

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE



SO

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Front cover	<i>The Hope in the Charcoal Cloud/Time in the Grey Pages</i> 2014 charcoal, coloured pencil, Indian ink, digital print and water colour on <i>Shorter Oxford English Dictionary</i> 161 x 121 cm
Frontice piece	<i>The Hope in the Charcoal Cloud/Time in the Grey Pages</i> detail (from front cover) 2014
Back cover	<i>To Outlive the Tree</i> 2013 Indian ink on <i>Universal Technological Dictionary</i> , George Crabb 1823 179 x 116 cm

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE

SO

films sculptures drawings linocuts lithographs

OPENING Wednesday 9 April 6:30 - 9:00 pm

Exhibition dates 9 April - 24 May 2014

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Introduction

The indefatigable William Kentridge is without doubt one of the most influential artists in the world today. What sets him apart is his ability to communicate so effectively in so many different media and to reach so many different audiences as a result.

With Kentridge, major works “usually” originate with some form of text. But there’s nothing “usual” in what follows. His choice of direction often seems without limit.

He directs and designs operas. He directs and acts in theatrical performances. He makes videos. He draws. He is a uniquely talented sculptor. He is one of the most original printmakers to emerge on the world scene in the last twenty years.

The new exhibition of work by William Kentridge entitled **SO** brings together a variety of media. Diverse in perspective and execution, they explore the numerous concerns and ideas of this restless artistic imagination. Whether seen through Kentridge’s individual works, or through the prism of the exhibition as a whole, the viewer has the thrill of responding to art in new and stimulating ways.

If there is one overriding theme here it is transformation. Kentridge cultivates zones of uncertainty in his studio that eventually lead to outcomes that are always unexpected. The result is sometimes disturbing, often delightful, inevitably substantial.

An ink stamp and a telephone gradually morph into a reclining nude reminiscent of Matisse in the drawing *Reclining Nude/Telephone* 2014.

Each of the Rebus sculptures are comprised of at least two distinct images depending on the angle of view. A man walking turns into a tree, a megaphone into a black square, a bird into a cage. The artist discusses the process in more detail in the introduction to the *Rebus* series of sculptures and linocuts.

The series of trees, some printed or drawn on book pages, are majestic and graphically striking images. Upon further investigation they become containers of ideas. *Remembering the Treason Trial* 2013 refers directly to Nelson Mandela’s trial of the 1950s. It evokes a period in South African history, but at the same time it speaks to us directly about contemporary injustice and pain. And yet, at an even deeper level, it speaks to hope. Kentridge is a complex and nuanced artist. He is a political and social realist. But he is not a pessimist.

NO, IT IS, the Flip Book films on show, are also about transformation. The images dance across the screen in a manner that seems almost slapstick. As in the *Drawing Lessons* Annandale Galleries showed in 2012, humour is an integral part of much of Kentridge’s work here. The moving film, *Second Hand Reading* 2013, is a feature of the show. It is directly related to Kentridge’s love of the printed word and is discussed by the artist in the catalogue.

Empathy is key to Kentridge’s ability to communicate so effectively. He gives us plenty of room to manoeuvre inside his works. Regardless of a viewer’s knowledge of art, Kentridge’s work provides something memorable, something significant, something indelible. This is as true for the neophyte as it is for the seasoned critic.

Annandale Galleries are proud to be having our eighth solo exhibition of William Kentridge since 1995. We would like to thank the artist, his staff at the studio: Linda, Natalie, Lisa and particularly Anne McIlhennion for their ongoing support.

– Bill Gregory, Sydney, March 2014



Reclining Nude/Telephone 2014
 Indian ink on *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*
 161 x 121 cm

Whilst Reaching Down (Slowly) 2014

charcoal, coloured pencil, Indian ink, digital print and water colour on *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*
121 x 161 cm





Above
 Whilst Finding my Place (in the chapter) 2014
 (detail)

Right
 Whilst Finding my Place (in the chapter) 2014
 charcoal, coloured pencil, Indian ink, digital print and water colour on Shorter Oxford English Dictionary
 161 x 121 cm



WHILST

FINDING
MY
PLACE
(IN THE
CHAPTER)

WHILST

SLICING
THE
LEMON

WHILST

SPREADING
THE
APRICOT
JAM

WHILST

STRETCHING
FIRST
TO THE LEFT
THEN
TO THE RIGHT

WHILST

SETTING
DOWN
THE
DOG'S
WATER

WHILST

LOOKING
AT MY
WATCH

WHILST

PASSING
THE
BUTCHER
(SHOP)



