



Ryerson
Image
Centre

GALLERY. RESEARCH. COLLECTIONS.

ARCHIVAL DIALOGUES: READING THE BLACK STAR COLLECTION

INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED CANADIAN ARTISTS PREMIERE NEW WORK

Toronto's newest art gallery, the Ryerson Image Centre, opens on September 29th with an exhibition showcasing a first rate selection of leading Canadian contemporary artists: Stephen Andrews, Christina Battle, Marie-Hélène Cousineau, Stan Douglas, Vera Frenkel, Vid Ingelevics, David Rokeby and Michael Snow.

Archival Dialogues: Reading the Black Star Collection features new work from eight extraordinary artists, commissioned and created for the grand opening of the Ryerson Image Centre. Each artist has interacted with the legendary Black Star Collection at Ryerson University, a world-renowned archive of historic black and white photojournalism and one of the most valuable repositories of collective global memory captured in visual form.

By commissioning new works for the grand opening of the Ryerson Image Centre, curators Doina Popescu and Peggy Gale have facilitated vibrant examinations and exciting contemporary reinterpretations of the historic images.

"It's not often Canadian artists of this stature have their work curated in one exhibition, let alone an exhibition using such extraordinary source material," says Sheldon Levy, President of Ryerson University. "The depth of talent and the international stature of these artists makes the opening of the Ryerson Image Centre doubly exciting."

There is a tremendous range of scope in the multi-disciplinary work presented in *Archival Dialogues: Reading the Black Star Collection*

- Vera Frenkel's video-photo-text piece, *The Blue Train*, was inspired by Frenkel's mother's escape from Europe at the outbreak of World War II;
- Michael Snow's *TAUT* features a video projection of extraordinary crowd scenes on a classroom setting;
- David Rokeby's installation, *Shrouded*, on the Salah J. Bachir New Media Wall, reconstructs the way our eye passes over an image and selectively reveals details;
- Stephen Andrews presents cinema as a forensic tool;
- Christina Battle's multi-media examination of photographs of disastrous events takes us into the realm of science fiction;
- Stan Douglas's *Midcentury Studio* chronicles a photographer in the postwar years;
- Marie-Hélène Cousineau's work is inspired by portraits and snapshots taken in Baker Lake during the 1960s; and
- Vid Ingelevics explores the contradictions inherent in the archiving process and the preservation of "original" photographic images.

“The opportunity to examine and re-contextualize diverse aspects of the historical material in the Black Star Collection has been a remarkable journey for both the artists and the curators,” says Doina Popescu, Director of the Ryerson Image Centre, who co-curated the exhibition with Peggy Gale. “These commissioned works offer the public the chance to witness the coming together of one of the world’s most important photo historical archives with the analytical and creative subtleties at the core of eight unique contemporary art practices.”

The Black Star Collection was the single largest donation of cultural property ever made to a Canadian university. *Archival Dialogues: Reading the Black Star Collection* is a gift to its viewers, allowing us to see the past through the eyes of some of Canada’s most exceptional artists.

The Ryerson Image Centre (RIC), Toronto’s newest cultural destination, is an international centre of excellence for the exhibition, research, study and teaching of photography and related disciplines, including new media, installation art and film. International in scope, the Ryerson Image Centre features three interrelated areas of activity: an exciting program of public exhibitions where innovative work by professional Canadian and international artists addresses social, cultural, historical and aesthetic issues; a world-class research centre that conducts research into the history of photography and documentary media, and offers an array of workshops, conferences and publication programs; and the collection, which is home to the famous Black Star Collection of black and white photojournalistic prints, as well as important fine art photographic holdings and artist archives. The new museum-standard facility consists of approximately 4,500 square feet of exhibition space; a Great Hall for lectures, conferences, screenings and receptions; a glassed-in entrance colonnade with the Salah J. Bachir New Media Wall, a 16-foot new media wall visible from the street; a temperature and humidity controlled vault for our growing collection; and a state of the art, professionally staffed research centre. The public can find more details, and subscribe to the Ryerson Image Centre email newsletter, at www.ryerson.ca/ric.

Ryerson University is Canada’s leader in innovative, career-oriented education and a university clearly on the move. With a mission to serve societal need, and a long-standing commitment to engaging its community, Ryerson offers more than 100 undergraduate and graduate programs. Distinctly urban, culturally diverse and inclusive, the university is home to more than 28,000 students, including 2,300 master’s and PhD students, nearly 2,700 faculty and staff, and more than 140,000 alumni worldwide. Research at Ryerson is on a trajectory of success and growth: externally funded research has doubled in the past four years. The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education is Canada’s leading provider of university-based adult education. For more information, visit www.ryerson.ca

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