

# PRESS FILE

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# WILLIAM KENTRIDGE SMOKE ASHES FABLE

**TENTOONSTELLING • EXHIBITION • ST-JANSHOSPITAAL • 20/10/'17 - 25/02/'18**

# WILLIAM KENTRIDGE. SMOKE, ASHES, FABLE

## IN BRIEF

Since his international debut at Documenta X in 1997, South African artist William Kentridge has achieved worldwide renown. Most recognized for his ten animated films titled *Drawings for Projection* (1989-2011), Kentridge's astonishingly diverse corpus includes masterful drawings, prints, tapestries, sculpture, lectures, and opera productions.

This major exhibition presents a unique selection of Kentridge's work curated for Sint-Janshospitaal in Bruges—at 850 years one of Europe's oldest surviving hospital buildings. Organized around the themes of trauma and healing, the show takes as its centerpiece Kentridge's 2015 video installation *More Sweetly Play the Dance*, a contemporary interpretation of the medieval Dance of Death.

Through a dialogue between the displayed artworks and the remarkable hospital setting, the exhibition presents art as a powerful means of 'working through' layers of history.

## INTRODUCTION

**Margaret K. Koerner**

(source: catalogue)

This exhibition began, most simply, with a desire to show some of the work by William Kentridge that I have most admired. The assumption was that, having made a selection on this basis, certain themes would become apparent, as if in retrospect. In this, the exhibition follows the artist's own practice, which is to begin with a certain playful freedom, to allow accident or fortune to play a role, and then, looking back, to discern a pattern. That the exhibition was to take place in Bruges was not, in the first instance, crucial. Yet having this remarkable location in mind sparked certain associations that helped shape the outcome.

The fact that the show would be mounted in Sint-Janshospitaal, founded in the 12th century and preserved as one of Europe's oldest surviving hospital complexes, made a compelling case for centering the list of objects around one of Kentridge's newer works. The video installation *More Sweetly Play the Dance* deals with questions of healing, death, and human fragility, and explicitly revisits an artistic genre that flourished during the hospital and the city's heyday in the late Middle Ages: the dance of death. Today, Sint-Janshospitaal contains





a museum dedicated to the art of the great early Netherlandish master Hans Memling, and some of the towering works by Memling's predecessors Hugo van der Goes and Jan van Eyck hang in the Groeningemuseum nearby. The proximity of these masterpieces sharpened something central to Kentridge's art generally: his highly complex engagement with the art of the past. As it turns out, Bruges, with its richly sedimented history — as exemplified in cultural survivals such as Sint-Janshospitaal — is an uncannily suitable setting for an artist for whom the past is always inescapable and, at the same time, too easily erased.

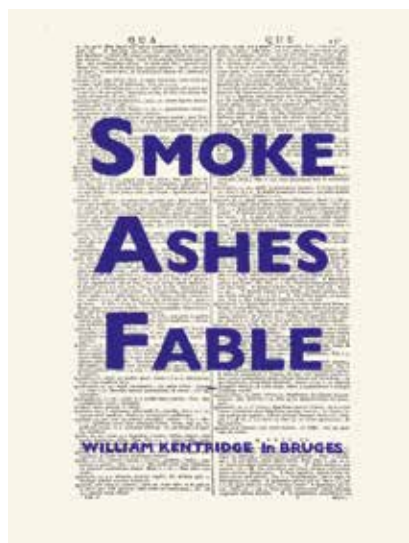
In making the selection, I decided that, rather than attempt a survey of Kentridge's career or even focus on a single phase, the show should demonstrate, in a condensed form, where Kentridge's art comes from, where it now stands, and where it might be going in the future. Thus it is not a retrospective but rather one curator's view of what might be considered a primer on the art of William Kentridge.

A sense of historical development was easily conjured in Bruges, given the rich artistic tradition that arose there. But it also seemed useful to include in the exhibition the work of a Belgian artist of the recent past whose aesthetic stance,

choice of media, forms of self-presentation, and set of thematic concerns would serve as a foil to the work by Kentridge on display. The art of Marcel Broodthaers fit these criteria beautifully, and including works by this eccentric avatar of the European avant-garde was simplified by the fortuitous presence in Bruges of a number of fine examples. As Kentridge would have it, it is best not to dictate what is to be gained by the association but to allow the visitor to draw her own conclusions.



## PUBLICATION



The exhibition catalogue is published by Mercatorfonds, distributed by Yale University Press and edited by the curator of the exhibition, Margaret K. Koerner; with contributions by Margaret K. Koerner, Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, Joseph Leo Koerner & Harmon Siegel.

€ 49,95

Hardcover, 232 pages

Available in Dutch, French and English

For sale at the museum shops at Sint-Janshospitaal and Arentshof, Dijver 16, Bruges.

## LECTURE-PERFORMANCE by William Kentridge

4



From 20 October 2017 to 25 February 2018, the Sint-Janshospitaal will host the important exhibition William Kentridge; Smoke, Ashes, Fable. Before the show opens, Kentridge will present the public lecture-performance at the Concert Hall in Bruges. One of the most acclaimed, original, and multifaceted creators of our time, Kentridge will combine reflections on artistic practice with stunning images and film excerpts to explore the motivating forces behind his work. The event will give the people of Bruges a rare and personal introduction to a great artist and thinker at the height of his powers

Date: 17 October, 2017 at 19 p.m.

Location: Concertgebouw - 't Zand 34, Bruges

Price: € 15 (visit exhibition Sint-Janshospitaal included) - tickets via [concertgebouw.be](http://concertgebouw.be)

Language: English

— CONCERT —  
— GEBOUW —  
— BRUGGE —

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William Kentridge. Smoke, Ashes, Fable  
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William Kentridge. Smoke, Ashes, Fable  
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William Kentridge. Smoke, Ashes, Fable  
© William Kentridge / More Sweetly Play the Dance



William Kentridge. If We Ever Get to Heaven  
EYE Filmmuseum, Amsterdam, 2015  
© Studio Hans Wilschut

## PRACTICAL INFO EXHIBITION

Title	William Kentridge. Smoke, Ashes, Fable
Location:	Sint-Janshospitaal, Mariastraat 38, 8000 Bruges
Period	from 20th October, 2017 until 25th February, 2018
Opening hours	Tuesday to Sunday from 9.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The pharmacy is closed between 12.30 and 13.30
Tickets:	€ 8 (26-64 y.)   € 6 (>65 y. & 12-25 y.) [incl. permanent collection] free -12 years
Extra:	Lecture-performance on 17th October at 7 p.m. - Concertgebouw Tickets: € 15 via <a href="http://concertgebouw.be">concertgebouw.be</a>
More information	<a href="http://www.museabrugge.be">www.museabrugge.be</a>
Good to now	First Kentridge exhibition in a MUSEUM in BELGIUM!

### MORE INFO

All **arrangements** can be made via [sarah.bauwens@brugge.be](mailto:sarah.bauwens@brugge.be) or on +32 50 44 87 08.

**Press visits** to the exhibition are possible with an appointment: see under the heading 'pers' (press) on the website [www.museabrugge.be](http://www.museabrugge.be).

The **press file** can also be consulted online and texts can be transcribed, again via [www.museabrugge.be](http://www.museabrugge.be), under the heading 'press'.

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We thank you for your cooperation and interest.

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