



For Immediate Release: October 31, 2022

[Online Press Kit](#)



Images of William Kentridge are available for download from the [online press kit](#). Photo by Stella Olivier.

**UC BERKELEY AND CAL PERFORMANCES ANNOUNCE
WILLIAM KENTRIDGE IN RESIDENCE AT UC BERKELEY
FALL 2022 – SPRING 2023**

**Events with world-renowned multi-disciplinary South African artist
will take place in partnership with Cal Performances, BAMPFA,
and the Townsend Center for the Humanities
in November 2022 and March 2023**

Berkeley, October 31, 2022—The University of California, Berkeley and Cal Performances announce a campus-wide residency with world-renowned, multi-disciplinary artist William Kentridge taking place over the course of the 2022–23 academic year. Featuring one of the most respected artists of our time, this residency will provide the UC Berkeley campus and wider Bay Area

community the rare opportunity to engage directly with Kentridge and his artistry via lectures, performances, and events showcasing the breadth and depth of his creative output. For the residency, Kentridge will make two visits to the Berkeley campus, one in November 2022 and one in March 2023. Residency events include a classroom conversation; a visual lecture entitled *To What End*; a live hour-long performance of the Dadaist poem *Ursonate*; a retrospective of Kentridge's films; the US premiere of the artist's musical and theatrical work, *SIBYL*, as part of Cal Performances' season-long *Illuminations* programming; and a gala celebration. The residency will be produced and presented by Cal Performances, the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA), and the Townsend Center for the Humanities. All events are described in more detail [below](#).

South African artist William Kentridge has been revered in the international art world for more than 40 years. Much of his work addresses his homeland's legacies of colonialism and apartheid while also celebrating the nation's vibrant culture. He is known for combining drawing, writing, film, performance, music, theater, and collaborative practices to create works of art grounded in politics, science, literature, and history, all the while maintaining a space for contradiction and uncertainty. Kentridge has created new productions for such leading opera companies as the Metropolitan Opera, English National Opera, and Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie. His multidisciplinary theatrical productions incorporate many of the elements of his artistic practice to create an immersive environment and provide layers of meaning. As for his work as a filmmaker, according to the Harvard Film Archive, "Kentridge is revered for crafting profoundly imaginative films based upon his handmade charcoal drawings and using only a drafting table and camera for their arduous and extended productions. [Refusing any computerized special effects], Kentridge works and reworks his drawings as he films them, making the act of erasure as important as his drawings, keeping the trace as visible as the final figures." In recognition of his vast artistic accomplishments, he has received honorary doctorates from several universities, including Yale University, Columbia University, and the University of London.

Says Kentridge of the opportunity to spend extended time with the students, faculty, and academic community at Berkeley, "My process is very improvisational and collaborative. And I find great value in uncertainty. To me, being in residence at a place like Berkeley provides the chance not only

to show this way of working, but to share the value of allowing the periphery to have its say; to explore the dangers of certainty; and to test how long can one hang onto doubt and uncertainty while still trying to arrive at some kind of meaning in the end. These are practical, artistic considerations, and they also have greater and wider applications outside of the studio, well suited to a place of intellectual exploration like Berkeley. They will be interesting to look at together—in the context of performance, in the context of imagemaking, and in the context of thinking about history and making sense of the world.”

UC Berkeley Chancellor Carol Christ said, “I’m delighted that UC Berkeley has the opportunity to host—over a prolonged period—an artist of such distinction. This serves to enrich the educational experience of our campus community, especially for our students. Berkeley thrives on its dedication to exploration and innovation, which is modeled so quintessentially in the impressive body of work William Kentridge has created. I look forward to hosting Kentridge on campus so we can more directly learn from his inventive expression and, in doing so, engage in a deeper dialogue on critical topics, from art to technology to politics.”

Residency Events

William Kentridge’s 2022–23 UC Berkeley residency will feature activities in a variety of settings, with a special emphasis on events for UC Berkeley students.

