



© Stan Douglas. Courtesy the artist, David Zwirner, New York/London and Victoria Miro, London

Stan Douglas. The Secret Agent

6 May – 10 July 2016

(Main Hall)

Press conference: Fr, 6 May 2016, 11 am

7 pm Exhibition Tour by Stan Douglas

8 pm Opening of the exhibitions

New film installation by artist Stan Douglas examines terrorism and political identity in Europe through combined lenses of history and fiction

Canadian artist Stan Douglas's new six-channel video installation is an adaptation of the 1907 novel *The Secret Agent*, by Joseph Conrad. The book recounts a failed bombing attempt of the Greenwich Observatory in London, inspired by a real event in 1894. *The Secret Agent* film installation sets the action and characters from the novel within the context of Portugal's so-called "Hot Summer" of 1975. This was the turbulent period between "The Carnation Revolution" in 1974 and the ratification of a new constitution, when numerous terrorist acts by extreme right- and left-wing groups rocked the county.

The Carnation Revolution marked the end of the Portuguese dictatorship, which was longest authoritarian regime in Western Europe. The left-leaning Armed Forces Movement that organized the coup d'état had wide popular support due to its opposition to the ongoing complications of the colonial wars in Africa. The Hot Summer that followed nearly precipitated a civil war. The threat of an unstable Western Europe leading up to the elections in April 1976 was taken seriously by NATO, which conducted war games in the region. At that time, the United States dispatched battleships to keep watch off the coast. All of Portugal and much of the world was anticipating an extraordinary event that could be as transformative as the Carnation Revolution itself.

This engrossing and sophisticated film installation combines fiction with history, revisionism with speculation, and political identities with literary ones. Stan Douglas' characterizations and story-telling are always much more than meets the eye. His artwork often disrupts conventions of film-making and the audience's relationship to the spectacles of cinema, photography and history.

A new publication printed by Ludion in collaboration with Wiels (Brussels) accompanies the exhibition.

Special thanks to Victoria Miro Gallery, London and Blaue Gans, Salzburg.

Curatorial tours by Director Séamus Kealy

Sa, 21 May 2016, 4 pm

Sa, 2 July 2016, 6 pm

Austrian and German Art University Workshops

17 – 20 June 2016

Biography

Born in 1960 in Vancouver, Stan Douglas is a world-renowned visual artist living and working in Vancouver and Los Angeles. Between 1979 to 1982, he attended the Emily Carr College of Art + Design in Vancouver.

Since the late 1980s, Douglas has produced photographs, films and installations that examine social-political narratives, combine history with fiction, and offer profound analyses of the contemporary subject. His works are often rooted in a range of complex historical and literary material that has included references to the writings of Franz Kafka, Samuel Beckett, Theodor W. Adorno and E.T.A. Hoffmann, and the films of Alfred Hitchcock, Akira Kurosawa and Orson Welles.

From 1982 to 1983, Stan Douglas made installations with projected slides, which he presented in movie theatres. In 1988 he curated the exhibition *Samuel Beckett: Teleplays*, which included eight Beckett works for film and television, and toured internationally. In 1989 his first series of short works for television, the twelve *Television Spots* (1988), was broadcast on television as commercials. In 1992

Douglas's *Monodramas* (1991) were broadcast on television as well. That same year, the artist edited and designed the influential book *Vancouver Anthology: The Institutional Politics of Art*. In 1992, as the guest of the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, he created *Hors-champs*, which examined the free jazz developed by African American expatriates in Paris in the 1960s. His mesmerizing 1995 film installation *Der Sandmann*, in the form of a continual loop and made while on a DAAD residency in Berlin, took as its source the ETA Hoffmann narrative that Freud had later analysed. In 1997–98, he worked on a series of photographs, *Detroit Photos*, that document the devastated American city and its auto industry. A related film installation, *Le Detroit*, was completed in 1999. His film *Inconsolable Memories* revisited the novel of the same name by Edmundo Desnoes as well as the 1968 film *Memories of Underdevelopment* also based on this novel, both set in Havana, Cuba.

Working mostly as a film director in producing both photographs and films, Douglas works with large casts, costumes and stage design to revisit historic moments through complex narratives. This process applies both to his films and his photographs. For example, his critically acclaimed photographic series *Crowds and Riots* (2008) explores crowd phenomena and forms of uprising (or the quashing of such) in the twentieth century in his native Vancouver. With the photography series *Midcentury Studio* (2010–11), Douglas crafted a vernacular of 1950s photography into an astounding, surrealistic photo series. Here he had assumed the role of a fictitious press photographer in post-war North America. With the subsequent series *Disco Angola* (2013), he invented a 1970s photojournalist who documented both the Angolan civil war and the early days of the New York underground disco scene.

Douglas's artwork has been featured in major group exhibitions, including the 1995 Carnegie International; the 1995 Whitney Biennial; the 1997 Skulptur Projekte Münster; the 1997 Documenta; the 1998 Berlin Biennial; the 2000 Biennale of Sydney; the 2001 Istanbul Biennial; the 2002 São Paulo Biennale; the 2002 Documenta; the 2005 Venice Biennale; and the 2011 Moscow Biennale, among many others. Recent large-scale solo exhibitions include presentations at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2015); Haus der Kunst, Munich (2014); Carré d'Art-Musée d'Art Contemporain, Nîmes (2013); Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minnesota (2012); The Power Plant, Toronto (2011); Staatsgalerie Stuttgart and Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart (2007); and The Studio Museum in Harlem, NY (2005). This is his second exhibition at the Salzburger Kunstverein, having exhibited his work *Win Place or Show* there in 1998.

Key Awards

2016 Winner of Hasselblad International Photography Award, Sweden

2015 World Technology Award for the Arts, New York

2013 Scotiabank Photography Award, Toronto

2012 Infinity Award, International Center of Photography, New York

2011 Mayor's Arts Awards, Vancouver

2009 Honorary Doctoral Degree, Emily Carr University of Art + Design, Vancouver

2008 Bell Award in Video, The Canada Council for the Arts, Ottawa

2007 Hnatyshyn Foundation Award, The Hnatyshyn Foundation, Ottawa, Canada

2001 Arnold Bode Prize, Documenta, Kassel

1999 Gershon Iskowitz Prize, The Gershon Iskowitz Foundation and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

1998 Coutts Contemporary Art Foundation Award, Coutts Bank, Zürich

1996 Mies van der Rohe Stipendium, Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld, Germany

1994-1995 DAAD Scholarship, Berlin

More information & photo material:

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www.salzburger-kunstverein.at, Hours exhibition: Tue-Sun 12-7 pm

All images:

Stan Douglas, *The Secret Agent*, 2015, six-channel-videoinstallation, sound, 54 min 53 sec.

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