

William Kentridge | *Vertical Thinking*

17 November 2012 – 3 March 2013

curated by Giulia Ferracci | MAXXI Arte

MAXXI Arte, directed by Anna Mattiolo, presents *William Kentridge. Vertical Thinking*. The exhibition, curated by Giulia Ferracci, revolves around the installation ***The Refusal of Time***, created for Documenta 13 at Kassel and presented for the first time in Italy at MAXXI. Reconfigured for the spaces of the museum's Gallery 5, the powerful, embracing and evocative installation is an explosion of sound, images and shadows with at the centre a pulsing Leonardesque machine.

The work was born out of a lengthy reflection on the concept of time developed by Kentridge together with the physicist and historian of science Peter L. Galison. It has been produced in collaboration with the composer Philip Miller and with Catherine Meyburgh for the video processing and editing. The enthralling and eclectic South African dancer and choreographer Dada Masilo has curated the choreographies.

The point of departure is the idea of "standardised time", the way in which every day humanity measures time while losing any awareness that it is merely a convention. The work references the atmosphere of the 19th Century when increasing industrialisation led to a need to synchronize one's personal time with that of millions of other individuals. The reflection on time accompanies that on the traversing of the earth, following the various time zones and the times of sunrises and sunsets.

With *The Refusal of Time*, Kentridge has realised a grandiose piece: animated films with five-channel synchronous projections into which flow the magic of theatre, drawing, music, dance and film in a commingling and wealth of idioms typical of his works. In the films, shadow dancers interact with various instruments that reference the measuring of time: cylindrical megaphones, wheels, 19th Century clocks orchestrated by giant metronomes projected on the walls.

The spectator is completely immersed in the story which is both epic and fable-like and in which the shadows of the dancers chase one another and the artist himself appears and disappears through the space of imaginary maps.

Also on show at MAXXI are **14 previously unseen silk-screen prints**, including *Vertical Thinking* which provided the title for the exhibition. Then there are the preparatory sketches for *The Refusal of Time*, a **maquette** of the set for *Refuse the Hour* and **six works from the MAXXI Arte permanent collection**, the museum's pulsing heart. Among these, on show for the first time: *Flagellant*, 1996-1997, freely inspired by Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi*, a reflection on the theme of apartheid, *Cemetery with Cypressess*, 1998, inspired by *Il ritorno di Ulisse* by Claudio Monteverdi which sets the return of the Aechean hero in a Johannesburg hospital, *Untitled* (Large Drawing – Standing Man) from 2001 and the video *Zeno Writing* from 2002, inspired by Italo Svevo's famous character. Also on show are the great tapestry *North Pole Map* from 2003 that evokes the journey of life and the crossing of borders and the installation *Preparing the Flute* from 2004-2005, a model theatre that includes music and themes taken from Mozart's *Magic Flute*.

The exhibition ***Vertical Thinking*** is part of the **KENTRIDGE IN ROME** project, realised in synergy by **MAXXI, Fondazione Romaeuropa and Teatro di Roma** to pay tribute to the great artist and to create an extraordinary opportunity to explore his unmistakable, complex and original work.

As well as the exhibition at MAXXI, the project provides for the Italian debut of the show *Refuse the Hour* at the Teatro Argentina from 15 to 18 November within in the ambit of the Romaeuropa Festival 2012, in coproduction with Teatro di Roma. A "chamber piece" with extravagant machinery and the on-stage presence of the artist himself. www.fondazionemaxxi.it | www.romaeuropa.net | www.teatrodiroma.net

The exhibition *William Kentridge Vertical Thinking* has been realized with the contribution of the Chamber of Commerce of Rome.

With thanks to Galleria Lia Rumma.