The residency kicks off on Friday, November 18 at 3:30pm when the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA), Cal Performances, and the Townsend Center for the Humanities present *To What End*, a visually illustrated lecture by William Kentridge, in the Barbro Osher Theater at BAMPFA. For it, Kentridge will consider provocations and processes in the making of the chamber opera *Waiting for the Sibyl* (2019), which will be presented March 17–19 at Cal Performances as part of the US premiere of his larger work, *SIBYL*. In this lecture, he will also discuss his multifaceted artistic practice and the role and meaning of art. For Kentridge, the lecture, which integrates drawing and other media, is yet another medium of creative expression. “Art,” as Kentridge has said, “is a unique form of knowledge that cannot be fully explained in traditional academic terms. Drawing has the potential to help us understand the most complex issues.” He uses lectures to discuss the use of language and the creation of meaning in his works as he attempts to

enact those processes in the moment. The largest portion of the event's seating is reserved for UC Berkeley students. *To What End* will be recorded and made available online for viewing at a later date.

Upon Kentridge's return in the spring of 2023, Cal Performances will present his performance of Kurt Schwitters' seminal 1932 Dadaist sound poem *Ursonate* at Zellerbach Playhouse on Friday, March 10. Kentridge's dramatic performance of *Ursonate*, which demonstrates his ability as both actor and director, is unique in that it is truly meant to be heard *and* seen. The artist creates a dramatic reading of the work, with the assistance of projections and surprise guests.

BAMPFA continues the residency with *A William Kentridge Film Retrospective* in March and April 2023. The series will showcase animation, documentary, filmed performance, and older works by Kentridge. Much of the artist's animated films involve a process of drawing, partially erasing, and redrawing his charcoal compositions, and the retrospective's program will represent his work across all mediums. The films and dates will be announced in the new year.

While on campus, Kentridge will pay a special visit to the Letters and Science class *Thinking Through Art and Design@Berkeley*, taught by Shannon Jackson and Cal Performances' *Illuminations* Design Committee member Greg Niemeyer, for a unique exchange with students about the artistic process.

Anchoring Kentridge's entire campus residency is the US premiere of his newest production, *SIBYL*, presented by Cal Performances at Zellerbach Hall on March 17–19. *SIBYL* is the centerpiece of Cal Performances' 2022–23 season and the hallmark of its season-long *Illuminations* programming, themed "Human and Machine." Performed in two parts, *SIBYL* is inspired by the Greek myth of the Cumaean Sibyl, and wrestles with the human desire to know the future as well as humankind's helplessness before powers and technologies that obscure that knowledge. Both parts feature music composed by frequent Kentridge collaborative partners, choral composer and performer Nhlanhla Mahlangu and pianist Kyle Shepherd. The first part of the program, *The Moment Has Gone*, is a film by Kentridge set to live music and featuring a piano score by Shepherd and an all-male vocal chorus led by Mahlangu. The chamber opera *Waiting for the Sibyl*, performed on the second half of the program, features nine vocalists and dancers interacting with Kentridge's

distinctive stage design, along with hand-painted sets, animated ink drawings, swirling projected text, collage, and shadow play.

On the opening night of *SIBYL*, Friday, March 17, **Cal Performances' 2023 Gala** honoring Kentridge kicks off with a festive pre-concert cocktail hour at Zellerbach Playhouse. Attendance at the opening night performance of *SIBYL* in Zellerbach Hall is followed by a dazzling post-concert dinner in UC Berkeley's Pauley Ballroom designed by Nopa chef Laurence Jossel, with Kentridge as the guest of honor. A week prior, Gala sponsors will enjoy a private performance-lecture on the making of *SIBYL* with William Kentridge at Meyer Sound's Pearson Theater. All proceeds from the 2023 Gala will support Cal Performances' mission to produce and present performances of the highest artistic quality, enhanced by programs that explore compelling intersections of education and the performing arts.

