

For immediate release

STAN DOUGLAS

Luanda-Kinshasa

January 9 – February 22, 2014

Opening reception: Thursday, January 9, 6 – 8 PM

Press preview with the artist: 5:30 PM



Still from *Luanda-Kinshasa*, 2013

Single-channel video projection, 6 hours 1 min (loop), color, sound

Overall dimensions vary with installation (Aspect ratio 4:3)

Edition of 4

David Zwirner is pleased to debut a new film by Stan Douglas, on view at the gallery's 533 West 19th Street space in New York.

Marking the first time the artist has filmed on location in New York, *Luanda-Kinshasa* is set in a reconstruction of the legendary Columbia 30th Street Studio, which was based in Midtown Manhattan and home to some of the most renowned musical recordings of the twentieth century. Operated by Columbia Records between 1949 and 1981 in an abandoned Armenian church on East 30th Street, the studio was popular with artists working across all genres. Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue* (1959), Bob Dylan's *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965), and Pink Floyd's *The Wall* (1979) were amongst the seminal records made at "The Church," as were Glenn Gould's *Bach: The Goldberg Variations* (1955), Vladimir Horowitz's *Complete Masterworks Recordings* (1962–1973), and albums by Leonard Bernstein, Johnny Cash, Aretha Franklin, Billie Holiday, Charles Mingus, and many others.

Featuring a band of professional musicians improvising together, *Luanda-Kinshasa* is the documentation of a fictitious recording at the famed studio. The decade is the 1970s and an array of stylistic and ethnic influences is apparent. Pianists, saxophonists, trumpeters, drummers, and guitarists play while a sound engineer works on the tunes and an entourage of girlfriends, journalists, and record label staff hangs around more or less listlessly. Context is provided by fashion styles, musical equipment, tobacco and drinks labels, while newspaper headlines offer a subtle reminder of the outside world.

Luanda-Kinshasa expands Douglas's interest in the African origins of the music scene in New York in the early 1970s. In his series of photographs from 2012, *Disco Angola*, he drew parallels between the burgeoning disco culture in the United States and the Angolan liberation struggles following the end of Portuguese rule. Foreign influences and an affinity with Afrobeat are widely discernible in the reconstructed studio, as is a broader curiosity in synthesizing sounds and genres. Similar to many of Douglas's previous films, which have involved arbitrary loops that at times take days to unfold, *Luanda-Kinshasa* combines and recombines edits to allow for musical variations. The emphasis is on the compositional process itself, rather than a finished composition.

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Luanda-Kinshasa draws inspiration from Jean-Luc Godard's filmic portrait of the Rolling Stones recording their hit single "Sympathy for the Devil" (*Sympathy for the Devil*, 1968). Godard's film is known for interweaving shots of the band recording and re-recording passages for the song with seemingly unrelated clips showing Black Panther militants, ultimately using its struggle to arrive at a finished product as a metaphor for the political climate of the times. Douglas's experimental style similarly defies linear expectations of narrative, while his ready-made contextual framework furthers his own hybrid and unique genre of staged reportage.

The musicians in the video were selected by jazz pianist and composer Jason Moran, who played alongside Kahlil Kwame Bell, Liberty Ellman, Jason Lindner, Abdou Mboup, Nitin Mitta, Antoine Roney, Marvin Sewell, Kimberly Thompson, and Burniss Earl Travis. Other key contributors include producers Christopher Martini and Trivium Films, musical producer and arranger Scotty Hard, director of photography Sam Chase, and production designer Kelly McGehee.

Stan Douglas was born in 1960 in Vancouver, where he continues to live and work. He was one of the first artists to be represented by David Zwirner, where he had his first American solo exhibition in 1993. *Luanda-Kinshasa* marks his twelfth solo show at the gallery in New York.

Stan Douglas: Photographs 2008–2013, a major survey of the artist's recent work, is currently presented at Carré d'Art – Musée d'Art Contemporain in Nîmes, France (through January 26, 2014), which will travel to Haus der Kunst in Munich. Also now on view is *Stan Douglas: Abandonment and Splendour* at the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris (through January 17, 2014).

In 2012, Douglas received the prestigious Infinity Award from the International Center of Photography, New York. He was recently the recipient of the third annual Scotiabank Photography Award in 2013. A solo exhibition will be organized on its occasion and shown at the Ryerson Image Centre in Toronto (opening May 1, 2014), as part of the 2014 Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival. The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue published by Steidl. Another solo show of Douglas's work is planned for fall 2014 at The Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh.

Premiering in March 2014 at the Arts Club Theatre Company in Vancouver, *Helen Lawrence* is a new multimedia theatre work conceived by Douglas. Created in close collaboration with acclaimed screenwriter Chris Haddock, the project innovatively merges theatre, visual art, live-action filming, and computer-generated imagery. Douglas worked with a team of 3D artists and programmers to virtually construct the set, which will further be available to audience members to explore in advance through a 3D augmented reality app called *Circa 1948* produced by the National Film Board of Canada.

Over the past decade, his work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at prominent institutions worldwide, including the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minnesota (2012); The Power Plant, Toronto (2011); Staatsgalerie Stuttgart and Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart (2007); The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2005); kestnergesellschaft, Hanover (2004); and the Serpentine Gallery, London (2002).

Major museum collections which hold works by the artist include the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate Gallery, London; Vancouver Art Gallery; and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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