

News Release

Icelandic-Danish artist Olafur Eliasson's first permanent public UK work unveils in Oxford

Commissioned by global innovation district Oxford North, the major public art installation of eight planetary sculptures is situated within the new public two-acre Fallaize Park, which opens today



Olafur Eliasson, Your planetary assembly, 2025, in Oxford's new public Fallaize Park; photo: Hufton + Crow © 2025 Olafur Eliasson

OXFORD, 30 SEPTEMBER 2025 – World-renowned artist Olafur Eliasson's first permanent public artwork in the UK is to be unveiled today as part of Oxford North's launch, the city's new flagship innovation district. *Your planetary assembly* is a major public art installation of eight illuminated planetary sculptures set within Fallaize Park, a new two-acre public park, inspired by models of the solar system and reminiscent of the orreries at the University of Oxford's History of Science Museum.

Celebrated internationally for art installations that challenge the way we perceive and interact with our environments, Eliasson's previous projects in the UK include *The weather project*, 2003, which drew two million people to Tate Modern; *Serpentine Gallery Pavilion*, 2007; and more recently *Lifeworld*, 2024, displayed on Piccadilly Circus' screens with CIRCA.

Created with the support of Contemporary Art Society *Consultancy (CAS*C), *Your planetary assembly* weaves throughout Fallaize Park, which is part of the one million sq ft (92,903 sq m) new district. The now completed first phase of Oxford North opens today and includes nearly 160,000 sq ft of flexible

laboratory and office space alongside the Red Hall, a distinctive four-storey centrepiece designed by Fletcher Priest Architects featuring workspaces, retail units and soon to be opening 80-seat café.

Situated next to the Red Hall, Fallaize Park is named in honour of Professor Elizabeth Fallaize (1950-2009) – the first female fellow of St John's College and a pro-vice chancellor of the University of Oxford. Within the park, Eliasson's debut permanent public work in the UK comprises eight individual sculptures, each featuring a striking glass polyhedron.



Eliasson's debut permanent public work in the UK comprises eight individual sculptures in Fallaize Park; photo: Hufton + Crow © 2025 Olafur Eliasson

Winding along a path that cuts through Fallaize Park's green landscape, the artwork will offer visitors a point of orientation. From dusk, the polyhedrons will be illuminated in colours inspired by the dominant tones in telescopic imagery of the planets, with each sculpture providing a space for visitors and passers-by to congregate.



Your planetary assembly, 2025, draws on Eliasson's longstanding interest in public space, taking inspiration from historical gathering places such as the agora of ancient Athens and Thingvellir in Iceland, where people came

Olafur Eliasson said: *“Your planetary assembly at Oxford North is an invitation to co-create space, to experience your surroundings as part of a larger negotiation of self, community and the world. The eight glass polyhedrons spread across Fallaize Park invite you to gather, talk, spend time, and share space with one another. Situated in a neighbourhood that includes residential, educational, and scientific facilities, the artwork welcomes visitors from early morning until late at night.*

“The arrangement of the forms along the park’s meandering path was inspired by models of the solar system. The colours come from the major tones of telescopic images of the planets, from Mercury to Mars to Neptune. Illuminated, these forms function as points of orientation to help guide you through the park. Knowing that Mars is behind you, for example, tells you that Earth lies ahead.

“This work is open to your interpretation: you may see the polyhedra as elements, molecules or crystals. Your planetary assembly is a public space for everyone: visitors and workers from the nearby labs and offices as well as members of the surrounding community. It is, I hope, a peaceful oasis that emerges from the greenery of the park, spreading out like a cluster of stars or a cloud of gas in outer space.

“Sitting within this local space, you simultaneously inhabit a larger continuum, a meeting point of trajectories that reflects both community and the vastness of the cosmos. As the solar system travels through space, we too are always in motion, meeting one another at a specific time and place, each on our own trajectories.”