MAXXI – National Museum of XXI Century Arts

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opening hours: 11.00 – 19.00 (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Sunday) | 11.00 – 22.00 (Saturday)

closed: Mondays, 1 May and 25 December | tickets: €11,00 adults and €8.00 reduced

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William Kentridge. *Vertical Thinking*, a title inspired by one of the screen prints on display, aptly describes William Kentridge's constantly evolving, kaleidoscopic way of working. References to the theatre, which has been of key interest to the artist ever since 1970, can often be found in his works, which combine drawing, music, dance and cinema. This wealth of artistic forms is a distinctive feature of his animated films and is subject to constant metamorphosis, with previously drawn scenes being deleted and transformed into new ones. This superimposition, which appears as much in his stylistic research as in his subjects, is also linked to an intense exploration of our contemporary world. Kentridge draws the history of the present, intermingling events in his home country, South Africa, with works by the great masters of the past, leading him to touch on existential and scientific issues. This constantly evolving visual language has influenced the choice of works for this exhibition, which includes drawings, maquettes and previously unexhibited screen prints, which we see here with works from the MAXXI collection dating from between 1998 and 2012. The exhibition, which has been conceived as a journey of images, starts out from the past and moves out beyond terrestrial coordinates. It takes us on a journey through stories in which the protagonists move through constantly changing settings: *Preparing the Flute* (2004-2005), a miniature theatre, includes music and subjects taken from Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (1791); *Cemetery with Cypresses* (1998), inspired by Claudio Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno di Ulisse* (1641), sets the return of the Achaean hero in a Johannesburg hospital; *Zeno Writing* (2002) tells of the personal and historic defeat of Zeno, the protagonist of Italo Svevo's famous novel *Zeno's Conscience*, which is interpreted as an allegory of contemporary South African society; *Flagellant* (1996 – 1997), freely inspired by Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi* (1896) is a reflection on the theme of apartheid. The exhibition continues with *North Pole Map* (2003), a large tapestry that tells of the journey of life and the crossing of borders – concepts which also appear in *The Refusal of Time* (2012). Made for *dOCUMENTA (13)* in Kassel, and shown for the first time in Italy at MAXXI, this installation is an explosion of music, images, shadow play and, at the centre, a wooden sculpture that recalls Leonardo da Vinci's machines. Lastly, the exhibition also includes a *Wunderkammer* – an cabinet of wonders with exquisite references to the stage design for *The Refusal of Time*, with preparatory sketches, screen prints, a maquette and paper props, all of which illustrate the artist's spectacular creative process.

Giulia Ferracci

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WORKS ON DISPLAY | from MAXXI Arte collection

Flagellant, 1996 – 1997

ink, watercolour, charcoal and plaster on paper; permanent collection

Shown in 1997 at the Association for Visual Arts in Cape Town, *Flagellant* portrays Ubu, the protagonist of the *Ubu Roi* (1896) by the playwright Alfred Jarry. The work is part of a series of seven preparatory drawings for *Ubu Tells the Truth* (1997), a political film based on the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which shed light on the atrocities committed under apartheid. The choice of subject and the dismembering of the body, which appears in the expressive lines of the drawing, are part of a broader reflection that Kentridge makes on the subject of the suffering and massacres inflicted by apartheid on the African continent.

Cemetery with Cypresses (Drawing from il Ritorno di Ulisse), 1998

charcoal and pastel on paper; donation from Gian Ferrari, permanent collection

Cemetery with Cypresses is part of a series of drawings made for the stage design of *Il Ritorno di Ulisse*, which was inspired by Claudio Monteverdi's 1641 opera of the same name and shown in Brussels in 1998. Kentridge bases the opera around the prologue of the *Odyssey*, creating the setting for the Achaean hero's return not to Ithaca but to a hospital bed in Johannesburg. The drawings convey the protagonist's thoughts through dark, desolate landscapes, and they form the stage sets for the entire show. In *Cemetery with Cypresses* the apocalyptic view is used as a foil to Ulysses' human fragility, which is subject to the laws of time and destiny, symbolising a lost form of heroic action.

Untitled (Large Drawing – Standing Man), 2001

charcoal, pastel and acrylic on paper; permanent collection

This work is part of a cycle of drawings inspired by the series of eight *Summer Graffiti* (2002) lithographs. Here the artist chose as his starting point a teachers' manual called *Errors in Schools*, renamed in a play on words "Eros in School". From this he worked on the poetic vision of *Untitled (Large drawing – Standing Man)*, which recalls a school environment, as suggested by the corner of a blackboard at the bottom right, as well as by the eroticism, which is clear to see in the portrait of the artist covering his own nudity with his hands. The blend of signs and colours is a significant example of the graphic quality of all Kentridge's work.

