



NATIONAL  
GALLERY  
OF CANADA

MUSÉE  
DES BEAUX-ARTS  
DU CANADA



La Biennale di Venezia

59. Esposizione  
Internazionale  
d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali

**STAN DOUGLAS**  
**2011 ≠ 1848**

**at the 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia**  
**Canada Pavilion, Giardini / Magazzini del Sale No. 5, Zattere**

**23 April – 27 November 2022**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

*“All great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice... the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.” – Karl Marx*

**VENICE, Tuesday April 19, 2022** - The National Gallery of Canada (NGC), commissioner of Canada's participation in the 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, unveiled today the exhibition **Stan Douglas: 2011 ≠ 1848**. For the first time, Canada's presentation at the Biennale Arte is shown across two venues, with the exhibition split between the Canada Pavilion in the Giardini and Magazzini del Sale No. 5 in Zattere. Douglas presents new video and photographic work inspired by the tenth anniversary of 2011, a year that saw significant political unrest around the globe.

On view in the Giardini are four large-scale photographs which re-stage protests and riots from 2011 over four geographic locations: people gathered along Avenue Habib Bourguiba in Tunis on 12 January 2011 at the beginning of the Arab Spring; the aftermath of the Stanley Cup riot in Vancouver on 15 June 2011; clashes between youth and police in the London borough of Hackney on 9 August 2011 during the London riots; and the kettling of Occupy Wall Street protesters on New York's Brooklyn Bridge on 1 October 2011. The works explore the events of 2011 as unconscious reactions to the economic and political status quo which followed the recession of 2008, and examine the ways in which social media fuelled movements for change.

To create his photographs the artist combined high-resolution photographic and CG plate shots of the site of each event with elaborate staged re-enactments and, in one case, documentary aerial footage. Presented as compelling and accurate records of real situations, Douglas' hybrid-documentary photographs are instead meticulous reconstructions that speak of history – including the most recent past – as inseparable from the mediated forms of its retelling.

In the Magazzini del Sale, a sixteenth-century salt warehouse on Dorsoduro, Douglas shifts from the representational lens of his photographs to the active mediations of the moving image in a two-channel video installation that explores music as a form of cultural resistance. Taking its title from an obsolete method of transmitting digital audio over telephone lines, *ISDN* centres around two musical genres, Grime and Mahraganat. Grime music emerged in London in the mid-2000s at the same time as – thousands of kilometres away – Mahraganat (which translates from Arabic as

“festivals”) music appeared in Cairo. Though Grime has its roots in Dubstep and Mahraganat in Sha'abi, the two genres often share a similar timbre because many of their producers use the same free or pirated software, as well as similar samples gleaned from the internet. By 2011, each genre would in its own time and place emerge as a soundtrack for youthful revolt.

*ISDN* presents a fictionalized account of Grime and Mahraganat rappers exchanging beats and lyrics, using scavenged equipment in improvised recording studios in London and Cairo, respectively. Sensorially immersive, the rhythms in *ISDN* move through a game of call and response that thwarts the parameters between what is seen and what is heard in astonishing and unprecedented ways. *ISDN* continues Douglas' committed exploration of music that has been at the core of his films and videos since the early 1990s, from his exploration of Free Jazz in *Hors-champs* (1992) to the Afrobeat-inflected Jazz-Funk of the marathon jam session *Luanda-Kinshasa* (2013).

As the title for Douglas' exhibition implies, **2011 ≠ 1848** draws a comparison between the events of 2011 and those of 1848, a year in which continent-wide upheaval found European middle and working classes allied in a fight against a lack of democratic freedoms, restrictions on the press, and the continued dominance of an aristocratic elite. Revolt in 1848 was continental, as news spread by print media, but revolt in 2011 was global, with news spread virally by way of electronic media. Across Europe and North America, Douglas notes, events were simply policed and ignored. In North Africa and the Middle East they were suppressed or subverted, with a few notable exceptions. These new works explore the rise of populist nationalism and outbreaks of civil war, seen in the ensuing decade because of root causes never being addressed.

**Stan Douglas: 2011 ≠ 1848** is curated by Reid Shier and accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with texts by Erika Balsom, Ma'an Abu Taleb, George E. Lewis and Samir Gandesha.

