LUANDA KINSHASA
by
STAN DOUGLAS



A personal archive
by RVLeb
in November 2026

I discovered Luanda Kinshasa by Stan Douglas* at Fondation Pinault apparently in early 2022.
www.pinaultcollection.com/fr/boursedecommerce/stan-douglas

I could never find much more except a short extract on vimeo. vimeo.com/94233892

Then I learnt about a record published by The Vinyl Factory
www.thevinylfactory.com/product/stan-douglas-luanda-kinshasa

The “final” icing on the cake came with Parallax, the largest monographic exhibition devoted to Stan Douglas in France for over thirty years
jeudepaume.org/evenement/stan-douglas

* en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stan_Douglas

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Le programme Le lieu Votre visite Adhérez Billetterie

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STAN DOUGLAS

Archive

Exposition 08.12.2021 — 13.06.2022



www.pinaultcollection.com/fr/boursedecommerce/stan-douglas

vimeo

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05:00

vimeo

Stan Douglas' "Luanda-Kinshasa" Art Installation Video w/ Jason Moran

33,1K vues · Il y a 12 ans

Commentaires 17

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vimeo.com/94233892

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Editions > Stan Douglas - Luanda Kinshasa

Stan Douglas - Luanda Kinshasa

£25.00

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Details Shipping Returns

* Now Repressed (2nd edition)
* Soundtrack to Stan Douglas' 'Luanda-Kinshasa' video
* Showcased at The Infinite Mix exhibition
* Double 12" heavyweight vinyl *Gatefold sleeve and two printed inner sleeves
* The Eye of the Trumpet essay by Diedrich Diederichsen and Stan Douglas
* Recorded in Brooklyn, New York on June 22nd and 23rd, 2013

Musicians/Contributors: Stan Douglas: Concept/Editing Scott Harding: Producer/Arranger Kahlil Kwame Bell: Percussion Liberty Ellman: Lead Guitar Jason Lindner: Moog Whirlitzer Abdou Mboup: Congas Nitin Mitta: Tablas Jason Moran: Rhodes, B3 & Band Leader Antoine Roney: Alto Saxophone Marvin Swewell: Rhythm Guitar Kimberly Thompson: Drums Burniss Earl Travis: Bass

In celebration of The Infinite Mix, The Vinyl Factory releases the soundtrack to Stan Douglas's 'Luanda-Kinshasa'. The video is shot like a documentary film on a set carefully crafted to resemble a legendary New York recording studio.

www.thevinylfactory.com/product/stan-douglas-luanda-kinshasa
www.thevinylfactory.com/features/vf-represses-soundtrack-to-stan-douglas-luanda-kinshasa



Stan Douglas Hastings Park, 16 July 1955, 2008 From the series, Crowds and Riots
© Stan Douglas Courtesy the artist, Victoria Miro, and David Zwirner

EXPOSITION

STAN DOUGLAS

Parallax

Du 20 octobre 2026 au 10 janvier 2027 *Jeu de Paume - Paris*

RÉSERVER

Jeu de Paume is proud to present *Parallax*, the largest monographic exhibition devoted to Stan Douglas in France for over thirty years. Born in Vancouver in 1960, this artist, a major figure on the international contemporary art scene, will show some forty or so of his works here, including films, video installations, photographic series, etc, covering the entirety of his career from the late 1980s to the present day. Following the exhibition in Paris, the show will travel to the MACBA Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona in 2027.

jeudepaume.org/evenement/stan-douglas

Stan Douglas
Concept/Editing

Scott Harding
Producer/Arranger

Kahlil Kwame Bell
Percussion

Liberty Ellman
Lead Guitar

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Jason Moran
Rhodes, B3
& Band Leader

Antoine Roney
Alto Saxophone

Marvin Sewell
Rhythm Guitar

Kimberly Thompson
Drums

Burniss Earl Travis
Bass



Kimberley Thompson – Drums	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kimberly_Thompson
Kahlil Kwame Bell – Percussion	https://kahlilkwamebell.com/
Abdou Mboup – Congas	https://www.instagram.com/buurgewal/
Nitin Mitta – Tablas	https://lpr.com/lpr_artists/nitin-mitta-tabla/
Antoine Roney – Alto Saxophone	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antoine_Roney
Jason Moran – Rhodes, B3 & band Leader	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jason_Moran_(musician)
Jason Lindner – Moog & Whirlitzer	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jason_Lindner
Burniss Earl Traviss – Bass	https://www.labella.com/artists/burniss-earl-travis-ii
Liberty Ellmann – Lead Guitar	https://www.libertyellman.com/
Marvin Sewell – Rhythm Guitar	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marvin_Sewell

Stan Douglas – Concept/Editing
Scott Harding – Producer/Arranger

To be honest, I am not sure who is who in the next slides, sorry for possible confusions



