



Press Release

RAVELLO FESTIVAL 2026 AN EXHIBITION OF WORKS BY WILLIAM KENTRIDGE AT VILLA RUFOLO

Villa Rufolo, Ravello, 3 July – 5 September 2026

The press kit with authorized images is available at this [link](#)

The Ravello Foundation, in collaboration with the Lia Rumma Gallery, presents William Kentridge, an exhibition of works by an artist for whom music, theatre and image are part of a single creative process – opening on 3 July 2026 at Villa Rufolo and continuing until 5 September as part of the 74th edition of the Ravello Festival.

The opening, scheduled for Friday 3 July at 6:30pm, will be preceded at 5pm by a conversation with Bartolomeo Pietromarchi at Palazzo Avino.

One of the most profound and constitutive aspects of William Kentridge's research is the relationship between drawing, sound, word, music, opera and theatre. Throughout his work, the mark is never merely a fixed image, but action, rhythm, a trace in motion, appearance and erasure. It emerges, disappears, returns, transforms into sequence, into voice, into visual score.

Drawings, videos, installations, sculptures and works tied to the artist's scenic and musical dimension make up an itinerary that unfolds across the villa's rooms and the garden designed by Francis Neville Reid in the 19th century, in a continuous dialogue between architectural space and open landscape.

Inside Villa Rufolo, *Preparing the Flute*, 2005, a video projection onto a miniature model of a small theatre, connected to the celebrated reinterpretation of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* — introduces one of the exhibition's central themes: theatre as a mental, visual and political space. In this work, the small stage becomes a place of projections, figures and apparitions, where the Enlightenment imagination of Mozart's opera confronts colonial history, knowledge, power and the ambiguity of vision. The work - part of the MAXXI Collection in Rome - reproduces in reduced scale the interior of a theatre that references the stage design of Kentridge's production at La Monnaie/De Munt Opera in Brussels, subsequently reprised at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples in 2006 and at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan in 2011.

The theatrical dimension unfolds in *Theatre Drawing I* (La Fenice Theatre, 2008), where drawing is bound to the architecture of the stage and the memory of the place. The theatre appears not only as a space of representation, but as a device of stratification, where the image takes shape and history manifests itself through overlays, traces and erasures.

In the video work *Sibyl* (2020), linked to the broader project *Waiting for the Sibyl*, Kentridge reinterprets the figure of the Sibyl as an emblem of enigma, fate and the fragility of language. Words appear, scatter, recompose themselves, suggesting a condition in which meaning remains always provisional, unstable, entrusted to the rhythm of images, sound and music.

In *Fugitive Words* (2024), the word instead becomes visual and mental matter: a mobile vocabulary, an archive of thoughts, fragments and notes that run through the artist's work like a score in constant transformation. With *Mayakovsky Diorama* (2025), a recent work in which the diorama form and the optical illusion of shadow theatre intertwine with the figure of Vladimir Mayakovsky, and the legacy of the historical avant-gardes, image, text, scene and movement once again build a theatre of the mind, suspended between poetry, politics, satire and memory.



In *Medicine Chest* (2001) – a three-part video animation in overlapping horizontal bands projected onto the glass door of a medicine cabinet – the artist addresses the stratification of meaning, the difficulty of stably constituting an identity, and the contradictory nature of the information we receive.

The exhibition itinerary continues outdoors as well, in the gardens and on the terraces of Villa Rufolo, where sculptures with anthropomorphic silhouettes such as *Paper Procession* (2023) enter into dialogue with the villa's architecture and the surrounding landscape. In these open spaces, overlooking the sea and the coast, the works expand the exhibition's scenic dimension: the mark becomes physical presence, a body in space, a figure in relation to light, to the history of the place and to the natural depth of the Ravello landscape.

Ravello, a city long tied to great European culture and to the memory of Richard Wagner, welcomes an artist for whom music, theatre and image are part of a single creative process. In this context, the exhibition takes its place within the history of the Festival as a reflection on the relationship between vision and listening, gesture and voice, mark and time.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue, published for the occasion, with an introduction by the Festival's President, Alessio Vlad, and a critical essay on William Kentridge by Bartolomeo Pietromarchi. The volume explores the relationship between drawing, music, theatre, word and stage space that runs through the artist's entire body of work.

William Kentridge

William Kentridge's relationship with opera and theatre has run through his work for decades. The artist has directed important productions and stage designs for masterpieces of the musical repertoire, including Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Shostakovich's *The Nose*, and Alban Berg's *Lulu* and *Wozzeck*, presented at international theatres and institutions such as the Metropolitan Opera in New York, La Scala in Milan, the English National Opera in London, the Opéra de Lyon, the Dutch National Opera in Amsterdam, the Sydney Opera House and the Salzburg Festival.

Born in 1955 in Johannesburg, South Africa, where he lives and works, William Kentridge is one of the most internationally recognized contemporary artists. His body of work spans drawings, animated films, installations, sculptures, graphic works, performances, theatrical projects and opera direction. At the centre of his practice lies drawing, understood as a process of transformation, erasure, memory and montage. His research weaves together history, politics, literature, philosophy, music and theatre, always keeping open a space of ambiguity, doubt and contradiction.

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Ravello Festival

Founded in 1953, the Ravello Festival at Villa Rufolo is one of Europe's most prestigious classical music festivals, born in memory of Richard Wagner's 1880 visit, during which, amid the lush nature of the Villa, he found the enchanted garden of Klingsor for his final masterpiece, Parsifal. This magical setting, backed by one of the most beautiful views in the world, with the scents of the sea and the lemon groves of the Amalfi Coast in the air, will once again in summer 2026 host outstanding conductors and soloists – including Daniele Gatti, Jordi Savall, Kent Nagano, John Eliot Gardiner, Simon Rattle, Giovanni Sollima, Jan Lisiecki, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet and Isabelle Faust – together with ensembles such as the Orchestra del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Le Concert des Nations, the Ensemble Pygmalion, the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI, the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester and The Constellation Choir and Orchestra, not to mention jazz stars such as Rick Margitza and collaborations with Campania's musical institutions, offering audiences a unique experience. From 4 July to 5 September 2026, 22 events organized by the Ravello Foundation – led by President Alessio Vlad, with General Director Maurizio Pietrantonio and Artistic Director Lucio Gregoretti – will be held thanks to the support of the Campania Region. Over time, the bond between sound, vision and landscape that resonates so powerfully in Kentridge's work continues to renew itself. It is in this context that the William Kentridge exhibition finds its most natural place: a work of art in which vision and listening, gesture and voice, mark and time are inseparable. www.ravellofestival.com

Villa Rufolo

Piazza Duomo 1, Ravello

9:00 am – 8:00 pm (last entry at 7:30 pm)

On days of Ravello Festival concerts, Villa Rufolo's closing time is subject to change.

For further information, please call +39 089 857621 or write to segreteria@villarufolo.it or prenotazioni@villarufolo.it

Tickets

€ 8.00 standard

€ 7.00 for groups of 15 or more

€ 6.00 for over-65s and children aged 5 to 12

Tickets are sold on site only. No booking required.

www.ravellofestival.com

boxoffice@ravellofestival.com

tel. 089 858422

The programme is subject to change.

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Fondazione Ravello – Press Office and Communications

Nicola Mansi - *Head of Press and Communications*

n.mansi@fondazioneravello.it

+39 340 9002415 / +39 089 858360.

Floriana Tessitore - *Communications and Media Consultant*

floriana.tessitore@fastwebnet.it

+39 3387339981

Galleria Lia Rumma

Silvia Macchetto - *Communications and Press Consultant*

silviamacchetto.com

+39 3383429581

