

“Doug Aitken: All Aboard the Art Train,” *HuffingtonPost.com*, September 3, 2013

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Doug Aitken: All Aboard the Art Train

All aboard the art express! Next week, Doug Aitken’s art train project, *Station to Station: A Nomadic Happening*, will embark on a cross-country journey making art-infused stops from New York to Oakland that will bring together world-class artists with the underground art scene, installations, music and food that are tailored to each city along the way. As if the opening of gallery season wasn’t already exciting enough, Aitken’s fantastical project may just steal the thunder of the yearly return of the art world that begins each September. A literal feast for the senses, *Station to Station* will invigorate the communities it touches, bringing incredible artistic interventions and experiences, while providing financial support to chosen partner institutions in each city. The \$25 ticket fee will directly benefit non-traditional cultural programming in museums like MoMA PS1, Carnegie Museum of Art, Walker Art Center and SFMOMA. Additional support by Levi’s for the public art project will help bring these one-of-a-kind artistic experiences to life in New York, Pittsburgh, Chicago, St. Paul, Lamy, La Posada, Barstow, Los Angeles and Oakland.



Station to Station map. © 2013 Doug Aitken

The “train” of *Station to Station* is a moving, kinetic, light sculpture, whose mission is to bring unforgettable art experiences from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans. The laundry list of visual collaborators is beyond impressive, with artists like Olafur Eliasson, Rikrit Tiravanija, Urs Fischer, Ed Ruscha, Carsten Höller, Jim Jarmusch, Ernesto Neto, Catherine Opie, Raymond Pettibon, The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, and James Turrell, signing on for exciting site-specific installations. In addition to the visual arts program, each one-night pop-up event will be host to unique musical performances by artists like Beck, Cat Power, Cold Cave, No Age, and members of The Bordoms. For palatable pleasure, the element of taste is meshed with the visual and aural with a food experience curated by Alice Waters, including taste interventions on the train and at each city stop with the Edible Schoolyard Project and Slow Foodie Leif Hedendal.

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This action packed roster may sound too good to be true, but is scheduled to kick off in New York on Sept. 6. Each event will commence with a procession of twelve performers wearing African headdresses, carrying a flag designed by Lawrence Weiner and a poster designed by Kathryn Andrew -- a new one for each city station stop. For its already sold out debut in New York, *Station to Station* will take over the Riverfront Studios in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. The lucky ticket holders will experience museum-quality pieces that are worthy of any international biennial. Olaf Breuning will be creating the first of his colorful and ephemeral smoke bomb installations, to be repeated only in the Barstow and Oakland stops later in the month. Following in the footsteps of his food and relational experiences that began in 1992 at the 303 Gallery and were emulated at David Zwirner in 2007 then MoMA in 2011, Rikrit Tiravanija will create yet another “food happening” that will surely integrate and engage visitors with the delicious smells and flavors of traditional Thai cooking, creating a social sculpture of interested (and hungry) participants. This time Tiravanija will not be recreating his 303 piece, but instead will deliver a new experience based on *Station to Station*'s concept of nomadism, complete with different food stations, and unfortunately for vegetarians, rumored to be heavy on the meat.



Rendering of *Station to Station* train by Doug Aitken.

Along with nomadic eating will be nomadic sculptures by Kenneth Anger, Urs Fischer, Liz Glynn, Carsten Höller and Ernesto Neto, moving images and art works by Aitken himself, Nam June Paik, Ryan Trecartin and endless others, printed matter, and let us not forget the musical performances. Levi's will be flexing their sponsorship muscle with a series of gallery-yurts dedicated to the popular jeans brand's "Makers" program, which celebrates and showcases independent artists and artisans. In each Levi's curated yurt, local artist and makers will be designing and crafting products at each *Station to Station* stop for visitors to observe and enjoy. Aside from New York's Riverfront Studios takeover, each of the remaining stops along the way invigorate historic railroad stations, from a gorgeous Beaux-Arts building in Chicago to the now defunct 16th Street Station in Oakland - originally designed by architect Jarvis Hunt and opened in 1912, the site is being redeveloped as a potential anchor for neighborhood revitalization. With respect to the diversity of each stop on the schedule, *Station to Station* shifts its focus, pulling inspiration from each locale to help dictate programming.

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The art-fueled road trip sounds unbelievably ambitious, but the multi-media road show promises to deliver, and more importantly group together facets of the arts that often exist separately including film, music, fine arts and food. Aitken’s all encompassing project could spur a new kind of arts programming -- one of a kind experiences that not only dazzle all of the arts-loving senses, but also create a sort of alternative form of fundraising that supports tried and true institutions across America.