Kimberley Thompson – Drums





Kahlil Kwame Bell – Percussion







Nitin Mitta – Tablas





Abdou Mboup – Congas



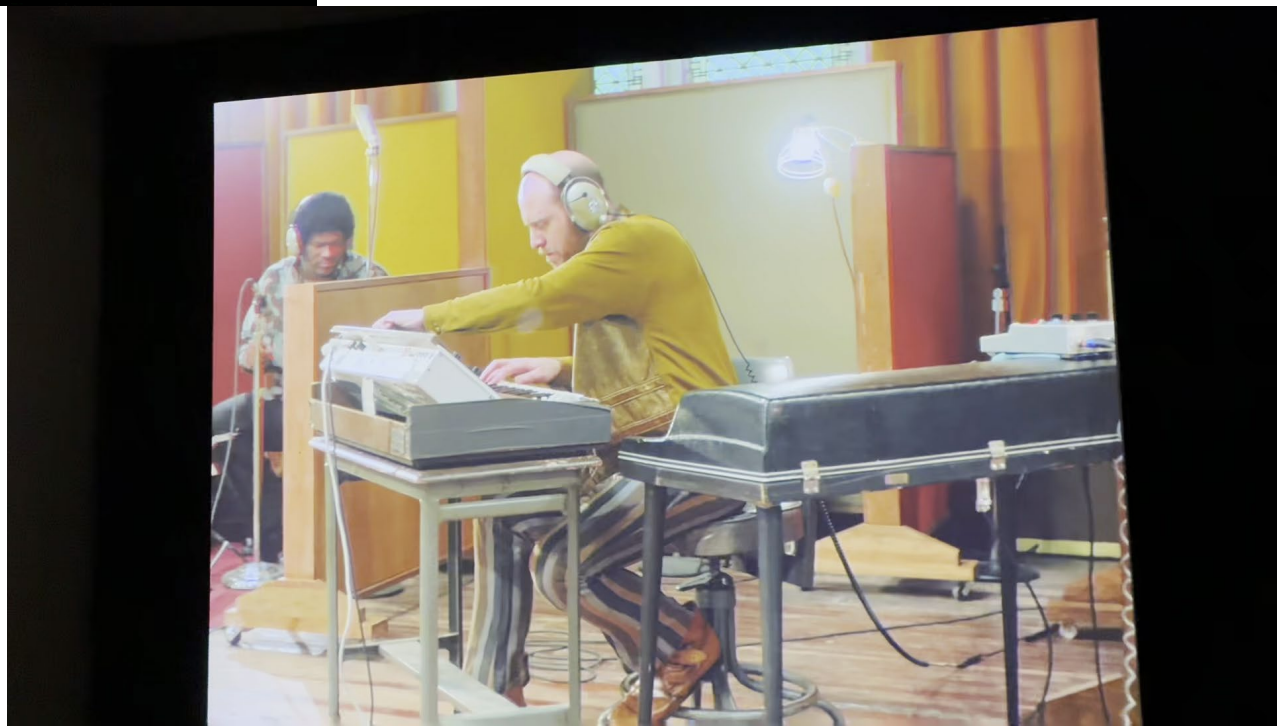


Antoine Roney – Alto Saxophone





Jason Lindner – Moog & Whirlitzer





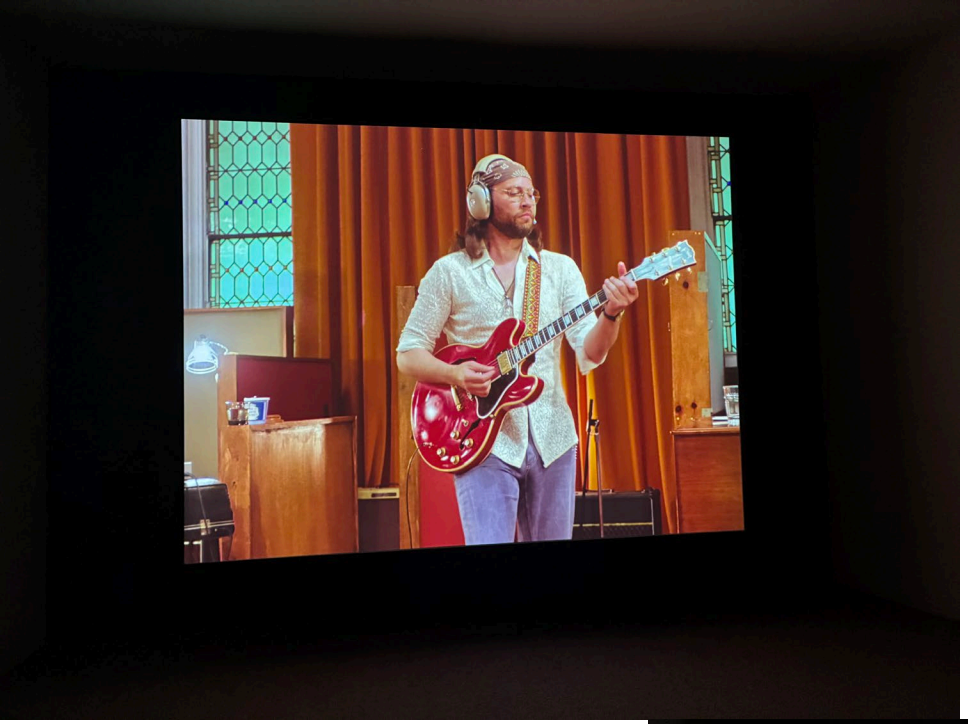
Jason Moran – Rhodes, B3
& band Leader





Burniss Earl Traviss – Bass





Liberty Ellmann – Lead Guitar





Marvin Sewell – Rhythm Guitar



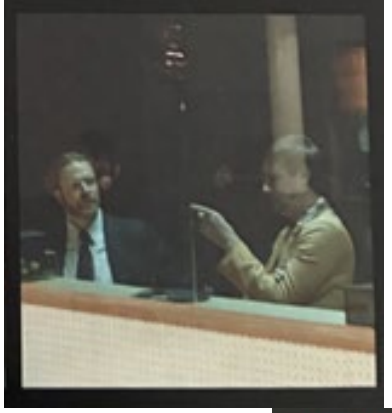










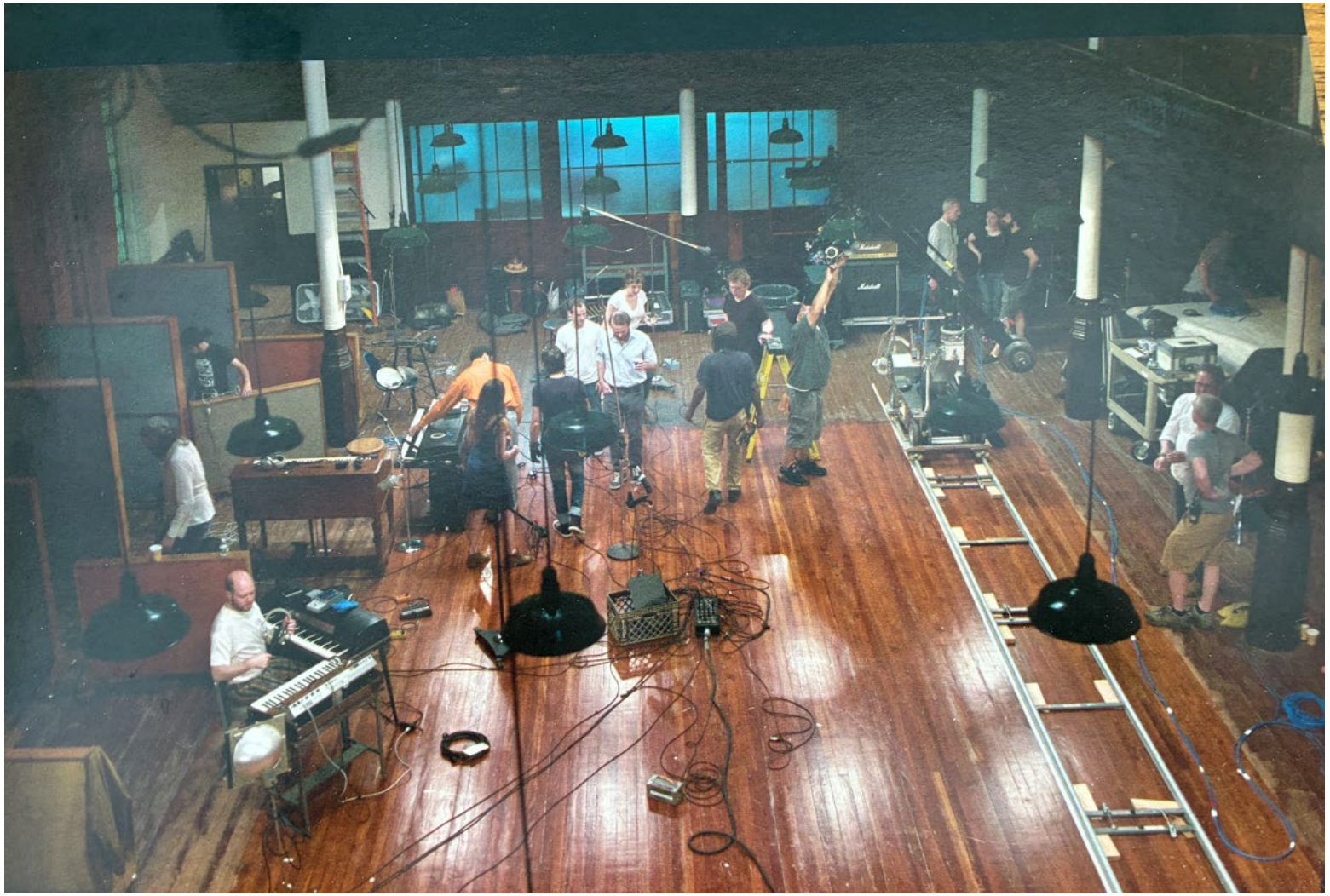



RECORDING




Marshall






Stan Douglas
Luanda
© The Vinyl Factory 2016


Stan Douglas
Kinshasa
© The Vinyl Factory 2016

They work together and also separately. On the one hand, the musicians in the studio are somewhat isolated from each other. There are movable partitions between them; they wear headphones and often seem to be looking inward. But they also make eye contact with the others. We can see that their gazes are directed, that they are looking for approval, encouragement, and other tangible signals, often something as simple as emotional confirmation. The two songs played by the group in Stan Douglas's video installation *Luanda-Kinshasa* (2013) may be built around basic rules and ideas established in advance, but much of the music also seems to have been decided "on the spot." Sometimes these "decisions" have consequences for the piece as a whole, and sometimes one has the impression that a musician is simply filling a spot left open for his or her personal contribution, which doesn't necessarily change the direction in which the overall web or texture of the music is moving. The music has/is a texture; it combines lines that at some point lose their responsibility to the larger whole, and then it ceases to matter whether a particular line is developed any further or whether it stops — as long as there is a sufficient number of others that do develop something further. Saxophone, two keyboards, two guitars, bass, drums, conga, tabla, percussion…

The hairstyles, the clothing, the body language, and of course the music, especially the technical idiosyncrasies of the electric and electronic instruments, leave no doubt that the period meant is the early to mid-1970s. The allusion in terms of the sound, the basic musical ideas, and the cultural atmosphere to the middle electric years of Miles Davis is unmistakable. The year in question could be 1972, when the albums *On the Corner* and *In Concert* and a few of the songs from *Get Up with It* were produced. The atmosphere — perhaps unlike under Davis as bandleader, who was not always easy