

William Kentridge



This catalogue is published in conjunction with the exhibition *William Kentridge*, which was coorganized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, and the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York. The exhibition was presented at:

**Hirshhorn Museum
and Sculpture Garden,
Smithsonian Institution**

Washington, D.C.
February 28 – May 13, 2001

**New Museum of
Contemporary Art**

New York
June 3 – September 16, 2001

Museum of Contemporary Art

Chicago
October 20, 2001 –
January 20, 2002

Contemporary Arts Museum

Houston
March 1 – May 5, 2002

**Los Angeles County
Museum of Art**

July 21 – October 6, 2002

**South African
National Gallery**

Cape Town
December 7, 2002 –
March 23, 2003

The international tour of *William Kentridge* is sponsored by

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"Mundus Perversus, Mundus Inversus" © 2001 Lynne Cooke.

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The Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. The MCA's exhibitions, programming, and operations are member-supported and privately funded through contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations. Additional support is provided through The Chicago Community Trust; the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; and American Airlines, the official airline of the Museum of Contemporary Art.

The New Museum of Contemporary Art receives general operating support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Producers Council, and members of the New Museum.

Produced by the Publications Department of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Hal Kugeler, Director; Michael Sittenfeld, Associate Director; and Kari Dahlgren, Editor.

Edited by Michael Sittenfeld

Designed by Hal Kugeler

For Harry N. Abrams, Inc.:
Diana Murphy, Senior Editor

Printed in Belgium by
Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon

Color separations by
Professional Graphics
Rockford, Illinois

ISBN 0-8109-4228-3
(Abrams: hardcover)

ISBN 0-933856-69-5
(Museum: softcover)

Library of Congress Catalog
Number: 00-109050

The hardcover edition of this catalogue is distributed in 2001 by Harry N. Abrams, Incorporated, New York.

Harry N. Abrams, Inc.
100 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10011
www.abramsbooks.com



COVER
Drawing for the film
Felix in Exile
1994
Cat. no. 28

BACK COVER
Drawing for the film
History of the Main Complaint
1995–96
Cat. no. 46

PAGES i–1
Portage
2000
Collage

Directors' Foreword

Although his art has been influential in South Africa for more than fifteen years, William Kentridge first gained widespread critical attention in 1997, when he was included in *Documenta X* in Kassel, Germany, as well as in the Johannesburg and Havana Biennials. Since then, he has exhibited in a range of international venues, and a retrospective of his films and drawings toured European museums in 1997–98. Until now, however, his work has not been seen in depth in the United States, so it is especially rewarding to be able to join forces to organize the first full-scale exhibition of Kentridge's art here.

Kentridge is an exceptional artist whose career spans decades. Due to the growing influence of film and media-based art, it is especially important to acknowledge his seminal role in this history. In addition, Kentridge's groundbreaking work in theater and opera, for which he has received considerable international acclaim, points to a thoroughly interdisciplinary fusion that has been achieved by few artists today. In recognition of the increasingly global dimension of artistic production, it is a unique privilege to be able to share with American audiences the work of the first South African artist to gain international recognition in the postapartheid era.

Because of events in recent history, it is difficult to separate William Kentridge's work from his national background. Born in Johannesburg, where he continues to live and work, Kentridge has been politically and socially active throughout his life. It would be a mistake, however, to search for explicit political messages in Kentridge's films and drawings. While making unambiguous reference to the harsh realities and history of his homeland, Kentridge's poetic and haunting work transcends the complex problems of South Africa to address the human condition.

We are honored that the exhibition will travel to the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, so that audiences from diverse regions of the country will have the opportunity to experience Kentridge's unique contribution to the art of our time. In addition, we are extremely pleased that the exhibition will travel to the South African National Gallery, Cape Town, making it the artist's first full retrospective in his homeland. We thank Philip Morris Companies for helping support this tour.

An exhibition of this magnitude is not possible without the hard work and dedication of many individuals who gave so generously to ensure its success. We express our gratitude to the lenders who have agreed to part with their cherished works for two years and to the museum team, in particular co-curators Neal Benezra, Staci Boris, and Dan Cameron.

Finally, we are especially indebted to William Kentridge himself, not only for the generosity and graciousness that are hallmarks of his character, and which have been vital for the realization of this project, but for his uniquely evocative way of viewing the world.

Lisa Phillips
The Henry Luce III Director
New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York

Robert Fitzpatrick
The Pritzker Director
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago

