berg, 2015

OLAFUR ELIASSON: BAROQUE BAROQUE

The Winter Palace of Prince Eugene of Savoy

November 21, 2015 – March 6, 2016

BAROQUE BAROQUE brings together a significant selection of artworks by Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson from the private collections of Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (TBA21) and Juan and Patricia Vergez presenting them within the grand baroque setting of the Belvedere's Winter Palace. The former city residence of Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663–1736), was an important site of artistic and scientific patronage in baroque Vienna. BAROQUE BAROQUE is an encounter between artworks, aesthetics, and worldviews from two vastly different epochs. The exhibition challenges viewers' habits of perception and proposes that reality can be understood as unstable and evolving, as a process of constant negotiation. Surprising affinities between Eliasson's works and their temporary settings become evident as the juxtapositions explore the relationships between object and viewer, representation and experience, actual and virtual, giving rise to a concept of the baroque superimposed on itself – the BAROQUE BAROQUE.

While emphasizing the way spaces are constructed by history and tradition, Eliasson's works address the viewer in her embodied experience. Through the use of projections, shadows, and reflections, the artworks foreground the relationship between body, perception, and image. They anchor agency in the body and mind in motion as they invite the viewer's active engagement by mirroring, fragmenting, and inverting her position within space.

Eliasson says, "I find it inspiring that the baroque exhibited such confidence in the fluidity of the boundaries between models of reality and, simply, reality. The presentation of my works at the Winter Palace is based on trust in the possibility of constructing reality according to our shared dreams and desires and on faith in the idea that constructions and models are as real as anything."

"Olafur Eliasson's installations form an almost perfect symbiosis with the baroque opulence of the Winter Palace. His fascination with the phenomena of nature can be compared with Prince Eugene, who commissioned this unique architectural gem and who held the sciences and technological progress in high regard. This frame of mind becomes tangible—indeed, it seems to come alive—in the exhibition and changes our perception of the building's atmosphere—very much in the spirit of the baroque," says Agnes Husslein-Arco, Director of the Belvedere and the 21er Haus.

TBA21 Founder, Francesca von Habsburg says: *"This exhibition brings together several elements that I think support the vision of collectors and their responsibility as well as their ability to create art projects that defy traditional categorization. Both Patricia and Juan Vergez and I have been collecting and supporting Olafur Eliasson for many years with great enthusiasm, as he is indeed a renaissance man of many talents! In this presentation we wanted to introduce a parallel, that Olafur himself has mirrored in the exhibition rooms, that juxtaposes the precious Baroque cultural heritage of Vienna with the work of an artist that I feel very close to."*

"When Francesca came up with this brilliant project at the Winterpalais, we loved it and it was a dream to us which now has come true. We hope the viewer will be able to let go of himself by transforming his way to see reality, opening up new worlds of sensations and perceptions," says Patricia Vergez. "We also hope that people during this exhibition will enjoy challenging their limits of imagination just as Francesca and we have been doing since we discovered Olafur's work."

In the entrance Vestibule, the light installation *Die organische und kristalline Beschreibung* (1996) floods the walls, floor, and ceiling with swelling washes of blue and yellow light, an ocean of color that loosens the viewer's sense of the stability of her environment. In *Yellow corridor* (1997), monofrequency light is used to heighten the precariousness of our relationship to visible space.



Olafur Eliasson
New Berlin Sphere, 2009
Stainless steel, colored glass,
aluminum, bulb, ø 140 cm
Installation view: OLAFUR
ELIASSON: BAROQUE BAROQUE,
The Winter Palace of Prince Eugene
of Savoy, Vienna
Thyssen-Bornemisza Art
Contemporary Collection, Vienna
Photo: Anders Sune Berg, 2015

Eliasson's optical machines and installations – such as *Kaleidoscope* (2001), *New Berlin Sphere* (2009), *Your welcome reflected* (2003), and *Seu planeta compartilhado* (Your shared planet), (2011) – reflect the artist's ongoing investigations of color, perception, transformation, and deconstruction, an inquiry that is particularly interesting in relation to the baroque context. A site-specific intervention in the form of a continuous mirror traversing the enfilade of grand rooms further disorients the viewer by folding and re-folding the complex spaces it produces. *Wishes versus wonders* (2015), a steel half-ring mounted to the mirror wall in the Hall of Battle Paintings, stages an encounter between reality, illusion, and the elaborate artifice of the surroundings, simultaneously multiplying lines of potentiality.

