

MoMA AND CREATIVE TIME PRESENT *DOUG AITKEN: SLEEPWALKERS*

**Large-Scale Cinematic Installation to Be Projected onto the Facades
of The Museum of Modern Art**

Rhythms and Energies of New York and Its Inhabitants Inspire Major Public Artwork

***Doug Aitken: sleepwalkers*
January 16–February 12, 2007
5:00–10:00 p.m. on the exterior of MoMA**

NEW YORK, January 16, 2007—The Museum of Modern Art and the New York–based public art organization Creative Time present *Doug Aitken: sleepwalkers*, a major public artwork comprising eight large-scale moving images that will be projected onto the exterior of MoMA, enlivening the building’s architecture with the nocturnal journeys of five characters representing city dwellers—a bicycle messenger, an electrician, a postal worker, a businessman, and an office worker. Conceived by Doug Aitken (American, b. 1968) specifically for the Museum’s broad expanses of glass, steel, and granite, *sleepwalkers* was inspired by the densely built environment of midtown Manhattan and portrays the metropolis as a living organism fueled by the desires, energies, and ambitions of its inhabitants. *Doug Aitken: sleepwalkers* will be exhibited each evening from January 16 through February 12, 2007, from 5:00 until 10:00 p.m. and will be viewable from various vantage points around the Museum and in The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden. The Sculpture Garden will be open to the public free of charge during the month of the projections.

“New York City is defined by our extraordinary cultural life, which this winter includes Doug Aitken’s dramatic public art project at MoMA, offering New Yorkers one more reason to get out and experience the City,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “Doug’s thought-provoking and unique *sleepwalkers*—filmed in all five boroughs—is another star in the constellation of the City’s artistic treasures. This dynamic project also reinforces the City’s identity as an exciting creative center for artists and audiences from here and around the world. Last year, a record 44 million tourists visited New York City, with nearly 50% of them visiting our cultural offerings, and through the help of exceptional art events such as *sleepwalkers*, we expect to surpass that total this year.”

Doug Aitken: sleepwalkers was commissioned jointly by Creative Time and MoMA and is the first collaboration between the two organizations. Its origin grew out of discussions between the artist and MoMA Director Glenn D. Lowry and Creative Time President and Artistic Director Anne Pasternak. The project is organized by Klaus Biesenbach, Chief Curator, Department of Media, The Museum of Modern Art, and Peter Eleey, Curator, Creative Time. Mayor Bloomberg joined with Lowry, Aitken, and Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Kate Levin to announce the project in July 2006.

“Ambitious experimental projects like Doug Aitken's take a tremendous amount of vision, resources, and belief in the ability of art to transform people's experience of place,” said Ms. Pasternak. “*Sleepwalkers* began as a conversation seven years ago with Creative Time, but it was the partnership with MoMA that made it possible to fully realize this extraordinary artwork, turning the museum's iconic building into a stunning flow of cinematic images, and making architecture come to life with rhythmic human presence, for the public to enjoy.”

“A project like this creates a very different dialogue with the public, who we hope will be inspired to think about art in relation to the city itself, and to the larger urban experience,” said Mr. Lowry. “*Sleepwalkers* will be easily accessible to a broad and diverse audience of New Yorkers and visitors to the city, who can engage directly with an artwork in a vital and unexpected context.”

Sleepwalkers entwines distinct storylines constructed around five archetypal New Yorkers, nocturnal beings who awaken as the sun sets, prepare to set out into the night, and make their way through the city to their disparate destinations. As they move from the solitude of their personal and professional lives into the chaotic and rich interrelationships of their urban existences, their individual narratives are shown in juxtapositions on different surfaces of the Museum's exterior, with moments of parallel synchronicity in their movements emphasizing both the solitude of their lives and their membership in the same urban community.

The synchronous composition and editing dissolve as each character undergoes a transition from the everyday to an abstract, dreamlike state. While walking down the street, the businessman collides with a taxi; he then climbs onto the hood of the car and ecstatically dances on it. The bike messenger drums on a bucket on a subway platform, quickening his beat until he attains a state of frenzied rapture. Amid the routine of her job, the postal clerk enters a trance-like state and begins spinning in a tight axis, accelerating until her surroundings seem to fall away. The motion of a roomful of photocopiers dissolves to reveal the office worker onstage in a concert hall, sawing a bow back and forth across the taut strings of a violin amidst an ensemble of musicians. And the electrician, following some cables running along the street, coaxes one from a manhole, knots it into a lariat, and circles it above his head in a reverie.

The five narratives of *sleepwalkers* are each 13 minutes in length and continuously recombine throughout the course of each evening, offering new juxtapositions of characters in a continual cycle. Because each narrative has essentially the same duration and structure, an ever-changing symmetry evolves throughout the night.

