

Contact :
Valérie Abrial
valerie.abrial@lelaboratoire.org
+ 33 (0)1 78 09 49 55
+ 33 (0)6 46 20 03 77

THE REFUSAL OF TIME - PROLOGUE

William Kentridge
in collaboration with Peter Galison and Philip Miller

25 March - 26 June 2011



© John Hodgkiss

Le Laboratoire

4, rue du Bouloi 75001 Paris
+33 (0)1 78 09 49 50
www.lelaboratoire.org



CONTENTS

-
- p 3 Press Release
- p 4 From the process to the artwork
- p 8 Presentation by Caroline Naphegyi, artistic director of
Le Laboratoire
- p 10 Conversation between David Edwards, founder of
Le Laboratoire & Peter Galison
- P 14 Two questions to Philip Miller, composer
- p 16 Biographies
- p 20 Partners
- p 21 Pratical information

Le Laboratoire

4, rue du Bouloi 75001 Paris
+33 (0)1 78 09 49 50
www.laboratoire.org

artscience member of
labs ●●●●

PRESS REALESE

What is time? How can time be realized? Can time be denied? Questions simultaneously physical, technological and philosophical in nature arise in the manner of an enigma both realistic and subjective. As part of experiment No 12 in Le Laboratoire, the South African artist William Kentridge and the American scientist Peter Galison explore the simultaneity of time as a creative process.

Known for his animated films made by repeated drawing and erasure of charcoal drawings, William Kentridge is one of few South African artists to enjoy international repute. His visual work, poetic and politically engaged, denounces the evils of apartheid and colonialism through symbolic themes such as equality and justice. William Kentridge works across multiple media including printmaking, collage, sculpture, performance art, theatre and opera.

His meeting with Peter Galison, History of Science Professor at Joseph Pellegrino University and Physics Professor at Harvard University (and author of the famous essay *Einstein's Clocks, Poincaré's Maps: Empires of Time*), highlights creative development at the frontiers of art and science.

According to Kentridge, *"The aesthetic and metaphoric possibilities unleashed by the work of Peter Galison are extremely rich. The pre-history of relativity, with its mixture of scientific and philosophical questions is still intriguing, and the mechanics of these questions provide a lot of the visual material for exploring the metaphoric implications. The themes of simultaneity, of time slowing down and speeding up, synchronization and its lack, are all good, and suggestive of many routes to follow. At the moment I'm interested in something which floats between being a performance piece or an installation, between an opera and a lecture, something which has a performance component, but remains afterwards"*.

The exhibition *The Refusal of Time - Prologue* is produced with the Marian Goodman Gallery, the Galleria Lia Rumma and the Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg.

Le Laboratoire

4, rue du Bouloi 75001 Paris
+33 (0)1 78 09 49 50
www.lelaboratoire.org

artscience a member of
labs ●●●●

FROM THE PROCESS TO THE ARTWORK

From the encounter between William Kentridge and Peter Galison came out a research, which is broken down over three notions of time:

- Newton's Time
- Einstein's Time
- The black hole

Temporality and musicality are essential elements of the scenography from which echoes a cycle of songs resonating with the installations.

Images, drawings, photographies, videos, are mixed with shadows of objects, metronomes of pyramidal shapes in reference to Egypt, phonographs to read books, choruses of megaphones, mechanical percussions, ballets of telegraphs

Objects borrowed from the Arts et Métiers Museum of Paris are part of the pieces presented in this installation.



© John Hodgkiss

Le Laboratoire

4, rue du Bouloi 75001 Paris
+33 (0)1 78 09 49 50
www.laboratoire.org

artscience a member of
labs ●●●●



© John Hodgkiss

Le Laboratoire

4, rue du Bouloi 75001 Paris
+33 (0)1 78 09 49 50
www.laboratoire.org

artscience
a member of
labs ●●●●



© John Hodgkiss

Le Laboratoire

4, rue du Bouloi 75001 Paris
+33 (0)1 78 09 49 50
www.laboratoire.org

artscience
labs 



Drawing William Kentridge © John Hodgkiss

Le Laboratoire

4, rue du Bouloi 75001 Paris
+33 (0)1 78 09 49 50
www.laboratoire.org

artscience
labs 

PRESENTATION BY CAROLINE NAPHEGYI, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF LE LABORATOIRE

For thirty years now, William Kentridge has been creating a polymorphous opus, one that is narrative and dreamlike, political and humanist. One of its main components is his highly personal *drawing for projection* technique for animation, which uses charcoal drawings. In counterpoint to the solo work he carries out in his studio, he brings together a team of loyal collaborative partners* in the production of large-scale installations; they contribute to set design, costuming, stage direction, musical composition, engineering, photography, and editing. This team has accompanied Kentridge in his work since the creation and staging in 2005 of W. A. Mozart's *The Magic Flute* at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels. Under Kentridge's leadership, they meet for work-shopping sessions where they nurture and develop his proposals. His approach is similar to that of the director who, through improvisation, progressively adjusts his strategy, gradually finding cumulative final form.