to work with — is uniformly friendly and relaxed; the musicians are smiling, enjoying themselves; occasionally they fall into the facic expressions and gestures of the ecstatic and perfor "self-realization," but they very seldom display th spiritual or grimly political earnestness that free mus and free jazz often exuded in the previous decad That decade didn't solve all of humanity's problen but these musicians do at least seem to have a mir revolution behind them, one that ended happily. Th collaboration looks democratic; only now and t does the one keyboard player seem to intimate cer decisions with his gestures like a bandleader; mos the time the musicians' gazes seem multidirectic The cinematic reverse angle shot, in which a searc gaze is followed by another that may be respondi

it, doesn't appear with the claustrophobic automaticity familiar from the conventional feature film, where the camera's only choice is to show the speaker or the listener. Here there is an entire gallery of players, and it never becomes completely clear who can potentially see whom and fix them with their gaze.

When musicians are invited into the studio to play other musicians playing music, one is dealing with a special case of acting. While in feature films about musicians it is clear that the musical ability displayed is merely simulated, and while in documentaries it is equally clear that the musicians whom we see are playing exclusively themselves, in the visual arts there has for some time now been a genre in which musicians play other musicians but do so by playing music themselves. Douglas's *Hors-champs* (1992) was the first work I know that followed this principle: real musicians,well-known and highly acclaimed exponents like the trombonist, composer, and author George Lewis, saxophonist Douglas Ewart, Kent Carter on bass, and Oliver Johnson on drums, play a nameless, fictional African-American free jazz band performing Albert Ayler's *Spirits Rejoice* in a French TV studio — at around the same time that quite a few American free jazz musicians were living and working in France and receiving an enthusiastic public response.

Hence while an actor, as a general specialist in playing others, not in playing the specific life to be embodied in a given instance, normally plays a stranger who is protected by his or her named concreteness, in this video installation a group of specialists who are well-known names play a group of generic, unspecific figures. We find the same principle in the works *Actualité* (2001) and *Western Recording* (2003) by Mathias Poledna, where