WHILST

PAUSING
AT THE
STOP
STREET

WHILST

LISTENING
TO THE
MESSAGE

WHILST

SETTING
THE
ALARM



WHILST

CLEARING
THE
TABLE

WHILST

CLEARING
THE
BROKEN
GLASS

WHILST

LISTENING
TO THE
SAFETY
INSTRUCTIONS



WHILST

WAITING
FOR HER
TO
PICK UP



WHILST

WAITING
TO
REPLY

IF

WHILST

WAITING
AT THE
GATE



WHILST

HOPING
AGAINST
HOPE



Remembering the Treason Trail 2013
63 Panels hand printed on a Takach litho press from aluminium plates in 3 runs on 145 gsm Zerkall 100% cotton,
on a 230 thread count base sheet with archival carboxy methylcellulose adhesive
edition of 25
195 x 178 cm

Lekkerbreek 2013

linocut printed on 30 sheets of non-archival pages from *Britannica World Language Dictionary*, Edition of Funk and Wagnalls, 1954.
Each sheet is mounted, in the corners, with archival framing tape to the backing sheet of Arches, Cover White, 300gsm
edition of 24
170 x 108 cm

THE LIE OF THE LAND 2



Hope in the Green Leaves 2013
linocut on Hahnemuhle Natural White 300gsm
edition of 40
185 x 102 cm





Stone Tree I 2013
lithograph on handmade Japanese paper; edition of 36
82.5 x 63.8 cm



Stone Tree II 2013
lithograph on handmade Japanese paper; edition of 36
64 x 48 cm

REBUS

2013 - 2014

A rebus is a representation of words or phrases by images whose names sound similar to them—for instance, an image of an eye can be used as a rebus to represent the word 'I'. The connections made in this way allow for visual and linguistic absurdities that can transform the original meaning into something different. Those kinds of transformations are an important in how William Kentridge allows things to happen in the studio.

In a series of drawings made in 2013, Kentridge decided to show how one image could transform into another through vague associations—a bird turning into a cage, or a fruit bowl into a cone, or a woman into a typewriter—through a series of drawings. *At first they were very simple drawings, and then I started wondering what would happen if the order of the images in the series was changed, as if they were part of a narrative that was being rewritten, or as if they were a series of picture books that could be read to a child in very different ways. And so they changed from drawings to cardboard cut-outs and from cardboard cut-outs into three-dimensional cardboard sculptures which could, when turned, transform from a fruit bowl to a cone, from a megaphone to a square; hieroglyphs, of sorts, in which an invitation is extended to the viewer to make sense of the nonsense—and what is offered is not a natural interpretation, but rather the possibility of sense. There is an invitation to make our own rebus from the elements, a narrative sentence from the different pieces.*

The bronze sculptures were followed by another series of drawings, in Indian ink – some tracing the form of the bronzes, some of objects not in the sculpture series. These drawings in turn became the series of Rebus linocut prints – the ink mark cut into lino and printed at Artist Proof Studio onto handmade paper by the Phumani Archive Mill in Johannesburg.



Rebus sculptures 2013 two views



Rebus 2013 suite of 9 bronzes, edition 12/12
172 x 303 x 3 cm installed



Double page display two views of *Rebus* sculptures



Rebus sculptures 2013 two views



Rebus sculptures 2013 two views



Rebus sculptures 2013 two views



Rebus sculptures 2013 two views



Rebus sculptures 2013 two views



Rebus sculptures 2013 two views



Rebus: Telephone 2014

Linocuts printed onto handmade sisal and cotton fibre-mix, tipped on Arches Cover; edition of 30
40 x 29 cm



Rebus: Megaphone 2014

Linocuts printed onto handmade sisal and cotton fibre-mix, tipped on Arches Cover; edition of 30
40 x 29 cm



Rebus: Head 2014

Linocuts printed onto handmade sisal and cotton fibre-mix, tipped on Arches Cover, edition of 30
40 x 29 cm



Rebus: Stamp 2014

Linocuts printed onto handmade sisal and cotton fibre-mix, tipped on Arches Cover, edition of 30
40 x 29 cm



Rebus: Jug 2014

Linocuts printed onto handmade sisal and cotton fibre-mix, tipped on Arches Cover; edition of 30
40 x 29 cm



Rebus: Fruit 2014

Linocuts printed onto handmade sisal and cotton fibre-mix, tipped on Arches Cover; edition of 30
40 x 29 cm



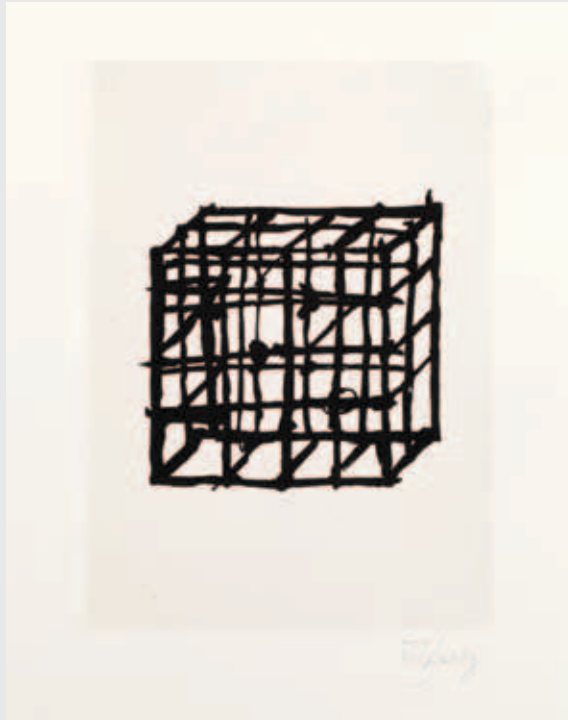
Rebus: Atlas 2014

Linocuts printed onto handmade sisal and cotton fibre-mix, tipped on Arches Cover, edition of 30
40 x 29 cm



