

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ACQUIRES MAJOR MOVING-IMAGE WORKS BY SOUTH AFRICAN ARTIST WILLIAM KENTRIDGE

New York, June 16, 2006—The Museum of Modern Art has acquired three major moving-image works by the artist William Kentridge, MoMA Director Glenn D. Lowry announced today. The works—*7 Fragments for Georges Méliès*, *Day for Night*, and *Journey to the Moon* (all 2003)—are projections that combine performance, moving image, and animation. The works are a gift in honor of Peter Haas, a longtime friend and supporter of the Museum, from a group of trustees: Kathy Fuld; Agnes Gund, President Emerita; Marie-Josée Kravis, President; and David Rockefeller, Honorary Chairman.

The South African artist William Kentridge (b. 1955) is known internationally for creating drawings with political overtones. He often creates a narrative of the drawings, which he records as an animation, or as a performance of making the drawings.

“William Kentridge is a major artist who has been active in film, art, and theater over the past 30 years,” Mr. Lowry says. “He has blurred boundaries among disciplines to create his signature body of work. We are delighted to add such a significant grouping to our collection, and we are grateful for the generosity of our trustees and their encompassing view of contemporary art.”

Barbara London, Associate Curator, Department of Film and Media, says “Kentridge’s projections form a magically immersive environment. With its profound scale and evocative concentration, the masterworks add a new dimension to the Museum’s Film and Media collection.”

The works *7 Fragments for Georges Méliès*, (16 mm and 35 mm film based on live-action film, video, and animated drawing, transferred to Digibeta and DV cam. 7 minutes) comprises a series of short projections that depict the artist at work in his studio, illustrating the approach to conjured animation he takes to much of his art. Time moves in reverse, with drawings ending up as blank pages and an empty space quickly becomes a vast landscape, where tiny figures scurry across the horizon.

Journey to the Moon, (16 mm and 35 mm film and video transferred to Digibeta and DV cam. 5:56 minutes.) also pays homage to Méliès and his classic 1902 film of the same name, in which Méliès experimented with early animation techniques. In this witty remake, Kentridge’s studio becomes both the space for exploration and the interior of a rocket ship. The piano score - written by Philip Miller—evokes the live accompaniment of silent cinema.

Day for Night (16 mm film and video transferred to Digibeta and DV cam. One minute.) comes out of an exercise of recording “drawings” made by ants crawling across paper lined with sugar. Kentridge playfully utilizes motion media’s potential for illusion and visual trickery: when printed in negative, the “drawings” turn into visions of the galaxy.

These works join 53 other works by Kentridge already in the Museum's collection, including media installations, drawings, prints, and illustrated books.

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