in one case the social fabric of a typical post-punk band is reconstructed in the practice room, and in the other a singer who sings in the style of the Warner Bros. singer-songwriters of the late 1960s is seen at work in the studio. In Harun Farocki's Single: *Eine Schallplattewird produziert* (Single: A Record Is Produced, 1979), work on a disco single in the studio is documented with an emphasis on its cultural-industrial character, while in *Horror Vacui* (2009) David Zink Yi has Afro-Cuban musical rituals and Afro-Cuban pop music meet and then drift apart again in the recording studio in a two channel video installation. In *Luanda-Kinshasa*, musicians who are all currently active and some of whom are quite well known play their stylistic forebears, essentially members of their fathers' generation. Hence they "play" not only in the sense that they impersonate somebody fictional but also to the exten that they perform a largely improvised — and thus in

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conventional terms authentic — music which is not at all their "own." And this in turn is not just a clever artistic stroke on Douglas's part, which he repeats here, but an indication of the current state of music's material evolution: improvisational authenticity can of course be "played."

In addition to a specific interest in the phenomenon of musicians as actors, however, there is another interest at work here as well, and it concerns a specific stage set: a set that provides a historical frame for the acting component of the spectacle and binds a certain surplus and connects it with the world — precisely the surplus which consists in the fact that a musician who is actually busy making music has sufficient time, energy, and charm left over to send out social and communicative signals beyond what is necessary for music making.

In *Hors-champs*, this was a French TV studio that presented American free jazz in a setting of modernist austerity and abstractness, a choice that can be seen as rooted in a mixture of helplessness and respect: at that time Europe's public TV channels had only two formats, high culture and youth culture. The decision to opt for high culture here shows on the one hand that they classified the African-American avant-garde as high culture, on the other that they were ill-equipped to deal with the fact that precisely music like Albert Ayler's, with its many specific allusions and evocations of musical memories and reminiscences, was a poor match for the ideal of purification and abstraction symbolized by this studio's design.

