

Finkel, Jori. "How 'West' was written". Los Angeles Times (11/10/10)

Los Angeles Times

ART

How 'West' was written

In trying to stage a gala for the Museum of Contemporary Art that does not feel staged, artist Doug Aitken has also created a book for the event that does not read like his creation.

His concept was simple: Find 1,000 people in L.A. to answer the question, "What is your idea of the West?"

"I wanted to create something steeped in this region, in the legacy of creativity in Los Angeles," says Aitken, who was born in Redondo Beach and lives in Venice. "And I thought maybe the purest way to start the project would be to open the question up to everyone — from mechanics to homeless people to real estate agents."

Some answers — "surfers" or "the land of hope and promises" — were to be expected. Others — "gangbangers" or "dust" — were more startling.

The book, published just in time for Saturday's gala, contains all 1,000 of these answers, plus related photos. Many images were culled from the Internet or photo databases. Still, the visual montage is pure Aitken, who is best known for his rhythmic video artworks.

—JORI FINKEL



MOCA / Distributed Art Publishers

'WEST' VISION: Doug Aitken asks 1,000 people.