Of the residency, and the US premiere of *SIBYL* at Berkeley, Cal Performances' executive and artistic director Jeremy Geffen expressed his enthusiasm for Kentridge and Cal Performances' role in bringing him to campus. "Since *SIBYL*'s premiere in Rome, Cal Performances has worked to bring the production to the UC Berkeley campus. *SIBYL* inspired and is perfectly aligned with our *Illuminations* theme of 'Human and Machine,' as it explores the many roles technology plays in both catalyzing and challenging creative expression and human communication. And this theme is not only reflected in Kentridge's creative output, but in the artist himself: Across artistic disciplines, Kentridge has been on the forefront of examining the complexity of humans' relationship to technology, particularly the real human implications of applying precise yet unfeeling data generated by machines to individual lives. Few artists have so profoundly and insightfully expressed such a variety of thought, beauty, and inspiration across such a broad spectrum of media. We are thrilled to share his genius with the UC Berkeley and greater Bay Area communities."

William Kentridge is no stranger to UC Berkeley. In 2009, as the Townsend Center's prestigious Avenali Lecturer, he participated in a panel discussion on "Learning From the Absurd," archived on video [here](#). In May of 2015, Cal Performances co-commissioned the remounting of South Africa's Handspring Puppet Company's acclaimed dramatic work, *Ubu and the Truth Commission*, featuring Kentridge and puppet master Adrian Kohler. Through Kentridge's singular style, the work

combined animation, live actors, film, music, and a troupe of meticulously crafted puppets in an examination of the Apartheid regime and its aftermath.

Most of the residency events are open to the public, some with limited availability. Tickets and/or registration may be required. More information about tickets and individual events can be found at calperformances.org/kentridge-residency.

Calendar Editors Please note:

**William Kentridge in Residency at UC Berkeley
November 2022–March 2023
Calendar of Events**

Friday, November 18, 3:30pm

Barbro Osher Theater
BAMPFA
2155 Center Street,
Berkeley

BAMPFA, Cal Performances, and the Townsend Center for the Humanities present

To What End

Visual Lecture by William Kentridge

William Kentridge will consider provocations and processes in the making of the chamber opera *Waiting for the Sibyl* (2019), which will be presented as part of the US premiere of his newest production *SIBYL* at Cal Performances on March 17–19, 2023. For Kentridge, the lecture format is another medium of creative expression in which he discusses the use of language and creating meaning in his works and attempts to enact those processes in the moment.

Event page: bampfa.org/event/lecture-william-kentridge

Tickets: Tickets are free for UC Berkeley students; \$14 for the general public; \$8 for BAMPFA members; and \$10 for UC Berkeley faculty and staff, non-UC Berkeley students, and any individuals who are disabled, 65+, or 18 and under.

The free UC Berkeley student tickets will be available [online](#) beginning at 11am on November 1 or at the BAMPFA admissions desk beginning at 11am on November 2. Reserving a ticket is required and students must present a valid Cal 1 ID card to be admitted. Tickets must be picked up before 3:15pm on the day of the lecture.

Tickets for the general public go on sale at 11am on November 4.

Tickets are available at bampfa.org/event/lecture-william-kentridge. More information can also be found at calperformances.org/kentridge-residency.

Friday, March 10, 8pm

Zellerbach Playhouse
Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley campus

Cal Performances presents

Ursonate

Performed by William Kentridge

William Kentridge embodies the spirit of Dada in this performance piece based on the seminal 1932 sound poem *Ursonate*—a poetic and musical work by renowned artist Kurt Schwitters. Unlike a classical sonata, *Ursonate* requires only the human voice for instrumentation. Through his performance of this piece, Kentridge reveals his talents as an actor, as well as a director, orienting the work not only to the listener but also to the viewer. He will create a dramatic reading of the work, with the assistance of projections and surprise guests.

Event page: Tickets and more information can be found at calperformances.org/kentridge-residency.

Tickets: Free to UC Berkeley faculty, staff, and students, and \$10 for non-campus affiliates.