The most recent of these workshops took place in his Johannesburg studio where William Kentridge and his team prepared the exhibition *The Refusal of Time, prologue*, presented at the Laboratoire from 25 March to 26 June 2011.

Always intrigued by provocative collisions of ideas and projects, William Kentridge was naturally drawn to the proposal made by David Edwards to meet physicist and science historian Peter Galison – author of, most notably, *Einstein's Clocks, Poincaré's Maps: Empires of Time* – for an unprecedented collaboration.

Cinema can fragment, recompose, reverse and restructure time; animation takes this temporal plasticity even further. "Animation, such as I practise it, corresponds to the non-permanent, provisional nature of the world," said William Kentridge in an interview. Like the drawings for projection, where the narrative of the drawing comes alive through successive layers deleted and added, the process used during this workshop followed the same principle of stratification.

Le Laboratoire

4, rue du Bouloi 75001 Paris
+33 (0)1 78 09 49 50
www.lelaboratoire.org

artscience member of
labs ●●●●

CONVERSATION BETWEEN DAVID EDWARDS, FOUNDER OF LE LABORATOIRE & PETER GALISON

David Edwards: You and William have shared ideas very fluidly from that first conversation in a cafe in New York a little over a year ago. What has resulted is a fascinating artistic experiment around our understanding and perception of time. Can you identify some of the elements that made your conversation, and collaboration, so naturally productive?

Peter Galison: First, David, your commitment to making a space in the culture—and on the ground—for art and science has been remarkable. We were in that café because you organized the meeting. Thank you!

It is true: William Kentridge and I needed no time at all to start this conversation. We lost no steps in the quicksands that supposedly divide art from science or philosophy. One common pitfall consists of a too-easy aesthetization of scientific imagery. Alas, the image-ways are full with scientific figures, often in jazzed up color and composition, that is presented as art: from astronomy, nanoscience, or simulations. Another patch of watery sand threatens the traveler in these borderlands when art becomes just another vehicle for illustrating scientific ideas. We skipped those traps.

Instead, we quickly converged on something I wouldn't quite call a style—not even, exactly, a topic, but rather a shared sensibility. How should I put this? We both instantly discovered that we were amused by certain stories, scenarios in which very abstract things are embodied in particularly material circumstances. We began by talking about William's *The Nose* that was, during our conversations, about to go into production at the Met; we talked about my work (Einstein's Clocks, Poincare's Maps) on synchronized time, relativity, and vicissitudes of stringing undersea cables over mountain ranges and oceans. Both of us are drawn in our work, over and over, to something about the late 19th century and early 20th, a moment in which older visible, Victorian technologies link to the staggering abstractions of the 20th century. I like it that William so often returns to these older mechanisms to get at deep themes—typewriters and spire-like antennae, radio microphones and bicycle wheels. We both find ways of approaching political issues embedded in circumstances not ideology.

Le Laboratoire

4, rue du Bouloi 75001 Paris
+33 (0)1 78 09 49 50
www.lelaboratoire.org

artscience member of
labs ●●●●

What the arts have in common, and what I believe has for all too long made them hard to accept in the classically structured university, is that they are about making things: films, canvases, plays, hypermedia productions, concerts. Scientists often understand the importance of making better than the humanists—and for this reason, the creation of collaborations along the science-art axis has often been quite fruitful. Perhaps this is why one sees a plethora of scientist-artist collaborations these days. I am thinking, for example, of the joint work by two colleagues philosopher-biologist Peter Godfrey-Smith who, with singer Jane Sheldon, created a remarkable Darwin opera; or my colleague, theoretical physicist Lisa Randall, who worked made an opera, *Hypermusic*, working with IRCAM, composer Hector Parra, and painter Matthew Ritchie.

The old, dead weight of the distinction between head and hand work falls on our backs and slows us down. We don't need or want that division any more. If in concert with the social and human sciences, film or theater or locative digital work can help us understand better what cities or wars or selfhood is like today, well, then that would be great. If scientists and artists can work on imaginative boundaries to find ways of exploring the new concepts life and cosmology, that would be all to the good. It could help us better understand these ideas, all while opening up realms all too often hermetically sealed from one another.

I would like nothing more than to see a generation of students and faculty who see the complementary force of art making, humanities and sciences. It would make the university a more vibrant place for this, our new century.

