



Large  
Print

# Kentridge

Main Galleries

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# Kentridge

Main Galleries

24 September – 11 December 2022

## Contents

**Gallery 1** Page 5

**Gallery 2** Page 11

**Large Weston  
Room** Page 22

**Small Weston  
Room** Page 25

**Gallery 3** Page 26

**Gallery 4** Page 31

**Gallery 5** Page 36

**Gallery 6** Page 45

**Central Hall** Page 57

**Gallery 7** Page 61

**Gallery 8** Page 65

**Gallery 9** Page 68

**Lecture  
Room** Page 73

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# Vestibule

## **Introduction to the exhibition**

The largest exhibition of the artist's work in the UK to date, 'William Kentridge' leads the visitor on an experiential voyage through the last 40 years of his extraordinary career.

William Kentridge was born in Johannesburg in 1955. After graduating in Political Science and African Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in 1976, he spent two years studying at the Johannesburg Art Foundation before going to Paris in 1981 to study mime and theatre at the L'Ecole internationale de théâtre Jacques Lecoq. Returning to Johannesburg, he continued to work in theatre but also began to concentrate on his art, which included suites of etchings and linocuts, large-scale charcoal drawings and short films.

By the late 1980s his work was gaining recognition outside South Africa, a process accelerated by the end of apartheid and the reopening of the country, which had long been internationally regarded as a pariah state. Since the 1990s, his art and work for stage has been seen in museums, galleries, theatres and opera houses across the world.

While always regarding drawing as his primary practice, Kentridge continues to make prints, sculptures, tapestries and films, and to work on theatrical projects and lectures. His work in theatre has expanded to include both directing operas and creating new operatic pieces in collaboration with composers and performers. Lectures and performances by the artist will take place during the run of the exhibition as part of the public programme.

In 2016 he established the Centre for the Less Good Idea in Maboneng, Johannesburg. This studio laboratory space holds two seasons each year; to date over 500 artists have been involved and 100 individual works or productions created. The Centre will have a special residency at the Barbican to coincide with this exhibition.

Kentridge continues to live and work in Johannesburg.



# Gallery One

## Early Drawings

In the 1980s Kentridge was engaged in theatre and television production in Johannesburg. He directed and acted in plays as well as designing theatre posters and backdrops for the Junction Avenue Theatre Company, Market Theatre Company and Nunnery Theatre. It was at this time he began to produce large-scale charcoal and pastel drawings.

From single-sheet drawings, these works evolved into diptychs and triptychs. The subjects focus on daily life, the urban environment and the distinctive landscape in and around Johannesburg. In these drawings, Kentridge uses symbolism to present the realities of South Africa under apartheid.

Wild animals, including hyenas, warthogs and cheetahs, represent government officials; a burning tyre refers to “necklacing”, a brutal form of summary extrajudicial execution exacted on black South Africans suspected of colluding with the authorities. Generating distrust within communities was a powerful weapon of control used by the South African authorities.

The drawing ‘Casspirs Full of Love’ refers to the armoured people-carriers favoured by the South African Defence Force to patrol townships such as Soweto, where Black South Africans were forcibly relocated, and the vehicles became synonymous with state violence.

Brutality and threat are embedded in many of these drawings, juxtaposed with bourgeois White South Africans indulging their extravagant lifestyles, as if unaware of the poverty and violence that surrounds them.

The triptychs portray a single scene from multiple viewpoints, positioning the viewer as a witness to an unfolding drama rather like being in the audience of a theatre where no-one shares the same view of the play enacted on stage.

## **List of works (clockwise in order of hang)**

# **Untitled (Woman and Hyena)**

1986

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Private collection

# **Untitled (Warthog and Necklace)**

1985

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Private collection

# **Stadium**

1987

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Sanlam Art Collection, Belville

# **Spartan / Isando**

1988

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Southern: a Contemporary Collection, South Africa

# **Reservoir**

1988

Charcoal, pastel and gouache on paper

Southern: a Contemporary Collection, South Africa

# **Casspirs Full of Love (Study III)**

1988–89

Encaustic on paper

Robert Loder Collection

# **The Conservationist's Ball**

1985

Charcoal, pastel and gouache on paper

Rembrandt van Rijn Art Foundation collection

Rupert Museum, Stellenbosch, South Africa

# **Koevoet (Dreams of Europe)**

1984–85

Charcoal on paper

Robert Loder Collection

# **Embarkation**

1987

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Standard Bank Corporate Art Collection, South Africa