Friday, March 17, 2023, 7pm

Saturday, March 18, 2023, 8pm

Sunday, March 19, 2023, 3pm

Zellerbach Hall
Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley campus

Cal Performances presents

William Kentridge's *SIBYL* (music: Nhlanhla Mahlangu, Kyle Shepherd; US Premiere)

Program:

Part 1: *The Moment Has Gone*

Part 2: *Waiting for the Sibyl*

Myth, magic, music, movement, and imagery combine in South African visual artist William Kentridge's newest production. Presented in two parts, *SIBYL* is inspired by the Greek myth of the Cumaean Sibyl, and wrestles with the human desire to know our future, and our helplessness before powers and technologies that obscure that knowledge. The chamber opera *Waiting for the Sibyl* features nine vocalists and dancers interacting with Kentridge's distinctive stage design, which energizes the action of the performers through the use of hand-painted sets, animated ink drawings, swirling projected text, collage, and shadow play. The music in *SIBYL* is composed by Nhlanhla Mahlangu and Kyle Shepherd, and layers South African vocal harmonies with rhythmic chants and piano accompaniment. The first part of the program, *The Moment Has Gone*, is a film by Kentridge with live music featuring a piano score by Shepherd and an all-male vocal chorus led by Mahlangu.

A talk with William Kentridge and cast members follows the matinee performance on Sunday, March 19, free to all ticket holders.

This performance is part of Cal Performances' 2022–23 season [Illuminations: "Human and Machine"](#) themed programming.

Event page: calperformances.org/william-kentridges-sibyl

Tickets: \$42–\$125 (prices subject to change). Tickets are available at calperformances.org, by phone at (510) 642-9988, or in person at the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, Tuesday–Friday, 12–5:30pm and Saturday–Sunday, 1–5 pm.

Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Also through Cal Performances' [Golden Bear Circle program](#), a limited number of \$10 tickets for some of the most desirable seats in the theater will be made available to UC Berkeley students for the Saturday, March 18 performance of *SIBYL*; available starting March 4. More information about student tickets and discounts can be found at calperformances.org/ucb-students.

Friday, March 17, 2023

5:30pm Cocktail Reception

7pm Performance

8:30pm Gala Dinner

Zellerbach Playhouse,

Zellerbach Hall,

Pauley Ballroom,

UC Berkeley campus

**Cal Performances' 2023 Gala
Honoring William Kentridge**

Cal Performances presents a Gala evening honoring world-renowned artist William Kentridge, centered around the US premiere of Kentridge's *SIBYL*. Gala festivities begin with a lively cocktail reception at Zellerbach Playhouse. This will be followed by the opening night performance—and US premiere—of William Kentridge's *SIBYL* at Zellerbach Hall. After the performance, guests will cross the plaza to Pauley Ballroom for an elegant dinner designed by special guest Chef Laurence Jossel, founder and owner of San Francisco's Nopa restaurant. One week prior, Gala sponsors will enjoy a private performance-lecture on the making of *SIBYL* with William Kentridge at Meyer Sound's Pearson Theatre. All proceeds from the 2023 Gala will support Cal Performances' mission to produce and present performances of the highest artistic quality, enhanced by programs that explore compelling intersections of education and the performing arts.

Event page: calperformances.org/gala

Sponsorship and Tickets: \$1,000–\$100,000. Available at calperformances.org/gala or by contacting Cal Performances' Development office at 510.642.8653 or donate@calperformances.org.

March–April 2023
Details to be announced

Barbro Osher Theater
BAMPFA
2155 Center Street, Berkeley

BAMPFA presents
A William Kentridge Film Retrospective

BAMPFA's film retrospective will offer audiences a chance to see William Kentridge's creative work in the areas of animation, documentary, and filmed performance. Kentridge employs a hand-crafted animation technique, photographing his charcoal and pastel drawings for projection at various stages of progression. His primary images coupled with an innovative use of erasure lends a strong allegorical quality to short narratives that often deal with themes of cultural displacement and political oppression. Complete program details will be announced by early February on the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive's website, bampfa.org.

Press Contacts:

Louisa Spier, Cal Performances
lspier@calperformances.org (510) 643-6714

Albert Imperato, 21C Media Group
aimperato@21cmediagroup.com (917) 825-3440