



# THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES (MOCA), PRESENTS  
*DOUG AITKEN: ELECTRIC EARTH***

**THE FIRST SURVEY TO COMPREHENSIVELY EXAMINE  
THE FULL BREADTH OF THE ARTIST'S WORK**

**September 10, 2016–January 15, 2017  
The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA**



"We are experiencing time in a different way now in terms of information. We move rapidly through information, grazing across the surface, comfortable in an accelerated state. In the moment when we stop and turn everything off, we find ourselves alone in an almost greater silence. This expansion and compression of time moves us toward alternative forms of perception."

—Doug Aitken

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**LOS ANGELES** — The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, presents *Doug Aitken: Electric Earth*, the first survey to comprehensively examine the full breadth of the artist's work. Since the 1990s, Aitken has created new and deeper levels of viewer involvement in narrative and the moving image. To immerse the viewer in images and sounds, Aitken projects his films across multiple screens in architectural environments. Conceptualized around the notion of the broken screen, Aitken's films present nonlinear narratives built from fragmented and repetitive abstract images. These films place the viewer at the center of an immersive multisensory experience. In his work across mediums and disciplines, he maps psychological, social, informational, and physical landscapes, often using imagery of the American West. Aitken's art is informed by media saturation and the ubiquity of information technology, what Aitken describes as the "landscape of fragmentation." The exhibition is organized by MOCA Director Philippe Vergne, with Wendy Stark Curatorial Fellow Anna Katz, and represents a full collaboration and dialogue with the artist and his studio.

"Doug Aitken pushes the limits of what an exhibition can be," remarks MOCA Director Philippe Vergne. "The exhibition creates its own space and time through the fragmentation of images and sounds and becomes a work in itself. It is a total environment that acts as a broadcasting tower for the issues of our time—the ethical and aesthetic questions that frame this moment, those of human, environmental, and social entropy—and does so in a way that is immersive, making the viewer a fully participatory protagonist of the work. Doug has introduced a new conception of narrative based on fragmentation and a new conception of sculpture not in an expanded field, but rather in an expanded time. What is distinctive about this new form is it provides a common ground for audiences, giving a physical space to the idea of communication as what is familiar to many."

*Doug Aitken: Electric Earth* comprises seven major, large-scale moving-image installations—from Aitken's earliest multichannel video installation, *diamond sea* (1997), to more recent performance-based works such as *Black Mirror* (2011)—in addition to the live sound installation *Sonic Fountain II* (2013/2015), numerous sculptures, photographs, collages, a program of single-channel films, and documentation of site-specific architectural projects. It unfolds around the major moving-image installations that articulate the artist's central thematic concerns—the end of linear time, environmental depredation, unprecedented technological mediation, self-contained and decentralized communication, and the incursion of commerce into our social relationships. The uniqueness of the work reveals itself in Aitken's mesmerizing treatment of such concerns: he strategically structures architectural environments and edits images and sounds in order to envelop the viewer and overwhelm the senses. In immersive works like *SONG 1* (2012/2015), Aitken creates opportunities for the audience to share a communal experience, drawing viewers in through a nearly hypnotic aesthetic and cannily deploying a wide range of visual vocabularies from the realms of cinema, communications, avant-garde music, and the history of art. Conceptualized as an entropic landscape suspended between city, broadcasting machine, and labyrinth, the exhibition is punctuated by the signs, sculptures, and images unbound from vernacular language and culture at the center of Aitken's art.

The exhibition's logic incorporates that of Aitken's nomadic cultural incubator, cross-continental happening, and moving earthwork *Station to Station* (2013), which, like so many of Aitken's works, embraced a collaborative spirit across disciplines and beyond walls to reimagine what a work of art can be and what an art experience can do. Similarly, a robust roster of accompanying public programs highlights how, over the course of his career, Aitken has been a creative conductor, bringing together musicians, performers, thinkers, other visual artists, and the public at large to experience collective cultural happenings. Recent examples of this type of collaborative programming include *Doug Aitken: Special Happening & Performance* (2015) at Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt, Germany and *Station to Station: A 30 Day Happening* (2015) at Barbican Centre in London, a continuously evolving "living exhibition" with more than one hundred free events by over one hundred artists, choreographers, filmmakers, musicians, and others, including newly introduced and created works, live rehearsals, performances, talks, interviews, and workshops.