# Gallery Two

## Drawings for Projection

In 1989 Kentridge began to create short animated films in a process of successive charcoal drawing and erasure – tangentially autobiographical works centred on Johannesburg and following the life of Soho Eckstein, a ruthless property tycoon. To date there are eleven of these ‘Drawings for Projection’, the most recent of which was completed in 2020. Five of them can be seen in the adjoining gallery.

The films begin with a charcoal drawing on the studio wall. This is photographed using a movie camera mounted on a tripod a few feet away. Kentridge returns to the drawing and adds to it, sometimes erasing previous marks, before walking back to the camera and taking another frame.

This process continues until the film sequence is 'complete' and another one is started. Thus the animation – created when individual frames are run in quick sequence – bears the changing marks and erasures of the original drawing, leaving shadows that trace its progress. The walk between drawing and camera is also part of the process, allowing Kentridge to reflect on the evolution of the drawing. The subtle changes develop organically and each drawing may have been added to many times before it is concluded.

In this gallery a selection of final drawings from all eleven films allow the visitor to see how Kentridge's style and subject matter have developed over the last 30 years.



**List of works (clockwise in order of hang)**

# **Drawing for History of the Main Complaint (Private Ward)**

1996

Charcoal on paper

Courtesy the artist and private collection, South Africa

# **Drawing for Johannesburg, 2nd Greatest City After Paris**

1989

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Private collection

# **Drawing for Monument**

1990

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Courtesy the artist and private collection, South Africa

## **Salon Hang Captions**

### **1. Drawing for Other Faces**

2011

Charcoal and coloured pencil on paper

Southern Collection, Johannesburg

### **2. Drawing for Monument**

1990

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Courtesy the artist and private collection, South Africa

# **3. Drawing for Weighing... and Wanting**

1997

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Southern: a Contemporary Collection, South Africa

# **4. Drawing for Johannesburg, 2nd Greatest City After Paris**

1989

Charcoal on paper

Vanessa Branson

# **5. Drawing for Other Faces**

2011

Charcoal and coloured pencil on paper

Private collection

# **6. Drawing for Sobriety, Obesity & Growing Old (Her Absence Filled the World)**

1991

Charcoal and pastel on paper

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **7. Drawing for Tide Table**

2003

Charcoal and coloured pencil on paper

Courtesy the artist and private lender

# **8. Drawing for Monument**

1990

Charcoal on paper

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **9. Drawing for Felix in Exile (Nandi Lying Amongst the Newspapers)**

1994

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Private collection

# **10. Drawing for City Deep**

2019

Charcoal and red pencil on paper

Private collection

# **11. Drawing for Sobriety, Obesity & Growing Old**

1991

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Private collection

# **12. Drawing for Mine**

1991

Charcoal and pastel on paper

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **13. Drawing for History of the Main Complaint**

1996

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Courtesy the artist and Japie Claassens

# **14. Drawing for Felix in Exile**

1993

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Collection of Shelly Croock

# **15. Drawing for Stereoscope**

1998–99

Charcoal on paper

Collection of Sherry and Joel Mallin

# **16. Drawing for Other Faces**

2011

Charcoal and coloured pencil on paper

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

## **List of works (continued)**

# **Drawing for Other Faces**

2011

Charcoal and coloured pencil on paper

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **Drawing for City Deep**

2018

Charcoal and red pencil on paper

Private collection



# **Drawing for Stereoscope**

1998–99

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Courtesy the artist and private collection

# **Drawing for Tide Table**

2003

Charcoal and coloured pencil on paper

Kravis Collection, New York

# **Large Weston Room**

## **Ubu Tells the Truth**

In 1994 Nelson Mandela of the African National Congress (ANC) was elected President of South Africa. The following year, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, was established to help address the deep wounds left by apartheid.

