

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE, DOCTOR OF FINE ARTS



William Kentridge is a South African artist who has revolutionized the world of drawing. Best known for animated films, he is also a printmaker and sculptor who has collaborated on works for both the theater and opera. His signature films are a product of stop-motion technique that involves photographing his charcoal drawings over time, recording each addition and erasure, and capturing the changes on film to create a finished piece.

Mr. Kentridge was born and raised in Johannesburg, South Africa. His parents were lawyers who defended victims of apartheid. At the age of fourteen, he began taking life-drawing classes from artist Bill Ainslie. After a year of compulsory military service, Mr. Kentridge attended the University of the Witwatersrand, earning a bachelor of arts in politics and African studies in 1976. As a student, he directed and acted in anti-apartheid theatrical productions and was a founding member of the racially integrated Junction Avenue Theatre. He continued making prints and drawings at Ainslie's Johannesburg Art Foundation. In hopes of becoming an actor, Mr. Kentridge studied mime at the Ecole Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq in Paris in the early 1980s, but he returned to Johannesburg in 1982 to work as an art director in television and film. By 1984, he had recommitted himself to graphic art, and the following year, a Johannesburg art gallery exhibited his large-scale charcoal drawings and etchings that were inspired by great draftsmen like Picasso and Goya.

Mr Kentridge has described himself as “interested in a political art, that is to say an art of ambiguity, contradiction, uncompleted gestures and uncertain endings.” Bridging the boundaries between art forms, he not only produced animated films based on his charcoal drawings, but also collaborated with the Handspring Puppet Company on several theater productions. The exhibition of two animated films from his series *9 Drawings for Projection in Documenta X* in Kassel, Germany, sparked international interest in his art. In 2003, he was commissioned to stage and direct Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute*, which premiered at the Royal Opera House in Belgium in 2005. In 2009, he collaborated with the artist Gerhard Marx on *Fire Walker*, an eleven-meter-tall steel sculpture for the city of Johannesburg. His production of Shostakovich's opera *The Nose* debuted in 2010.

Mr. Kentridge's work has been widely exhibited by major museums worldwide, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Louvre and the Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art. His art has also been showcased in such international exhibitions as the Venice Biennale, Documenta, and Carnegie International. Among the honors he has received are the Carnegie Prize from the Carnegie Museum of Art in 2000, the Goslar Kaiserring in 2003, and the celebrated Kyoto Prize in Arts from the Inamori Foundation in Japan in 2010. In 2012, he delivered the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard University.