Doug Aitken (b. 1968) is an American artist and filmmaker whose work explores every medium, from sculpture, film, and installations to architectural interventions. His work has been featured in exhibitions around the world, in such institutions as the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Museum of Modern Art, Vienna Secession, the Serpentine Gallery in London, and the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. Aitken earned the International Prize at the Venice Biennale in 1999 for the installation *electric earth*. He also received the 2012 Nam June Paik Art Center Prize and the 2013 Smithsonian American Ingenuity Award: Visual Arts. He currently lives and works in Los Angeles, California.

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*Doug Aitken: Electric Earth* will be accompanied by a substantial, full-color catalogue co-published by MOCA and DelMonico Books·Prestel. Like the exhibition, the catalogue surveys and contextualizes the full scope and depth of Aitken's work. Extensively illustrated, it is edited by MOCA Director Philippe Vergne and features essays by Vergne, Joseph Grima, Anna Katz, Norman M. Klein, and Glenn D. Lowry.

Following its presentation at MOCA, *Doug Aitken: Electric Earth* will travel to the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth.

*Doug Aitken: Electric Earth* is organized by MOCA Director Philippe Vergne, with Wendy Stark Curatorial Fellow Anna Katz.

Lead support is provided by the Annenberg Foundation, The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, Aileen Getty Foundation, Eugenio Lopez, LUMA Foundation, Maurice Marciano, Carolyn Powers, and Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo.

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Supporters of the exhibition catalogue include 303 Gallery, Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Regen Projects, and Victoria Miro Gallery.

Exhibitions at MOCA are supported by the MOCA Fund for Exhibitions with lead annual support provided by Delta Air Lines, Shari Glazer, Hästens, and Sydney Holland, founder of the Sydney D. Holland Foundation. Generous funding is also provided by Jerri and Dr. Steven Nagelberg, and Thao Nguyen and Andreas Krainer.

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Image credit: Installation view of Doug Aitken, *Black Mirror*, 2011, at Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, July 9–September 27, 2015, photo by Norbert Miguletz

**THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES (MOCA)**

**About MOCA:** Founded in 1979, MOCA's vision is to be the defining museum of contemporary art. In a relatively short period of time, MOCA has achieved astonishing growth with three Los Angeles locations of architectural renown; a world-class permanent collection of more than 6,800 objects, international in scope and among the finest in the world; hallmark education programs that are widely emulated; award-winning publications that present original scholarship; groundbreaking monographic, touring, and thematic exhibitions of international repute that survey the art of our time; and cutting-edge engagement with modes of new media production. MOCA is a not-for-profit institution that relies on a variety of funding sources for its activities.

**Hours:** MOCA Grand Avenue (located at 250 South Grand Avenue in Downtown Los Angeles) is open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 11am to 6pm; Thursday from 11am to 8pm; Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 5pm; and closed on Tuesday. The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA (located at 152 North Central Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012) has the same hours as MOCA Grand Avenue during exhibitions. Please call ahead or go to [moca.org](http://moca.org) for the exhibition schedule for The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA. MOCA Pacific Design Center (located at 8687 Melrose Avenue, West Hollywood, CA 90069) is open Tuesday through Friday from 11am to 5pm; Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 6pm; and closed on Monday. The MOCA Store at MOCA Grand Avenue (located at 250 South Grand Avenue) is open Monday through Wednesday and Friday from 10:30am to 5:30pm; Thursday from 10:30am to 8:30pm; and Saturday and Sunday from 10:30am to 6:30pm.

**Museum Admission:** General admission is free for all MOCA members. General admission is also free for everyone at MOCA Grand Avenue and The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA on Thursdays from 5pm to 8pm, courtesy of Wells Fargo. General admission is always free at MOCA Pacific Design Center. General admission at MOCA Grand Avenue and The

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Geffen Contemporary at MOCA is \$12 for adults; \$7 for students with I.D. and seniors (65+); and free for children under 12.

**More Information:** For 24-hour information on current exhibitions, education programs, and special events, call 213/626-6222 or access MOCA online at [moca.org](http://moca.org).

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