

## Narratives Spun by Art

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### The potential of narrative

Working in an art museum, you often hear people complaining that they don't understand contemporary art. Imagine being made to stand in front of a work of art that doesn't display any particularly outstanding technique, isn't beautiful, and doesn't have a familiar form, and then being told to "interpret it any way you like." I can see how that experience could make anyone feel uncomfortable. Even if you have a certain amount of interest, contemporary art is often shrouded in an aura that discourages questions, that makes you feel you might sound stupid if you ask the wrong thing. Many people are still convinced that each work must have a 'correct' interpretation, a single message based on the intentions of the artist.

Narrative is one technique that can be used to do away with that aura of inapproachability and convey the fun and energy of contemporary art — art that can have a real impact on people living in today's world. Narrative is one of the most primordial forms of entertainment that has been enjoyed from time immemorial. As Kamiya Yuki mentions when she discusses "moving back towards the narrative" (p.25), once artists have recognized the limitations of canonical modernism, with its respect for autonomous form, they tend to actively incorporate narrative elements in their work instead — elements that might make reference to society or history. Since the 1980s, in particular, technology for showing moving images has become widely available, and globalism has spread dramatically along with information technology. These factors have brought about substantial changes to the way we map the world, and have given birth to a great

variety of narratives that reach out to encompass all corners of our world. French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard developed post-modern theory by rejecting the universal 'grand narrative' with its liberation of people based on Enlightenment arguments.<sup>1)</sup> However, the movement that he noticed towards 'smaller narratives' — in other words, from centrally controlled ideologies and ethical values towards a more free diversity — was, in fact, an inevitable consequence of that historical period.

Once narrative was set free, the author was no longer seen as a deified genius — Roland Barthes declared the "death of the author"<sup>2)</sup> — and the existence of the reader was emphasized. Instead of unilaterally putting out an enlightening message, works were given life by means of active interpretation by a reader (viewer). Being released from the curse of having to find the 'correct answer' in art, and being allowed to read the narrative proactively signify a shift whereby the creation of stories is now completed by the reader him or herself.

"The World is a Stage" introduces 14 internationally active artists / groups who use different media, and examines the narrative nature of their work. Images emerging from the works express all sorts of physical and psychological experiences that are part of human life, including intense emotion, desire, absurdity, taboo, and humor. Sometimes they are sentimental and sometimes they bring out discomforting emotions. Nevertheless, rather than admiring them as beautiful, autonomous works in isolation from their context, here they are seen in the light of their relationships with their counterpoints in our world and its regional, historical, and human themes. One of the dynamic

functions of art is that it encourages viewers to peer into human nature, including its negative elements, and to be further stimulated by doing so to think around their own problems. It is only natural that the way a viewer interprets the narrative in a work differs in accordance with his or her cultural background and psychological state. For instance, the impressions a Japanese viewer gains from Gregory Crewdson's scenes of suburban America, and from the region and politics depicted in William Kentridge's images of South Africa, are of course different from the impressions gained by people from those countries. However, it is possible to share the psychological underpinnings of these works. Furthermore, the diversification of the potential readings of the works, which is afforded by seeing them in different contexts, is surely part of the rich experience of viewing a work. Reading stories and at the same time weaving new stories is part of the generous and vibrant experience that this exhibition invites viewers to share.

This text introduces the works of the 14 artists from the viewpoint of different themes — regionality, family, self, system, physical body and society — examining how they are involved with narrative.

### Regionalism and narrative

Houses suddenly appearing as if to block roads, a woman floating in a flooded living room, an overturned school bus, a pile of flowers in a garden several-meters high — these are some of the images in Gregory Crewdson's *Twilight* series (pp.47-51), a series of lavishly-staged photographs portraying uncanny scenes occurring in suburban America. The events that take place in commonplace, peaceful residential areas turn a powerful focus onto the location, but eventually

result in throwing further into relief just how ordinary the place is. The daily goings-on of an eminently forgettable suburb are worlds apart from change and individuality.