Zeno Writing, 2002

transferred to Beta and DVD, 11' 12"; permanent collection; Edition 1/8

Shown for the first time in 2002, at *documenta 11* in Kassel, *Zeno Writing* is part a sizeable suite of works inspired by Italo Svevo's novel *Zeno's Conscience* (1923). The artist reinterprets the time of the First World War in Trieste, setting it in Johannesburg under apartheid. The anxieties of the protagonist, Zeno, are a reflection on the crisis of modernity and of an existential inability to influence the course of one's own life and that of history. Combining the drawings, collages and puppets of the Handspring Puppet Company of Johannesburg with music by Kevin Volans, the work is an allegory that takes inspiration from the story of Zeno to illustrate a cross-section of contemporary South African society.

North Pole Map, 2003

tapestry embroidered and woven in silk, mohair, acrylic, polyester woven by the Stephens Tapestry Studio
Edition 3/3, permanent collection

North Pole Map is one of a series of seventeen hand-woven tapestries made by William Kentridge between 2001 and 2007. The anthropomorphic subjects come from previous drawings – the *Puppet Drawings* of 2000 – which gave rise to the black silhouettes made of sheets of torn paper. The collages were photographed, brought to scale and adapted for the creation of the tapestries, and later applied to the background of vintage nineteenth-century maps. In line with the research into memory that Kentridge has been working on since the late 1980s, the silhouettes convey the idea of the journey of life, the flow of time and the crossing of frontiers.

Preparing the Flute, 2004/05

miniature theatre with drawings and projections, pastel, pencil, charcoal on foam board, pvc, gauze, 35 mm film transferred to DVD; edition 3/3, permanent collection

In 2003, the artist reinterpreted Mozart's *The Magic Flute* at the La Monnaie theatre in Brussels. This project led to a stunning series of works, including a film, a number of drawings, various prints and two miniature theatres, including *Preparing the Flute*. The work consists of a series of panels onto which the drawings and the scenes shown at the show at the La Monnaie theatre are screened. This work illustrates the artist's intention to bring the world of the theatre into his studio and constitutes a perfect fusion of the worlds of literature, cinema, theatre and animation. The enchanted images of the Milky Way and the fireworks that accompany the Queen of the Night plunge the viewer into an explosion of music, shadows and light.

WORKS ON DISPALY | Installation

The Refusal of Time, 2012

William Kentridge, Philip Miller, Catherine Meyburgh, Peter Galison
5-channel projection with megaphones and a breathing machine

Courtesy Galleria Lia Rumma *Milan – Naples*

The Refusal of Time is a multi-year project that emerged from a meeting between the artist and the physicist and science historian Peter L. Galison. Their encounter led to reflections on time, entropy and black holes. The installation, which Kentridge interprets in a cosmos of drawn fragments, is an explosion of music, images and shadow play, with a moving sculpture at the centre which recalls Leonardo's machines. The figures interact in the five videos with various time measuring devices: cylindrical megaphones, nineteenth-century clocks, wheels and other objects, all orchestrated by enormous metronomes projected onto the walls. The work is thus a meditation on time, which is measured out in the crossing of geographies, from dawns to dusks, in the various time zones of the earth, until it comes back together in single, cosmic whole.

Credit line

Produced by: Marian Goodman Gallery (New York and Paris), Galleria Lia Rumma (Naples and Milan), Galleria Goodman (Johannesburg and Cape Town) and Goethe Institut (South Africa) / with the support of Dr. Naomi Milgrom AO, Australia.

