360° PROJECTION | Doug Aitken

HIRSHHORN
Media Kit
360° Projection | Doug Aitken
March 22–May 13, 2012
nightly from sunset to midnight

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for all media requests, including high-res images
and interviews with the artist and curator.

Media website: hirshhorn.si.edu/press
Project Overview

In spring 2012, the Hirshhorn will present its boldest commission and one of the most groundbreaking exhibitions in its history. Internationally renowned artist Doug Aitken will illuminate, animate, and transform the Hirshhorn’s iconic circular building into “liquid architecture.”

Using approximately eleven high-definition projectors, the artist will seamlessly blend imagery to envelop the entire façade of the Museum with a 360-degree projection that will make the structure recede into cinematic space, rotating, rising, and evolving into new forms. Exploding film conventions, the work cannot be viewed from any single perspective or at any single moment in time. Visitors must walk the perimeter of the building in order fully to experience the work.

This site-specific work will animate the Museum beginning in mid-March and remain on view each evening from March 22 to May 13, 2012, offering an unprecedented exhibition experience to the millions of visitors who will come to the National Mall during the 100th anniversary of the National Cherry Blossom Festival. A fully illustrated artist book about the work as well as a series of public programs—including lectures, dialogues, performances, and other events—will accompany the project.

More than a temporary artwork, however, this truly original piece will also become part of the Hirshhorn’s permanent collection, enhancing its cutting-edge and ever-expanding holdings of time-based media.
Artist Statement

OVERVIEW

The Hirshhorn 360-Degree Projection is a new form of film... one that defies categorization.

This is a work about liberation and expansion. Unlike cinema, where an image is created for a flattened screen, the Hirshhorn 360-Degree Projection will be designed in an entirely site-specific manner from the ground up. The visual and conceptual language of the work will be scripted and filmed to seamlessly turn the form of the Hirshhorn Museum into a single transformative experience.

Everything from the speed with which the camera moves from one sequence to the next to how the landscape is filmed will work in tandem. At times, the work will have an open panoramic perspective, while in other scenes an aggressively cubist-like nonlinear approach will be used. The artwork’s narrative will envelop the museum so that it can never be completely seen from a fixed vantage point. The film becomes architecture, and the architecture transforms into moving image. The Hirshhorn’s 360-Degree Projection looks to explode the relationship between art and architecture. The projection will strive to create a release from Bunshaft’s concrete mass by generating a liberating, seemingly weightless and highly choreographed visual experience.
The structure of the Hirshhorn 360-Degree Projection work will be motivated by a sense of “choreography.” This idea brings the artwork to a place that is more based on movement than story. With this artwork there is enormous unexplored potential to create a new form of “liquid architecture,” an architecture that relates to and embraces its surroundings while also allowing its “form,” the building’s façade, to continuously transform. The Hirshhorn 360-Degree Projection will exercise the dormant potential of the museum’s façade for the architecture to come to life and create a new language.

The traditional “linear film” approach will be liberated from the flat screen and allow the museum itself to appear to continuously change; to rise into and out of the earth, to rotate, and move in many new ways. At other times the film will create sequences in which the building will open up into a stream of moving images.

—Doug Aitken, 2010
Doug Aitken

Doug Aitken (b. California, 1968; lives and works in Los Angeles and New York) is widely known for his innovative and thought-provoking practice, which includes film and video, sculpture, photography, sound, installation, and architectural intervention. Utilizing a wide array of media and artistic approaches, his work leads us into a world where time, space, and memory are fluid concepts.

His work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions around the world, in such institutions as the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Museum of Modern Art, the Vienna Secession, the Serpentine Gallery in London, and the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris.

He participated in the Whitney Biennial 1997 and 2000 and earned the International Prize at the Venice Biennale in 1999 for the installation Electric Earth. Aitken’s Sleepwalkers exhibition at MoMA in 2007 transformed an entire block of Manhattan into an expansive cinematic experience as he covered the museum’s exteriors walls with projections. In 2009, his Sonic Pavilion opened to the public in the forested hills of Brazil at the new cultural foundation INHOTIM. Continuing his work in innovative outdoor projects, Aitken presented his latest large-scale film and architecture installation, Frontier, on Rome’s Isola Tiberina in November 2009 and at Art Basel Unlimited in 2010.

Above: Electric Earth, 1999; Below: Sleepwalkers, 2007
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Smithsonian Institution’s museum of international modern and contemporary art, has nearly 12,000 paintings, sculptures, photographs, mixed-media installations, works on paper, and new media works in its collection. The Hirshhorn presents diverse exhibitions and offers an array of public programs that explore modern and contemporary art. Located at Independence Avenue and Seventh Street SW, the museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (except December 25). Admission to the galleries and special programs is free. For more information about exhibitions and events, please visit hirshhorn.si.edu. Follow the Hirshhorn on Facebook at facebook.com/hirshhorn and on Twitter at twitter.com/hirshhorn.
All concept sketch images courtesy Doug Aitken Workshop