TWO QUESTIONS TO PHILIP MILLER, COMPOSER



You have composed the music for/with William Kentridge for several of his projects. More specifically for *The Refusal of time*, how would you describe the collaborative process, what was the starting point?

Philip Miller : The collaborative process with William often starts with a conversation about a text or a piece of music or an image that he has in his mind at the start of the project. In the case of *The Refusal of Time*, several conversations had started simultaneously. We had started to find a musical language for a film about a group of metronomes, playing out of sync with each other in his series, *Carnets d' Egypte* at the Louvre. This idea of a polyphony of tempi seemed to have set us on a musical path.

But then William also played me the beautifully lyrical song *Spectacle du Rose* by Berlioz. Using a two bar fragment from this song, I developed a composition with the singer Anne Masina, which explored human anger and rage. It became a furious "protest song" which played with the notion of resistance against the tyranny of Time. As I worked with Anne in the recording studio, she made a particular exclamatory utterance in Zulu, something close to "ah-ah!" (a literal translation in English would be "no-no!") This aural gesture seemed to connect to the very heart of the idea of the refusal of time.

Berlioz's music and others will become part of the final composition. Machines playing piano and drums, are mixed with lyrical voices, chorus, and other experimented musicians. You play with such freedom with these 'high and low' cultural repertoires. How would you describe the nature of your music?

P.M. : As a composer, in South Africa, I am constantly working across musical genres and languages which jostle up against each other. I am often very curious to see how the barriers breakdown between the so-called "high art" forms of classical music, and other musical styles, whether it be African drumming or a Zulu a capella choir, like the Thulisa Brothers Choir who participated in the workshop.



Le Laboratoire

4, rue du Bouloi 75001 Paris
+33 (0)1 78 09 49 50
www.laboratoire.org





This impetus to mix up different musical languages together is not for the sake of some kind of utopian musical dream. It is rather to play with the way sounds constantly collide with each other in our every day world. The notion of a discreet “musical sound or language” seems to me very artificial. Living in a city like Johannesburg, a perfectly normal musical sound world, is me driving in my car listening to Schubert piano sonatas, interrupted by the hooting of irate taxi drivers, cars next to me playing traditional rap music called kwaito on the car stereo, a street evangelist, preaching in the street to his congregation, and above me I hear the sounds of the raucous, hadeda birds in the sky.

BIOGRAPHIES

William Kentridge

Kentridge was born in Johannesburg on 1955. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Politics and African Studies and then a diploma in Fine Arts from the Johannesburg Art Foundation. At the end of the 1970s, he studied mime and theatre at the École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq in Paris.

Between 1975 and 1991, he was acting and directing in Johannesburg's Junction Avenue Theatre Company. In the 1980s, he worked on television films and series as art director.

In 1989, Kentridge created his first animated movie, *Johannesburg, 2nd Greatest City After Paris*, in the series "Drawings for Projection". For the series, he used a technique that would become a feature of his work - successive charcoal drawings, always on the same sheet of paper, contrary to the traditional animation technique in which each movement is drawn on a separate sheet. His animations deal with political and social themes from a personal and, at times, autobiographical point of view, since the author includes his self-portrait in many of his works.

This same animation technique was used for *Sobriety, Obesity and Growing Old* (1991), *Felix in Exile* (1994), *History of the Main Complaint* (1996), and *Stereoscope* (1999). In 1999, he created *Shadow Procession* using black carton cut-outs on pages of books and cards.

His participations include Documenta X in Kassel (1997), São Paulo's 29th Art Biennial (1998) and the Venice Art Biennial (1999), as well as solo exhibitions in London, New York, Sydney, Kyoto and Johannesburg. He has also directed opera works including *Wozzeck* (Berg), *The Magic Flute* (Mozart), and *The Nose* (Chostakovitch), and has worked with the composer François Sarhan on a musical piece entitled *I Am Not Me, the Horse is not Mine*.



DR

Le Laboratoire

4, rue du Bouloi 75001 Paris
+33 (0)1 78 09 49 50
www.laboratoire.org

Peter L. Galison

Peter Louis Galison is the Pellegrino University Professor in History of Science and Physics at Harvard University.

Galison received his Ph.D. from Harvard University in both Physics and the History of Science in 1983. His publications include *Image and Logic: A Material Culture of Microphysics* (1997) and *Einstein's Clocks, Poincaré's Maps: Empires of Time*. His most recent book (2007), co-authored with Lorraine Daston, is titled *Objectivity*.

