

# AN EVENING WITH DOUG AITKEN

Wednesday, October 23, at 7 p.m.  
Bovard Auditorium



## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- ◉ Doug Aitken (b. 1968) is a California-born American multimedia artist and filmmaker known for large-scale video installations. He has also created several site-specific sculptures and installations, interacting with architecture as well as the natural world.
- ◉ Aitken's work has been exhibited in major institutions including the Whitney, MoMA, Vienna Secession, the Serpentine Gallery, the Centre Georges Pompidou, and MOCA.
- ◉ He has been the recipient of the International Prize at the Venice Biennale, the Nam June Paik Art Center Prize, the Smithsonian Magazine American Ingenuity Award, and the Americans for the Arts National Arts Award for Ingenuity in the Arts.
- ◉ In 2017, he was awarded the inaugural Frontier Art Prize for work that "challenges the current and future condition of human knowledge and experience."

## SELECTED WORKS

### *New Horizon* (2019)

Over 17 days in the summer, a 100-foot-tall hot-air balloon designed as a reflective light sculpture traveled over Massachusetts, reflecting and illuminating the world below. At each of its seven stops, Aitken organized site-specific happenings and conversations about the future of our culture.

### *Mirage* (2017)

A structure in the desert near Palm Springs was clad in mirror, creating a dynamic encounter between subject and object, and riffing on the human dreams that have been projected onto the American West.

### *Underwater Pavilions* (2016)

Viewers had to swim to see these three light-refracting sculptures that were temporarily placed in the ocean near Catalina Island.

### *Song 1* (2012)

This large-scale video installation was projected on a 360-degree screen on the outside of the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, D.C., creating an experience of cinema that was unexpected and unconventional on multiple levels: cinema as public art, and cinema that could only be fully seen if the viewer moved around the screen. An array of figures, including both famous actors like Tilda Swinton and unfamiliar faces, were projected larger-than-life, lip-syncing to the classic song "I Only Have Eyes for You" (performed by musicians including Beck and No Age), in a moving meditation on city life, loneliness, longing, and connection.

### *Electric Earth* (1999)

An eight-channel, multi-room video projection that follows a man moving alone through different spaces as if he is the last person on earth. The multi-room structure disrupts the linear time of conventional cinema. Aitken wanted to "make time somehow collapse or expand, so it no longer unfolds in . . . one narrow form."

Photo: Ami Sioux



Doug Aitken

### Happenings and Conversations

Aitken is interested in interactivity, and his art practice includes conversations and “happenings” that bring people together in live encounters. Conversation projects include two books of interviews that Aitken conducted with other artists, as well as *The Idea of the West* (2010), which documents 1,000 people’s responses to the question “What is your idea of the West?”

In some of Aitken’s “happenings,” performers from Aitken films appear live in the installation space with the audience. *Station to Station* (2013) was a happening that took place on a train from New York to San Francisco, with different artworks and musical performances at every stop. Participating artists included Olafur Eliasson, Cat Power, Patti Smith, Catherine Opie, Urs Fischer, No Age, and Thomas Demand. Food was provided by the legendary chef Alice Waters.

### FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- ◉ Why do you think Aitken uses reflective surfaces in so many of his works?
- ◉ Why do you think Aitken works in so many different mediums, from photography to video installation to sculpture to conversation?
- ◉ How would you answer Aitken’s question, “What is your idea of the West?”
- ◉ What was most moving or thought-provoking to you in tonight’s presentation?

### IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

- ◉ Doug Aitken Workshop  
dougaitkenworkshop.com
- ◉ The Museum of Contemporary Art  
moca.org
- ◉ Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles  
theicala.org
- ◉ Marciano Art Foundation  
marcianoartfoundation.org
- ◉ Regen Projects  
regenprojects.com

### DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

**REBECCA MICHELSON** of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about Aitken and this evening’s event. Those with a call number (e.g., books) are physical items which you can find in our campus libraries. Those without a call number (e.g. journals and databases) are electronic resources, which you can access through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at [libraries.usc.edu](http://libraries.usc.edu).

#### BOOKS

Aitken, Doug, Steve Erickson, and Lionel Bovier. *Doug Aitken: Sculptures 2007–2015*. Zurich: JRP Ringier, 2015.

