

# Expert excess in William Kentridge's largest exhibition

## *Why Should I Hesitate*



By Ruth Cooper

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One could imagine that an oeuvre exhibition of 40 years of prolific art-making, plus a few new major works, would be overwhelming and you would be right, but in the best way possible.

William Kentridge's current and largest exhibition to date, *Why Should I Hesitate*, has been so expertly edited and curated as well as neatly split between two galleries – the Zeitz MOCAA and Norval Foundation – one can really get a sense of the artist's development, way of working and overarching themes in an accessible and understandable way.



### Putting Drawings to Work – Zeitz MOCAA

The Zeitz MOCAA dedicates three floors to Kentridge's drawings, stop-frame animation, video, prints, sculpture, tapestry and video created between 1976 and 2019. Interactive installations that aim to recreate the look and feel of his library and studio at home are also included. There was even an idea, if there was more space on offer, to create a room of failed artworks – all those scribbles and ideas that didn't just quite work.



Creating a space that was approachable and relatable as well as illustrated the art making process was a major aim for curators Azu Nwagbogu and Tammy Langtry.

*"When dealing with an icon, it's necessary to demystify that – make it approachable, tangible for young artists who can come here and feel like they can deal with this reality and, I think, this is what the function is on the studio room in this exhibition.*

*"It might look like magic but it's not, there is a process to it. Without preaching, it is more about encouragement – to make the first step, to move, to make a mark and to see how a simple drawing can become a film, a sculpture," stated Azu Nwagbogu at the Q&A session with the artist at a recent media preview.*

The title – *Why Should I Hesitate* – becoming a circular instruction to Kentridge but also the viewers; a note of encouragement to inspire action.



William Kentridge talks inspiration for upcoming exhibition

23 Jul 2019



## Sculpture – Norval Foundation

The Norval Foundation focusses on sculptural works from Kentridge including bronze sculptures, musical pieces and some large-scale new works

*“ I’m interested in things that hover at the edge of meaning, where it’s a riddle you feel you should but can’t quite find a complete solution to,” Kentridge ”*

One can most keenly see this in his new sculptural works; massive depictions of his iconic motifs such as the megaphone on a tripod, an old school film camera and a giant ampersand instil a feeling of a 3D hieroglyphic/emoji-like alphabet, if you will, and hint at the deeper geopolitical discussion that often informs Kentridge’s work.



While Kentridge’s interest and involvement in theatre, performance and sound are most beautifully illustrated with *Singer Trio*, a lineup of three synchronised Singer Sewing Machines topped with speakers harmonising an African folk song.

*“Kentridge’s sculptures embrace a spontaneous approach and have recently evolved towards the massive and the monumental. Simultaneously, and in tension to the monumental aspects of his practice, he is revealed to be a choreographer as much as a sculptor,”* says Karel Nel, senior advising curator at Norval Foundation.



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As Kentridge mentioned in the Q&A, a big body of work like this becomes a self-portrait of sorts, capturing and tangibly illustrating the thoughts and desires of the creator – and what a creator he is! Don't miss out on this must-visit exhibition of one of South Africa's most iconic and prolific artists.

*Why Should I Hesitate: Sculpture is currently on view at Norval Foundation's Atrium and Galleries 2-8 in Tokai till 23 March 2020 and Why Should I Hesitate: Putting Drawings To Work is currently on display at Zeitz MOCAA at the V&A Waterfront's Silo District from till 23 March 2020.*

## ABOUT RUTH COOPER

Ruth is the production manager at Bizcommunity. [ruth@bizcommunity.com](mailto:ruth@bizcommunity.com)

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