Rebus: World 2014

Linocuts printed onto handmade sisal and cotton fibre-mix, tipped on Arches Cover, edition of 30
40 x 29 cm



Rebus: Cube 2014

Linocuts printed onto handmade sisal and cotton fibre-mix, tipped on Arches Cover; edition of 30
40 x 29 cm



Rebus: Lamp 2014

Linocuts printed onto handmade sisal and cotton fibre-mix, tipped on Arches Cover; edition of 30
40 x 29 cm



Rebus: Nude 2014

Linocuts printed onto handmade sisal and cotton fibre-mix, tipped on Arches Cover; edition of 30
40 x 54 cm

NO, IT IS

2012

Triptych of three flipbook films: *Workshop Receipts*, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, *Practical Enquiries*
HD video
edited by Melissa Parry

Workshop Receipts
3 min 17 sec

The Anatomy of Melancholy
2 min 21 sec

Practical Enquiries
2 min 19sec

edition of nine
Two artist's proofs

The triptych of flip book films NO, IT IS was constructed from a series of approximately 500 new drawings made by William Kentridge over a three-month period toward the end of 2012.

It includes sequences of self-portraits of the artist sitting down and standing up, contorting himself or dancing; text-based series; geometric blocks of color; and calligraphic renderings of trees that verge on abstraction.

As with the artist's previous films made within books or on the pages of books, all of the drawings are executed on the pages of antiquarian publications, from manuals on photography and electricity, dictionaries and guides to polishing leather to Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

Each film is between 2 and 3 minutes. The triptych is shown on three flat screens, the small scale inviting the viewer in to the intimacy of these energetically moving books.





Drawings for the film *Second-hand Reading* 2013

SECOND-HAND READING

2013

Flipbook film from drawings on single pages of the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*
HD video, approx. 7 minutes
music and voice Neo Muyanga
edited by Snežana Marović
edition of nine

The flip-book film *Second-hand Reading* was constructed from the successive filming of drawings on the pages of old books - a second-hand reading of those books. The film is both about a narrative— it starts at the beginning and eventually gets to the end — but it also acknowledges repetition, inconsistency and illogicality as part of its material. Music for the film was composed and made by the Cape Town based composer Neo Muyanga.

Kentridge describes the film as in some way a backwards step from the series of *Rebus* sculptures made in the same year, in which he took all the sheets of paper that had been accumulating during the time of making the bronze sculptures — pages covered with phrases and images that were being used for sculpture - and decided to put them back into a book.

Kentridge notes that the book is overdetermined. *There is a multiplicity, a surplus of reasons for the book to re-emerge. Firstly, it has to do with the kind of paper. Books call to be drawn upon in a certain way, depending on how they absorb charcoal. There are some that have very shiny paper and from which a charcoal mark can be brushed off very easily. There are other books that aren't well sized, so they absorb Indian ink like blotting paper. There are others whose sheets hold the ink very beautifully and keep their flatness, like the pages of the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary used for this work.*

There is the possibility of multiplicity, of buying one volume and finding within it nine hundred and seventy or twelve hundred and forty pages waiting to be drawn on. There is something about a dictionary that suggests abundance; abundance of words. It contains thousands of words that one might never use, but nevertheless one is happy to have those three kilograms of weight in one's hand. There's a sense of animation in the hundreds of thousands of frames in the book, waiting to be turned; a flipbook done on a larger scale. Unlike an ordinary ream of paper or a roll of drawing paper or a drawer full of drawing paper, it also has the narrative pressure of a book built into it; the sense that there is a cover at the front and another at the back, and you open it and you get through to the end.

There's the materialisation of that which is invisible - taking all of these vague thoughts and phrases, putting them onto sheets of paper, and thus turning the vague thoughts into 2.3 kilograms of paper. All these multiplicities of ideas push for these sheets of paper to go back into the book.



The artist in his studio, Arts on Main, downtown Johannesburg



Kentridge Studio, Arts on Main, downtown Johannesburg



Theatre props and kinetic sculptures, Kentridge Studio, Arts on Main, downtown Johannesburg



Kentridge Studio, Arts on Main, downtown Johannesburg



The artist in his Houghton studio, Houghton, Johannesburg



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