

Highly Acclaimed Solo-Exhibition of a Superstar Ólafur Elíasson Inspires with Light Installations

For 20 years now, they have been captivating, enchanting and astounding not only audiences interested in contemporary art: with his extraordinary installations, the Danish-Icelandic artist Ólafur Elíasson, who lives in Berlin, makes every viewer of his objects experience elementary phenomena such as light and shadow, colour, mirroring effects and reflections in a new, intense, and conscious way.

The conceptually extraordinary and diverse works enjoy great popularity in the international art and design scene. And Elíasson's creativity and the technical implementation of his often spectacular installations seem to be almost unlimited.

In addition to the numerous projects that he has created as striking components of architecture and art in public spaces, such as the Harpa concert hall and congress centre in Reykjavik, his extraordinary creations for temporary exhibitions impressively convey the magic of changing light and colour moods. This is currently the case in London, where the Tate Modern is presenting outstanding examples of his work from three decades in a much-acclaimed retrospective entitled "In real life".

These include not only large-scale projects related to current topics such as nature conservation and climate change, but also works of art of particular visual appeal and creative aesthetics. Their design is often based on the use of glass, especially dichroic glass, supplied by the specialist supplier Prinz Optics. Elíasson uses the rich variety of colour effects achieved with coated glass for his art and design objects.

Again and again he is inspired by the characteristic of this material that varies with the changing perspective of the spectator and changed lighting conditions, the colourfulness and facets of the objects and their surroundings change. His preferred "medium" for the transformation of these physical properties is the - mostly glass - sphere. In large-format versions, spheres radiate incomparable optical effects in colour, movement and reflection.

Typical examples of this can be seen in his impressive London presentation. Some selected works stand for the multitude of creations that emerge from Elíasson's preoccupation with the interplay of colours, materials (such as dichroic glass filters by Prinz Optics and metal) and geometric forms in motion.



The resulting radiance is impressively accentuated by the object "In real life", which is the eponym of the exhibition. The special arrangement of green, yellow, orange, red, pink and cyan (turquoise-like) colour effect filters on a large sphere creates the impression of a walk-in kaleidoscope in the surrounding space.

In real life, 2019
Tate Modern, London
Photo: Anders Sune Berg
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He also reproduces faceted beauty on the surrounding surfaces with similar spherical colour effect creations such as "Stardust particle" (2014) or "Cold wind sphere" (2012) presented in the Tate Modern. In this way, spectators not only perceive a part of the work of art, but experience the object from all sides; their relocation and change of perspective ultimately make them part of the installation. Thanks to this "enchanted" function, Ólafur Elíasson's kaleidoscopic works create a new sense of artistic spatiality.

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