Yet oversimplifying somewhat, we can say that the relationship between the cultural situations of the musicians in *Hors-champs* and those in *Luanda-Kinshasa* may be seen as that between exile and cultural flowering or political success in one's own country. For many of the African-American musicians who went to Paris in the late 1960s, one reason to leave the US for a while was not just the greater, if sometimes questionable, recognition they received in Europe, especially France. It was also the Pan-African Festival that was held in Algiers in the summer of 1969. Many of the musicians invited to play there subsequently recorded, in a very short time, important sessions for labels including BYG/Actuel in Paris and thus left behind a dense impression of the second generation of New Thing/Free Jazz. Others, including the Art Ensemble of Chicago, simply extended their stays and remained in Paris for a few years. George Lewis, the trombonist from *Hors-champs*, not only had close artistic ties to the Art Ensemble of Chicago, but also published a comprehensive and influential biography of their organizational mothership, the AACM.

By contrast, the various bands that came together around Miles Davis can be situated in a period following that exile. An important point in the history of jazz and African-American music is surely that with Miles and the electric and electronic jazz, jazz funk, and jazz rock which he and his students and former colleagues initiated (including Tony Williams, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, and Chick Corea), the African-American tradition recovered its sovereignty over amplified and sonically manipulated music, which began with blues, jazz, and R&B, but then, despite Jimi Hendrix, was temporarily taken over by (white) hippie rock. And it did so very much in a kind of dialectical movement that adopted a number of elements from psychedelic rock. Multiple versions of utopian music making were thus superimposed and framed by the new funk sensibility of the 1970s.[1] This new synthesis, which musicians like Miles not only embodied but also quite obviously mastered, lent them power and glory (even if students like Hancock were often more successful economically than the undisputed authority figure). Miles was like a combination of James Brown, Sun Ra, and Duke Ellington. This was essentially the message of David Liebman, who played in his bands in that period: these three artists not only stand for three kinds of charisma but also for different ways of organizing the collective phenomenon of ensemble play and hence for the musical equivalent of different political fantasies and utopias. They are separated by issues surrounding the derivation of their physicality, spirituality, and politics, but they all have in common the fact that they project the context of music onto social contexts. And vice versa.

Douglas places two recognizable fixed points at the center of this work: one of them is the studio, a replica of the famous Columbia Studio on 30th Street in New York where Miles Davis, as a longtime Columbia artist, worked at various stages of his career. The other is the title of the work, which refers to two African cities that underwent important historical developments during the period of the electric Miles: Kinshasa and Luanda. Thus, Douglas not only establishes a relationship between the musical and cultural-political developments that had occurred since the time of the performance of the fictional *Hors-champs* quartet and the Pan-African Festival of 1969; he also refers to the kind of titles that Miles Davis preferred at that time. On the one hand, they relate to postcolonial Africa, especially to areas where the anticolonial liberation struggle was not yet over, for example *Calypso Frelimo*,[2] which refers to the Mozambican liberation movement, while the songs on *Dark Magus* are named after the numerals in Swahili (one through four). On the other hand, there are the mythical continents (Gondwana, Agartha) that gave their names to the albums released in 1975 and certain individual songs, but also the names of real countries involved in the liberation struggle, including Zimbabwe, which officially still had a different name in 1975 (Rhodesia). Kinshasa did not lose its colonial name (Leopoldville) until 1966. The hopes bound up with the new African names combined utopian and mythical notions with very real political developments whose results were palpable. Luanda, the capital of Angola, was at war with the Portuguese colonial power, a war it won in 1974; hence all of this fell during the period when Miles closely linked his music, which was utopian in the sense described above, with certain real developments as well as with mythical expectations. Postcoloniality seemed to be evolving in similar steps and stages as the electrification and "electronicizing" of the collective improvisations of Miles Davis's various ensembles.[3]

Alongside this obvious presence — that of the evolving postcolonial world, the newly electric character of jazz, the relaxed utopianism of the jamming musicians, and the traditional setting of Columbia Studio, nicknamed "the Church" — there is also a glaring absence in *Luanda-Kinshasa*. I am speaking, of course, of Miles himself. He isn't there, and at least at first glance no one seems to be taking his place. What was his role? He wasn't just the boss, the leader, the conductor, and nominally the composer; as a trumpeter, he was a highly individual voice within the overall texture, as I described it earlier. He was not just one among many, but structurally specific. Thus, he is said to have placed great importance on having saxophonists who played very fast as his counterparts, so that he could that much more effectively embody a sense of repose which made his notes seem less like markers of pitches in runs and movements than like fields or surfaces. Many compare them to color fields. On stage, however, this repose and superiority were combined with constant motion. For example, a film of an entire concert in Vienna from November 1973 shows that he played his tranquil notes while constantly moving among the musicians. He turned and "addressed" them; he kept his eye on them, so to speak, while producing his musical color fields, which seemed to have to do with something entirely different from interaction. Where everything was interaction and individual actions sought their place in the texture, these notes were like an interruption of collaboration, a look within, but one that was closely coupled on stage to a look without, into the eyes of the other musicians. In the 1950s, Miles Davis was famous and notorious for turning his back on an audience that — as legend would have it — he regarded as racist or unworthy, especially in Europe.

