

Content Review

Olivia Erlanger: If Today Were Tomorrow

On View | April 20–October 27, 2024



Olivia Erlanger, *Blue Sky*, 2024. Wire, flocking, foam, plaster, acrylic, aluminum, graphite, shoe polish, LED, and driver

This content review is designed to communicate accessibility and powerful subject matters within this exhibition.

Content Review

Olivia Erlanger: If Today Were Tomorrow

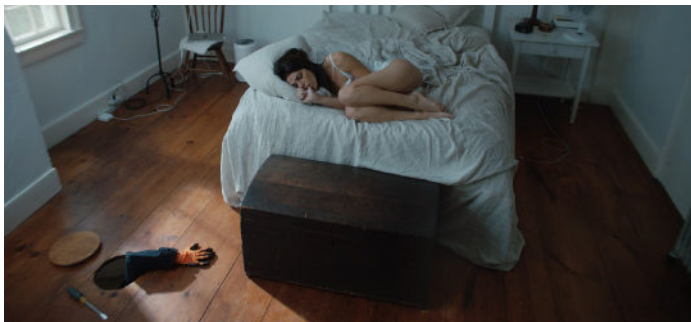
On View | April 20–October 27, 2024

Themes: Speculation, Fantasy, Memory, Identity, Environmental Study, Discovery

Olivia Erlanger is an American artist renowned for her exploration of dreams and delusions through various mediums, including sculpture, writing, and filmmaking. Her works often touch on themes of domesticity, memory, and the relationship between architecture and identity. Additional themes include challenging conventional notions of suburban life, reflecting on how progress is understood through hindsight, and considering the connections between interior and exterior, self and non-self. Erlanger's writing has been featured in publications such as *Tank* and *Harvard Design Magazine*, and she has exhibited her works in solo and group shows worldwide. *Olivia Erlanger: If Today Were Tomorrow* is organized by Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and curated by Patricia Restrepo, Curator.

Interactive Elements

- Explore Erlanger's latest short film, *Appliance* (2024), delving into the cultural and historical significance of domestic appliances, particularly the oven, while highlighting metaphors for the human body.
- Visitors are free to sit on the couch, and chairs in the installation area, a sitcom-like set, reminiscent of *Dogville* or *Seinfeld*.
- Peer through cut-outs in the walls to catch glimpses of miniature landscapes and dioramas.
- Encounter massive illuminated sculptures representing planets within the exhibition.



Olivia Erlanger, *Appliance* (Still), 2024, HD Video, 17:01 mins, Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and Soft Opening, London.

Miniature Diorama Sculptures

These dioramas present four proposals of seemingly impossible architectural forms and environments—a city, a park, a mountainscape, and a mesa.

- Explore four imaginative dioramas or architectural forms and environments—a city, a park, a mountainscape, and a mesa.
- Observe each diorama and probe the American belief in power through home ownership.
- Reflect on real estate investments and their impact on forms, futures, and memories.
- Consider issues of equity by examining how architecture and infrastructure influence American aspirations and disappointments.

Giant Planet Sculptures

Erlanger's two planet sculptures contain stylized suburban settings, pointing to architecture's power to frame our lived experience.

- They feature stylized suburban settings to illustrate architecture's role in shaping lived experiences.
- The sculptures use exaggerated details to map the built landscape.
- They also include infrastructure like electrical grids and roadways connecting suburbs to centers of capital and exchange.

Content Review

Olivia Erlanger: If Today Were Tomorrow

On View | April 20–October 27, 2024



Olivia Erlanger, *Eros (when night was last dark)*, 2024. Polished aluminum.

Arrow References

In *Eros (when night was last dark)* (2024), polished aluminum arrows pierce CAMH’s iconic freestanding staircase. These arrows map a celestial constellation, revealing what Houston’s sky would have looked like on January 26, 1880. This date marks, per the artist, “the last day the sky was dark,” as Thomas Edison received the patent for the lightbulb the following day.

Other Considerations

- Visitors should avoid the temptation to touch objects and please view artwork from behind the designated floor markers.
- Please be aware parts of this exhibition are dimly lit.
- Visitors are invited to browse the books in the space under the stairs.
- Visitors are also invited to sit on the couch and chairs to view *Appliance*.