Jane Taylor, a long-term collaborator with Kentridge, wrote 'Ubu and the Truth Commission', a play developed in collaboration with the Handspring Puppet Company (led by Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones), directed by Kentridge, and first performed in 1997 in the Laboratory of the Market Theatre, Johannesburg. The play was based on Alfred Jarry's absurdist drama 'Ubu Roi', first staged in Paris in 1896, entwined with testimony recorded by the TRC.

Kentridge's animated film, 'Ubu Tells the Truth', is constructed from archival footage and animation created for the stage production. Jarry's protagonist, Père Ubu, becomes Pa Ubu, a member of a police unit charged with controlling anti-state activities such as political protest or membership of an illegal organisation. His wife fears he is having an affair but is relieved to discover he is actually out detaining, torturing and murdering suspected activists instead.

The work is an exposition of the brutal and illegal tactics used by the South African Defence Force and South African Police during apartheid. The film is presented alongside a site-specific wall drawing by the artist. A suite of eight etchings of the same name is shown in the adjacent gallery, with drawing fragments used in making the film.

**List of works (clockwise in order of hang)**

# **Ubu Tells the Truth**

1997

35 mm film, 16 mm archival film and documentary  
photographs transferred to video, 8 minutes

Editing: Catherine Meyburgh; music: Warrick Sony and  
Brendan Jury

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **Drawings for 'Ubu Tells the Truth' (In situ wall drawing)**

2022

Charcoal and chalk

# **Small Weston Room**

**List of works (clockwise in order of hang)**

## **Drawing fragments for 'Ubu Tells the Truth'**

1997

Chalk on black paper

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

## **Ubu Tells the Truth**

1996–97

Suite of eight etchings with soft ground, aquatint and drypoint on paper, edition of 50

Printed by Malcolm Christian, The Caversham Press,  
Lidgetton, South Africa

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# Gallery Three

## Soho Films

Kentridge started the film series 'Drawings for Projection' in 1989 with 'Johannesburg, 2nd Greatest City After Paris', the first of eleven animated films created over a period of 30 years; the most recent is 'City Deep' (2020). Both these films, as well as 'Monument' (1990), 'Tide Table' (2003) and 'Other Faces' (2011), can be seen in this gallery.

The remnants of erased marks within the drawings (as seen in the previous gallery) dominate the animations, creating images in which scars or memories of erased lines slowly fade but remain visible. The viewer, drawn to the haunting shadows that these erasures cause as the drama unfolds, often at speed, is left to wonder what is real and what is not.

The protagonist, Soho Eckstein, is an invented, semi-autobiographical character, and a tension is created between him and Johannesburg, the city in which he lives and maintains his various business interests.

As the narrative develops across the series of films, it acknowledges the anxieties Kentridge wrestles with as an artist. Set to powerful musical scores, the films morph between scenes, creating a mesmerising animation with unexpected twists and different pacing used throughout. Reflections on the challenges of daily life in the city merge with feelings of love and loss.

By using drawing as the principal story-telling mechanism, Kentridge gives free rein to his imagination, expressing his love of music, cinema and literature to create compelling dream-like dramas set in Johannesburg, a city he calls home with which he maintains a long and complex relationship.

## **List of works (clockwise in order of hang)**

# **City Deep**

2020

HD film, 9 minutes, 41 seconds

Editing: Janus Fouché; music: Imimoya (spirits):  
composed by Nhlanhla Mahlangu; works for prepared  
piano: composed by John Cage, performed by Markus  
Hinterhauser

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **Tide Table**

2003

35 mm film transferred to video, 8 minutes 50 seconds

Editing: Catherine Meyburgh; music: Likambo Ya Ngana  
by Franco et le TP O.K. Jazz; singers from the Market  
Theatre Laboratory; sound: Wilbert Schübel

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg



# Monument

1990

16 mm film transferred to video, 3 minutes 11 seconds

Editing: Angus Gibson; sound: Catherine Meyburgh;  
music: Edward Jordan

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# Other Faces

2011

35 mm film transferred to video, 9 minutes 45 seconds

Editing: Catherine Meyburgh; music and sound design:  
Philip Miller; sound mix: Wilbert Schübel and Gavan  
Eckhart

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **Johannesburg, 2nd Greatest City after Paris**

1989

16 mm film transferred to video, 8 minutes 2 seconds

Editing: Angus Gibson; Sound: Warwick Sony with music  
by Duke Ellington; choral music

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# Gallery Four

## Tapestries

In 2001 Kentridge began making tapestries in collaboration with the Stephens Tapestry Studio, run by the mother and daughter team of Marguerite (Mags) Stephens and Tina Weavind.

