

\$1 A WEEK for **12 WEEKS** **SUBSCRIBE NOW**

U.S. EDITION Wednesday, September 4, 2013 As of 10:18 PM EDT

[Subscribe](#) | [Log In](#)

Home World U.S. Business Tech Markets Market Data Your Money Opinion Life & Culture **N.Y.** Real Estate Management
 News Sports Culture Real Estate

TOP STORIES IN NEW YORK 1 of 12



Unions Might Find a Friend in City Hall



Singer Shoots for the Moon



Developer Lands Dumbo Bid

3 of 12

Police Chafe at Scrutiny

NY CULTURE | September 4, 2013, 10:18 p.m. ET

Kinetic Sculpture Comes Full Circle

"Ventilator," Olafur Eliasson's hypnotic kinetic sculpture, Returns to MoMA

Article

Comments

MORE IN NEW YORK-CULTURE »

Email

Print

By ANDY BATTAGLIA

"Ventilator," Olafur Eliasson's hypnotic kinetic sculpture, is making its second appearance at the Museum of Modern Art after having its debut in the artist's 2008 exhibition. But its few elemental parts—an electrical cord, a mechanical fan and a suggestive expanse of air—warrant more than a second glance, according to Mr. Eliasson.

"I think that 'Ventilator' is captivating to look at, but you also start to wonder what on Earth makes it fly," he said of the piece, which hangs from the ceiling and propels itself in circles around the room. "When we walk into a space, we tend to look at the walls and the floor as solids, and everything between as somehow not there. We know very well that air is thick enough for a jumbo jet to take off and float on it. There is something there, conceptually, to solidify."

The materials for the spartan sculpture, then, work hard to make for more than a mere basic display. "Of course it's supposed to look like I just went down to the hardware store and bought a \$20 fan," Mr. Eliasson said, "but the truth is, as it often is with ideas that look simple, a lot of work went into making it."

He tested numerous fans for "weight and robustness," and it was no simple feat to find a 50-foot cable immune to coiling up.

The premise of "Ventilator" aligns with aspects of much of the 46-year-old Mr. Eliasson's work, which plays with light, space and matter in different states of being. One such substance was a grouping of glacial-ice chunks that he exhibited over the summer at MoMA PS1, as part of the climate-change-inspired survey "Expo 1." Some critics balked at the energy required to transport pieces of a glacier, from Iceland, and then display them in freezing conditions. But Mr. Eliasson,

THE NEW PORTFOLIO TOOL ON WSJ.COM:
 THE ULTIMATE INVESTMENT TRACKER
 AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY FOR SUBSCRIBERS

[LEARN MORE](#)

provided by LikeAssets

Popular Now

What's This?

1 Study Says Parents' Yelling Is as Hurtful as Hitting

2 IRS Ruling Affects Restaurant Tips



3 Data Expert Kaspersky: No More Privacy



4 Opinion: Adam Chandler: Why 'Duck Dynasty' Viewers Heed Its...



Enlarge Image

Matthew Septimus

Olafur Eliasson, whose 'Ventilator' installation will be on view at MoMA

who was born in Iceland and now lives in Berlin and Copenhagen, called the work an urgent plea.

"I embrace the people who criticize me for that. They have a good point," he said. "But if you go two blocks from PS1, there's a deli which has seven refrigerators filled with Gatorade."

"Ventilator," too, comes with a suggestion of climate change, a new aspect to a work first conceived in 1997. "Think about what our relationship with the weather was like 15 years ago," the artist said. "An old piece can take on new meaning as time goes."

It also aspires to ground the viewer, more personally, in a contemplative sense of self. "There is a strong wonderment and magic in how poetic

this piece is in relation to the simplicity of its setup," said Klaus Biesenbach, director of MoMA PS1 and chief curator at large of MoMA. "The moves are sometimes quiet and calming like a pendulum, sometimes capricious like a living being."

Mr. Eliasson expressed affection for the ways that currents around "Ventilator" can change. "In museums and public buildings, these grand-scale architectural statements, sometimes it can be hard to find your own body," he said. "To have a fan hanging—a very unmythical fan—makes space tangible. It addresses what we take for granted, what we don't think of as being there. The idea is to make the negative space a positive space."

A version of this article appeared September 5, 2013, on page A22 in the U.S. edition of The Wall Street Journal, with the headline: Kinetic Sculpture Comes Full Circle.

JOIN THE DISCUSSION
Be the first to comment

MORE IN
New York-Culture »

Email

Print

Order Reprints

THE NEW PORTFOLIO TOOL ON WSJ.COM:
THE ULTIMATE INVESTMENT TRACKER
AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY FOR SUBSCRIBERS

LEARN MORE

provided by LikeAssets

Hot New Stock Pick

This Proven Gainer Could Be Your Best Move Yet—Learn More!
www.OTCStockPick.com

Bronze Sculpture Studio

Pre-made or custom sculptures. Reproductions to one of a kind
www.LargeArt.com

BLFR Penny Stock Up 30%

Continues To Trend Up. Huge Profit Potential
FinancialDigest.info

Mortgage Rates Hit 2.87%

White House Program Cuts Up to \$1k off Monthly Payments! (3.12% APR)
www.SeeRefinanceRates.com

Add a Comment

JOURNAL COMMUNITY

Community rules



5 U.S. Car Sales Soar to Pre-Slump Level



Show 5 More

Available to WSJ.com Subscribers

U.S. Car Sales Soar to Pre-Slump Level



'Jumbo' Mortgages Hit Milestone

Energy-Hungry China Struggles to Join Shale-Gas Revolution



In Munis, Some Investors Fly First Class



\$1 A WEEK FOR 12 WEEKS

SUBSCRIBE NOW

Real-t

/ York

Weather Journal: Sweater Weather Returns

A cold front moves from Eastern Canada into Greater New York on Thursday, bringing sun and the first serious sweater weather since spring.



Cuomo Weighs in on Syria Debate

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo tends to steer clear of the national political arena, but he waded into Washington's debate on U.S. military action against Syria Wednesday, denouncing "hyper-partisanship" on the matter.



Anthony Weiner Argues With Heckler While Campaigning in Brooklyn

Spitzer, Stringer Remain in Dead Heat in Latest Poll

Museum of Arts and Design Names a New Leader

See All

RSS Feed

More in New York Culture

Singer Shoots for the Moon

Kinetic Sculpture Comes Full Circle

New Director for Museum of Arts and Design

Repertory Film: From Boards to Bordeaux

Pouches and Couches at Samsung's Lounge