In fact, that actually happened extremely rarely at the time and was more a myth that seemed to go well with the solitary, stationary notes. With the wireless microphones that Miles was able to use in the 1970s, it now became a real possibility — one that he availed

continued overleaf

himself of, however, not to snub audiences but to better interact with the musicians.

In this sense, it's no joke when the camera itself, in this work, is compared with the trumpeter, and not just in structural terms. Biographer John Szwed likens Davis's work with his musicians to the method acting of the 1950s, that generation of "American male actors … notably Marlon Brando, James Dean, and Montgomery Clift, all Midwesterners [like Davis — author's note] — actors who learned the principles of Stanislavsky … and became known for a form of intimate yet emotionally charged acting, carried off with the liberating sense that everything was improvised, and therefore real." Hence Miles's trumpet represented a different principle of music making, one that didn't vanish into the texture but pointed at it from without, that made it possible by not belonging to it. This function may be likened to that of a camera, which not only records a set of events but makes it possible in its practical social reality in the first place. The absurdity of cinematographers and filmmakers who believe there is such a thing as an unimplicated, purely externally documenting camera has often been criticized and ridiculed by the contemporary social sciences and ethnography — most humorously by Eliot Weinberger in his essay "The Camera People." From this perspective, a camera among musicians should be seen as an instrument like Davis's trumpet: as the necessarily foreign, dislocated element in a collective collaboration which makes the others' equality possible in the first place. This isn't meant as an expression of the kind of social pessimism which maintains that every collective needs a chief or king in order to articulate and organize itself; it is rather something like a campfire or other structural element that generates equality through exteriority, without itself being one of the persons and wishing to rule over them as first among equals.

In this sense, the principle of the electric Miles, whose critics (above all disappointed former fans) complained in the early 1970s that he was playing less and less on his records and giving too much space to others, is comparable to the idea of introducing a nonmusical but artistic principle into music making. From this perspective, it makes perfect sense to let this principle be taken over — as it were symbolically — by a camera, which now generates and leads the music — this is after all a reconstruction — but occupies the same structural position within the reconstruction as the musical identity of Miles's trumpet, which was strategically foreign to its musical environment.

Beyond its performative role, the camera then has the task of recording two kinds of visual details in particular. First is individuality within the equality, the highlighting of carefully selected individual physical details which are also accentuated by clothing and hairstyles and which stand out especially clearly once that homogeneity is established. Also in this category is the impression that the volume is turned up for whichever musician happens to be on screen (in fact that isn't always the case). Second, however, the cultural abundance of the framework conditions is spread out quite luxuriously before us. Thus, we see the lighting installations necessary for the filming, a profusion of lovingly finished rolling partitions, and people involved in the production — in reality as well as in the fiction.

We very briefly see two girlfriends who are elaborately "dolled up" in the style of the seventies. At one point a person who looks more contemporary is seen taking notes, as if she were a so-called "script girl." And at another we see a young man who looks like a friend of the musicians sitting on the floor reading Charles Mingus's autobiography, *Beneath the Underdog*, which was published the year before the aforementioned albums were recorded. Mingus, who had once played with Miles in Charlie Parker's band, was appalled by the electric Miles and had said in an interview that he once knew a great man by the name of Miles Davis, but that he assumed that man was long dead, and now there was another who couldn't play at all and who had himself photographed with naked white women. Mingus is something like the other great bandleader of that generation, who in many ways traveled a different path. Yet Mingus, who unlike Miles often changed record companies, also made a number of recordings for Columbia. Hence it followed that he often worked at the Church, in 1959, for example, when he recorded his album *Mingus Ah Um* there. The CD versions of that album which were released in the 1990s include photographs that show the musicians in exactly the same panoramic way that Douglas's camera films the fictional Miles Davis ensemble, and they convey a similar impression of the space. That said, it is apparent that the photographer stood next to Mingus, who had clearly sought out for himself and his bass a spot from which he could keep an eye on the entire proceedings without having to walk back and forth. Everything else looks almost exactly the same as in *Luanda-Kinshasa* — the gaze of the leader, of the camera, the cause, the missing Miles at the caused, the historical totality, the web or texture of fashion, politics, electricity , and postcoloniality.

Diedrich Diederichsen

1 See Philip Freeman, *Running the Voodoo Down: The Electric Music of Miles Davis* (San Francisco, 2005), p.141.

2 This was the first song Miles Davis recorded in 1973 with the band that included Pete Cosey and others and that followed the one which seems to be the model here, which included Carlos Garnett, Mtume, Badal Roy, and Cedric Lawson — the 1972 band before the Lamborghini accident in which Miles Davis was injured in the fall of that year.

