

McDERMOTT

THE EUGENE McDERMOTT AWARD IN THE ARTS AT MIT
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
77 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, BUILDING 10-183
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

OLAFUR ELIASSON 2014 RECIPIENT EUGENE McDERMOTT AWARD IN THE ARTS AT MIT

Award includes artist residency, pop-up exhibitions, public lecture,
\$100,000 prize and gala

MIT Students to work on Olafur Eliasson's Little Sun project

MEDIA CONTACT:

Leah Talatinian | Communications Manager, Arts at MIT
617-253-5351 | leaht@mit.edu | arts.mit.edu/mcdermott



Cambridge, MA, October 24, 2013 – Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is pleased to announce that Olafur Eliasson is the recipient of the 2014, 40th anniversary [Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT](#), presented by the Council for the Arts at MIT. Renowned for the multi-faceted practice of his studio in Berlin, Eliasson creates ambitious public art projects, large-scale installations, architectural pavilions, major art exhibitions, spatial experiments, sensory experiences and a distinctive art and social business enterprise -- Little Sun, a solar powered lamp that is “a work of art that works in life.” Eliasson’s creative practice above all reveals that art shapes life in a way that transforms reality.

The Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT celebrates individuals whose artistic trajectory reveals that they will achieve the highest distinction in their fields and continue to produce inspiring work for many years to come. The \$100,000 prize represents an investment in the recipient’s future creative work, rather than a prize for a particular project or lifetime of achievement. The official announcement is made at the Council’s 41st annual meeting at MIT on October 24, 2013, and Eliasson will be presented with the award at a gala in his honor on March 13, 2014.

Olafur Eliasson’s remarks upon receiving the award:

“Through abstraction, we shape the world. Through art, we translate thoughts, intuitions, feelings and intentions into actions that transform reality. It is a great honor for me to receive the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT, an institution with a long tradition of turning thinking into doing.”

From MIT Associate Provost and Ford International Professor of History Philip S. Khoury:

“MIT recognizes the broad reach of Olafur Eliasson’s art practice, which extends the boundaries of our sensory perception and awareness about what art can do in the world. His art is at once intellectually rigorous and socially aware. Eliasson’s collaborative approach to artistic creation will resonate in MIT’s culture, and we look forward to mutually productive interactions with faculty, students and researchers in the arts, science and technology during his visit to MIT in March 2014.”

Eliasson's extraordinary work encompasses a broad range of creative practices spanning art, science and psychology, supported by a prodigious studio. He has made strikingly original contributions to public art, architecture, and recently, social entrepreneurship. Eliasson's enormously popular installation *The weather project*, an immense artificial sun, produced a *sui generis* immersive environment, transforming the cavernous turbine hall of London's Tate Modern with ethereal light and fog. Through such philosophical investigations of light, color, atmosphere and water, Eliasson probes the nature of space and human perception. Most recently, Eliasson collaborated with engineer Frederik Ottesen to develop Little Sun: a portable solar-powered LED lamp for the 1.6 billion people worldwide without access to electricity. "A work of art that works in life," Little Sun is providing a safe and affordable alternative to toxic and expensive fuel-based lighting like kerosene lanterns. Little Sun was launched at London's Tate Modern in 2012 and has since produced 165,000 solar lamps, with distribution in seven African countries, the EU, Japan, Australia and the USA. Little Sun is a social business that addresses the need for light in a sustainable way that benefits off-grid communities, with a focus on creating local jobs and generating local profits.

Campus Residency and Public Programs

A distinctive feature of the Award is a short residency at MIT, which includes a public presentation of the artist's work, substantial interaction with students and faculty and a gala that convenes national and international leaders in the arts. The goal of the residency is to provide the recipient with unparalleled access to the creative energy and cutting-edge research at the Institute and to develop mutually enlightening relationships in the MIT community.

During his residency, Eliasson and his team will have the opportunity to connect with path-breaking advances in design, entrepreneurship and energy research at MIT. At [Hacking Arts](#) -- MIT's first annual festival and hackathon to explore the intersection of arts, technology and entrepreneurship (September 28-29, 2013) -- students from across the Boston region were challenged to improve Little Sun, exploring ways in which the lamp can be transformed into an even more sustainable, affordable and aesthetically pleasing source of energy for all. Little Sun was showcased on October 18, 2013 at [MIT Energy Night](#) and in an installation at the MIT Museum through March, 2014.

About Olafur Eliasson

Olafur Eliasson represented Denmark at the 50th Venice Biennale in 2003 and later that year installed *The weather project* at Tate Modern, London, which was seen by more than two million people. *Take your time: Olafur Eliasson*, a survey exhibition organized in 2007 by San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), traveled until 2010, stopping in New York at MoMA and the Dallas Museum of Art. *Seu corpo da obra* (Your body of work), 2011, engaged with three institutions around São Paulo and featured ten site-specific installations. Projects in public space include *The New York City Waterfalls*, commissioned by Public Art Fund in 2008 with the support of Mayor Michael Bloomberg. Harpa, the Reykjavik Concert Hall and Conference Centre, for which Eliasson created a crystalline façade, was inaugurated in August 2011 and received the European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture Mies Van Der Rohe Award in 2013. Little Sun, developed with engineer Frederik Ottesen, was shown at Tate Modern as part of the London 2012 Festival and at Common Ground, La Biennale di Venezia: 13th International Architecture Exhibition in Venice. Eliasson is a professor at Berlin University of the Arts.