Executive Production: Tomorrowland

Commissioned by: dOCUMENTA (13)

The creative team music: Philip Miller / video: William Kentridge, Catherine Meyburgh / choreography: Dada Masilo / dramaturg: Peter Galison / stage design: William Kentridge, Sabine Theunissen / movement direction: Luc de Wit / costumi costume design: Greta Goiris / machine design: Jonas Lundquist, Sabine Theunissen / megaphones: Christoff Wolmarans, Louis Olivier / lighting design: Urs Schoenebaum

Studio Kentridge / sound mix and installation: Gavan Eckhart / video installation: Yoav Dagan / video assistant: Snezana Marovic / costume assistants: Naomi van Niekerk, Zahira Meyburgh-Majiet / set assistants: Lisa Cloete, Stella Olivier, Pascal Desfontaines, Jake Singer, Abdul Razaq Awofeso / studio support: Anne McIlleron, Linda Leibowitz, Natalie Dembo, Lisa Cloete, Nomsa Mfene, Victor

Performers in video: dancer: Dada Masilo / actors: William Kentridge, Thato Motlhaolwa, Abdul Razaq Awofeso, Luc de Wit, Louis Olivier, Shareen Mathebula / singing and vocals: Ann Masina, Bham Ntabeni, Joanna Dudley, Thato Motlhaolwa, Mandie de Villiers-Schutte, Siyavuya Makuzeni, Abdul Razaq Awofeso / flugel horn and trumpet: Adam Howard / trombone and euphonium: Dan Selsick / tuba: Thobeka Thukane / violin: Waldo Alexander / percussion: Tlale Makhene; Robert Ndima and the Ntuba Brohers Choir / others: Pippa Dyer, Boitumelo Shai, Shareen Mathebula, Sibusiso Ngcobo.

WORKS ON DISPALY | silk-screen prints, preparatory sketches, maquette

Selection of 11 props from the 'Entropy' procession from The Refusal of Time, 2012

cardboard cutout painted with black poster paint; courtesy Galleria Lia Rumma *Milan – Naples*

Thato, 2012

indian ink and charcoal on 36 book pages; courtesy Galleria Lia Rumma *Milan – Naples*

As If I Could Swallow, 2012

indian ink and charcoal on 28 book pages; courtesy Galleria Lia Rumma *Milan – Naples*

Zoetrope. Running Man, 2012,
charcoal and chalk drawing on 20 book pages; courtesy Galleria Lia Rumma Milan – Naples

Sospiri & Tracce, 2012
computer-printed text and charcoal drawing on 20 book pages; courtesy Galleria Lia Rumma Milan – Naples

12 models for Refuse the Hour , 2012
cardboard, glue, pins, tape, foil sheet
courtesy Galleria Lia Rumma Milan – Naples

Rubrics , 2012
series of 14 prints, silkscreen on book pages
Edition 16, collection of the artist, courtesy Lia Rumma Gallery, Naples - Milan

Stage model from Refuse the Hour 2012,
cardboard, glue, pins, tape, foil sheet
Courtesy Galleria Lia Rumma Milan – Naples

Anti-Mercator, 2011
HD transferred to DVD 9
Private Collection, Turin, courtesy Galleria Lia Rumma Milan - Naples



THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SUPPORTS THE SHOW *VERTICAL THINKING*

Promoting territorial and business development and improving the quality of life of its citizens: these are the guiding objectives of the activity of the Chamber of Commerce of Rome. An institution which, in following a “culture of doing”, has chosen to invest its resources and its know-how in the creation of a competitive and cutting-edge local context, complete with modern infrastructure, both tangible and intangible, and of services fully able to meet the needs of business. Thanks to a “common understanding” among the representative associations that make up its governing bodies, the Chamber of Commerce has actively promoted the development of infrastructures critical to both the modernization of the city and the creation of employment and wealth, such as the New Rome Exhibition Centre, the System of Technology Parks (Tiburtino and Castel Romano), the Food and Agriculture Centre and the Rome Auditorium-Music Park.

This action has gone hand-in-hand with a strong commitment to supporting the growth of the economic fabric of the capital, achieved through the development of its productive sectors and of some of its most genuine vocations, such as innovation, tourism and culture.