Throughout the work, Aitken explores not just the constructed landscape upon which *sleepwalkers* is projected, but also the architecture of the video image itself. At key moments, the images break down into abstraction, sometimes into pixels that are the building blocks of most of the moving pictures we encounter today.

“Doug Aitken's use of the volumes, surfaces and translucencies of architecture and specifically the dynamic urban fabric of midtown Manhattan is brought to a new level of complexity, scale, and visibility in *sleepwalkers*, the first installation that was conceived and

realized for the Museum's monumental facades. Aitken envisions *sleepwalkers'* audience as active participants in the process of experiencing the work, engaging them as nocturnal movers throughout the city similar to the protagonists of the work itself," said Mr. Biesenbach.

"*Sleepwalkers* is a work of art that engages the turbulence of city life, interacting not simply with the architecture of MoMA, but also with the rhythms and energies of the city that surround it," said Mr. Eeey. "As one of the most ambitious efforts to place film in direct dialogue with the metropolis, it provides a multiplex spectacle on the scale of a drive-in for a city whose pedestrians form a significant part of its traffic."

Building on Aitken's interest in collaborating with a range of artists, musicians, and filmmakers, *sleepwalkers* features a diverse cast of actors, including New York City street drummer Ryan Donowho (*Broken Flowers, Strangers with Candy*) as the bike messenger; musician and actor Seu Jorge (*City of God, The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*) as the electrician; Chan Marshall (singer Cat Power) (*North Country, V for Vendetta*) as the postal worker; Donald Sutherland (*M*A*S*H, Klute*) as the businessman; and Tilda Swinton (*Orlando, Chronicles of Narnia*) as the office worker.

The protagonists of *sleepwalkers* take viewers through the physical and psychological archaeology of New York, through its subways, electrical grids, manholes, office buildings, and processing centers. The work's setting also serves as an artistic point of departure; filming for *sleepwalkers* took place in all five boroughs of New York City, at locations including the Atlantic Avenue Tunnel in Brooklyn; the Staten Island Skating Pavilion; the Lettera Sign Company, where Times Square signs are repaired, in the Bronx; a mail-sorting facility in Queens; the New York Transit Museum; and numerous other settings, including the streets of Harlem and the Lower East Side. In addition to many recognizable locations, *sleepwalkers* takes viewers to virtually unseen areas of the city, including the abandoned subterranean tunnels under Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn, a long-closed heliport atop the MetLife Building in Manhattan, and behind the monumental neon lights of Times Square. Filming at all locations was coordinated with New York City's Office of Film, Theatre, and Broadcasting.

Eight projectors installed around the Museum will project *sleepwalkers* onto eight surfaces: five on the Museum's facades surrounding the Sculpture Garden, two that face west and are viewable in a mid-block open lot, and one above the Museum's main public entrance on West 53 Street.

Doug Aitken: sleepwalkers continues Aitken's exploration of the ever-evolving ways in which people experience memory and narrative and relate to fast-paced urban environments. During the past decade, the artist has created innovative contemporary video art by fracturing the narrative structures of his films across multiscreen environments. His work has been exhibited in museums around the world, including The Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Centre Georges Pompidou, in Paris. In 1999 he was awarded the International Prize at the Venice Biennale. In 2004, Aitken's installation *Interiors* (2002) was shown as part of the exhibition *Hard Light* at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, a MoMA affiliate.

ABOUT CREATIVE TIME

Creative Time presents the most innovative art in the public realm. Launched in New York in 1974, it works with artists who ignite the imagination and explore ideas that shape society. It initiates a dynamic conversation among artists, sites, and audiences, in projects that enliven public spaces with free and powerful expression. Creative Time first worked with Aitken in 1996 for *Art in the Anchorage 13*, in which film/video, audio, and digital media artists created environments in the Brooklyn Bridge anchorage's vast chambers, introducing viewers to a range of new digital artistic processes through sound, moving image, and interactivity.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Doug Aitken: sleepwalkers will be viewable from West 53 Street, between Fifth and Sixth avenues; West 54 Street, between Fifth and Sixth avenues; from an open lot adjacent to the American Folk Art Museum that can be entered from either West 53 Street or West 54 Street; and in MoMA's Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden, whose gates on West 54 Street will be open to the public from 5:00 to 10:00 p.m. each evening for the duration of the project. The last entrance to the Garden is at 9:45 p.m.

Images will be projected on 53 Street above the Museum entrance, the open space between 53 and 54 streets, and the Sculpture Garden. A map can be found on www.moma.org. There is no seating in the Sculpture Garden and portable seating is not allowed. Food, beverages, and smoking are not permitted in the Sculpture Garden. Museum staff will be on hand to assist viewers and answer questions. Last entrance to the Sculpture Garden viewing area will be at 9:45 p.m. and the projections will stop at 10:00 p.m.

