

February 13, 2009

SFMOMA PRESENTS OPERA IN CONJUNCTION WITH WILLIAM KENTRIDGE EXHIBITION

Museum Brings Artist's Restaging of *The Return of Ulysses* to San Francisco

Acknowledging the importance of theatrical work in William Kentridge's oeuvre, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) will present *The Return of Ulysses*, an opera directed by the artist. *The Return of Ulysses* will run at Project Artaud Theater, San Francisco, from Tuesday, March 24, through Saturday, March 28 (Opening Night Benefit Performance March 25), and is a production of Pacific Operaworks, Seattle, with musical direction by Stephen Stubbs and puppetry by Kentridge's longtime collaborator, the Handspring Puppet Company of Cape Town, South Africa.

Kentridge's acclaimed reinterpretation of *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* (Claudio Monteverdi's seminal masterpiece from 1640) was first performed in Brussels in 1998. This limited-engagement revival of the artist's original production will be overseen by director Luc de Wit and features actors and musicians, as well as life-size wooden puppets and projections of Kentridge's signature animated charcoal drawings.

Performed in Italian with English supertitles, *The Return of Ulysses* is based on Homer's *Odyssey*, focusing on the hero's return to Ithaca after his voyage of more than 20 years. Aided by the goddess Minerva and disguised as an old beggar, he reveals his true identity and power as he routs the unwelcome suitors who have plundered his home and wooed his long-suffering wife, Penelope.

Kentridge recreates Monteverdi's classic for our time by setting the story in mid-20th-century South Africa and placing the dying Ulysses in a hospital ward in Johannesburg. Incorporating the artist's video projections—inspired in part by medical films and images of the body taken from X-rays, MRIs, and angiograms—Kentridge's restaging of the piece adds a fascinating visual world to Homer's epic and Monteverdi's music, highlighting the fine line between internal and external forces within the story, as well as the mortal frailty of Ulysses and all mythic heroes.

The Return of Ulysses is presented in conjunction with the exhibition *William Kentridge: Five Themes* (on view at SFMOMA March 14 through May 31, 2009) and marks the latest installment of Live Art at SFMOMA, an ongoing series of innovative public programs designed to embrace the event-driven, performance-based nature of today's most engaging contemporary art.



The Return of Ulysses, production still; photo: Johan Jacobs

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THE RETURN OF ULYSSES

An opera by Claudio Monteverdi

Directed by William Kentridge

Revival directed by Luc de Wit; produced by Pacific Operaworks, Seattle; musical direction by Stephen Stubbs; featuring the Handspring Puppet Company of South Africa

Tuesday–Saturday, March 24–28, 8 p.m.

Opening Night Benefit Performance: March 25

Project Artaud Theater, 450 Florida Street, San Francisco

Performed in Italian with English supertitles; approximately 100 minutes; no intermission.

\$60–\$100 general; \$45–\$85 SFMOMA members, students, and seniors.

For tickets, visit www.sfmoma.org/kentridgeopera or call Ticketmaster at 800.745.3000.

THE RETURN OF ULYSSES OPENING NIGHT BENEFIT PERFORMANCE

Wednesday, March 25

Reception: 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Performance: 8 p.m.

The Modern Art Council, SFMOMA's primary fund-raising auxiliary, hosts the highly anticipated opening night of *The Return of Ulysses*. Mingle at a pre-show cocktail reception, then see the production in its San Francisco debut. All proceeds support SFMOMA's exhibitions and public programs. \$750 Grand Benefactor; \$500 Benefactor; \$350 Patron.

For tickets, call the Modern Art Council at 415.618.3268 or email mac@sfmoma.org. For more information, visit www.sfmoma.org/kentridgeopera.

Major support for the opening night of *The Return of Ulysses* is provided by KPMG LLP. Additional support is provided by Peggy and Willis Newton. Special thanks to our wine sponsor, Napa Valley Vintners.

LIVE ART SPOTLIGHT

Panel Discussion: *The Return of Ulysses*

Stephen Stubbs, Pacific Operaworks; musicians and performers from *The Return of Ulysses*

Saturday, March 28, 2 p.m.

Phyllis Wattis Theater, SFMOMA

Join members of the San Francisco production of William Kentridge's *The Return of Ulysses* for this behind-the-scenes look at making and performing this celebrated restaging of Monteverdi's opera. Expect a puppet demonstration.

\$10 general; \$7 SFMOMA members, students, and seniors. Program tickets are available at the museum (no surcharge) or through www.sfmoma.org/tickets (surcharge applies).

The Return of Ulysses is made possible by generous support from the Koret Foundation, Doris and Donald Fisher, the Mimi and Peter Haas Fund, and Nancy and Steven H. Oliver. Virgin America is the official airline of this production.

William Kentridge: Five Themes is organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Norton Museum of Art. Generous support for the exhibition is provided by the Koret Foundation. Additional support is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts. The San Francisco presentation of the exhibition is made possible by generous support from Doris and Donald Fisher.

Support for Live Art at SFMOMA is provided by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

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Museum hours: Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:45 p.m. Summer hours (Memorial Day to Labor Day): Open at 10 a.m. Closed Wednesdays and the following public holidays: New Year's Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas. The Museum is open the Wednesday between Christmas and New Year's Day.

Koret Visitor Education Center: Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:30 p.m. Summer hours: Open at 10 a.m.

Admission prices: Adults \$12.50; seniors \$8; students \$7. SFMOMA members and children 12 and under are admitted free. Thursday evenings after 6 p.m. admission is half-price. The first Tuesday of each month admission is free.

SFMOMA is easily accessible by Muni, BART, Golden Gate Transit, SamTrans, and Caltrain. Hourly, daily, and monthly parking is available at the SFMOMA Garage at 147 Minna Street. For parking information, call 415.348.0971.

Visit our Web site at www.sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

SFMOMA is supported by a broad array of contributors committed to helping advance its mission. Major annual support is provided by Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, Koret Foundation, and the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund. First Tuesdays are always free, thanks to AT&T. Thursday Nights at SFMOMA are sponsored by Banana Republic. KidstART free admission for children 12 and under is made possible by Charles Schwab & Co., Inc.

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