

Shaw, Kurt, “‘Station to Station’ mobile art event rolling into town,” *TribLive.com*, September 4, 2013



'Station to Station' mobile art event rolling into town

By: Kurt Shaw



Station to Station map

Doug Aitkin

On Sept. 6, a train will depart from Washington, D.C., and over a three-week span, it will make its way to Oakland, Calif.

Filled with artists, musicians, chefs and other creative types, it has all the trappings of a circus train, minus the animals. Except it's not a circus. Rather, the train will be bringing contemporary art to nine stops along the way, in cities in New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Minnesota, New Mexico, Arizona and California.

One of them is Pittsburgh, and on Sept. 8, Union Station and the *Pennsylvanian* will be alive with art-related events and installations, specially prepared foods, musical acts and site-specific performances.

Called “Station to Station: A Nomadic Happening,” the project is the brainchild of bicoastal artist Doug Aitken, who lives and works in Los Angeles and New York.

Maureen Rolla, deputy director at Carnegie Museum of Art, says Aitken was one of the artists who participated in the 2008 Carnegie International. “He did the projection migration of animals on the front and back of the building,” she says.

For this project, which includes the works of former Carnegie International exhibitors Ernesto Neto (1999) and Carsten Holler (2004), Aitken has organized a “liquid platform for artistic experimentation,” engaging more than 50 artists from around the country to create or contribute to the site-specific happenings planned for each stop.

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"It's a very interesting way of democratizing contemporary art, taking it out of the pristine environment of an art museum and really having it reach people in a much more participative way," Rolla says.

For example, Rolla says there are many visual-art aspects to "Station to Station" that attendees can interact with. Each happening will feature five Nomadic Sculptures created by Kenneth Anger, Urs Fisher and Liz Glynn, as well as Holler and Neto.

Each were asked to envision a yurt (a portable tent-like dwelling traditionally used by nomads in Central Asia) and create "nomadic sculptures" that attendees could interact with. The results range from a yurt created by Holler that is pierced with holes that visitors can throw Frisbees through, to Glynn's creation of her version of the universe inside of her yurt that will be different at each stop.

Not all of the artists involved in the project will be on the train, but many have contributed creative efforts that will be offered along the way. For example, well-known pop artist Ed Ruscha's recipe for a "cactus omelet" will be made and served to those who meet the train in Winslow, Ariz.

For the Pittsburgh stop, chef Leif Hedendal will create meals from ingredients gathered at a local farmers' market and serve them along with a performance event he calls "Dinner Discussions," an ongoing dinner series that has taken place in Copenhagen, New York, Chicago and at Harvard University.

Meant to inspire "collaboration between artists and food activists," Hedendal's discussions investigate the possibilities of chef as artist, or farmer as artist, while engaging critically with ideas of community, progress, nature and nutrition.

Also specific to the Pittsburgh stop, Thurston Moore, a musician best known as a singer, songwriter and guitarist of Sonic Youth, will perform, along with John Moloney, a Massachusetts-based musician and visual artist. Moloney is the drummer for Moore's new band, Chelsea Light Moving, and they will perform together as the savage guitar and drums improv duo Caught on Tape.

If dance is your thing, then you will enjoy the Kansas City Marching Cobras, a youth dance/step troupe that performs step routines to drum beats. And also in the musical/performance vein, drummer Yoshimio, an original member of the radical experimental music group Boredoms from Japan, will perform with improvisational musicians Hisham Akira Bharoocha and Ryan Sawyer.

For his part, Aitken has created a short performance work to open and close the live part of the Pittsburgh happening, which will include a conversation with Alice Waters, the food curator of "Station to Station." They will talk about Waters' latest endeavor, "The Edible Schoolyard," an interactive program that teaches kids about agriculture by helping them grow their own school gardens, harvest the vegetables and prepare their own meals.

The Pittsburgh happening will include a procession organized by Meschac Gaba, a 12-person performance troupe whose members will wear different African headdresses and walk among the public as they enter the venue.

And artist Kathryn Andrew will create a poster specific to Pittsburgh, with an image of one randomly chosen person who will become the "face" of the Pittsburgh happening.

"I think that the interdisciplinary nature of the activity is really interesting," Rolla says. "It's not just visual art, it's not just music, it's not just installation, but it's many different kinds of activities. It's a very exciting project, and I think it's an interesting way to reach people with contemporary art and make it not so elitist."

Carnegie Museum of Art is one of 10 art institutions that have been designated as participating partners promoting the event. The others include MoMA PS1 in Long Island, N.Y.; the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; SITE Santa Fe in New Mexico; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Sundance Institute in Park City, Utah; and Arcosanti Institute, Mayer, Ariz.

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Tickets are \$25 at every stop, and all proceeds will be distributed to each of the participating institutions.

"From the revenue generated through the ticketed event, and also through donations, they are creating an art fund, the proceeds of which will be shared with the participating partners in 2014 to help them fund projects that carry out the same spirit of Doug's participative, innovative art experiences," Rolla says.