



William Kentridge

Artist William Kentridge Brings South African Cultural Politics to MOAD

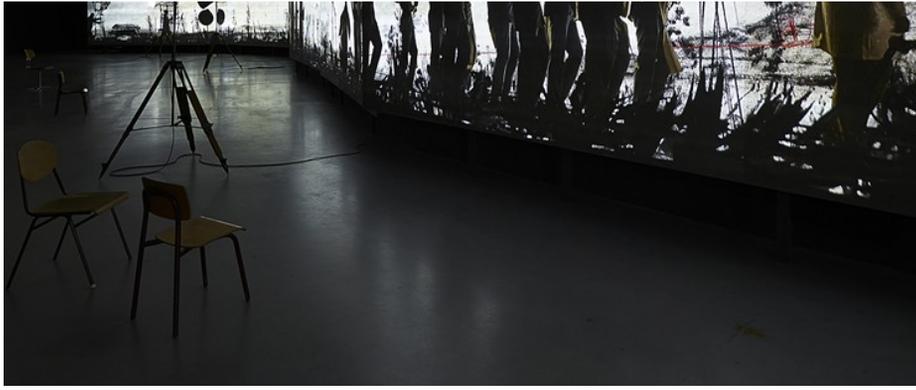
MINHAE SHIM ROTH | MAY 21, 2018 | 8:46AM

Miami is often applauded for its diversity, but the city also has a troubling history of racial and ethnic segregation and cultural misunderstanding. At the Museum of Art and Design at Miami Dade College (MOAD MDC), executive director and chief curator Rina Carvajal is promoting inclusion and celebrating diversity in the Magic City with its cross-disciplinary Living Together series.

“[Miami] is a place where many people came from other places, whether through voluntary immigration, forced displacement, or exile. We are also a frontier city, a crossroads of the Americas, but we have a history of ethnic segregation in the city. [With Living Together], we are trying to find ways to engage the diversity of Miami and think about how our differences might do more than divide us...We want to engage with art and foster a sense of inclusion and belonging here in Miami,” says Carvajal.

The Living Together series, which consisted of performance art, film screenings, and lectures since last January, is concluding with an exhibition by South African artist and activist William Kentridge on the second floor of the Freedom Tower. Titled *More Sweetly Play The Dance*, Kentridge’s massive 130-foot, eight-channel video installation challenges viewers to think critically about humanity, equality, and race, all topics of personal interest to the artist.





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"[The installation] is inspired by current events, like the refugee crisis and the various [global] displacements occurring in the last few years...[Kentridge] is an artist whose work touches issues in a universal way. He's also a political scientist and his parents are human rights lawyers in South Africa. He comes from a Jewish family that is very invested in human rights... He has always been very interested in contemporary life, all the conflicts of contemporary life and the situation of apartheid in South Africa, where he is from," says Carvajal, who previously worked with Kentridge in 2005 when she curated a retrospective of his work at Miami Art Central.

The video footage in *More Sweetly Play The Dance* is partly filmed live and partly an animation of Kentridge's signature charcoal drawings. The installation surrounds viewers, immersing them in a deluge of sound and images that "will involve you completely...[The act of viewing] is very performative...There are people in movement [in the video] around you. You are at the center of this," says Carvajal.

The content of the video installation consists of a funeral procession reminiscent of the *danse macabre*, a New Orleans jazz funeral. "This kaleidoscopic parade of death includes a brass band in the lead; followed by people carrying possessions or shrouded bodies; robed figures holding giant Classical busts, portraits, or birdcages; priests bearing funeral lilies; patients dragging their IV drips; skeletons; and a live ballerina...who wears a military uniform and carries a rifle," describes a press release for the exhibition.



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Though Kentridge's installation is specific to issues in his home country and larger global conflicts, Carvajal believes the lessons are relevant and applicable to cultural tensions in Miami. "I think [Kentridge's] work fits for Miami because of its humanness and how he sees connection between people without any frontiers and any barriers," she says. "The history of segregation in South Africa and the divisions in his country are major themes of his work...Miami is a port [and] within Miami, there are all these different frontiers and the neighborhoods are very separate from each other.

"[Kentridge] is certainly someone who through his work fosters a sense of belonging and inclusion," she adds, "and that's very much something we need here in Miami."

William Kentridge: *More Sweetly Play the Dance*. May 19, 2018 through January 20, 2019 at the Museum of Art and Design at Miami Dade College, Freedom Tower, 600 Biscayne Blvd., Miami; mdcmoad.org. Admission costs \$12 for adults, \$8 for seniors and military, \$5 for students ages 13–17 and college students (with valid ID), and is free for MOAD members, MDC students, faculty, and staff, and children 12 and under.

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