3 But there are also ironic takes on the connection between politics and music, as on the album covers by Corky McCoy for *On the Corner*, *In Concert*, and *Big Fun*, where a collection of comically overdrawn figures from the "scene" (girls in platform shoes, "pimps" in fancy hats) represents a (desirable) Miles Davis audience. There are activists with buttons and sweaters in the Black Nationalist colors (black-red-green), but they are pictured wearing slogans like "Free Me" or "Vote Miles."

4 See John Szwed, *So What: The Life of Miles* (New York, 2002), pp.332–34.

5 Ibid., p.199.

6 Eliot Weinberger, "The Camera People," in *Visualizing Theory: Selected Essays from V.A.R.*, ed. Lucien Taylor (New York, 2009), pp.3–26.

7 Charles Mingus, *Beneath the Underdog* (New York, 1971).

From Wikipedia

Luanda-Kinshasa runs for more than six hours. Its title points directly to the origins and history of jazz in Africa.[22] Marking the first time the artist has filmed on location in New York,[23] however, the setting is a reimagined Manhattan milieu in the 1970s, namely the CBS 30th Street Studio. Featuring a band of professional musicians improvising together, *Luanda-Kinshasa* is the documentation of a fictitious recording at the famed studio.[23] Although Douglas plants subtle period details in clothes, wall posters and cigarette brands, all attention is on the band — which includes among its 10 instrumentalists the Senegalese drummer Abdou Mboup, the Indian tabla player Nitin Mitta, and the American drummer Kimberly Thompson — and on the music being made.[22]

From The Vinyl Factory

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In celebration of The Infinite Mix, The Vinyl Factory releases the soundtrack to Stan Douglas's 'Luanda-Kinshasa'. The video is shot like a documentary film on a set carefully crafted to resemble a legendary New York recording studio.

Stan Douglas's Luanda-Kinshasa depicts a fictional 1970s jazz-funk band engaged in a seemingly endless real-time jam. The band's music echoes the then-current confluence of American jazz, funk and Afrobeat – a musical fusion made possible, as the video's title indirectly implies, by the emerging independence and rising profile of African nations.

As the camera appears to seamlessly circle around the studio, the sound mix highlights whichever musician it lingers on, enhancing the impression that we are watching a live performance. But the band's improvisation is actually a construction: intricately remixed by Douglas in the editing room, it extends through over six hours of 'alternate takes' created by recombining various shots and accompanying sections of music. Conjuring a never-ending sequence of variations, Luanda-Kinshasa conjures a vision of culture as a potentially 'infinite mix.'

Through photography, film and installation, the Canadian artist Stan Douglas has, since the late-1980s, examined complex intersections of narrative, fact and fiction while scrutinising the constructs of the media he employs and their influence on our understanding of reality.

Douglas's work is often in the first instance an examination of place - Potsdam, Cuba and Detroit have provided the impetus for, respectively, Der Sandmann (1995), Inconsolable Memories (2005) and Le Détroit (1999) - but entangled with the detail of specific geographical and political circumstance is a diverse range of source material that has included the writings of Franz Kafka, Samuel Beckett, Theodor W. Adorno and ETA Hoffmann, and the films of Alfred Hitchcock and Orson Welles.

While we may recognise the literary, filmic or musical references, along with the stories, places or even characters appropriated in these complex works, expectations are often frustrated. Instead of narrative fulfilment, Douglas offers us complexity, perplexity and doubt. The artist has remarked that 'life is all middle' and in Douglas's work the viewer often finds himself plunged into events whose beginnings are obscured and whose ends seem to dissolve into mutability.

For instance, the films Journey Into Fear (2001), which makes reference to Eric Ambler's 1940s spy novel as well as Herman Melville's 1857 novel 'The Confidence Man', and Klatsassin (2006), which referring to Akira Kurosawa's 1950 film Rashomon reveals details of a murder in nineteenth-century British Columbia through a series of sometimes contradictory flashbacks and anecdotes, unfold over many days.

Both are examples of Douglas's 'recombinant' works - sequences of imagery and dialogue generated by computer as permutations that are capable of running without repetition for timespans way in excess of the conventional art-viewing experience. As such, the works unmoor themselves from formal requirements of narrative and expectations of authorship as they liberate the viewer to reflect on the contingencies of truth in the wider world.

It is no coincidence that Douglas often chooses to locate his work where failures of political and social systems are most apparent. His critical eye focused on events that could have taken a very different turn, Douglas attunes us to the possibility of alternative outcomes. Born in Vancouver in 1960, Stan Douglas has been the subject of numerous solo and group exhibitions at prominent institutions worldwide.

From Fondation Pinault

The film *Luanda-Kinshasa* film by Stan Douglas takes place in the carefully reconstructed setting of the legendary Columbia Records recording studio as it was in the 1970s. Known to many as “The Church”, housed in a former Armenian church, this legendary New York studio, which saw Miles Davis play and Aretha Franklin sing, hosted some of the most iconic recordings in the history of contemporary music from 1949 to 1981.