In *Image and Logic*, Galison explored the fundamental rift rising in the physical sciences: whether singular, visual accounts of scientific phenomenon would be accepted as the dominant language of proof, or whether statistically significant, frequently repeated results would dominate the field. This division, Galison claims, can be seen in the conflicts amongst high-energy physicists investigating new particles, some of whom offer up statistically significant and frequently replicated analysis of the new particle passing through electric fields, others of whom offer up a single picture of a particle behaving—in a single instance—in a way that cannot be explained by the characteristics of existing known particles.

His work with Lorraine Daston developed the concept of “mechanical objectivity” which is often used in scholarly literature, and he has done pioneering work on applying the anthropological notion of “trading zones” to scientific practice. He has developed a film for the History Channel on the development of the hydrogen bomb, and has done work on the intersection of science with other disciplines, in particular art (along with his wife, Caroline A. Jones) and architecture. He is on the editorial board of *Critical Inquiry* and was a MacArthur Fellow in 1996.



DR

Le Laboratoire

4, rue du Bouloi 75001 Paris
+33 (0)1 78 09 49 50
www.laboratoire.org



Galison has been involved in the production of two documentary films. The first, *The Ultimate Weapon: The H-Bomb Dilemma*, was about the political and scientific decisions behind the creation of the first hydrogen bomb in the United States, and premiered on the History Channel in 2000. The second, and most recent, *Secrecy*, Galison directed with Harvard filmmaker Robb Moss, is about the costs and benefits of government secrecy, and premiered at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival.

Before moving to Harvard, Galison taught for several years at Stanford University where he was professor of History, Philosophy, and Physics. He is considered part of the “Stanford School” of philosophy of science along with Ian Hacking, John Dupré, and Nancy Cartwright (philosopher).

Le Laboratoire

4, rue du Bouloi 75001 Paris
+33 (0)1 78 09 49 50
www.laboratoire.org

Philip Miller

Philip Miller is a South African composer based in Johannesburg. Born in 1964, he first practiced law before establishing a career in music. His work is not easily categorized, often developing out of collaborative projects in theatre, film and video.

One of his most significant collaborators is the internationally acclaimed artist, William Kentridge. His music to Kentridge's animated films, and multimedia installations, has been heard in some of the most prestigious museums and galleries all over the world, including MoMA, SFMOMA, The Guggenheim Museums (both New York and Berlin) La Fenice Opera House and the Tate Modern. Out of this collaboration, the live concert series *Nine Drawings for Projection* and *Sounds from the Black Box* has evolved, touring Australia, the UK, Germany, Italy, Belgium, France and the US.



DR

In 2007, Miller conceived and composed *Rewind, a Cantata for voice, tape and testimony*, an award-winning choral work, based on the testimonies of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. The cantata had its international debut in New York at the Celebrate Brooklyn Festival and has been performed at the Williams College 62 Centre for Theatre and Dance, the Market Theatre, Johannesburg, and the Royal Festival Hall, London.

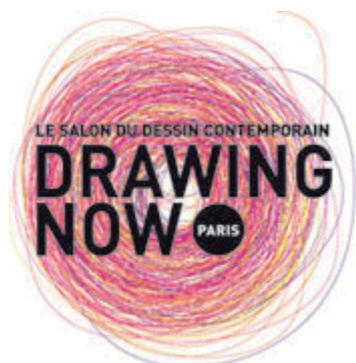
In 2008, Miller's sound installation *Special Boy* was selected as a finalist for Spier Contemporary, a major, national art exhibition in South Africa. Amongst his more recent commissions, Miller's composition *Can you hear that?* was performed for the New York-based Ensemble Pi in 2009.

He has released many CDs of his music which include: *Rewind, a Cantata for voice, tape and testimony*, *William Kentridges' 9 Drawings for Projection*, *Black Box/ Chambre Noire*, *The Thula Project*, *African Soundscapes* and *Shona Malanga*.

Le Laboratoire

4, rue du Bouloi 75001 Paris
+33 (0)1 78 09 49 50
www.laboratoire.org

PARTNERS



CARROUSEL DU LOUVRE
25 / 28 MARS 2011
5^E EDITION

EPSON[®]

With the participation
of DICRÉAM

MEDIA PARTNERS

PARIS **art**

CONNAISSANCE DES
arts

ARTINFO
FRANCE

art
press

POUR LA
SCIENCE

ANOUS PARIS

Capitole
Télérama
Télérama.fr

Le Laboratoire

Press Contact

4, rue du Bouloi 75001 Paris
+33 (0)1 78 09 49 50
www.laboratoire.org

Valérie Abrial
+33 (0)1 78 09 49 55
+ 33 (0)6 46 20 03 77
valerie.abrial@laboratoire.org

