

ANNANDALE GALLERIES

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE

Biography

William Kentridge, widely considered by many to be one of the most important artists to emerge worldwide in the last decade was born in Johannesburg in 1955 where he continues to live and work today. He studied politics and African studies at University of Witwatersrand and theatre in Paris.

In the last 18 months, Kentridge's work has been seen at The Metropolitan Opera in New York, La Scala in Milan, MoMA New York, the Albertina Museum in Vienna, the Louvre and Jeu de Paume in Paris. In November last year he received the Kyoto Prize for lifetime achievement in Arts and Philosophy, and in 2011 was elected as an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and received the degree of Doctor of Literature honoris causa from the University of London.

The retrospective exhibition *William Kentridge: Five Themes* was seen in the U.S. curated by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and toured extensively. Notably for Australians this huge exhibition will be presented in 2012 at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI), Melbourne. The Opening is Wednesday March 7th and the Annandale exhibition has been timed to coincide. Kentridge's production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (first staged at La Monnaie in Brussels in 2005, and since then seen in New York, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and at Festival d'Aix, was presented at La Scala in Milan earlier this year. His acclaimed presentation of Shostakovich's *The Nose* at the Metropolitan Opera (New York) in May 2010 traveled this year to Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, and the Opéra National de Lyon, France.

William Kentridge's work has been exhibited widely throughout the world. He has received a number of honorary doctorates and other prestigious awards for his contributions to contemporary art. His recent solo exhibitions, apart from the 2009-2012 Five Themes tour, include most recently William Kentridge: Carnets d'Egypte at the Louvre Museum, Paris (2010) in which he re-explored the world of ancient Egypt and the Napoleonic campaigns of the late 18th century through drawing and film placed in relationship to the museum's collection. In addition, last year brought two exhibitions in Japan at Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto and National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (2010). In March and April of this year Kentridge will present the Norton lectures at Harvard.

Current projects include; *Dancing With Dada*, a theatre piece that premiered in Johannesburg in September and will be shown at the Avignon festival in 2012 and the related Refusal Of Time for Documenta XIII in June. A good deal of the material in the current Annandale exhibition relates to these works. Exhibitions at Annandale Galleries including *Eidophusikon – seven colonial landscapes and drawings from Faustus in Africa* 1996, *Procession* 2000, *Selected Graphics* 2002, *William Kentridge* 2004 (with full catalogue) and *Telegrams From The Nose* (full catalogue). Kentridge was the officially featured artist at the Melbourne Art Fair in 2002 where Annandale staged a solo show and the film *Shadow Procession*. He was a featured artist at the 2008 Sydney Biennale where he had a multi-screen video installation on Cockatoo Island.

William Kentridge maintains a close affinity with Australia and has family here. His work appears in all State galleries in some depth except Darwin including the National Gallery of Australia in addition to public and private collections around the world too numerous to list here. This is his seventh solo exhibition at Annandale Galleries.

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5 Solo Exhibitions

- 2001–3 Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, *William Kentridge*, 28 February-13 May 2001 (touring to New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 3 June-16 September 2001; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 20 October 2001 – 20 January 2002; Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, 1 March-5 May 2002; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles 21 July-6 October 2002; South African National Gallery, Cape Town 7 December 2002 - 23 March 2003)
- 2004–5 Castello di Rivoli, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli, Italy, *William Kentridge*, January 7 – February 29, (touring K20 K21, Düsseldorf; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal, Montréal; Johannesburg 1st July – 31st October 2005)
- 2006 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, *William Kentridge: 7 Fragments for George Melies*, 24 February - 21 May
- 2010 *William Kentridge: Carnets D'Egypte*, Louvre Paris
- 2009-12 *William Kentridge: Five Themes*, San Francisco Museum of Art and touring to Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, Museum of Modern Art NY, Albertina Vienna, Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Australian Museum for the Moving Image (ACMI) Melbourne March-June

5 Group Exhibitions

- 1997 Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, *Documenta X*, June 21 – September 28
- 2002 Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany, *Documenta XI, The Divine Comedy* (with Goya & Buster Keaton) Art Gallery WA Perth touring to Vancouver
- 2005 51st Venice Biennale, Italian Pavilion, *The Experience of Art* 12 June - 6 November
- 2008 Sydney Biennale including performance *I Am Not Me The Horse Is Not Mine*
- 2012 *Documenta XIII*, Kassel, Germany, *The Refusal of Time*