The 'uncanny' scenes depicted by Crewdson (such as a neighbor's secret revealed by peeping through a window, mysterious light descending from the sky, or a beautiful woman looking like a corpse) also give the viewer a persistent feeling of *déjà vu*. In fact, Crewdson does not hesitate to talk about the influence of movies by Alfred Hitchcock, Steven Spielberg and David Lynch, paintings by Edward Hopper, and short stories by Raymond Carver. This popular culture reflects mass values — values that pervade all aspects of culture in the United States. By crafting American images, including media information, into his tableaux, and depicting ordinary suburbs rather than special places such as big cities, Crewdson demonstrates the reality that our bodies and spirits have no chance of escape from their inherent regionalism. The narrative spun by the location is based on the values shared throughout the community, and can be taken as emerging from human desires.

Swedish artist Anneè Olofsson's *God Bless the Absentees* series of photographs (pp.95-97) features people wearing clothes in the same fabrics as the mattresses or sofas in the rooms they are in. At first glance, the effects of light and shade reminiscent of works by Vermeer, the beauty of the colors and patterns, and the unconventional ideas for settings give a very strong visual impression, but this slowly turns into a faint sense of dread and foreboding. The house began as a comfortable home, but at some point the occupants are being assimilated into the soft furnishings, fading from sight. These photographs achieve a wonderful visualization of an ambivalent situation akin to suffocating in a shelter that was supposed to protect you. These works stimulate all sorts of associations, providing metaphors for the



incarcerated princess of old tales, for example, and also addressing current social problems such as *hikikomori*, the phenomenon of young people spending months or years hiding in their rooms. Playing out on the stage of the home, the very smallest of 'regions,' they show the struggle between the individual and what protects (confines) him or her, a struggle between attachment and detachment.

#### Narratives of family

Olofsson explores the subject of oppression more deeply with her family-themed works. In *Unfamiliar* (p.98), a woman (the artist herself) is shown with her clothes being removed or her face being covered by her father's hand. The fact that they are father and daughter is not made explicit, but the difference between their ages and their gestures portray the complex relationship between the woman and paternal power. What is expressed is an infinite danger mixed with oppression, violence, love and affection. Olofsson's video works have often included performances by her actual parents, including having her mother read out old love letters sent to her daughter (*You need her and you want her golden hair, she sees you but she won't love you because she really doesn't care*, 2000) and asking her father taboo questions when driving along in a car (*Trick or Treat*, 2002). Through hard play that can extend as far as cruelty, Olofsson shakes up the family stories that most people romanticize, pretend to forget, or attempt to seal off, causing the stories to be read again and reviewed.

Eija-Liisa Ahtila's *Consolation Service* (pp.38-39) takes the process of struggle between a couple on the verge of divorce, the occurrence of an accident, and the eventual resolution of the situation, and creates from it a video work with a

mix of paranormal expressions. The argument that the two have in front of a therapist is infantile, and even takes on an aspect of comedy when the two bark at each other like dogs. This drama of foolish love and hate exposes just how lacking in logic our interpersonal relationships and feelings are, and just how we are unable to control them. At the same time, it shows that humans have an intrinsically disconsolate nature that goes beyond the bounds of reason. After going through death by treading on melting ice on a frozen lake, this mysterious narrative of separation ends by achieving relinquishment of the relationship via a 'consolation service' with a ghostly apparition of the dead husband.

*Me/We; Okay; Gray* (pp.35-37) is a three-part work consisting of stories about one-and-a-half minutes long. In *Me/We*, Ahtila portrays the relationships within a family from the father's perspective. At first glance it seems a peaceful family, but there is an air of fiction — something incomprehensible about the family. One weird point is that no matter who speaks, the words that can be heard are all in the father's voice. The fiction of family as happy community and the loneliness evident in the family combine with an unpredictable twist in the story to create a massive surprise.