Dancing Man
1998
Cat. no. 57

Contemporary Arts Museum

Winter
2002



Calendar

The Brown Foundation Gallery

William Kentridge

March 2 - June 2, 2002

Perspectives Gallery

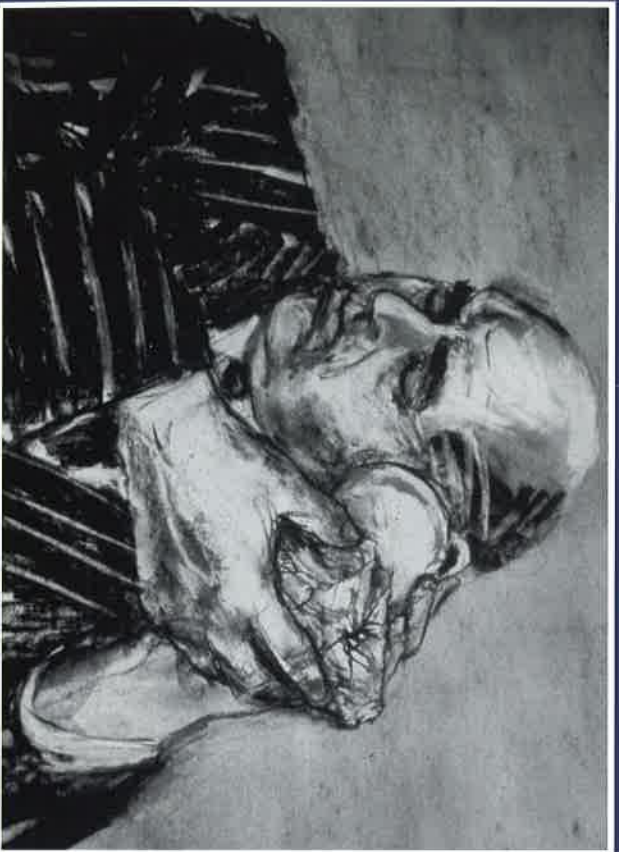
Bill Lundberg:

Syntax of Illusion

December 14, 2001 - March 17, 2002

Christine Borland

March 22 - June 23, 2002



William Kentridge

March 2 – June 2, 2002
 Exhibition Preview
 Friday, March 1, 2002
 9:00 – 11:00 p.m.

The first American retrospective of internationally acclaimed South African artist William Kentridge will be on view through June 2, 2002. Known for expressing the complex political and historical realities of his homeland, Kentridge's poetic and haunting work transcends the problems of South Africa to address the universality of the human condition. The exhibition will feature 11 animated films created by Kentridge over a ten year period, together with over 60 drawings, 2 sculptural installations, and video documentation of theater and opera productions designed and scripted by the artist.

At the core of the exhibition are Kentridge's animated films that include *Johannesburg, 2nd Greatest City After Paris*, 1989, *Weighing...and Wanting*, 1997–98, and *Stereoscope*, 1999. Based on vigorous black-and-white charcoal drawings frequently enhanced by strokes of red or blue pastel, Kentridge's short animations chronicle the experiences of Soho Eckstein, the pin-stripe-suited factory owner whose guilt-laden memory characterizes one aspect of contemporary South Africa and his alter ego, Felix Teitlebaum, a thoughtful artist who competes for the attentions of Soho's wife. The characters navigate a hypnotic vortex of civil strife, social inequity, and industrial pillage. Images of tenderness alternate with violence and fantasy as Soho and Felix explore the interrelation of identity, memory, guilt, and forgiveness against the backdrop of a decimated landscape.



William Kentridge, Still from the film *Shadow Procession*, 1999, 35mm film transferred to video and DVD, 7 minutes

William Kentridge is co-organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, and the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York. The Contemporary Arts Museum is the only southwest venue on the exhibition's tour. *William Kentridge* will also travel to the Los Angeles County Museum of Arts and finally to the South African National Gallery, Cape Town. The exhibition is accompanied by a 176-page, illustrated catalogue published in association with Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Exhibition curators Dan Cameron of the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; Staci Boris of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and Neal Benezra of The Art Institute of Chicago, along with Lynn Cooke, Curator, Dia Center for the Arts, New York and Ari Sitas, Professor of Social Studies, University of Natal, Durban, contributed essays to the catalogue.



William Kentridge, *Hunting the Spurwinged Goose*, 1995–96. From the series *Colonial Landscapes*, Charcoal and pastel on paper, 47 1/4 x 63 inches, Private Collection, Johannesburg



William Kentridge, *Felix in Pool with Megaphone*, 1998–99. Drawing for the film *Stereoscope*, Charcoal and pastel on paper, 31 1/2 x 48 1/2 inches, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution. Joseph H. Hirshhorn Purchase Fund, 1999

Each film, which varies in length from three to eight minutes, vividly illustrates Kentridge's complex drawing process. The artist develops each sequence by photographing hundreds of modifications, additions, and erasures into a singular visual experience. Throughout the exhibition, substantive groupings of Kentridge's "drawings for projection" are presented with corresponding films.

The artist's most recent work is represented by *Medicine Chest*, 2001, a sculptural installation that funnels film images through a mirrored medicine cabinet. Created especially for the exhibition, the installation underscores the theatricality of Kentridge's imagery and exemplifies the interdisciplinary fusion unique to his work.

Kentridge's theater projects, which are shown as video excerpts in the exhibition, include *Faustus in Africa*, 1995, a version of Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe's celebrated story; *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse*, 1998, an adaptation of Claudio Monteverdi's 1641 opera based on Homer's epic; and *Ubu and the Truth Commission*, 1997 in which Alfred Jarry's satire about a ridiculous but deadly despot signifies the South African process of reconciling the legacy of apartheid.

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The national and international tours of *William Kentridge* are sponsored by



The presentation of the exhibition at the Contemporary Arts Museum has been made possible by grants from Philip Morris Companies Inc., Union Pacific Railroad, and the Contemporary Arts Museum's Major Exhibition Fund patrons, benefactors, and donors listed to the right.



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