

PRESS RELEASE

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE

January 17 2002, 7.00 p.m. at the Galleria Lia Rumma in Milan, Via Solferino, 44
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The gallery is open to the public from Tuesday to Saturday
from 11.00 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. and from 3.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

We would like to thank *South Africa Mohair* for making the tapestries.

The Lia Rumma Gallery in Milan is pleased to announce the forthcoming exhibition of the South African artist William Kentridge, some of whose films forming part of a series devoted to Soho Eckstein have already been shown in the Lia Rumma Gallery in Naples.

Kentridge lives and works in Johannesburg, the city where he was born in 1955 and which he has never wanted to leave.

A multi-disciplinary artist *par excellence*, his stories recount the history, the conflicts, the wounds and suffering of South Africa and the sense of guilt that is tearing the country apart in the transformational phase of post-apartheid and is accompanying it in the difficult path towards emancipation.

Nevertheless, the strong ethical and poetic inspiration together with the energy and expressivity of his drawings lend his work a capacity for emotional impact which enables the questions and metaphors he employs to reverberate beyond the immediate stories he tells. Themes such as exodus, fear and horror, desire, amnesia, power, oppression, physical, moral and social corruption, individual and collective responsibility, manage to attain a universal significance.

Kentridge has gained international recognition for his animated short films as well as his pastel and charcoal drawings which constitute the preparatory phase of his films. The process of making his films consists in preparing a series of drawings which are gradually modified and re-elaborated by the artist through adding or subtracting elements or else erasing them and re-drawing them and then re-using them, a technique that leaves tangible evidence of the passing of time and the stratification of memory. His engravings and bronze sculptures are also well-known. However, it was in the theatre that Kentridge began as an actor, playwright and director in 1967 and it is here that he has returned in recent years.

In this exhibition the artist presents the installation *Medicine Chest* which he himself has defined as "screen specific". It is a tripartite work of video-animation, consisting of three overlapping horizontal layers, attached to the glass door of a chemist's cabinet. The images in the film refer to current events. The themes of the work are the stratification of meaning of reality, the difficulty of constructing a stable identity and personal opinion, the fluctuating extremes between denouncement and compassion, the impossibility of considering a point of view as inflexible when it is based on the increasingly contradictory information we receive.

Exclusively for the evening of the inauguration on January 17 in Via Varese 17, a series of drawings will be presented related to the theatrical work *Confessions of Zeno*; this is the work that the artist is currently presenting to the international public and which served as the basis for a film due to be shown at Kassel in June 2002. The exhibition will also include engravings and bronze sculptures, tapestries and drawings done on the pages of old books.

Beginning with Documenta X held at Kassel, which brought his work to the attention of the general public, there have followed numerous one-man exhibitions dedicated to Kentridge's work, among which some of the most important are those of 1998 at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, the Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, and the Kunstverein Munchen, Munich, those of 1999 at the MACBA in Barcelona, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Serpentine Gallery in London, as well as the 1999 Venice Biennial.