#### Narratives of self

The complex relationships between people close to home that Ahtila expresses are also a metaphor for the mixing and division of one's own identity. The accident and the husband's death and subsequent relinquishment of the relationship in *Consolation Service* could be interpreted as a projection of the wife's psyche instead of as actual events. Facing up to tangled emotions and bringing the history of a relationship to a

conclusion (making a story) is not something that can be resolved through therapy. (Ahtila lightly derides this modern-day fiction in her works.) Likewise, *Me/We*, as the title suggests, can be interpreted as the chaotic vision of the father who identifies himself with his family. The use of two screens in *Consolation Service* and three monitors in *Me/We; Okay; Gray* enables ingenious expression of multifaceted psychological states and broken narratives.

Konoike Tomoko uses installations incorporating paintings, objects and moving images to narrate her original fantasies. In *Chapter Three "Wreck"* (pp.78-79), viewers' eyes are drawn by the abrupt appearance of a massive heart in the middle of a forest. The grotesque and gaudy lump of meat seems real for an instant, but closer inspection reveals that it is imbued with model-like characteristics, such as color coding for the arteries and veins. The fantastic world is an intersection between the real and the virtual that is further enhanced by the countless knives and the creatures — a fusion of wolves and young girls — that rush around between the trees. The combination of girls, knives and wolves is an almost obsessive motif in Konoike's paintings. *Knifer Life* (p.80) shows a horde of knives engulfing a young girl's body with ferocious energy while wolves hang around playfully. In *Chapter Four "The Return" — Sirius Odyssey* (p.77), the wolves become a ball and envelop the girl, lifting her off from the surface of the sea. The girl wears nothing but sneakers on her feet, which in some senses is a rather perverse image reminiscent of Hans Bellmer's dolls, but it also communicates a view of an incomplete version of self. The attacking blades point more and more towards the subject as well as outwards, and thereby contain a dual meaning; they protect as well as bind. If the flowing movement of the knives represents emotions, then the knife points cannot be easy to control.

The journey in search of parts of oneself that have become scattered, or in search for a heart that has been lost is a classic theme of fantasy, but the jet coaster ride depicted somewhere beyond the forest by Konoike suggests that this is a fiction within the narrative, as if the adventure itself were an event in an amusement park. While playing with artificial objects, Konoike draws a modern version of a coming-of-age tale.

#### Narrative systems

Jananne Al-Ani's *A Loving Man* (pp.42-43) is a five-channel video installation, with each monitor showing a different woman talking in relay about a man. The first starts with just one sentence, then the woman next to her repeats the sentence from memory, adding another sentence to the end. This process continues turn by turn, making the story longer, but the longer it gets, the more likely it is that the narrative is broken or errors occur. That awkwardness becomes apparent to the viewers, who feel a strange tension as if they were watching something going wrong in a live performance. It is not clear who the man is, but the words being spoken generate associations of the history of a struggle between a father and his family.

Al-Ani, while showing the traditional structure of verbally transmitted stories in its most simple form, makes use of the inclusion of 'errors' to reveal the fluid character of narrative. That fluidity is emphasized by the differences between the narrators in terms of facial expressions, voices and ways of speaking. Al-Ani's approach of showing discrepancies in meaning and the mutability of words can be interpreted as deconstructivist. The perils in the history of the family shown by the women and the imperfections in their narratives demonstrate how the history of a larger group must contain many more 'errors,' and make it clear that



there is not just a single reading.

