

# Press Release



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## Newark Museum Debuts Important Acquisition by William Kentridge in Lead Up to Reinstallation of Arts of Global Africa Collection

### William Kentridge's *What Will Come* (2007) Installation on view January through May 2017

**NEWARK, NJ:** In anticipation of the relocation and reinstallation of its Arts of Global Africa collection in November 2017, the Newark Museum debuts a newly acquired video installation by artist William Kentridge, *What Will Come* (2007). The installation will be on view in the Arts of Global Africa's dedicated space for video art from January through May 2017.

The title originates from a Ghanaian proverb, "What will come, has already come," a reference to the repetitive nature of history. The work is inspired by Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, in which 275,000 Ethiopians lost their lives. Among them were a large number of civilians who were gassed, a fact denied by the Italian government until 1995.

Kentridge, based in Johannesburg, South Africa, created the film using his signature technique of drawing and erasing on a sheet of paper and filming the process frame by frame. The animated film is anamorphic — the distorted images projected on the table can only be read correctly in the mirror-like surface of the steel cylinder at the center. Through this optical illusion, the artist invites reflection on the relativity of perception, including the questionable truths and distortions of the past. The film unfolds as a series of visual fragments that spin around the table, stop, then reverse. Images of fighter planes, a gas mask and a globe teetering on legs accompany a sound track that combines the shriek of bombs, an Italian military song and the squeals of children playing.

"This innovative work by William Kentridge — an international artist among the most influential and respected in the 21st century — is a continuation of his focus on patterns of political oppression, which began with a sustained exploration of the history of apartheid in his homeland of South Africa," said Christa Clarke, Senior Curator of the Arts of Global Africa. "Considered to be the first anamorphic film, *What Will Come* is an important acquisition that

significantly enriches our collection of contemporary arts of global Africa, indeed our overall collection of contemporary art.”

In describing the project, Kentridge has commented, “I’m interested in machines that make you aware of the process of seeing and aware of what you do when you construct the world by looking. This is interesting in itself, but more as a broad-based metaphor for how we understand the world.”

The Newark Museum began collecting arts of Africa within a decade of its founding in 1909 and first exhibited African art in 1926, when the Museum opened in its new building. It opened its first permanent gallery devoted to African art in 1970. Since then, the Museum has continued to actively collect and display the arts of Africa, often ahead of the curve in its representation of new or lesser known genres. The Newark Museum is widely considered to be a pioneer in developing an extensive collection of modern and contemporary arts of Africa over the past 15 years.

“With holdings spanning from north Africa to its southern tip and beyond, this collection is notable for its embrace of the entire continent and its diaspora,” said Director and CEO Steven Kern. “The breadth of artistic representation and inclusion of historic as well as modern and contemporary art also distinguish the collection of nearly 6,000 objects.”

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