5 Works

- 1989-03 9 *Soho Eckstein Films*, 1989 to 2003 (*Johannesburg*, *2nd Greatest City after Paris*, 1989; *Monument*, 1990; *Mine*, 1990 *Sobriety, Obesity & Growing Old*, 1991; *Felix in Exile*, 1994; *History of the Main Complaint*, 1996; *Weighing and Wanting*, 1998; *Stereoscope*, 1999; *Tide Table*, 2003)
- 2004 *Shadow Quartet* 4 bronze sculptures circa 2.5 metres commissioned by the Art Gallery of Western Australia
- 2005 *The Magic Flute* opera directed by William Kentridge, Theatre de la Monnaie, Brussels and touring
- 2010 *The Nose* full scale opera directed by William Kentridge premier at Metropolitan Opera, NY, Festival of Aix, Opera house, Lyon
- 2011 *Dancing With Dada* live theatre piece written and directed by William Kentridge, premier September 16-18, Johannesburg

5 Publications

- 2001 William Kentridge, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 2001 (catalogue)
- 2004 *William Kentridge* Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev (ed.), Jane Taylor; William Kentridge, Castello di Rivoli, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli-Turin; Skira Editore, Milan, (catalogue)
- 2007 *William Kentridge: What Will Come*, Stadel Museum, Frankfurt am Main, Kunsthalle, Bremen (catalogue)
- 2009 *Five Themes* hardcover 263 page exhibition catalogue w/DVD
- 2010 William Kentridge: *Trace*, Museum of Modern Art New York

5 Awards

- 2000 *Carnegie Prize*, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh
- 2008 *Oscar Kokoschka Award*, Vienna
- 2011 *Kyoto Prize* for contributions to the arts & Philosophy
- 2011 elected honorary member of the *American Academy of Arts and Letters*
- 2004–11 *HONOURARY DOCTORATES*; Doctor of Literature, honoris causa, University of London 2011, Royal College of Art, London 2010, Rhodes University, Grahamstown South Africa 2008, Honorary Doctorate University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg 2004

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Quotes by the Artist

There are a set of minimal, banal actions that Dada and I have been doing on the stage. There are certain big themes that we want to undo, unsay ... Art is about anti-entropy – on Dancing With Dada theatre production – 2011

Everything is provisional in my art: there are no absolutes, no answers. I'm just trying to say: "Wake up and look what is going on around you" ... From political oppression to democracy, South Africa has provided me with an important lens through which to understand the world ... but every society is unbalanced and in need of redress. We should never take our place in the world for granted. - 2009

Over the last thirty-five years, printmaking has been close to the centre of the work I have done. Prints have never been a side journey or in the margins. – 2009

All fact is an abstraction of something that is inherently moving and changing. There is a sense in which animation deeply connects to my sense of the world as provisional. Whatever is there is liable to change. Certainties can disappear. Emotions felt so unbelievably strongly don't necessarily endure: they shift and change. – 2009

Everything can be saved. Everything is provisional. A prior action is rescued by that which follows. A drawing abandoned is revived by the next drawing ... The films of Soho Eckstein and Felix Teitlebaum were all made with the principle of NO SCRIPT, NO STORYBOARD. – 2008

I cast a wide net and haul it in ... Some of my works start as theatre or videos, turn into drawings, then film and back to video to projection, to photographs, to photogravures – 2007

I am wary of advice. But more than that I am wary of the certainty that lies behind most advice. I am mistrustful of certainty. Show me a certainty and I will show you a policeman with a sjambok standing behind it – the artist recalling being told to focus on 'one medium such as painting' in his early days - 2007

And what are the worst nightmares that art dealers experience? (Lunch conversation with Bill Gregory) - 2007

... This awareness of how we construct meaning, and this inescapable need to make sense of shapes, seems to me very central, indeed essential, to what it means to be alive – to live in the world with open eyes – 2005

Johannesburg has a very rough and brutal centre, but lush leafy suburbs that spread out from that point. My actual studio is not in the centre of town but in a garden. My view from the studio is not urban streets but a mass of trees – 2004

... Does all this come from what was immediately at hand or possible with low to medium technology? Is our work so much determined by current simple technical possibility? I raise my hand guilty as charged on this count – 2003

... I remember reading a description of someone looking at an old photograph of himself and him feeling, "I am so sorry. I was supposed to look after you. But along the way I made some bad decisions and in the end turned you into me" - 2003

White Guilt come home – White guilt is much maligned. Its most dominant feature is its rarity. It exists in small drops taken at infrequent intervals and its effects do not last long. – 1986

That's when it was explained to me that I was unemployable ... And I decided, sink or swim, I was going to be an artist ... There was no epiphany. Rather a long and painful time of failure. Failure to paint, failure to be an actor. I was reduced to drawing. It was the only thing I could do. – Kentridge on his early days – mid 1980's

I am interested in political art, that is to say an art of ambiguity, contradiction, uncompleted gestures and certain endings – an art (and a politics) in which optimism is kept in check and nihilism at bay - undated