



WILLIAM KENTRIDGE ((b.1955))**World on its Hind Legs**

metal and wood

64 x 26 x 30 in.

2010

28893

PROVENANCE:

Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris, France

Private Collection

Sotheby's London: Tuesday, May 16, 2017 [Lot 00099] Modern and Contemporary African Art

Private Collection, California, acquired from the above

EXHIBITION:

Paris, Marian Goodman Gallery, *William Kentridge: Breathe, Dissolve, Return*, 2010

LITERATURE:

Lilian Tone, *William Kentridge: Fortuna*, Thames and Hudson Ltd (Book), 2013

William Kentridge is a South African graphic artist, filmmaker, and theatre arts activist especially noted for a sequence of hand-drawn animated films he produced during the 1990s. The pungent humanism he revealed in these and other works echoed a larger European tradition of artists such as Honoré Daumier, Francisco de Goya, and William Hogarth.

Kentridge, whose father was a noted antiapartheid lawyer, attended the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg (1973–76) and the now-defunct Johannesburg Art Foundation (1976–78). At various times in the 1970s and '80s, he worked as an actor, playwright, set designer, and theatrical director, and he studied mime and theatre in Paris in the early 1980s. In 1992 he began an ongoing collaboration involving multimedia performances with Handspring Puppet Theatre (founded 1981) in Cape Town.

As is clear from both his early training and his later artistic output, Kentridge's interest in the visual arts was rooted in its connection with the theatrical arts. The narrative structure and character development in his films reflect this connection. While Kentridge pursued several avenues as an artist, at the centre of his work was a sequence of short animated films. To produce them, he made a rough charcoal drawing, photographed it, altered the drawing slightly, photographed it again, and so on. Kentridge's original drawings are often completely effaced by their successors.

Many of these films—including *Johannesburg, 2nd Greatest City After Paris* (1989) and *Felix in Exile* (1994)—follow the fortunes of the greedy capitalist Soho Eckstein and his alter ego, the sensitive and artistic Felix Teitelbaum. They present modern South Africa as reflective of the spiritual, ecological, and emotional crises of late

capitalism.

Kentridge later established himself as a consummate figure in the performing arts, particularly for his innovative stagings of the operas *The Nose* (2010) and *Lulu* (2015) at New York's Metropolitan Opera and *Wozzeck* (2017) at the Salzburg Festival. Critics especially praised his layered use of projected drawings, woodcuts, and animation. His interdisciplinary performance pieces also drew acclaim, notably his rendition of Kurt Schwitters's 1932 sound poem *Ursonate* (2017) and of *The Head and the Load* (2018), a tribute to the African soldiers who served in World War I.

(Encyclopedia Britannica)

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