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146 THE POLITICAL AND POETIC Known for his theatrical monologues, drawings, paintings and strangely animated films, William Kentridge has had one foot in the future since 1997. HELLO! meets the man as he prepares to stage his first-ever show in India this month

148 ART IS ALIVE Rarely do you get to see an assembly of artists spanning more than one generation, in an interactive forum which encourages them to create a work 'live' in each other's company. HELLO! captures the magic of this exhibition, held recently in the capital, while gaining insights into the experience of being an artist in India, decades ago, and in the present

156 CONFESSIONS OF A PAMPERED PET Whoever said it's a dog's life, was definitely looking at the canines and kittens of the rich and famous. HELLO! gives you the real picture of just how haute under the collar some of these four-legged celeb companions are

160 NEW LEADERS, WHERE ARE YOU? Is it really impossible to have inspiring leadership amidst us all, in an age when young Indians are seeing the world and exposed to the very best possibilities? Sangeeta Wadhvani listens in to an inspiring voice on the topic

162 MIDNIGHT IN PARIS Red hot right now... HELLO! presents some sparkling seasonal glamour from Christian Dior, featuring designer Raf Simons creations on Hollywood divas like Natalie Portman and Julianne Moore

172 RED HAUTE HELLO! brings you some trend-setting looks from the red carpet at the recent Golden Globes awards

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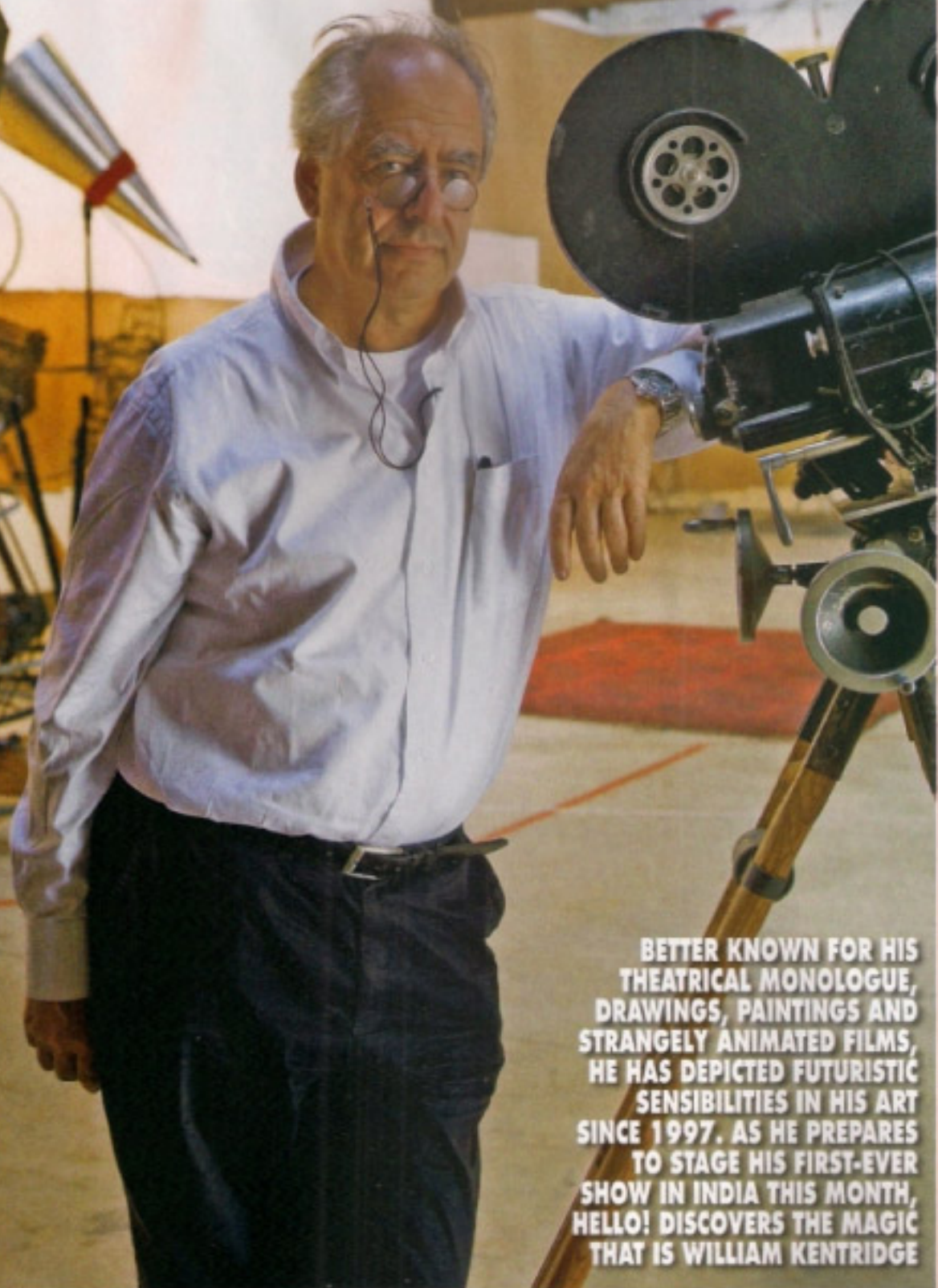
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THE POLITICAL AND THE POETIC