Within this terrain of doubling and paradox, Eliasson calls into question our received habits of seeing and experiencing space. His artworks make us wonder and reconsider, giving meaning to the enigmatic doubling inherent in BAROQUE BAROQUE.

About the artist

The Danish Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson (born 1967) works in a wide variety of mediums, including installation, painting, sculpture, photography, and film. Since 1997 his critically acclaimed solo shows have appeared in major museums around the world, such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and Tate Modern, London, and in major international exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale. In 2003 *The weather project*, installed in the Turbine Hall of Tate Modern, was seen by more than two million people. Eliasson's projects in public spaces include *Camera obscura für die Donau*, Austria (2004); *Your black horizon*, commissioned by TBA21 and installed in a pavilion designed by David Adjaye at Lopud, Croatia (2005); *The New York City Waterfalls* (2008); *Your rainbow panorama*, a 150-meter circular colored-glass walkway situated on top of ARoS Museum in Aarhus, Denmark (2006–11); and *Cirkelbroen* (The circle bridge), Copenhagen (2015). In 2006 Eliasson was awarded the Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Prize for Architecture and Art.

Established in 1995, Eliasson's Berlin studio today employs about ninety craftsmen, specialized technicians, architects, archivists, administrators, and cooks. They work with Eliasson to experiment and to develop and produce artworks and exhibitions, as well as to archive and communicate his work, digitally and in print. In addition to realizing artworks in-house, the studio contracts with structural engineers and other specialists and collaborates worldwide with cultural practitioners, policy makers, and scientists. It regularly hosts workshops and events in order to further artistic and intellectual exchanges with people and institutions outside the art world.

From 2009 to 2014 Eliasson led the Institut für Raumexperimente (Institute for Spatial Experiments), a five-year experiment in arts education affiliated with the Berlin University of the Arts. He is currently adjunct professor at the Alle School of Fine Arts and Design in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Since 2012 Eliasson has directed the social business Little Sun, together with the engineer Frederik Ottesen, which produces and distributes solar lamps for use in off-grid communities.

In 2014, Eliasson and collaborator Sebastian Behmann founded Studio Other Spaces to focus on interdisciplinary and experimental building projects and works in public space. Eliasson lives and works in Copenhagen and Berlin.

Belvedere–The Winter Palace of Prince Eugene of Savoy

Prince Eugene's Winter Palace is one of the most magnificent baroque edifices in Vienna and is the fourth exhibition venue of the Belvedere Museum. Originally built as a lavish urban residence for Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663–1736), then acquired in the eighteenth century by Empress Maria Theresa before being used for the Court Treasury and later as the Ministry of Finance, this baroque palace underwent extensive renovation before reopening as a public museum in October 2013. Since then the Belvedere has staged numerous exhibitions at the Winter Palace, placing particular emphasis on programs and projects that create a dialogue between the baroque setting and contemporary art. Artistic interventions result in inspiring new artworks created in situ that draw on the palace's unique ambience and history. Vital starting points have been the city palace's architecture, the prince's former collections, and the holdings of the Belvedere.

The Juan and Patricia Vergez Collection

The Juan & Patricia Vergez Collection in Buenos Aires, Argentina was developed by Juan Vergez and Patricia Pearson-Vergez in the late 1980s. The collection initially focused on Argentinian artists of the 1960s and 1970s, and after many trips to Brazil and Europe it expanded its international focus. In 2006 they opened Tacuarí, a four-story building which used to be a former traditional ink factory in the center of Buenos Aires. Many Latin American and post-Wall European art as well as commissioned pieces from Argentine artists are shown and rotate at least once a year. Tacuarí's program focuses on fostering relationships between emerging Buenos Aires talents and well-known artist from around the world. In 1999 Juan and Patricia Vergez purchased their first artwork by Olafur Eliasson, *Yellow corridor* (1997) at Tanya Bonakdar Gallery.

Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (TBA21)

Founded in 2002 by Francesca von Habsburg in Vienna, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (TBA21) represents the fourth generation of the Thyssen family's commitment to the arts. The foundation is dedicated primarily to the commissioning and dissemination of ambitious, experimental, and unconventional projects that defy traditional categorizations. This approach has gained the collection a pioneering reputation throughout the world. The foundation's projects promote artistic practices that are architectural, context- and site-specific, performative, and often informed by an interest in social aesthetics and environmental concerns. Many of the projects reflect the shift to transdisciplinary practices embracing architecture, sound, music, and science. Francesca von Habsburg has been collecting and supporting Olafur Eliasson for many years with great enthusiasm.