Mark Wallinger takes a scalpel to the mechanism of narrative with his very own form of malice. *Threshold to the Kingdom* (p.107) is a video shot at an arrivals gate at an international airport in the United Kingdom, showing passengers as they come in. What makes a decisive difference to this casual scene is the fact that it is shot in slow motion, and that there is allegorical church music playing in the background. The tantalizingly slow movement and the grandeur of the music creates an inescapably dramatic mood. Viewers watch the work, waiting for the dramatic event, and then they realize that a drama of the sort they were expecting is not going to occur. The reason that we are taken in by Wallinger's trick is that our brains have conditioned reflexes that lead us to associate church music with the sublime and slow motion with decisive moments. Even without religious practices, these associations are imprinted on our minds by movies and TV drama. Wallinger treats all phenomena with equal importance, so while there is no dramatic event, each little movement is in itself shown to be a drama. That could also be taken as scathing irony directed at the use of authority to force drama into a particular framework and to make everything a story. By sarcastically likening the United Kingdom to the Kingdom of God, Wallinger provokes and stimulates our 'faith.'

Stefan Exler is another artist who actively avoids authoritative categorization of the elements in his works. His *Untitled* (pp.53-56) series of photographs shows views of rooms shot directly from above. There are no shadows, and every little item in the photo is given equal status. As Exler himself explains (p.52), his works contain a number of overlapping narratives, and do not prioritize one over another. What seems to be a surfeit of information overwhelms the viewer, seeming to reject specific readings but at the same

time welcoming every reading that is possible. The state of each room — things strewn about untidily and the people stretched out — is not ready for being shown in public, and this stimulates the curiosity of the viewer. This is such a blatant disclosure of privacy that it leaves no leeway for voyeurism. Attention is drawn to accessories such as bunches of keys, dolls and medicines, and to bright pink colors, but these do not provide a solution to the puzzle, either. Exler's world looks like a myth depicting a unified world, and it poses the paradox of being difficult to read despite being opened up.

Teresa Hubbard / Alexander Birchler's *Single Wide* (pp.59-63) breaks the fundamental rule of stories that they must have a beginning and an end. The stage for this video work is a singlewide trailer home, and the story plays out in an atmosphere of suspense. A pickup is stopped in front of the trailer with a woman sitting alone in the driver's seat, crying, screaming and exploding in anger. The highlight comes when she suddenly rams her pickup into the trailer. Climbing out of the wrecked truck, she looks relatively composed; she then goes into the trailer, looks in the mirror and comes outside again. The same scenes then repeat, crashing her truck once again. The story goes round and round like a broken record, with the wrecked pickup and damaged trailer repeatedly returning to their undamaged forms and the woman cycling between rage and composure. The realistically laid-out contents of the trailer seem as though they may provide some sort of clue, but on the contrary, examining them makes the mystery deepen. A child's room with a doll's house, a homemade cake in an orderly kitchen, and photos in frames in the bedroom all point to peaceful family life and seem diametrically opposed to the woman's outburst. The woman appears to be the owner of the trailer, but there is nothing in the way she moves around it

that makes her seem at all like a homemaker or mother. The teddy bear in the bag that she keeps carefully with her as she walks around further confuses attempts to assess her true identity. The camera perspective moves from room to room, then outside again, making it difficult to gain a proper sense of the place.

It is clear that Hubbard and Birchler did not make a scenario for the story. The plausible setting, the incident and the woman's behavior are presented randomly like the pieces in a game, with it being left up to the viewer to decide how best to assemble them. In fact, the viewer's interpretation of the story differs according to the point at which he or she began viewing the work. The artists and the work lose control, giving significance to the relationship between reader and text described by Barthes.

#### Bodies telling stories

A girl painted by Ikemura Leiko (pp.65-69) may be lying down on the ground and becoming one with the earth, or may be lifting her head and trying to get up. Sometimes she may be standing with a cat in her arms, or sitting with a small child on her knee. These figures convey girl-like whims, vulnerability, stubbornness, indecisiveness and earnestness. Each girl is there by herself. Even when there are ostensibly two girls in an image, they look like multiple aspects derived from the same person. Suddenly floating up, splitting, or changing their positions, rather than being fixed in one place, the girls appear to be changing constantly. This is partly due to an afterimage effect produced by the technique of applying paint over and over again so that it saturates the canvas. While being figurative, their bodies are flexible and transparent like ghosts. Ikemura has achieved a similar effect with a terracotta sculpture of a girl.