The tapestries are woven from mohair harvested from Angora goats farmed in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, and in Lesotho. The raw mohair is processed and dyed in northern Eswatini before being transferred to the looms at the studio in Diepsloot, on the outskirts of Johannesburg.

Here a preparatory drawing created by Kentridge – usually a collage, an example of which can be seen in this gallery – is printed to the dimensions of the tapestry and set behind the loom for the weavers to work with. Depending on the size and complexity of the design, the tapestry, finally lined with a protective fabric backing, can take up to seven months to complete.

'Carte Hypsométrique de l'Empire Russe', the largest tapestry made by Kentridge and the Stephens Tapestry Studio to date, was specially made for this gallery. The central image of the boat is based on a drawing, 'Migrants and Prisoners', that Kentridge conceived for 'Triumphs and Laments', a monumental frieze he created on the banks of the River Tiber in Rome in 2016.

The image of migrants undertaking such perilous journeys in search of better lives serves as a reminder of the myriad challenges that continue to confront the world we live in. The finished tapestries, with their multiple images, mirror the animated backdrops that Kentridge produces for his stage productions and performances. Whereas in theatre the images are constantly shifting and choreographed, here the tapestries are images frozen in time.

**List of works (clockwise in order of hang)**

# **Preparatory drawing for Carte Hypsométrique de l'Empire Russe**

2020

Laser-cut paper, coloured pencil and collage on found paper

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **Mechanic**

2021

Hand-woven mohair tapestry

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **Spinner**

2021

Hand-woven mohair tapestry

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **Carte Hypsométrique de l'Empire Russe**

2022

Hand-woven mohair tapestry

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

## **Orator**

2021

Hand-woven mohair tapestry

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

## **Colleoni**

2021

Hand-woven mohair tapestry

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# France – North- Western Section

2022

Hand-woven mohair tapestry

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# Gallery Five

## Landscapes

During the mid-1990s Kentridge produced 'Colonial Landscapes', a series of drawings based on the two volumes of 'Africa and Its Exploration: As Told by Its Explorers'. Published in London in 1891, this collected the accounts of explorers such as Richard Burton, David Livingstone and Mungo Park with more than 500 plates reflecting the Europeans' belief in their cultural superiority.

At the Berlin Conference of 1884–85, Africa and its peoples had been divided up between European powers including Germany, France, Great Britain and Belgium. Colonial control was imposed, indigenous inhabitants subjugated and natural resources appropriated, resistance being brutally repressed.



Kentridge's images of waterfalls and landscapes mimic colonial representations of Africa but lines, posts, and other marks disrupt the idyllic scenes and suggest processes of surveying and mapping as Europeans attempt to possess and control the landscape. These point to the much darker, exploitative aspects of colonial rule and exploration, a suggestion absent from the original images.

Alongside are landscapes that were created for the performance piece 'The Head & the Load' (2018). Commissioned to commemorate the centenary of the end of World War I, it focussed on the hundreds of thousands of unrecorded Black Africans conscripted as carriers for the European armies. Kentridge highlights this historic injustice, shining a light on the individuals whose contribution to the war effort was erased from the historical record.

Two of Kentridge's 'Drawing Lessons' are presented in this gallery. This on-going series of more than 33 films began in 2009. Like many in the series, the films shown here, set in his studio, present him engaged in animated, often humorous, conversations with himself about his work.