BETTER KNOWN FOR HIS THEATRICAL MONOLOGUE, DRAWINGS, PAINTINGS AND STRANGELY ANIMATED FILMS, HE HAS DEPICTED FUTURISTIC SENSIBILITIES IN HIS ART SINCE 1997. AS HE PREPARES TO STAGE HIS FIRST-EVER SHOW IN INDIA THIS MONTH, HELLO! DISCOVERS THE MAGIC THAT IS WILLIAM KENTRIDGE

His father was a leading lawyer in the anti-apartheid movement and his mother co-founded the most important public-interest law firm in South Africa; it is no wonder then that William Kentridge's South African background majorly influenced his artistic mind. The versatile artist's works are often imbued with dreamy, lyrical undertones or comedic bits of self-deprecation that render his alluring and powerful messages. As his subjects, he deals with themes as sobering as apartheid, colonialism and totalitarianism. Best known for animated films based on charcoal drawings, he also works in prints, books, collage, sculpture, and the performing arts. From 1989 to 1996, Kentridge made an important cycle of films that allegorise South Africa's political upheavals through the lives of three characters: a greedy property developer, his neglected wife and her poet lover. The influence of satirists such as Daumier, Goya and Hogarth is clear, and he also often used European classical themes as frameworks for contemporary African subjects. Kentridge's fusion of Expressionism, art and theatre finds its context in the interests of South Africa's Resistance Art movement of the 1980s, and his work was largely unknown outside the country until he established an international reputation in the early 1990s.

One of the most celebrated artists in the world today, Kentridge has also been named among the '100 Most Influential People' in the World by *TIM* magazine. He has had major exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and San Francisco and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York among others. His grand production of the opera *71 Nise* showed at the Metropolitan Opera, New York. As he comes to India for his first-ever exhibit here, HELLO! learns more about the artist in an intimate tête-à-tête.

When did you first encounter your inner artist?

"I drew as a child, as all children do - and kept drawing through adolescence and beyond."

You have explored different forms of art like print drawing, making animate films, sculptures, tapestry and even staging orchestra. Which form interests you most and why?

'William is one of the greatest artists in the world today. I have experienced his work in some of the most major museums and exhibitions including MoMA in New York, the Tate Modern and Documenta. His work speaks a universal language that transcends cultural boundaries, and I feel it will have a major impact on the Indian audience'

- Tushar Jivrajka (Founder, Volte Gallery)

"Drawing has always been the beginning and is still the ground of all the things I make. What interests me is the movement of images and ideas across all these different media - how a series of etchings leads to a theatre piece, how work on an opera spawns not just drawings, but prints, sculpture, and film, and how the work in one medium bleeds into the forms of another. Rather than different media being discrete and pure, a migration and impurity between media. It is in the process of making, in different media, that ideas come, rather than the ideas being prior to the work."

What made you consider India as a platform to showcase your works? Is this your first time here?

"For some time I have wanted to do a project in India. In the last couple of years I began working with Seagull Books, the Kolkata publisher, and for that project, visited India a year or so ago. This has led to other conversations and connections. This will be my second visit."

Tell us about your exhibition

in India.

"The Mumbai exhibition includes work from different projects - *I am not me, the horse is not mine*, an installation of eight film fragments made in 2008 whilst working towards a production of Shostakovich's opera *The Nose*, to a very recent tapestry that was produced from the poster made for the same production at the Metropolitan Opera in 2010. One recurring theme seems to be fragmentation and coherence - the eight film fragments, two large drawings pieced together from multiple pages, a triptych of flipbook films, two small bronzes which fragment and cohere in form as the viewer's point of view shifts."

What are your views on Indian art? Any Indian artists whose works interest you?

"I know very little about India's art world, though of course have seen work by a few well-known Indian artists. I am delighted to have an exhibition in Mumbai and look forward to discovering more."

Were you ever inspired by any of the masters? If so, then



Untitled (You Are Lying) 2010, Photogravure, Sugarlift aquatint with drypoint (above). Untitled 2012, Indian ink on pages from *The Century Dictionary: An Encyclopedic Lexicon of the language* (left). Untitled (I am not me) 2010, Photogravure, Sugarlift aquatint with burnishing (below)

who were they?

"There are many which are references for different pieces of work - Goya, Beckmann, Francis Bacon, Rembrandt, Chardin, Picasso, Muybridge, many others."

The South African artist Dumile Feni was pivotal in showing me that one could do charcoal drawings as art work in itself - that it was not required to do painting."

Do you feel that the conventional oil on canvas has lost its charm?

"I have never worked on canvas. It lost its charm for me in my first year as an art student."

Where do you get your inspiration from?

"The impulse for working, and new ideas, come in the actual making of the work. Beyond that, literature, philosophy, early cinema, theatre, opera are all sources. And of course life itself, and living in Johannesburg."

What defines your artistic and creative style?

"Spending hours in the studio and letting the work show its own direction."

William Kentridge's 'Poems I Used To Know' will showcase at the Volte Gallery in Mumbai from 5 February to 20 March

TEXT: SHOLOKA CHHABRIA