Within this strategic approach, support for culture takes on particular importance. The Rome Chamber of Commerce in fact believes that this is an investment in the true sense of the word, able to activate development dynamics through the valorisation of our most precious assets. Promoting culture in fact means triggering a powerful economic multiplier and strengthening an essential attraction for tourists and foreign investors, with obvious positive consequences for business and employment. For a city like Rome and a country like Italy betting on culture is an essential choice if the aim is balanced development in which economic competitiveness and social cohesion go hand- in-hand.

The activity of our institution is aimed at creating a local context with a high level of creative and cultural vitality. One of the ways this is reflected is in involvement and support for the most important events on the city’s cultural calendar, such as the show “Vertical Thinking” by the versatile and internationally famous artist William Kentridge. This show marks the beginning of a collaboration between the Chamber of Commerce of Rome and the MAXXI Foundation – the National Museum of 21st century art.

ARCUS: INTERVENING IN SUPPORT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

In the month of February 2004, the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities was responsible for the constitution of Arcus SpA, a limited company devoted to supporting art, culture and the performing arts, in accordance with Law No. 291 of 16 October 2003. 291. The company capital is wholly underwritten by the Ministry of the Economy, while the company's day-to-day activities are based on the programmes established by annual decrees adopted by the Minister for Cultural Heritage and Activities – who also exercises the shareholder rights – together with the Minister for Infrastructures. Arcus may also develop independent projects.

Arcus's declared aim is that of providing innovative support for significant and ambitious projects within the world of cultural heritage and activities and its possible interrelations with the country's strategic infrastructures.

Within the ambit of Arcus's mission, supporting projects entails identifying important initiatives, contributing to the completion of planning, intervening in organizational and technical aspects, participating – where appropriate or necessary – in the financing of the project, monitoring its development and contributing to its successful outcome

It is important that Arcus's modus operandi is clearly understood, as explained above: the company intervenes to provide organizational and financial support for significant projects, but in no way is it comparable to an agency for the distribution of funding, nor may it be numbered among the "scattershot" distributors of public or private funds.

Arcus is, therefore, an original instrument for the support and launching of significant and innovative projects within the panorama of Italian culture. Economic support, where provided, must be seen as wholly instrumental within the ambit of a cultural project that is conceptually valid and operationally shared.

In more detail, Arcus provides assistance for initiatives relating, for example:

- to the establishment of projects for the restoration, redevelopment and improved fruition of the cultural heritage;
- to the preservation of the landscape and cultural heritage through actions and interventions also designed to mitigate the impact of existing or forthcoming infrastructures;
- to support the programming, monitoring and evaluation of interventions in the cultural heritage sector;
- to promote planning within the cultural heritage and activities sector and that of the performing arts;
- to identify and support projects valorizing and protecting cultural heritage through interventions with significant technological contents;
- to support projects relating to cultural tourism in the broadest sense of the term;
- to promote the birth and constitution of cultural catchment areas in relation to emblematic examples of cultural heritage within the ambit of an integrated and systemic vision capable of linking local cultural heritage, infrastructure, tourism, allied industries and transport;
- to intervene in the broad-based sector comprising initiatives designed to render the cultural heritage fully accessible to the differently able.

To achieve its aims Arcus draws on resources detailed in article 60 of Law 289 of 27 December 2002 (Financial Law 2003). The legislation provides for 3% of the funding for infrastructures being devoted to expenses relating to interventions safeguarding and in favour of cultural heritage and activities. Arcus is identified as the recipient structure for these funds. Furthermore, in accordance with article 3 of Law No. 43 of 31 March 2005, the above-mentioned percentage is increased annually by a further 2%. Moreover, the company may receive finances provided by the European Union, the state and other public and private bodies.

Arcus also works to bring potential stakeholders into contact with the various projects. When necessary, therefore, the company contacts foundations with banking origins or otherwise, local authorities, exponents of local bodies and civic society, the universities and private individuals in order to aggregate around the initiatives increasing resources and coordinated financing.

Arcus's ambitious project is therefore that of becoming the "glue" that renders operative the systemic capacity for the promotion and planned support of initiatives designed to enhance the cultural heritage and activities, with a view to ever better conservation, fruition and valorization. By taking appropriate measures, Arcus favours the necessary convergence of the various stakeholders, thus contributing to the success of the various cultural projects identified.



