



**5 December 2025**

## **'Olafur Eliasson: Presence' opens at GOMA**

A major exhibition by Berlin-based Icelandic-Danish artist Olafur Eliasson opens tomorrow at Brisbane's [Gallery of Modern Art](#) (GOMA), on display until 12 July 2026.

Globally renowned for installations that challenge how we perceive ourselves and the world around us, Eliasson's work has included transporting melting Arctic ice that had broken away from glaciers to public spaces across European capitals and an all-encompassing 'sun' in the cavernous Turbine Hall at London's Tate Modern.

Exclusive to Brisbane, '[Olafur Eliasson: Presence](#)' occupies GOMA's ground floor with major installations, sculptures, photo series, and more that invite visitors through shifting environments – from immersive works that play with light, colour and perception to a meticulously constructed riverbed.

Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA) Director Chris Saines said 'Presence' embodied the artist's belief in the audience as co-creators, with each visitor experiencing the artwork uniquely as they move through and interact with the exhibition.

'Informed by his expansive interests in architecture, design, science, the environment, psychology and wellbeing, Eliasson's work investigates how we give shape to our experience of the world,' Mr Saines said.

'From the large-scale title work *Presence* 2025, which simulates a vast sun moving and shifting with energy inside the gallery, to *Lost compass* 2013, a magnetic sculpture that hovers above us as we consider life's path, this exhibition keeps us in the present moment,' Mr Saines said.

In a first for the artist, 'Presence' has been developed through QAGOMA Head of International Art Geraldine Kirrihi Barlow's residency with Studio Olafur Eliasson in Berlin.

Ms Barlow said the exhibition invited us to explore light, land and life, and to reflect on how we connect with one another and the world around us.

'Olafur's work reminds us that we each perceive the world differently, even when standing side by side, and leads us to playfully reconsider how we make sense of what we perceive,' Ms Barlow said.

'This exhibition rewards curiosity, slowing down, taking our time. As we explore the artworks, we are sparked to ask: "What am I seeing?" What we first see, or sense, will change.'

'Presence' brings together iconic early works such as the shimmering, touchable rainbow *Beauty* 1993 with QAGOMA's much-loved interactive installations, the ever-evolving Lego city of *The cubic structural evolution project* 2004 and the immense literal landscape of *Riverbed* 2014.

Three major new works have been created for the exhibition. As well as *Presence* 2025, the polarisation works *Your negotiable vulnerability seen from two perspectives* 2025 and *Your Truths* 2025 warp colour and shape to focus our attention on perception itself.

Minister for Education and the Arts, John-Paul Langbroek said Queenslanders will be among the first to see this powerful collection of Olafur Eliasson's work.

'The Crisafulli Government is proud to support QAGOMA to provide transformational arts experiences for Queenslanders and visitors of all ages,' Minister Langbroek said.

'This exclusive exhibition delivers on the Queensland Government's 10-year strategy for arts and culture, *Queensland's Time to Shine*, and its commitment to growing our state's creative economy and strengthening our reputation as a vibrant cultural destination.'

Queensland Minister for Tourism, Andrew Powell, said attracting this exclusive exhibition to Brisbane cements Queensland's budding reputation as the events capital of the nation.

'The exhibition is poised to generate an estimated 80,000 visitor nights for Queensland, as visitors flock to the region to experience Olafur Eliasson's immersive body of work,' Minister Powell said.

'With an anticipated \$14.1 million boost for the community, we're committed to securing more events of this calibre that not only drive economic and tourism growth but also leave a lasting

cultural legacy for Queenslanders.'

An expansive publication produced in collaboration with Eliasson and his studio accompanies the exhibition and includes contributions from celebrated writers Ceridwen Dovey and Robert Macfarlane, a curatorial essay and an extended interview with the artist.

The exhibition is accompanied by the cinema program 'Perceptions of Light', which explores the powerful ways filmmakers harness light to craft meaning, character and setting, from film noir's mysterious shadows to the French New Wave's drive for authenticity with its use of natural light.

'Olafur Eliasson: Presence' is complemented by QAGOMA's interactive mobile companion, which includes an Exhibition Guide with curatorial insights, images, and behind-the-scenes videos, and a Sense Trail that invites visitors to experience selected artworks through gentle sensory prompts.

On Saturday 6 December, the exhibition's opening day includes a live streamed version of the sold-out artist talk with Olafur Eliasson and curator Geraldine Kirrihi Barlow via QAGOMA's YouTube channel at 11.00am AEST, as well as pop-up performances between 11.45am and 1.45pm from composer and percussionist Vanessa Tomlinson exploring ecological sound. Ongoing special events announced soon will include kids' tours, hands-on drawing experiences, art and wellbeing workshops, after-hours talks, the return of GOMA Friday Nights and more. Events will be listed here as they are announced.

'Olafur Eliasson: Presence' is supported by Strategic Partner Tourism and Events Queensland; Major Partners Shayher Group and Viking; Grantors Gordon Darling Foundation and New Carlsberg Foundation; and Tourism, Media and Supporting Partners and a generous group of Exhibition Patrons.

For more information about the exhibition, or to purchase tickets, please visit [www.qagoma.qld.gov.au](http://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au)

## **ABOUT OLAFUR ELIASSON:**

Icelandic-Danish artist Olafur Eliasson (b.1967) creates art relevant to the world at large. Since 1997, his wide-ranging solo shows — featuring installations, paintings, sculptures, photography and film — have appeared in major museums around the globe. In 2003, he represented Denmark at the 50th Venice Biennale, and later that year installed *The weather project* at Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, London. Eliasson's projects in public space include *The New York City Waterfalls* (2008); *Fjordenhus, Vejle* (2018); and *Ice Watch* (2014). In 2012, Eliasson founded the social business Little Sun, and in 2014, he and Sebastian Behmann founded Studio Other Spaces, an office for art and architecture. In 2019, Eliasson was named United Nations Development Programme Goodwill Ambassador for climate action.

Located in Berlin, Studio Olafur Eliasson comprises a team of craftspeople, architects, archivists, researchers, administrators, cooks, art historians and specialised technicians.

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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art stands and recognise the creative contribution First Australians make to the art and culture of this country.

**QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY | GALLERY OF MODERN ART (QAGOMA)**

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Olafur Eliasson / Denmark b.1967 / *Your lost lighthouse* (detail) 2020 / Lighthouse lens (c.1900), colour-effect filter cylinder, halogen light bulb, fluorescent light, brass, steel, ballast 217 x 96 x 96cm / Courtesy: The artist; neugerriemschneider, Berlin; and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York / © 2020 Olafur Eliasson / Photograph: Jens Ziehe