Luanda-Kinshasa retraces a fictional musical recording. Musicians improvise a piece together in a visual environment which, from the style of dress of the protagonists to the recording equipment, helps to recreate a vintage and paradoxically unclassifiable, timeless atmosphere. An offbeat recall. The film composes and recomposes the montages in a random way to create a quasi-hypnotic loop of 6 hours of immersive music.

The title refers to two historical events: the mythical boxing match between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman in Kinshasa in 1971 and the liberation of the Angolan capital Luanda in 1974–75. Immersed in the imaginary world of the mid-1970s, surrounded by fake girlfriends, fake technicians, and fake journalists, the three guitarists, four percussionists, two keyboard players, and a single clarinettist play their roles with an unsettling and meticulous faithfulness. Without names, without words, this entirely fictional jazz funk jam also has a political dimension. Douglas explains that he was also inspired by Jacques Attali’s idea that musical formations can anticipate and carry a vision of new social formations.

With this film, drawn into the big screen, the viewer is fascinated by a moment that they sense as key, behind the scenes of the history of music, and yet they are faced with a piece of fiction, carried away into an indefinite and subjective time, immersed in an almost infinite process of composition.

The artist returns to the African roots of the New York music scene of the seventies. The influence of Afrobeat is central, with a marked interest in musical fusions. Throughout this improvised score, the virtuosity of the musicians, their individual and collective playing, becomes palpable and exhilarating.

Stan Douglas

Stan Douglas was born in Vancouver in 1960, where he lives and works. He makes artworks (films, photographs, and installations) that show certain places or events in a new light. He is interested in the social aspect of progress in Western societies, particularly utopian philosophies, and their divisive political and economic effects. His questioning of the structural possibilities of film and video, supported by elaborate narrative frameworks, has produced many avant-garde works of contemporary art. Stan Douglas draws on the Hollywood film genre (including crime films and the western) and classic literary works (most notably those of Samuel Beckett, Herman Melville, and Franz Kafka) to create the contextual frameworks for his complex projects grounded in extensive research over time.

From the New York Times

www.nytimes.com/2014/02/14/arts/design/stan-douglas-luanda-kinshasa.html

Art & Design

Stan Douglas: 'Luanda-Kinshasa'

Art in Review

By HOLLAND COTTER FEB. 13, 2014



An installation view of Stan Douglas's jazz-jam film "Luanda-Kinshasa," which runs more than six hours, at David Zwirner. Credit Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner, New York

David Zwirner 533 West 19th Street, Chelsea Through Feb. 22

An obvious precedent for Stan Douglas's monumental 2013 jazz-jam film "Luanda-Kinshasa" is his great 1992 video installation "Hors-Champ" ("Off-Screen"), which was a kind of aural essay on free jazz as an expression of the black consciousness of the 1960s, particularly in Europe where many black performers at that time found a home.

For the video, Mr. Douglas recreated a vintage 1960s-style French television recording room and filmed a quartet of musicians who improvised on Albert Ayler's 1965 "Spirits Rejoice," threading it through with strains of the "Marseillaise" and the American national anthem.

On one screen we saw a short, edited-for-television version of the session, and on the other, the whole gloriously spun-out performance.

That piece ran about 14 minutes total; "Luanda-Kinshasa" runs for more than six hours. Its title points directly to the origins and history of jazz in Africa. But the setting is a reimagined Manhattan

milieu in the 1970s, namely the studio known as “the Church,” which was the scene of landmark jazz, pop and classical recordings by Miles Davis, Aretha Franklin, Glenn Gould and others.

Although Mr. Douglas plants subtle period details in clothes, wall posters and cigarette brands, all attention is on the band — which includes among its 10 instrumentalists the Senegalese drummer Abdou Mboup, the Indian tabla player Nitin Mitta, and the charismatic American drummer Kimberly Thompson — and on the music being made.

And the music has an element of fantasy. What appears to be a straight-through improvisation is a looping patchwork of edited and repeated parts. Just when the playing seems to be logically winding down, someone tinkles a chime, or strikes a chord, or hits a downbeat and everything revs up again until the next false pause.

Mr. Douglas has said that he was influenced by Jean-Luc Godard’s 1968 Rolling Stones film “Sympathy for the Devil,” with its intersplicing of recording sessions and political film clips. But he seems to be after something different in “Luanda-Kinshasa.”

Cultural politics are here to be read (certainly gender politics: Ms. Thompson is the only woman in the band), but over all the film is about the poetics, as much as the politics, of music. It’s about jazz as a pan-cultural transport, a kind of freedom train that goes on and on.

As a listener you can come aboard at any point, stay as long as you please (I stayed a long time), and get off where it suits you. No matter how long you ride, you’ve done some time-traveling and you’ve been somewhere global.

Correction: February 13, 2014

An earlier version of this review referred incorrectly to the artist in one instance. As the review correctly notes elsewhere, he is Mr. Douglas, not Mr. Gordon.

A version of this review appears in print on February 14, 2014, on Page C30 of the New York edition with the headline: Stan Douglas: ‘Luanda-Kinshasa’. Order Reprints| Today's Paper|Subscribe

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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



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.

(continue to next page)

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.

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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