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## **Vancouver Art Gallery Presents Cinematic Masterpiece Set in British Columbia's Interior by Renowned Vancouver Artist Stan Douglas**

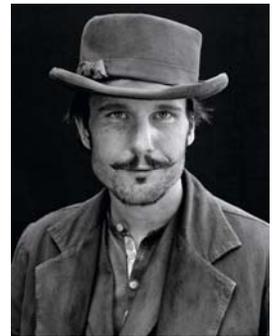
**VANCOUVER, BC** – Internationally acclaimed Vancouver artist **Stan Douglas** deconstructs the early history of British Columbia in his outstanding multi-media installation **Stan Douglas: Klatsassin**, on view at the **Vancouver Art Gallery** from **May 30 to November 8, 2009**. This challenging exhibition brings together two major video and film-based installations, **Klatsassin** and **Pursuit, Fear, Catastrophe: Ruskin B.C.**, presenting the divergent histories of inhabitation and settlement in Canada's westernmost province. These provocative film and video-based installations call attention to how forces of capitalism and colonialism have marked the land and its narrative.

"Stan Douglas has continually used the province of British Columbia as an inspiration for his internationally renowned artistic practice, mining the province's complex narrative to create works that speak profoundly about the perception of history, time and truth," said Vancouver Art Gallery director **Kathleen Bartels**. "We are extremely pleased to be able to present the North American museum premiere of *Klatsassin* at the Gallery with the support of presenting sponsor Rogers, an organization with a strong history of generous support for British Columbia's artists at the Vancouver Art Gallery."

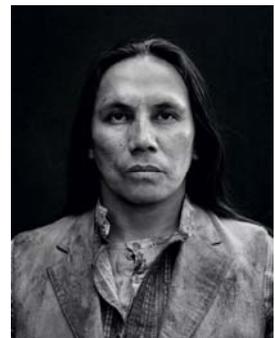
Shot on location in the Cariboo and Chilcotin districts of British Columbia, and on a studio backlot in Vancouver, *Klatsassin* is rooted in the historical context of the Gold Rush and annexation of land along Canada's west coast. The work is named after the Tsilhqot'in Chief who stood accused of leading an insurrection in 1864, which led to the deaths of ten road-builders and the so-called Chilcotin War. Using this plot point as the impetus, Douglas created a film that unravels and reconstructs the simple three-act cinematic formula traditionally used by producers of Hollywood westerns.

For ***Klatsassin***, Douglas draws on Akira Kurosawa's iconic 1950 movie, *Rashomon*, another tale of murder with a narrative told from different viewpoints. But unlike Kurosawa's film, the scenes in Douglas's *Klatsassin* are not compiled in a logical order. Instead, his film is comprised of twenty-seven scenes looped together in various random combinations on an ongoing basis. The film can run without repetition for more than seventy hours, with each character telling his version of events. This presents an endless array of possibilities, destroying conventional senses of time, memory, perspective and truth.

*Klatsassin* also includes a group of seven large-scale photographs of sites where the film was shot, including Barkerville, Quesnel Forks, Stanley and Vancouver, as well as a series of black-and-white portrait photographs of the principal characters in the film who are generically identified as the Prospector, the Prisoner, the Thief and the Miner, among others.



Stan Douglas, *Klatsassin Portraits (Thief)*, 2006, laserchrome print, Courtesy of the Artist and David Zwirner, New York



Stan Douglas, *Klatsassin Portraits (Prisoner)*, 2006, laserchrome print, Courtesy of the Artist and David Zwirner, New York

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***Pursuit, Fear, Catastrophe: Ruskin, B.C.*** invites viewers back to the early days of cinema. For this installation, Douglas created a silent black-and-white film accompanied by the music of a computer-controlled piano, recalling the musical accompaniment of pre-sound film. The score played in *Pursuit, Fear, Catastrophe: Ruskin, B.C.* is Arnold Schönberg's 1929 composition *Begleitmusik zu einer Lichtspielszene (Accompaniment to a Cinematographic Scene)*, an arrangement that possesses the thematic sections central to Douglas's film – pursuit, fear and catastrophe.

Set in Ruskin, British Columbia in the 1920s, Douglas's film is a detective story about the unexplained disappearance of a worker from the BC Electric Railway Company, which was building a dam and power plant near the town. Located between Mission and Maple Ridge, Ruskin was named in 1896 after John Ruskin, a British art critic and social reformer. Admirers of Ruskin's philosophy, the founders of the town and the associated sawmill established the settlement as a socialist community. Although the social arrangement failed within years, logging and sawmilling continued to sustain residents of the area. The film tells the tale of a BC Electric Railway Company employee who vanished after probing into issues of social inequality, industrialization and the town's utopian aspirations.

*Pursuit, Fear, Catastrophe: Ruskin, B.C.* also includes a series of photographs titled *Accompaniment to a Cinematographic Scene: Ruskin, B.C.*, shot on location at Ruskin.

Stan Douglas was born in 1960 in Vancouver, where he currently lives and works. Throughout his career, the internationally acclaimed artist has consistently and provocatively explored the idea of historical record, narrative and location. His work, predominantly in film, video and photography, has been thematically linked to British Columbia and the many different peoples who have inhabited the region.

Stan Douglas: *Klatsassin* was organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by **Bruce Grenville**, senior curator.

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The Vancouver Art Gallery is a not-for-profit organization supported by: its members; individual donors; corporate funders; foundations; the City of Vancouver; the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council and Gaming Revenues; the Government of Canada through the Canada Council for the Arts and the Department of Canadian Heritage. We thank everyone for their continuing generosity.