This first public art project for Oxford North is part of its ‘Engage’ legacy programme, delivered in partnership with IF Oxford Science and Ideas Festival, CAS *Consultancy, Modern Art Oxford, Creation Theatre and Fusion Arts.

Oxford North’s ambition for collaboration, local engagement and transparent governance led to the creation of a Public Art Steering Group in 2023. This advisory group – comprising local residents; local sixth form students; Oxford City Council; Modern Art Oxford; IF Oxford Science and Ideas Festival; masterplan architect Fletcher Priest; and landscape architect Gustafson Porter + Bowman – recommended Olafur Eliasson for this 2025 commission.

Eliasson’s commission is part of the Oxford North cultural scheme, developed by CAS to support Oxford North’s goal of becoming a world-class research and innovation district for the UK and Europe.

Oxford North is being delivered by Oxford North Ventures, the joint venture between St John’s College through its development company Thomas White Oxford; Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan, a leading global investor; and leading UK development and asset manager Stanhope.

Victoria Collett, development director, Thomas White Oxford and chair of the public art steering group said: *“This project has been an exceptional collaboration, kick-started by the breathtaking artwork of Olafur Eliasson. It marks the beginning of a long-term journey enriched by diverse community initiatives and a legacy programme that will unfold over many years. By partnering with fantastic local organisations such as IF Oxford, Modern Art Oxford and Creation Theatre along with local residents and students to develop the Engage programme, we are ensuring the artwork remains significant for decades to come.”*

Simon Ruck, managing director, Oxford North, said: *“Inspirational public realm is central to Oxford North’s vision, and Olafur Eliasson’s new world-class public art installation will offer captivating cultural moments for people who visit, work and live in this new global innovation district.*

“We’re truly honoured to have commissioned Olafur’s debut public permanent work in the UK. Olafur and his team are boundary-pushing creative visionaries, and his magnificent cosmic sculptures will illuminate Fallaize Park, an important new public green space for Oxford. Your planetary assembly elegantly embodies Oxford North’s broader cultural ambition, which aims to create bold and thought-provoking art interventions that are genuinely inclusive and open to everyone.”

Jordan Kaplan, senior art producer, CAS *Consultancy added: *“Working with such an internationally significant artist as Olafur Eliasson reinforces Oxford North’s character as a new place for groundbreaking work in science, health, wellbeing and imagination. Studio Olafur Eliasson’s world-class diverse, interdisciplinary team parallels the collaborative spirit of the scientists, technologists, and innovators Oxford North aims to attract. We will continue to work with Oxford North to shape an outstanding, abundant and varied public art offer across future development phases – from permanent and temporary public art installations to performances, exhibitions, films, publications and conferences.”*

An ‘In conversation with Olafur Eliasson’ public event is to be hosted at Oxford North on Wednesday 1 October with Behaviour Change Scientist & Poet Laureate, University College, Oxford Pireeni Sundaralingam to celebrate the artwork with circa 200 people registered to attend.

Creation Theatre has written a walking theatre piece with a guided journey through the Solar System which will be showcased at the upcoming launch event and also shared as part of the IF Oxford Science & Ideas Festival being held at Oxford North on Friday 24 October 2025 as part of Zone One, a hands-on family-friendly interactive area where people will be invited to take part in experiments and demonstrations, meeting friendly experts and experiencing *Your planetary assembly*.

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For further information, please contact:

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Notes to editors:

About Oxford North

Oxford North is a best-in-class £1.2 billion GDV global innovation district, deliberately designed as a future UK economy powerhouse, across 64 acres of land in Oxford, to host the next generation of local, domestic and international science, tech and associated industry occupiers.

The scheme sits at the intersection of academia, commerce and experience, with up to 1 million sq ft of brand new flexible lab and office accommodation and a new dynamic neighbourhood.

Oxford North’s cutting-edge space has been designed by scientists, for scientists, creating an ecosystem for collaboration and catering to the whole science and tech lifecycle, from start-ups and spin-outs through to industry behemoths, offering space from fitted labs and turnkey solutions through to grow-on space and bespoke buildings.