**Stan Douglas: 2011 ≠ 1848** is commissioned by the National Gallery of Canada, and presented in partnership with the Canada Council for the Arts and the National Gallery of Canada Foundation. The Gallery acknowledges the collaboration and support of David Zwirner and Victoria Miro. The Canadian representation at the Biennale Arte 2022 is made possible through the Canadian Artists in Venice Endowment at the National

Gallery of Canada Foundation and with the generous financial support of Presenting Sponsor Royal Bank of Canada, Canada Council for the Arts, Government of Canada, and numerous private contributions. Special recognition is extended to Jackie Flanagan, the Michael & Sonja Koerner Family, the Donald R. Sobey Family, and the Jack Weinbaum Family Foundation for their exceptional contributions to the Canadian Artists in Venice Endowment, and to Reesa Greenberg whose generous financial support funded the restoration of the Canada Pavilion.

**Dr. Sasha Suda, Director and CEO of the National Gallery of Canada, has said:**

*“The Gallery is proud to present Stan Douglas’ ambitious vision for Canada at the 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia through an exhibition that could not be more pertinent to this historical moment. Douglas’ astounding new commissions investigate languages of protest, revolt, and revolution. Reflecting on events from a decade ago, and echoing narratives from a former century, 2011 ≠ 1848 resonates loudly with events of the past two years, as the global pandemic has surfaced fundamental fissures within the social fabric along lines of race, class, mobility, and access. A leading voice in Canada and internationally, Douglas challenges us to reflect upon how we want to live tomorrow.”*

**Simon Brault, Director and CEO, Canada Council for the Arts, has said:**

*“I am delighted that Stan Douglas is officially representing Canada at the 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, and The Canada Council for the Arts is proud to partner and support this latest official representation. Through his profound reflections on an imagined past, and the present it might have generated, Douglas has been inviting us to understand better and critically examine our realities for decades.”*

**Reid Shier, Curator, has said:**

*“Over the past two years, as Stan Douglas has developed a project that investigates and reimagines events of 2011, the percussive events of that year continue to reverberate. The resulting works—which speak to the paths that have led to this moment—are emblematic of the artist’s acuity in bearing witness to conditions that are rapidly unfolding, and to the critical and creative imagination with which his art describes histories pixelated through lenses that remain in constant flux.”*

#CanadaPavilion #StanDouglas #BiennaleArte2022  
#TheMilkOfDreams

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

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**Exhibition credits**

*Stan Douglas: 2011 ≠ 1848*  
59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia  
23 April – 27 November 2022

Commissioner: National Gallery of Canada  
Partners: Canada Council for the Arts and National Gallery of Canada Foundation  
Curator: Reid Shier  
Project Director: Jonathan Shaughnessy  
Stan Douglas Inc.: Linda Chinfen, Peter Courtemanche, Brodie Smith

**Visiting the exhibition**

**Canada Pavilion**, Giardini della Biennale, Sestiere Castello, 30122 Venezia (Vaporetto: Giardini)

**Magazzini del Sale No. 5**, Dorsoduro 262, 30123 Venezia (Entrance on Fondamenta Zattere ai Saloni. Vaporetto: Spirito Santo/Salute)

During vernissage week, opening hours are 10am-7pm.

23 Apr – 25 Sep 2022: Tue–Sun, 11am-7pm  
27 Sep – 27 Nov 2022: Tue–Sun, 10am-6pm

**About Stan Douglas**

Stan Douglas (b. 1960, Vancouver) is a visual artist who lives and works in Vancouver and Los Angeles. His films and photographs have been included in exhibitions internationally since the early 1980s, including at documenta IX, X and XI (1992, 1997, 2002) and in four previous Biennale d'Art (1990, 2001, 2005 and 2019). A survey of his work, *Stan Douglas: Mise en scène*, toured Europe from 2013 until the end of 2015. From 2014 until 2017 his multimedia theatre production *Helen Lawrence* was presented in Vancouver, Toronto, Munich, Antwerp, Edinburgh, Brooklyn and Los Angeles. Douglas received the International Centre of Photography's Infinity Award in 2012, the Scotiabank Photography Award in 2013, the Hasselblad Award in 2016, the Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement in 2019 and the Chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Minister of Culture in 2021. Between 2004 and 2006 he was a professor at Universität der Künste Berlin and is currently Chair of the Graduate Art Program of ArtCenter College of Design in Pasadena, California

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