Supported by

As one of the leading insurance groups in Central and Eastern Europe, the Vienna Insurance Group and its main share holder clearly perceive its social responsibilities and have been reliable sponsoring partners for Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary and other cultural projects for many years. Numerous museums and galleries have insured their collections with Vienna Insurance Group. The main objective for cooperating with cultural institutions is to promote the international exchange in the field of arts and culture. Since June 2013, thanks to the main share holder of Vienna Insurance Group, admission to TBA21–Augarten has been free.



ROUNDTABLE

"CREATING WORLDS"

with **Olafur Eliasson, Aurélien Barrau, Mirjam Schaub and Daniela Zyman**

Friday, November 20, 2015 at 5 pm

On the occasion of the opening of OLAFUR ELIASSON: BAROQUE BAROQUE, Belvedere and Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary are hosting a roundtable discussion in the lavish Marble Hall of Prince Eugene's Upper Belvedere. At the event, which will explore different notions of world making, Eliasson, physicist Aurélien Barrau, philosopher Mirjam Schaub, and chief curator Daniela Zyman will come together to discuss creativity and knowledge production, as well as the expressive transgressions of reality and illusion that are evident both in the Baroque and in Eliasson's work. How are we to understand terms such as real and fictional, model versus reality? Are we still inclined to regard the scientific process as a benchmark for understanding and as a paradigm of knowledge production, or has the archive of ideas (valid and obsolete, scientific, philosophical, artistic, and political) long grown detached from such projects of framing, defining, and proving? Can "baroque reason", with its stylistic and rhetorical dramatization, mobilize the creation of new and old worlds?

Aurélien Barrau is a French physicist and philosopher, who specializes in astroparticle physics, black holes and cosmology at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS).

Mirjam Schaub has been Professor of Aesthetics and Cultural Philosophy at the University for Applied Science (HAW) in Hamburg since 2012.

Daniela Zyman is chief curator at Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary and co-curator of OLAFUR ELIASSON: BAROQUE BAROQUE

Date: November 20, 2015, 5 pm

Location: Marble Hall at Upper Belvedere

Prinz-Eugen Straße 27

1030 Vienna

Entry fee: € 10 | reduced € 18

CATALOGUE

OLAFUR ELIASSON: BAROQUE BAROQUE

Published on the occasion of the exhibition

OLAFUR ELIASSON: BAROQUE BAROQUE

November 21, 2015–March 6, 2016

Winterpalais of Prince Eugene of Savoy

OLAFUR ELIASSON: BAROQUE BAROQUE brings together some of Olafur Eliasson's most significant works from the holdings of TBA21 and the Juan and Patricia Vergez Collection. The overview of artworks from two decades of Eliasson's artistic practice explores the affinities between his work and the extraordinary baroque setting of the Belvedere's Winter Palace of Prince Eugene of Savoy in Vienna.

Accompanying the ambitious exhibition at the Winter Palace, the catalogue examines some of the threads of thought raised by the encounter between Eliasson's artworks and their temporary baroque housing – how transformations of space, perception and cognition reflect the realms of ontology, politics, technology, and the Anthropocene.

With contributions by Irmgard Emmelhainz, Paul Feigelfeld, Georg Lechner, Sandra Noeth, and Mirjam Schaub

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INFORMATION

Exhibition

OLAFUR ELIASSON: BAROQUE BAROQUE

Curated by Daniela Zyman & Mario Codognato

Location

The Winter Palace of Prince Eugene of Savoy

Press Conference

Thursday, November 19, 10 am, The Winter Palace of Prince Eugene of Savoy

Opening

Thursday, November 20, 2015, 7 pm, The Winter Palace of Prince Eugene of Savoy

Visitor Information

The Winter Palace of Prince Eugene of Savoy

Himmelfortgasse 8, 1010 Vienna

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www.belvedere.at

Opening hours: 10 am–6 pm, daily

#OlafurBaroque

Follow us on Twitter (@olafureliasson, @belvederewien, @tba21), Facebook, and Instagram (@belvederemuseum, @tba_21). Please share your images and respond to the exhibition on social media: #OlafurBaroque

BAROCK.BAROCK.

OLAFUR ELIASSON BIEGT ZEIT UND RAUM

A portrait by Ines Mitterer | Copenhagen.Berlin.Vienna 2015

An ORF production in partnership with TBA21 and Belvedere

Broadcast premiere on ORF 2; Monday, November 21, 2015; 10:30 pm (UTC+1)

Further information and photo download: www.olafurbaroque.at

www.olafureliasson.net | www.belvedere.at/en/press | www.tba21.org/press

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