

## Doug Aitken: *Microcosmos*

Exhibition 15 July–30 October 2021

**Victoria Miro Venice**, Il Capricorno, San Marco 1994, 30124 Venice, Italy



**Doug Aitken**, *Entry Point*, 2021

Mixed fabrics

157.5 x 157.5 cm

62 x 62 in

© Doug Aitken

Courtesy the artist; 303 Gallery, New York; Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zürich; Victoria Miro, London/Venice; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

**Victoria Miro is delighted to present an exhibition in Venice by the celebrated American artist Doug Aitken. *Microcosmos* features a new series of handmade fabric wall hangings that, engaging with the physical act of making, visually articulate a world that is driven by information and continuously in flux. The exhibition coincides with a major new site-specific installation, *Green Lens*, by the artist in Venice, and the European premiere of his 2021 work *Flags and Debris*, which will feature as part of Biennale Danza, 15th International Festival of Contemporary Dance, directed by Wayne McGregor.**

Doug Aitken's works, at their core, invite us to consider the nature of our present and signal possibilities for the future. His latest textiles are a continuation of a body of work generated over the past year and take as their starting point clothing and other everyday found materials that the artist was able to access within his home. Cutting fragments and reassembling them into abstract visual fields, Aitken has created elaborate wall hangings, patterns emerging and disappearing within their collaged layers. Foregrounded throughout these works are poetic tensions between the digital and the handmade, fast and slow media. Repeating elements within the works appear like handcrafted digital glitches, while the physical process of their creation suggests the slow-paced craft of quilting. Resembling flags and banners, mandalas and targets, they also bear connotations of protection, comfort or shelter – the very nature of cloth being at the same time intimate, personal and universal. These shifting symbolic qualities

resonate with the dynamic abstractions of each composition: these are signs, devoid of text, that allow for open-ended investigations into our collective experience.

Accompanying the wall hangings is a sequence of floor-based works created using a similar method to Aitken's fabric collages. These operate between the elevated artistic genre of soft-sculpture and as functional furnishings that invite visitors to pause, enabling physical activation of the works and an embodied experience of the show.

The final work on view, positioned at the entrance of the exhibition, is a single watercolour depicting a Muybridge-like motion-study image of a female figure rising up from a seated to a standing position. Echoing Aitken's recent illuminated figurative sculptures that pulse with light, this work surges with a force suggestive of a personal and cultural awakening.

This summer of activity marks a significant return to the city of Venice for Doug Aitken, who was awarded the prestigious Golden Lion for his *electric earth* installation at the 48th Venice Biennale in 1999.

### ***Green Lens*, a site-specific installation**

'*Green Lens* is a living artwork. It is simultaneously an artwork, installation and stage. It's like a lighthouse that one can journey to and have a very personal experience, while it also transmits light, ideas and questions. A focal point that allows all of us to share our ideas and visions for the future post Covid... a celebration and inquiry into the future.' – Doug Aitken

Located on the island of Isola della Certosa, *Green Lens* is a living experiential artwork and destination. From the exterior it creates a choreography of changing reflections of clouds, mist and wild green vegetation. As day turns to night *Green Lens* glows and becomes a kinetic light sculpture and sound composition.

*Green Lens* will be activated with a sequence of performances and conversations that are thought-provoking and provocative, focusing on the future as interpreted by musicians, speakers and dancers. These activations will be filmed by Aitken and released for the public to have access to this living artwork and stage for voices and culture.

*Green Lens* is an artwork by Doug Aitken, commissioned by Anthony Vaccarello in partnership with Saint Laurent.

### ***Flags and Debris***

In Aitken's video *Flags and Debris*, pulses of electricity merge with the human heartbeat and move through a landscape that is expansive and anonymous. Set against the backdrop of an unrecognisably empty Los Angeles, filmed during periods of lockdown in 2020, unseen members of the Los Angeles Dance Project move, ghost-like underneath Aitken's textile works.

Receiving its European premiere as part of Biennale Danza, 15th International Festival of Contemporary Dance, directed by Wayne McGregor, *Flags and Debris* is featured during a weekend of dance film screenings and will be shown in a programme that also features works by Merce Cunningham and others, held at Teatro Piccolo Arsenale at 2pm on Sunday 25 July 2021.

### **About the artist**

Born in 1968, **Doug Aitken** currently lives and works in Los Angeles. Major exhibitions for 2021 include a solo exhibition at Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney. Previous major solo presentations of the artist's work have been staged at institutional venues including Faurschou Foundation, Beijing (2019); Copenhagen Contemporary (2018); Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (2017); The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA, Los Angeles (2016); Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2015); Nam June Paik Art Center, South Korea (2013); Seattle Art Museum (2013); Tate Liverpool (2012); LUMA Foundation, Arles, France (2012); Deste Foundation, Hydra, Greece (2011); Cincinnati Art Museum (2010); Museo d'Art Contemporanea Roma, Rome (2009); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2007); Aspen Art Museum (2006); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2005); The Fabric Museum and Workshop, Philadelphia (2002) and Serpentine Gallery, London (2001).

The artist was awarded the prestigious Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale in 1999; he has been the recipient of the 2012 Nam June Paik Art Center Prize, the 2013 Smithsonian Magazine American Ingenuity Award: Visual Arts, and the 2016 Americans for the Arts National Arts Award: Outstanding Contributions to the Arts. Aitken is the inaugural recipient of the Frontier Art Prize, a new contemporary art award that supports an artist of international stature pursuing bold projects that challenge the boundaries of knowledge and experience to reimagine the future of humanity.

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