**List of works (clockwise in order of hang)**

# **Drawing for The Head & the Load, triptych**

2017–18

Charcoal, red pencil and pastel on paper

Private collection

# **Hunting the Spurwinged Goose (Colonial Landscapes)**

1995–96

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Juan Varez Collection, Madrid

# **Drawing Lesson 17 (A Lesson in Lethargy)**

2010

HD video, 5 minutes 28 seconds

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **Drawing Lesson 47 (An Interview with the Artist)**

2010

HD video, 4 minutes 47 seconds

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

These videos will follow each other on a loop

# **Drawing for The Head & the Load (Mitteländisches Meer)**

2018

Charcoal, red pencil, digital print and paper collage

Courtesy the artist and private collection, South Africa

# **Drawing for The Head & the Load (Afrika- Africa-L'Afrique)**

2018

Charcoal, red pencil, digital print and paper collage

Love, Luck and Faith Foundation, New York

# **Drawing for The Head & the Load (O, The Trumpets We Used to Blow)**

2018

Charcoal, red pencil and text on paper

Evan and Natalie Hoff

# **Falls Looking Upstream (Colonial Landscapes)**

1995

Charcoal and pastel on paper

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **Falls Looking Upstream (Colonial Landscapes)**

1995

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Southern: a Contemporary Collection, South Africa

# **Water Feature (Colonial Landscapes)**

1995–96

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Goldman Sachs International

# **The Pool Ahead**

2018

Charcoal and red pencil on paper

Private collection

# **Victoria Falls (Colonial Landscapes)**

1996

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Juan Varez Collection, Madrid

# **Untitled (Colonial Landscapes)**

1995

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Courtesy the artist and private collection

# **Drawing for The Head & the Load (Tondo III)**

2018

Collage of drawings, printed text and red pencil on paper

Marian Goodman Gallery, New York



# Gallery Six

## Studio

Nestled in the garden of his family home in Johannesburg is Kentridge's 'drawing studio'. Kentridge has often spoken about drawing as his starting point and it is in this environment that most of his creative work takes shape. Drawings will metamorphose into sculpture, tapestry, film and large-scale productions.

Through charcoal and Indian ink – which although it is applied with brushes he still describes as a drawing medium – Kentridge explores and populates the page, often building composite images across large numbers of found pages from old books and ledgers. His fascination with obsolete technological innovations like the stereoscope, a device from the 1830s - part of a larger investigation of how we construct our world rather than passively receiving it - allows some of these drawings to be seen in three-dimensions.

This gallery captures activity in the studio, mirroring the way works are hung there, allowing time for the artist to reflect on them, or as references for larger pieces. Those on view here offer glimpses of the processes Kentridge uses, including previously unseen preparatory drawings and experimental test proofs of prints.

The short film 'De Como Não Fui Ministro D'Estado' ('Of how I did not become a minister of state'), based on the novel 'The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas' (1881) by celebrated Brazilian author Machado de Assis, is shown here. Kentridge paces across the pages of the book, deep in thought, echoing the way he works in the studio.

Also in this gallery are examples from the artist's 'Blue Rubrics and Red Rubrics' series. These drawings capture phrases that Kentridge records from various sources – African proverbs, poetry and literature, often in translation. Others are his own phrases, which emerge from the creative processes of the studio.

## List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

### **Red Rubrics**

Watercolour on found paper

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

### **Blue Rubrics**

Pure Afghan lapis lazuli watercolour pigment on found paper

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

### **Drawing for The Refusal of Time (Unbind the Artist)**

2010

Charcoal, coloured pencil and poster paint on paper

Private collection

# **Negotiations Minuet**

1989

Charcoal on paper

Robert Loder Collection

# **Mantegna**

2016

Woodcut printed from twelve woodblocks onto 21 sheets of various sizes of Somerset Soft paper

Edition of twelve plus four artist's proofs

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **Little Morals: Negotiations Begin**

1991

Sugarlift, hand-stamped texts and charcoal, unique impression, 1st state

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **Little Morals: Negotiations Begin**

Etching with sugarlift, drypoint and hand-stamped texts,  
unique impression, 2nd state

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **Little Morals: Negotiations Begin**

Etching with sugarlift and drypoint, unique impression,  
3rd and final state

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **Little Morals: Negotiations Begin**

Etching with sugarlift and drypoint, unique impression with  
ink wash, 3rd and final state

Private collection

# **Responsible Hedonism (preparatory drawing)**

1986

Ink wash and pencil on paper

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **Lord Mayor of Derby Road (preparatory drawing)**

1986

Ink wash and pencil on paper

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **Coda, Insider Trading (preparatory drawing)**

