

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**The Museum of Modern Art****WORLD PREMIERE OF NEW FILM ANIMATION BY WILLIAM KENTRIDGE PRESENTED IN PROJECTS SERIES AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**

Projects 68: William Kentridge
April 15-June 8, 1999

The space between the political and the personal, and the extent to which politics finds its way into the private realm, is explored in a new film animation by William Kentridge (South African, b. 1955). *Stereoscope* (1999) will be presented at The Museum of Modern Art as part of the Projects series from April 15 to June 8, 1999.

Stereoscope is the eighth work in a decade-long series of extraordinary, handcrafted animated films by Kentridge that feature the evolving character Soho Eckstein, an archetypal businessman in a pinstriped suit. Rooted in Johannesburg, where Kentridge lives, the film conveys a sense of transience in a bustling city, full of telegraph wires and power stations. Certain images of civic unrest in *Stereoscope* can be traced to events in Johannesburg; others are from Kinshasa, Moscow, and Jakarta--all of which were in turmoil when Kentridge was working on the film's "Chaos in the City" sequence. This blending of disparate social realities, evocative of Soho Eckstein's internal conflicts, give the work a broad, almost mythical appeal.

Kentridge's homemade animation technique gives the film a distinctive appearance. The artist makes all of his charcoal "drawings for projection," continually reworking them and recording their successive stages with a 35mm camera to produce powerfully expressive metamorphic effects. "The allure of Kentridge's animations lies in their unequivocal reliance on the continuing present, and in the uncanny sense of artistic creation and audience reception happening at once," Tone says. Approximately 30 of the drawings Kentridge made to create *Stereoscope* will be on display in the Projects gallery.

The stereoscope is a device that makes images appear three-dimensional by presenting each eye a slightly different point of view of the same scene. In attempting to reconcile the difference, the viewer is tricked into seeing volume. In *Stereoscope*, Kentridge employs a reversed maneuver, where the use of a split-screen device can be seen to dismember three-dimensional truth into two complementary but unsynchronized realities. Motifs from Kentridge's earlier films reappear in *Stereoscope*, such as a cat that turns into a telephone or a bomb, and a room filling with water.

Kentridge graduated in 1976 from the University of the Witwatersrand with majors in Politics and African Studies, later attending the Johannesburg Art Foundation. He studied mime and theater at the L'Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris in the early 1980s, and in 1988 was a founding member of the Free Filmmakers Cooperative, based in Johannesburg. Kentridge has worked extensively in theater as an actor, designer, and director, and was a founding member of the Junction Avenue Theatre Company, based in

Johannesburg and Soweto from 1975 to 1991.

In 1989 he created his first animated film in the Soho Eckstein series, titled *Johannesburg 2nd Greatest City After Paris*. In 1992 he staged *Woyzeck on the Highveld*, his first theater project in conjunction with Handspring Puppet Company, with whom, in 1997, he conceived and directed *Ubu and the Truth Commission*, a multimedia theater production, and more recently the opera *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse* (1998). Kentridge's films received international acclaim at Documenta in 1997, and he was one of the finalists for the Hugo Boss Prize at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in 1998.

The Projects series is sponsored by Peter Norton.

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