Established in 1995, his studio today numbers about seventy craftsmen, architects, geometers and art historians. In April 2009, as a professor at the Berlin University of the Arts, Olafur Eliasson founded the Institut für Raumexperimente (Institute for Spatial Experiments), a five-year experiment in arts education located in his studio in Berlin.

About the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts

Now celebrating its 40th anniversary, [The Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT](#) was established in 1974 by the Council for the Arts at MIT. The Award recognizes innovative talents in any arts discipline and offers its recipient a \$100,000 cash prize, a gala and a campus residency. The selection process reflects MIT's

commitment to risk taking, problem solving and the idea of connecting creative minds across disciplines. The Award honors Eugene McDermott, cofounder of Texas Instruments and long-time friend and benefactor of MIT.

About the Council for the Arts at MIT

The Council for the Arts at MIT is a volunteer group of alumni and friends who support the arts at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Since its founding in 1972 by MIT President Jerome B. Wiesner, the Council for the Arts at MIT has bestowed the award upon 33 individuals who work in performing, visual and media arts, as well as authors, art historians and patrons of the arts. Appointed by the President of MIT to three-year terms, Council members continuously fulfill their mission “to foster the arts at MIT and to act as a catalyst for the development of a broadly based, highly participatory program in the arts.”

Award Committee Members, 2013-14

Ellen Berman, member, Council for the Arts at MIT
Bill Booziotis, member, Council for the Arts at MIT
Susan Cohen, Director, Council for the Arts at MIT
Margaret Anne Cullum, member, Council for the Arts at MIT
Michael Cuthbert, Homer A. Burnell Career Development Professor of Music, MIT
Brit d’Arbeloff, member, Council for the Arts at MIT
Deborah Fitzgerald, Kenan Sahin Dean, School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, MIT
Renée Green, Professor and Director, Program in Art, Culture and Technology, MIT
Paul Ha, Director, List Visual Arts Center, MIT
Philip S. Khoury, Associate Provost and Ford International Professor of History, MIT
Leila W. Kinney, Executive Director of Arts Initiatives and the Center for Art, Science & Technology, MIT
Flora Major, member, Council for the Arts at MIT
Nick Montfort, Associate Professor of Digital Media, MIT
Andrea Nasher, member, Council for the Arts at MIT
Jane Pappalardo, Chair, Council for the Arts at MIT
Susan Poduska, McDermott Gala Committee Chair and member, Council for the Arts at MIT
Adèle Naudé Santos, Dean, School of Architecture and Planning, MIT
Jay Scheib, Professor and Head of Theater Arts, MIT
Rick Stone, Chair, McDermott Award Selection Committee and member, Council for the Arts at MIT
Nader Tehrani, Professor and Head of Architecture, MIT
Peter Wender, member, Council for the Arts at MIT

Past Recipients

2011: Robert Lepage, performance/media artist
2010: Gustavo Dudamel, conductor
2009: Bill Viola, artist
2006: Suzan Lori Parks, playwright/novelist
2005: Santiago Calatrava, engineer/architect
2004: Libby Larsen, composer
2003: Vinie Burrows, activist/actress/writer
2001: Isaac Julien, filmmaker
2000: CORE Ensemble
1999: Diller + Scofidio, architects
1998: Junot Díaz, author
1997: Toni Dove, video artist
1996: Kenny Leon, theater director
1995: Jeff Wall, photographer
1994: Tan Dun, composer
1993: Thomas Hanrahan & Victoria Meyers, architects

1992: Richard Preston, author
1991: Rebecca Purdum, artist
1990: Agnes Denes, artist
1989: Ida Ely Rubin, art historian
1988: Yulla Lipchitz, photographer
1986: Richard Leacock, filmmaker
1985: Harold E. Edgerton, photographer
1984: I.M. Pei, architect
1983: Albert R. Gurney, Jr., playwright
1982: Roy Lamson, arts administrator
1981: Henry Moore, sculptor
1980: Luis A. Ferre, arts patron
1979: Jerome B. Wiesner, President of MIT, arts patron
1978: Catherine N. Stratton, Founder, Council for the Arts, arts patron
1977: James R. Killian, Jr., President Emeritus, MIT
1976: Paul Tishman, Founder, Council for the Arts, arts patron
1975: Klaus Liepmann, conductor, founder of the music program at MIT
1974: György Kepes, artist, founder of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT

For more information on the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT, please visit arts.mit.edu/mcdermott/

Media Contact:

Leah Talatinian | Communications Manager, Arts at MIT | 617-253-5351 | leaht@mit.edu

##