1986

Ink wash and pencil on paper

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **Industry and Idleness**

1986–87

Suite of eight etchings in an edition of 30, and one unpublished print, sugarlift aquatint, drypoint and engraving on paper

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **De Como Não Fui Ministro D'Estado**

2012

HD film, 2 minutes 2 seconds

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

## **Translation of De Como Não Fui Ministro D'Estado**

Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis

Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas

Posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas

First published Rio de Janeiro, 1881

## **De como não foi ministro d'estado**

How I did not become a Minister of State

## **Ao leitor**

To the reader

## **Poemas que eu conhecia**

Poems that I knew

## **A lua, a lua, a lua**

The moon, the moon, the moon

## **Comtando que**

Provided that

## **Esta manhã eu estive aqui**

This morning I was here

## **Do trapezio e outras coisas**

Of the trapeze and other things

## **O autor hesita**

The author hesitates

## **Razão contra sandice**

Reason against folly



## **Reflexão cordial**

Cordial reflection

## **Precisando deixar ir**

Needing to let go

## **Querendo segurar**

Wanting to hold

## **O senão do livro**

The defect of the book

## **Passos em segunda mão**

Second hand footsteps

## **O prisioneiro do livro**

The prisoner of the book

## **Que escapou a Aristotoles**

What escaped Aristotle

## **A proposito de botas**

With regard to boots

## **Quer entrar na dança?**

Do you want to join in the dance?

**Não, e.**

Isn't it

## **O cheiro dos livros antigos**

The smell of old books

**Fim**

End

## List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

# Procession

1999–2000

Bronze

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# Underweysung der Messung (Larder)

2007

Stereoscopic photogravure (reproduction print)

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# Tummelplatz (Rhino)

2016

Stereoscopic photogravure (reproduction print)

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# Portage

2000

Chine-collé of figures in black paper on found encyclopaedia pages, mounted on paper and folded as a leporello, 27.5 x 423 cm, eighteen panels

Courtesy the artist and Goodman Gallery

# William Kentridge, Gerhard Marx

Fire Walker, 2009

Rusted steel

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# Central Hall

## **Black Box / Chambre Noire**

'Black Box / Chambre Noire' is a miniature mechanised theatre that works like an automaton. Complete with mechanical puppets that move in and out of the wings, as well as drawings and an animated-film sequence, it mirrors the large-scale productions for which Kentridge is renowned.

The title recalls a black-box theatre, typically a simple performance space with black walls, the chambre noire (dark chamber) that houses celluloid film inside a camera, as well as the black box used in airplanes to record and recover flight information. The black in the title also refers to the darkness of the period of European colonial rule in Africa, a deep and lasting stain on history.

At the Berlin Conference of 1884–85 the African continent was parcelled out between European nations without African representation, a process that led to the formation of modern political nation states and decades of exploitation and repressive, often segregated, rule.

'Black Box / Chambre Noire' examines the violent suppression of the Herrero and Nama peoples of South West Africa (modern-day Namibia) in 1908 by the 'Schutztruppe', the German colonial armed forces. This military campaign has been recognised as the first genocide of the twentieth century. In 2021 Germany formally apologised for its actions.

Please note the film contains historic footage of a hunter shooting a rhinoceros that visitors may find distressing.

'Black Box / Chambre Noire' will play once every hour, starting at 10:20am, with the final showing at 5:20pm. Running time is 22 minutes.

**List of works (clockwise in order of hang)**

# **Particular Collisions**

2013

Charcoal, pastel, coloured pencil and digital print on found paper

Private collection

# **Black Box / Chambre Noire**

2005

Animated 35 mm film transferred to video, projected front and back onto model theatre with drawings and mechanical puppets, 22 minutes

Musical composition: Philip Miller; musical recordings in Namibia: Minette Mans, Philip Miller; mechanical design: Jonas Lundquist and Chris-Waldo de Wet; programming for mechanical objects: Ronald Halgren and Janus Fouché; editing: Catherine Meyburgh; lighting: Ann-Charlotte Fogelström

Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark.  
Acquired with funding from The New Carlsberg Foundation

**Scenic canvas for  
'Black Box / Chambre  
Noire' (scaled-up  
reproduction of an  
original drawing by  
Kentridge)**

2022

Acrylic paint on canvas

painted by Anaïs Thomas



# Gallery seven

## Flowers

Kentridge has been making large-scale drawings of flowers for several years. The most recent, 'Oh To Believe in Another World', has been created especially for this exhibition. These are often very personal drawings, such as 'Enough of This Scandal', which reflects the domestic setting of his home, sometimes featuring flower arrangements sent to the artist or his family to commemorate special events.

