



Mayor's Office
ERIN MENDENHALL

MEDIA RELEASE



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CHALLENGE

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With light and sound, Olafur Eliasson calls global attention to Great Salt Lake

Salt Lake City invites residents to gather at Memory Grove after dark to experience a new art installation by Olafur Eliasson—titled “A symphony of disappearing sounds for the Great Salt Lake”—that brings sounds of the lake to the heart of the city from March 26 through April 4.

Each night at 9 p.m., the artwork at Memory Grove Park will come alive with a soundtrack in harmony with striking visuals of light and color that ripple across the surface of a large, elevated sphere. The work celebrates the magnificence of Great Salt Lake and the ecosystem that is threatened by its decline.

The installation marks the capstone of the Wake the Great Salt Lake public art project—supported by the Salt Lake City Arts Council, Salt Lake City Mayor’s Office, and Bloomberg Philanthropies—and represents the latest work by internationally renowned Icelandic-Danish artist Olafur Eliasson, his first artwork in Utah and the Intermountain West region.

It arrives at a critical moment for the lake. This February, snowpack levels measured across Utah ranked among the lowest recorded since the 1980s, and lake levels dropped roughly six feet below the minimum healthy threshold. With approximately 54% of the lakebed now exposed, Eliasson's piece, "A symphony of disappearing sounds for the Great Salt Lake," carries particular urgency.

The installation is both a warning and a rallying cry.

"The call to save the Great Salt Lake has never been more urgent, and this artwork makes clear that the health of our residents and our ecosystems rise and fall together," said Mayor Erin Mendenhall. "This installation reminds us that the lake's future is tied to our own. When the lake suffers, so does our air quality, economy, recreation, and wildlife. But by working together, we can protect and restore this place that means so much to all of us."

Eliasson shares that sense of determined optimism. He hopes the work will "add something emotional and tangible to the larger campaign to save the lake, in ways that scientific data, news reports, and policy discussions cannot."

Over the past three decades, Eliasson has created large-scale installations around the world from the Qatari desert to Times Square. Across these disparate landscapes, his work brings attention and new perspective to how humans fit into larger ecosystems, renewing our sense of urgency and sensitivity to environmental crises.

"Great Salt Lake is a dynamic living system," Eliasson said. "Its rhythms shape the region, and its future is inseparable from our own. When we engage with Great Salt Lake—look at it and listen to it—can we experience, or even feel, the immense scale of what is disappearing?"

Attendees who are able are encouraged to park near the Utah State Capitol and use the pedestrian walkways to enter Memory Grove. Full event details are available at wakegsl.org.

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About Olafur Eliasson

Olafur Eliasson is an Icelandic-Danish artist whose works explore the relevance of art in 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. Eliasson is internationally renowned for his public installations that challenge the way we perceive and co-create our environments. Located in Berlin, Studio Olafur Eliasson comprises a large team of craftspeople, architects, archivists, researchers, administrators, cooks, art historians, and specialized technicians.

About *Wake the Great Salt Lake*

Wake the Great Salt Lake is a temporary public art project that aims to educate and inspire residents and visitors to understand and prevent the further decline of the Great Salt Lake. The project is a partnership of the Salt Lake City Arts Council, the Salt Lake City Mayor's Office, and is part of the Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge. For more information, please visit wakegsl.org.

About Salt Lake City Arts Council

The Salt Lake City Arts Council promotes, presents, and supports artists, arts organizations, and arts activities in order to further the development of the arts community and to benefit the public by expanding awareness, access, and participation. For more information, please visit saltlakearts.org.

About the Salt Lake City Mayor's Office

Mayor Erin Mendenhall is the mayor of Salt Lake City, the capital and most populous city in Utah, the fastest-growing state in the country. As the hub of the economy, the arts, and sports for the region, Salt Lake City is committed to fostering an inclusive, innovative, and sustainable community. With a focus on quality of life, Salt Lake City continues to be a destination for both residents and visitors alike, having hosted the 2002 Winter Olympics and welcoming the world again for the 2034 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. An elected mayor, who serves as the chief executive, and seven part-time City Council members govern the City. For more information, visit slc.gov.

About the Bloomberg Philanthropies' Public Art Challenge

The Bloomberg Philanthropies' Public Art Challenge brings together cities and their leaders, residents, and artists to develop temporary public art projects that address important civic issues in their communities. Since launching in 2014, the Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge has spurred more than \$100 million in economic benefits for participating cities and action across a range of civic issues. For more information, please visit bloomberg.org.