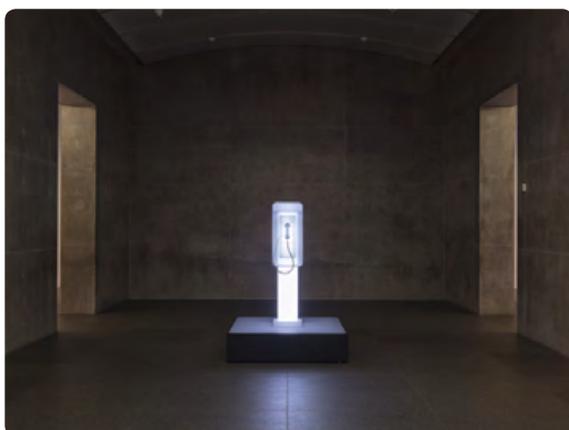
Architecture and Fine Arts Library: **N6537.A4 A4 2015**

Photo: Doug Aitken Workshop



Doug Aitken, *The Garden*, 2017

Photo: Kevin Todora



Doug Aitken, *Twilight*, 2014



Aitken, Doug, Max Hollein, and Ulrich Matthias. *Doug Aitken*. Frankfurt: Schirn Kunsthalle, 2015.

Architecture and Fine Arts Library: **N6537.A4 A4 2015b**

Birnbaum, Daniel, Amy Sharp, and Jörg Heiser. *Doug Aitken*. London: Phaidon, 2001.

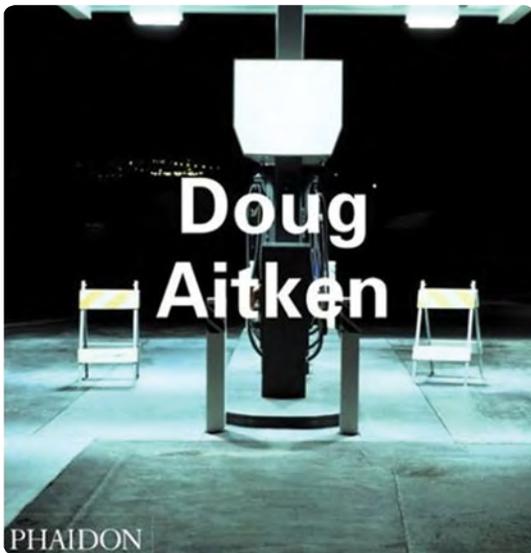
Architecture and Fine Arts Library: **N6537.A38 B57 2001x**

Marta, Karen, and Aaron Betsky. *Doug Aitken: 100 Yrs.* New York: Rizzoli, 2013.

Architecture and Fine Arts Library: **N6537.A4 A4 2013**

Vergne, Philippe, Joseph Grima, Anna Katz, Norman M. Klein, Glenn D. Lowry, and Doug Aitken. *Doug Aitken: Electric Earth*. Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 2016.

Architecture and Fine Arts Library: **N6537.A4 A4 2016**



## DATABASES

### Art and Architecture Archive

Art and Architecture Archive is a major research resource comprising the digitized backfiles of many of the foremost art and architecture magazines of the twentieth century. Each journal/magazine issue is scanned from cover to cover in high resolution color and has a fully searchable text.

### Arts and Humanities Citation Index

The Arts & Humanities Citation Index is a multidisciplinary database covering the journal literature of the arts and humanities. It indexes 1,100 of the world's leading arts and humanities journals, as well as covering individually selected, relevant items from over 6,800 major science and social science journals.

### International Bibliography of Art

The definitive resource for scholarly literature on Western art, IBA is the successor to the Bibliography of the History of Art (BHA), and retains the editorial policies which made BHA one of the most trusted and frequently consulted sources in the field.

## JOURNALS

*Afterimage*. Rochester, N.Y: Visual Studies Workshop., 1972 (Available Online and at the Architecture and Fine Arts Library).

*Millennium Film Journal*. New York, N.Y: Millennium Film Workshop, 1978 (Available Online and in the Cinematic Arts Library).

## SOUND RECORDING

Marclay, Christian. "Ensemble." Philadelphia, PA: Institute of Contemporary Art, 2008.

Architecture and Fine Arts Library: **NX650.S68 E57 2008**