Others, like 'Eat Bitterness', are related to projects, in this case Notes 'Towards a Model Opera', which can be seen in the adjacent gallery. Adopting the style of traditional Chinese paintings, Kentridge uses quotations from historical, philosophical and medical texts advocating the health benefits of certain plants.

These pithy sayings echo those of the 'Rubrics' displayed in the previous gallery, some of which, in turn, reference Mao-era maxims exhorting the people to make ever greater sacrifices in the collective interests of the nation.

Made using Chinese brushes and Indian ink, these free-flowing drawings usually cover several overlapping sheets of paper, which are secured to complete the image and held in place by drawing pins, as they are hung in Kentridge's studio.

In many cases they reflect other images or reference other artists, such as postcards of famous paintings like Edouard Manet's 'The Execution of Maximillian' (1867–68) or Félix Nadar's photographic portrait of Manet (c. 1867) in 'Oh To Believe in Another World'.

The impressive scale of these drawings can be overwhelming, dwarfing the viewer while amplifying the resonance of the flowers as gifts of personal importance.

**Lit of works (clockwise in order of hang)**

# **How Can One Be Warm Alone**

2022

Indian ink and pencil on found paper from The Century Dictionary: An Encyclopedic Lexicon of the English Language

Courtesy the artist and Goodman Gallery

# **Eat Bitterness**

2014

Indian ink on found paper

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery

# **Oh To Believe in Another World**

2022

Indian ink and red pencil on found paper

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **Enough of This Scandal**

2020

Indian ink on found paper

The Cross Steele Family Collection

# **Hold the Open Heart**

2015

Indian ink on found paper

Courtesy the artist and private collection, South Africa

# **The Execution of Maximilian**

2017

Indian ink, red pencil and torn paper

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery

# **Cat / Coffee Pot II**

2019

Painted steel

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# Gallery Eight

## Notes Towards a Model Opera

In China, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution under Chairman Mao Zedong took place between 1966 and 1976. Its aim was to accelerate development and to abandon bourgeois values while imposing Maoist thought. The brutal government-led campaign, involving the enforced relocation of people and the violent suppression of free thought, echoed strategies pursued in South Africa during apartheid.

Mao's 'Little Red Book', which contained directives and inspirational thoughts, disregarded the harsh reality confronting those living ordinary lives.

'Yangbanxi' (Model Operas), eight of which were created by Mao's wife Jiang Qing and performed as ballets as well as being adapted as films, were the only officially sanctioned state music permitted during the Cultural Revolution.

With strong nationalist themes and highly charged musical scores, ballets like 'The Red Detachment of Women' transformed peasants and soldiers into heroes of the revolution.

Kentridge's work refers tangentially to the current expansion of Chinese state interests, a form of economic colonialism, across Africa. In the film, the graceful ballerina dressed as a soldier and dancing with a rifle, transposed by Kentridge to South Africa, is an incongruous image.

Similarly, the Chinese campaign to eradicate the four 'pests' (mosquito, rat, fly and sparrow) during the Great Leap Forward (1958–62), is rendered tragically absurd in the film – millions of birds were killed in an orchestrated campaign, leaving the grain fields at the mercy of locusts and resulting in the Great Chinese Famine (1959–61), and the eventual reimportation of sparrows from the Soviet Union.

**List of works (clockwise in order of hang)**

# **Notes Towards a Model Opera**

**2015**

Three channel HD film installation

11 minutes, 14 seconds

Choreography and dancer: Dada Masilo; music composition and arrangement: Philip Miller; additional music composition: Johannes Serekeho, music performed by First St John Brass Band; video editing and construction: Žana Marovič, Janus Fouché; sound mix: Gavan Eckhart; costume design: Greta Goiris

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# Gallery Nine

## Trees

Recently, Kentridge has been using Chinese brushes and Indian ink to make large drawings of trees. Here these normally solitary trees come together to form a grove outside Sibyl, a film on view in the adjacent gallery.

