

A WORK OF LIGHT

and Shade



Gallery view of the William Kentridge exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts, London © William Kentridge. Photo: © Royal Academy of Arts, London / David Parry

David Atkinson Lighting Design used bold, high contrast illumination to underscore the dramatic work of artist William Kentridge at the Royal Academy of Arts in London.

Over the last decade, William Kentridge shows have captured the imagination of the public.

Always large in scale, ambitious in scope and astonishing in execution, he is South Africa's most celebrated living artist.

Kentridge's globally acclaimed practice spans across etching, drawing, collage, film and sculpture to tapestry, theatre, opera, dance and music.

The Johannesburg-born artist developed his early work during the apartheid regime of the 1980s, and his electrifying large-scale productions and animations have since been shown across the world.



Gallery view of the William Kentridge exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, showing miniature theatre model and props for *Waiting for the Sibyl*, 2019-2022. Scenography: Sabine Theunissen; collapsing chairs engineered by Jonas Lundquist. Loan courtesy William Kentridge Studio, Johannesburg. © William Kentridge. Photo: © Royal Academy of Arts, London / David Parry



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For his latest 'blockbuster' show at Royal Academy of Arts in London, the biggest exhibition of the artist's work in the UK, David Atkinson Lighting Design (DALD) was tasked with developing a lighting strategy to match his striking works.

After all, many pieces have never been seen before, and some have been made specifically for the show.

Spanning a 40-year career, there are large 4-metre wide tapestries, his signature charcoal trees and flowers, and the breath-taking three-screen film, 'Notes Towards a Model Opera,' 2015.

The visitors watch as typewriters turn into trees, a hunted rhino somersaults with a megaphone, and a coffee plunger drills into the depths of a goldmine.

The Royal Academy and exhibition designer Sabine Theunissen's brief to DALD was for the lighting to create a theatrically immersive yet sensitive quality to the exhibition, as well as adhering to any conservation constraints.

On entering the Vestibule the visitors are presented with Kentridge's large immersive sculpture 'Action, 2019'.

The exhibit is lit by tightly controlled zoom profile fixtures positioned at a steep angle to accentuate its form and texture.

A cool 4000K LED source was chosen to give high contrast between the exhibit and dark background.

Most of the galleries were either lit by medium or broad wall wash optic track fixtures subject to the scale of works being exhibited and, in some cases, fitted with warm or cool colour correction filters.

Control of the lighting throughout the exhibition was critical to help offset the exhibits within the galleries as well for the audio-visual projections which play an important part in the immersive experience.

DALD utilised the Royal Academy's stock of iGuzzini Palco fixtures with various accessories along with a supplement of LED zoom profiles and practical fixtures, which were all controlled via Casambi.

The 'William Kentridge' exhibition has received outstanding five-star acclaim from the world's press. ■

PROJECT CREDITS

Lighting Design: David Atkinson Lighting Design

Lighting Team: Mark Strange, Michael Lynch, Jason Tuffin, Quentin Jarman, Anita Sidoruk

Lighting Suppliers: Enliten, iGuzzini, Prolights

Lighting Control: Casambi

Exhibition Design: Sabine Theunissen of Squatelier with Julie Vandendael, Juliette Cavenaile and Aurelie Ranalli

Graphic Design: Daly & Lyon

Curators: Adrian Locke with Rose Thompson

Exhibition Manager: Flora Fricker with Belén Lasheras Díaz and Helena Cooper