

William Kentridge plans epic frieze for River Tiber South African artist will incorporate pollution in 550m-long work

by CRISTINA RUIZ | 25 August 2015



William Kentridge's *Triumphs and Laments* proposal. Rendering by Andrea Biagioni, Pippo Marino (2014)

William Kentridge is creating a monumental frieze along the banks of the river Tiber in Rome. The South African artist is planning an ephemeral work created by power-washing pollution from the river's high stone embankments.

Kentridge was first invited to create a work 14 years ago. It has taken a “very, very long time because of the complexity of the many bureaucracies which manage the Tiber and culture in Italy,” says the organiser of the project, Kristin Jones, a US artist who set up the organisation Tevereterno in Rome to revitalise a central stretch of the river.

Entitled *Triumphs and Laments* and measuring 550 metres, Kentridge's frieze will feature more than 90 large-scale figures from Roman mythology and history. The work is due to be inaugurated on 21 April 2016 with a live performance by his long-time collaborator, the composer Philip Miller, and processional marching bands.

The work will be made using stencils for each figure. These will be placed on the wall and the area around them will be power-washed to remove dirt, pollution and biological accretions. The resulting frieze will gradually disappear over the next few years as the wall becomes dirty again.

“Everyone's triumph is someone else's disaster,” Kentridge said at a presentation of the frieze in Rome. “If you're returning in triumph from a war, it means that other people are returning as slaves.”

Seed funding for the project has been guaranteed by the artist's three galleries—Lia Rumma (Milan, Naples), Marion Goodman (New York, Paris, London), and Goodman Gallery (Johannesburg)—among others, with approximately half a million dollars still to be raised, according to Jones.

Meanwhile, painted bronze heads related to the Roman project go on display at the Marian Goodman Gallery in London this month as part of a solo show devoted to Kentridge (11 September-24 October).