These drawings relate to the film (and the chamber opera 'Waiting for the Sibyl') as, according to legend, it was on the leaves of trees that those seeking information about their future wrote questions for the Cumaean Sibyl. There is also a visual pun as the same word denotes leaves on a tree and pages in a book. This gallery could be seen as the place for visitors to compose their own questions for the Sibyl before they approach her abode in the next gallery.



The tree drawings are scattered with symbolism, often underscored by the short phrases placed across their surfaces, similar to the 'Rubrics' already seen in the exhibition. These phrases are extracted from a notebook in which Kentridge records snippets of poems that appeal to him as he reads. Unlike the flower drawings, the tree drawings are made on blank sheets of paper that are then mounted on canvas, so they can be folded up like old maps.

**List of works (clockwise in order of hang)**

# **An Argument Mired in Nostalgia**

2021

Indian ink on hemp and sisal Phumani paper, mounted onto raw cotton,

Marian Goodman Gallery

# **Finally Memory Yields**

2021

Indian ink on hemp and sisal Phumani paper, mounted onto raw cotton,

Marian Goodman Gallery

# **Not Everywhere But Anywhere**

2021

Indian ink on hemp and sisal Phumani paper, mounted onto raw cotton,

Marian Goodman Gallery

# **A Concealing Memory**

2021

Indian ink on hemp and sisal Phumani paper, mounted onto raw cotton

Courtesy the artist and Goodman Gallery

# **A Bird Shall Carry the Voice**

2020

Indian ink on hemp and sisal Phumani paper, mounted onto raw cotton,

The CR Oosthuizen Family Trust

# **The Unstable Landing Point of Desire**

2021

Indian ink, watercolour and collage on hemp and sisal Phumani paper, mounted onto raw cotton

Private collection, UK

# Comrade Tree

2020

Indian ink on hemp and sisal Phumani paper, mounted  
onto raw cotton

Private collection

# Lecture Room

## Waiting for the Sibyl

'Waiting for the Sibyl' is a chamber opera (an opera to be performed by a small group of musicians rather than a full orchestra) written by Kentridge with music composed by Nhlanhla Mahlangu and Kyle Shepherd. It was commissioned by the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome where it premiered in 2019.

Here, Kentridge, working with the set designer Sabine Theunissen, has specially created the setting for the short film Sibyl, a related but separate work, complete with original props from the stage production, along with puppets and costumes made by Greta Goiris.

This work is based on the myth of the Cumaean Sibyl, a priestess who oversaw the Apollonian oracle at Cumae, near Naples.

In Virgil's epic poem 'The Aeneid' (written between 29 and 19 BCE), the Sibyl presided over the entrance to Hades, the Underworld. At the cave opening people would leave questions about their fate – written on the leaves of trees – for the Sibyl to address.

She would dutifully write her answers on oak leaves and leave them to be collected at the cave entrance. However, the wind would lift the leaves, swirling them around the area in front of the cave, shuffling their order so questioners could not know to whom the answers applied; their fates were at hand, but tantalisingly impossible to locate.

Kentridge has transposed the setting to a twentieth-century office, emphasising the layers and complexities of state bureaucracy as means to categorise and control people as well as to thwart their ambitions, a key feature of apartheid. He also alludes to the modern-day Sibyl, the ubiquitous algorithm that knows more about what an individual wants or will do next than they do themselves.

## List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

# Sibyl

2022

HD film, 15 minutes, 59 seconds

Music composition: Nhlanhla Mahlangu, Kyle Shepherd;  
video editor: Žana Marović; sound: Gavan Eckhart

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# Theatre model and props for 'Waiting for the Sibyl'

2019–2022

Paper, cardboard, wood, steel, paint, found objects

Scenography: Sabine Theunissen; collapsing chairs  
engineered by Jonas Lundquist

William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg

# **Costumes and puppets for 'Waiting for the Sibyl'**

2019–2022

Designed by Greta Goiris

# **Documentary video footage of the making of 'Waiting for the Sibyl'**

2019

HD Video, 8 minutes



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