Sleepwalkers will be projected in all weather conditions. The Museum's galleries, main lobby, and restrooms will be closed. The exhibition is fully accessible to wheelchairs and strollers.

Target Free Friday Nights, which offers free admission every Friday from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. will continue throughout *sleepwalkers*. However, there will be no access to the Sculpture Garden from the Museum building during this time.

MoMA AUDIO

Viewers can access audio commentary by the curators of *Doug Aitken: sleepwalkers* by calling 408-794-0886 throughout the run of the exhibition. The audio will also be available for listening and downloading on www.moma.org/audio and on the MoMA Audio podcast on iTunes.

PUBLICATION

The accompanying publication, like the artwork, explores the intersection of ideas with the constant flow of life and energy that is New York. It contains an essay about Aitken's work up to the present by Klaus Biesenbach, Chief Curator in the Department of Media at The Museum of Modern Art, and an in-depth look at *sleepwalkers* itself by Peter Eleey, Curator, Creative Time. It also includes conversations between Aitken and a variety of artists, architects, writers, and performers about different elements of city life - from the lit signage of Times Square to a taxi-driver's-eye view of the streets, as well as a conversation among Aitken and Glenn D. Lowry, Director of MoMA, and Anne Pasternak, Artistic Director of Creative Time, about the nature of public art and institutions in the present-day landscape. A separate section looks at the making of *sleepwalkers*, with excerpts from the shooting script and production stills. The book is published by The Museum of Modern Art and is sold in the MoMA Stores. It is available to the trade through Distributed Art Publishers (D.A.P.) in the United States and Canada and through Thames & Hudson outside of North America. Hardcover, with 176 pages, 275 color illustrations, and five black-and-white illustrations. Price: \$39.95.

SPONSORSHIP

Doug Aitken: sleepwalkers is a joint project of Creative Time and The Museum of Modern Art.

The exhibition is supported by Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine G. Farley, Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis, and David Teiger.

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The production of the film has been made possible in part by Eastman Kodak Company, LaCie, PlasterCITY Digital Post, L.L.C., AJA Video Systems, and Arri CSC.

PROGRAMS

PopRally, Friday, February 2, 2007, at 10:00 p.m.

PopRally presents *Doug Aitken: sleepwalkers*, A Happening, featuring Cat Power and other surprise guests and performers. More information will be available at www.moma.org/poprally.

DOUG AITKEN: SLEEPWALKERS ON MoMA.ORG AND CREATIVETIME.ORG

Special exhibition subsites on www.moma.org and www.creativetime.org accompany *Doug Aitken: sleepwalkers*. The sites, www.moma.org/aitken and www.creativetime.org/aitken, feature film stills from the project, images of the installation and characters, a 60-second trailer, and visitor information. They also include background information on the project and the artist and excerpts from a conversation among Doug Aitken, MoMA Director Glenn Lowry, and Creative Time Director Anne Pasternak.

NEW DAY ON CREATIVE TIME'S 59TH MINUTE: VIDEO ART ON THE ASTROVISION BY PANASONIC

A special one-minute video by Doug Aitken, *New Day*, created in conjunction with *sleepwalkers*, will be shown on the last minute of every hour on the Astrovision Screen, located at One Times Square, West 43 St. between 7th Avenue and Broadway. This site was a pivotal location for filming the character played by Seu Jorge, who fixes the neon signs in Times Square. The film plays every hour with two daily preemptions, from 7:00-10:00 a.m. and 6:00-7:00 p.m.

NEW YORK AT NIGHT: PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE COLLECTION

New York at Night: Photographs from the Collection celebrates the great ongoing tradition of photography in and of New York. The exhibition comprises over 25 photographs from the Museum's collection that capture nightlife in New York, the city that never sleeps. The glittering lights of the skyline and the legendary parties at El Morocco and Studio 54 are among the subjects that inspired great photographers from Berenice Abbott to Garry Winogrand. Other photographers included are Diane Arbus, Rudy Burckhardt, Lee Friedlander, and Alfred Stieglitz, among others. The exhibition will be on view in MoMA's lobby through March 5, 2007, and is organized by the Department of Photography. The Museum's lobby is open to the public until 5:30 p.m. Saturday through Thursday, and until 8:00 p.m. on Fridays.

For high resolution images, please visit our online press office Web site: www.moma.org/press. Please call for username and password.

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Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019

Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.
Closed Tuesday

Museum Admission: \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free for children 16 and under. Free for members. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs)
Target Free Friday Nights 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Film Admission: \$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)

Subway: E or V train to Fifth Avenue/53rd Street

Bus: On Fifth Avenue, take the M1, M2, M3, M4, or M5 to 53rd Street. On Sixth Avenue, take the M5, M6, or M7 to 53rd Street. Or take the M57 and M50 crosstown buses on 57th and 50th Streets.

The public may call 212/708-9400 for detailed Museum information.

Visit us on the Web at www.moma.org