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# Doug Aitken: *migration (empire)*

A RILEY CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS PROJECT GALLERY EXHIBITION

Opens June 4 at Joslyn Art Museum

(Omaha, NE) – Doug Aitken's *migration (empire)*, 2008, addresses the problematic question of what happens when human and animal worlds collide. In this video, shot on location in motel rooms across the United States, animals are removed from their natural habitats and placed in environments built for the purpose of human mobility. The latest exhibition in Joslyn Art Museum's Riley Contemporary Artists Project Gallery, *migration (empire)* opens Saturday, June 4, and continues through September 5. The exhibition is included in free general Museum admission.

*migration (empire)* finds moments of humor, but the overall tone is somber and unnerving. These animals have not only been contained but are being subjected to the same monotony to which humans willingly accede.

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*Doug Aitken: migration (empire) at Joslyn Art Museum*

As Aitken's surrealist vignettes unfurl over the course of twenty-four minutes, the animals quickly revert to their natural instincts: a beaver finds its way to the cascade of running water in the bathtub; an unruly bison topples furniture with its massive head; a cougar tears the bed apart. In an especially poignant moment, a horse seems to watch his wild counterparts canter gracefully across the landscape on a television screen. Aitken's equine subject slowly turns its head to face the camera, as if understanding the loss of freedom that came with domestication.

An epilogue to Joslyn's recent exhibition *Go West! Art of the American Frontier from the Buffalo Bill Center of the West*, Aitken's *migration (empire)* reflects on the U.S. history of westward expansion and its impact on the landscape, while also considering popular notions of what constitutes the American West. Aitken explains: "It's almost like a survey of the landscape . . . It's a cinematic portrayal of an idea that's somewhat fictional, futuristic, yet set within our current reality."

### **About Doug Aitken**

Doug Aitken was born in Redondo Beach, CA, in 1968. He studied at Marymount College in Palos Verdes, CA, before completing his BFA at the ArtCenter College of Design in Pasadena, CA, in 1991. Aitken's work has been featured at venues including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Istanbul Museum of Modern Art, Turkey; and Serpentine Gallery, London. His work was included in the Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of Art in 1997 and 2000, and in fall 2016, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles will open a major retrospective of his career. Among Aitken's many distinctions are the International Prize at the 1999 Venice Biennale, the 2012 Nam June Paik Art Center Prize, and the 2013 Smithsonian Magazine American Ingenuity Award in Visual Arts.

*Doug Aitken* (Phaidon's Contemporary Artists series) is available in the Hitchcock Museum Shop.  
\$45 (Member Price: \$40.50)

### **About Joslyn's Riley CAP Gallery**

A 500-square-foot space in the Scott Pavilion suite of galleries, the Riley CAP Gallery showcases nationally- and internationally-recognized artists, as well as emerging talent, selected by Joslyn curators. A rotating schedule of carefully focused exhibitions will examine how artists engage with the world and respond to the issues that challenge them creatively, bringing new perspectives on contemporary art to Nebraska. Riley CAP Gallery artists will be invited to Joslyn for lectures and other public programs, giving audiences the opportunity to gain

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insight into creative processes and contribute to an expanded dialogue about new art. The first Joslyn gallery dedicated exclusively to living artists, the Riley CAP Gallery represents an important step in making contemporary art an even more integral component of the Museum's exhibition programming.

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PICTURED (PAGE 1): Still from *migration (empire)*, 2008, single video projection, 24:28 min duration, edition of 4, Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles © Doug Aitken



**JOSLYN**  
Art Museum

**Our Mission** – Joslyn Art Museum collects, preserves, and interprets the visual arts of the highest quality, fostering appreciation and enjoyment of art for the benefit of a diverse audience.  
**Our Vision** – To be cherished and respected as a premier art museum.

Joslyn Art Museum showcases art from ancient times to the present. The Museum was a gift to the people of Omaha from Sarah Joslyn in memory of her husband, George, who made his fortune as president of the Western Newspaper Union. The Museum's original 1931 building is one of the finest examples of Art Deco architecture in the nation, with 38 types of marble from seven countries. The Walter and Suzanne Scott Pavilion, a 58,000-square-foot addition built in 1994, was designed by renowned British architect Norman Foster as his first U.S. commission. The Museum features galleries, a 1,000-seat concert hall, fountain court, education technology gallery, lecture hall, classrooms, sculpture garden, café, shop, and Art Works, an interactive space for art exploration (new in 2014).

**General Museum Admission:** Free (the *Doug Aitken* exhibition is included in free general Museum admission).

**Regular Museum Hours (includes exhibition):** Tuesday through Sunday, 10 am–4 pm; late 'til 8 pm on Thursday; closed Monday and major holidays.

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