Setting a new standard for placemaking, Oxford North provides a carefully curated mixed-use destination with fully enabled laboratory accommodation, significant amenity, new housing and masterplanned public realm.

Oxford North is being delivered by world-leading joint venture partners combining long-term, stable capital (Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan), significant science and tech expertise (Thomas White Oxford / St John’s College), market-leading development management capabilities (Stanhope) and deep local stakeholder knowledge and relationships (St John’s College). Fletcher Priest Architects is the masterplanner and architect, and Gustafson Porter and Bowman is the landscape architect.

Phase 1A of the scheme consists of fitted lab space ranging from 2,000 sq ft to 56,000 sq ft, as well as The Red Hall, a striking new centrepiece for the scheme comprising a ground floor cafe-bar, retail units, community space, and co-working spaces along with four floors of workspace. Phase 2 will see the delivery of three new laboratory buildings, together providing 374,400 sq ft of flexible lab and workspace.

www.oxfordnorth.com

About Studio Olafur Eliasson

Founded in 1995, Studio Olafur Eliasson comprises specialised craftspeople, technicians, architects, archivists, art historians, designers, cooks, and administrators. Eliasson's art is inspired by science and simultaneously seeks to inspire scientific thought.

Since 1997, his wide-ranging solo shows – featuring installations, paintings, sculptures, photography, and film – have appeared in major museums around the globe. His most recent exhibition in the UK was the survey show *In Real Life*, at Tate Modern in 2019.

2022 saw two large-scale solo exhibitions in Italy – *Nel Tuo Tempo* (In Your Time), at Palazzo Strozzi, in Florence, and *Orizzonti Tremanti* (Trembling Horizons), at Castello di Rivoli, in Turin. In 2023, Eliasson opened *الخيال تتعاقب الصحرا* (The curious desert), a major exhibition at the National Museum of Qatar, in Doha, and a series of twelve experimental pavilions situated in the desert. This year, the artist has opened major exhibitions at Istanbul Modern, Los Angeles MOCA and Boston's MASS MoCA.

The Studio brings a wealth of relevant experience in producing large-scale, complex artworks, commissions, exhibitions, and architectural works in diverse contexts.

In the last twenty-five years, Eliasson has produced numerous projects in public spaces: Green river in various cities between 1998 and 2001; Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2007 with architect Kjetil Thorsen for London's Kensington Gardens; The New York City Waterfalls, commissioned by the Public Art Fund in 2008; Your rainbow panorama, a circular coloured-glass walkway atop ARoS Museum, Aarhus, Denmark in 2011; Harpa Reykjavik Concert Hall and Conference Centre, 2011, for which Eliasson created the facades in collaboration with Henning Larsen Architects and won the Mies van der Rohe Award in 2013; Ice Watch, in which Eliasson and geologist Minik Rosing brought free-floating icebergs from a fjord outside Nuuk, Greenland, to public squares in European cities (Copenhagen, 2014; Paris, 2015; and London, 2018) to raise awareness of the climate crisis and Fjordenhus in Vejle, Denmark, the first building designed entirely by Eliasson and the architectural team at Studio Olafur Eliasson, which was completed in June 2018.

Find out more: <https://olafureliasson.net/>

About the Contemporary Art Society *Consultancy

CAS *Consultancy has been providing strategic art and cultural services for more than 30 years. Its knowledge of the field is unparalleled with work ranging from cultural placemaking strategies to bespoke art opportunities.

Curating and managing projects in a range of contexts and environments, they work with outstanding artists to produce collections, events, art strategies and public art commissions of the highest calibre. Our projects contribute to the cultural life of the UK.

What differentiates them from other art advisors is that they are a charity. Their work enables the Contemporary Art Society to support living artists and build critical knowledge around contemporary art. Consultancy fees support the organisation's charitable mission: to develop public collections across the UK for the benefit of audiences everywhere.

Find out more: <https://contemporaryartsociety.org/consultancy>