

## OLAFUR ELIASSON'S MASTERPIECE



Photo Ole Hein Pedersen

### *Your rainbow panorama*

First he created a sun for London.

Later he created a waterfall for New York.

Then the Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson created a rainbow for Aarhus

May 2011 was the official opening of *Your rainbow panorama*, a work by Olafur Eliasson on the roof of ARoS. The world-famous Danish-Icelandic artist has created this permanent work of art consisting of a circular, 150-metre-long and three metre-wide circular walkway in glass in all the colours of the spectrum. Mounted on slender columns 3.5 metres above the roof and with a diameter of 52 metres, this spectacular creation extends from one edge to the other of the facade of the cubic museum building.

#### **A Walk for the Senses**

There are both stairs and elevator to provide visitors to the museum with access to *Your rainbow panorama*. Then they can stroll through the circular, panoramic walkway providing a fantastic view of the city and the bay, a view in all the colours of the rainbow.

Beneath the 'floating' work of art, the actual roof surface of c. 1500 square metres is covered with sturdy timber making the surface into a unique recreational area and a viewing platform for visitors to the museum some fifty metres about street level. There is full access to both the roof terrace and to Olafur Eliasson's creation.

The following words are taken from the artist's own description of his work:

*"Your rainbow panorama* establishes a dialogue with the existing architecture and reinforces what was already there, that is to say the view across the city. I have created a space that can almost be said to erase the boundary between inside and outside – a place where you become a little uncertain as to whether you have stepped into a work of art or into part of the museum. This uncertainty is important to me, as it encourages people to think and sense beyond the limits within which they are accustomed to function."

### **Opening of the Roof Pavilion in 2013**

November 2013 ARoS celebrated the opening of the new Roof Pavilion on the museum's roof terrace. Building it has been made possible thanks to a generous donation of 20.9 million Danish crowns by Købmand Herman Sallings Fond.

The 310 square metre Roof Pavilion is situated on the west side of the art museum's huge roof terrace, the beautiful wood facing of which was likewise made possible last year by a donation from Købmand Herman Sallings Fond. Among other things, the roof pavilion with a stunning view includes an information centre, *Sky Room*, and the exclusive *Sunset Lounge*, where Olafur Eliasson's work *Your condensation, 2013*, is installed. The roof pavilion will provide visitors with direct access from the museum to *Your rainbow panorama* and will contain facilities both for visitors to the museum and for vocational guests.

The roof pavilion is designed by schmidt hammer lassen architects against the background of Olafur Eliasson's sketches. schmidt hammer lassen architects were similarly advisors on the building of *Your rainbow panorama* and were the architects responsible for the ARoS building.

### **Landmark for Aarhus**

In 2007, Olafur Eliasson won the competition for an artistic/architectonic work to stand on the roof of the cubic museum building designed by Danish schmidt hammer lassen architects. The jury was completely unanimous in selecting this winning project, and they endorsed their choice in part with the following: "The project is an elegant solution to the objective of the competition, which was to convert the roof surface of ARoS into a unique, artistic and architectonic feature of international standing. The project creates a very beautiful, poetical space that combines the panoramic view from the roof with a unique artistic and architectonic dimension that helps develop a new understanding of the borderline between architecture and visual art. At the same time, a powerful symbol of identity is created and established for ARoS and the city of Aarhus."

### **Dante's Divine Comedy**

*Your rainbow panorama* on the roof of ARoS represents the completion of the building's idea, which was inspired by the Renaissance poet Dante Alighieri's story in "The Divine Comedy" of the nine circles of Hell and the journey up from the mountain of Purgatory, ending in perfection in Paradise. In ARoS this is translated into the exhibition concept represented by the 9 Rooms in the basement, the journey up through the galleries and the art exhibited there, finishing with *Your rainbow panorama* on the roof as a symbol of perfection.

### **Book publication**

With support of Realdania, ARoS marked the opening of *You rainbow panorama* by publishing a richly illustrated book on the project. Among other things it contains an interview on the work with Olafur Eliasson and a text on it written by Professor Carsten Thau of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Art School of Architecture together with photographs of the work as it progressed and of the final result.