

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE
Waiting To Forget Something
Opening Wednesday 27 March 2024, 5.30 pm -8.30 pm
Galleria Lia Rumma | Via Vannella Gaetani 12 | NAPLES

The Lia Rumma Gallery in Naples is delighted to announce the opening, on Wednesday 27 March 2024, of the solo exhibition of William Kentridge's work entitled *Waiting To Forget Something*.

Kentridge is an artist of international renown thanks to his animated films, drawings, tapestries, sculptures, theatrical and operatic works. He will return to Naples at the Lia Rumma gallery (his first exhibition held there was in 1999), where he will present a poetic and varied corpus of works on paper and recent sculptures, confirming his capacity to bring together emotions and memory, and the relationship between desire, ethics and responsibility.

A long series of drawings of the same size, taken from the cycle of works *You Whom I could not Save (Te che non ho potuto salvare)* made in 2023, created for the exhibition of the same title held in Palazzo Branciforte (Palermo), runs along the walls of the first large room of the gallery. On old sheets of Sicilian ledgers, the artist has sketched, using pen and ink, charcoal and coloured felt tip pens, a sort of ironic and surreal theatre of puppets which have everyday objects and tools in place of their heads, but also the well-known faces of leading figures of the world of art, history, literature and the sciences, such as Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, Franz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Lilya Brik and Joséphine Baker. In this "theatre of the absurd", Kentridge metaphorically retraces the voyage undertaken by several European intellectuals in 1941, bound for the New World, to escape from the war and Nazi persecution: a crossing of the Atlantic which today, as in the past, turns one's mind to the numerous journeys in the Mediterranean made by migrants who set off from Africa in search of safety on our coasts. The ghosts of the past and the present coexist, as the artist recounts, projecting "the drawing of a world, a place that is at once real, surreal and mythological".

A link with two other important "Italian" projects by Kentridge (*Waiting for the Sibyl* and *Triumphs & Laments*) is provided by two large drawings: an enigmatic sentence supports the image of a tree whose leaves seem to be able to move and be scattered like the paper on which they are drawn. The second drawing takes up several scenes from the frieze of the Lungotevere (Tiber waterfront) in Rome, on the verge of disintegration, which superimpose our past upon more recent historical events.

The exhibition also features several painted sculptures, *Paper Procession* (2023), made from cuttings taken from the same Sicilian ledgers which, like a collage transferred to thin aluminium sheets, give substance and form to another poetics and playful anthropomorphic silhouettes. The work *Seven figures* (2023) are bronze sculptures that form a procession of elements that often feature in Kentridge's artistic vocabulary, while another series of figures, created in conjunction with the costume-designer Greta Goiris, consist of work tools that come alive as puppets dressed in paper or fabrics.

The exhibition ends with the film *City Deep*, the 11th chapter of the *Drawings for Projection*, a collection of animated films drawn over the course of a thirty-year period. The protagonist Soho Eckstein, a mining magnate who is thirsty for power, moves through the rooms of the Johannesburg Art Gallery while the paintings are transformed, revealing his tortured memories and the ravaged external landscape merges with the museum interiors.

The new series of 9 episodes of William Kentridge, *Self-Portrait as a Coffee Pot*, will be previewed at Venice on 17 April 2024, in an installation held at the Arsenale Institute for the Politics of Representation, curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev.

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE (born in Johannesburg, South Africa, 1955) is an internationally renowned artist acclaimed for his drawings, films, and theatrical and operatic works. His method combines drawing, writing, film, performance, music, theatre and collaborative practices to create works of art grounded in politics, science, literature and history, despite maintaining a space of contradiction and uncertainty.

Since the 1990s, Kentridge's works have been displayed in museums and galleries worldwide including MoMA in New York, the Albertina in Vienna, the Musée du Louvre, the Whitechapel Gallery in London, the Louisiana Museum in Copenhagen, the Reina Sofia in Madrid, the Kunstmuseum in Basel, the MOCAA in Zeitz, the Norval Foundation in Cape Town and the Royal Academy of Arts in London. He has taken part on several occasions in Documenta in Kassel (2012, 2002, 1997) and the Venice Biennale (2015, 2013, 2005, 1999 and 1993). His operatic works include *The Magic Flute* by Mozart, *The Nose* by Shostakovich and *Lulu* and *Wozzeck* by Alban Berg and have been performed at opera houses such as the MET in New York, La Scala in Milan, the ENO in London, Sydney Opera House and the Salzburg Festival.

Kentridge's plays include: *Refuse the Hour*, *Paper Music*, *The Head & the Load*, *Waiting for the Sibyl* and many others.

In 2016 Kentridge founded the *Centre for the Less Good Idea* at Johannesburg: a space for thinking and creating in a reactive way by means of experimental, collaborative and interdisciplinary artistic practices.



Kentridge has been awarded honorary degrees at various universities such as Yale, London University and Columbia University. In 2010 he received the Kyoto Prize. In 2012 he was made Commandeur dans l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres in France and presented the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard University. In 2017 he received the Premio Princesa de Asturias de las artes and in 2018 he was awarded the Premio Internazionale Antonio Feltrinelli. In 2019 he received the Praemium Imperiale for painting in Tokyo. In 2023 he received the Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera for his play Sibyl in London.