While being firmly bound to the horizon, the girl's dress appears to be filled by the wind, billowing lightly in harmony with the space around it.

The girls, who are forever young, never say anything, but all sorts of things can be read from inside their transparency. The helplessness of a child who needs protecting, or of a woman who has been hurt, triggers sympathy in the viewer, leading to a view of the inside of these people — to a human story of living that is beyond the bounds of gender and maturity. Strangely enough, the cat that the girl is holding is called Miko [a name that can mean 'shrine maiden'], and in keeping with that name, the transparent body acts as an intermediary, absorbing the thoughts of the viewer.

Karen Yasinsky creates animated films using clay dolls. Her works are characterized by a pervasive low-tech atmosphere. The clay dolls are rustic and move awkwardly. Clothes, hairstyles and backgrounds generate a nostalgic feel for the 1950s and 1960s. In today's world of high technology, Yasinsky's crude techniques and old-fashioned style are oddly attractive. The dolls cannot even change their facial expressions, but to Yasinsky, having so many limitations is one of the reasons she loves to work with them. They fit into a transitional space between the artist and her subject, with the dolls telling the story through gestures using their imperfect bodies.<sup>30</sup> In *Fear* (pp.113-115), a man and woman are passengers on a plane, with the situation inside the cabin shown simultaneously on two channels of video. The man and woman only appear on their own screens, and even if they stretch out their hands, they do not actually touch. Whether affected by memories of the past or fear of the future, they both shed tears from time to time, and are consoled by hugs from the flight attendant. The clumsy movement of the dolls, their lack of facial expressions, their enigmatic body language and meaningful camera



focus all make it difficult to read the story consistently. Minimal music that somehow conveys a sense of being old-fashioned further enhances the enigmatic atmosphere. While Yasinsky produces works that are as approachable as a children's puppet show, the themes she addresses are clearly not simplistic. The expressionless faces and lumbering movements of the dolls encourage viewers to form their own conjectures. Is this about hope, or jealousy, or conspiracy? Or maybe it's about some sort of incident? Perhaps even a hijack? The work suggests that 'fear' is this sort of state — suspecting the worst when you do not know what is happening.

Today's world at first appears to be a rational society with smooth and rapid communication. However, the frustration and suspicion demonstrated by these hard-hearted dolls could be sounding an alarm to warn us that our bodies and minds, with their own limitations, may be being left behind.

Odani Motohiko uses many different media, including sculpture, photography and video, but whatever the media, his focus has remained firmly on physical sensations. *Double Edged of Thought* (p.92) is a beautiful yet revolting dress finely woven from human hair. The unique patterns formed by the different tones of black and brown bring a hyper-real quality to the work, awakening a sense of apprehension deep in our bodies. The video work, *Rompers* (p.93) is a fantastic story centered on a girl like a fairy (or perhaps an apparition of some sort) living in a tree that is shown under an artificial, sparkling light, with audio backing provided by a child singing in a high-pitched voice. Throughout there are images of bodily processes and matter, such as feeding, excretion, festering, and sap (bodily fluid). Senses that are usually asleep are stimulated by this daydream of a creepy and fetishistic wonderland.

For this exhibition, Odani has made a realistic model using a labor-intensive method that was employed in Hollywood for special effects before computer graphics became available. He filmed this model using a technique called dynamation and made a video installation *Jackal* (pp.89-91). The work consists of two screens showing a diorama of a house and a dog running round and round in an abandoned and run-down interior. The dog has its guts dangling down and muscle tissue exposed. It can no longer really be regarded as a dog, and instead has become a creature that evokes horror rather than sympathy. As the changing light and the movement of hands on a clock mark the passage of time, the dog continues to walk through the same rooms again and again, despite not knowing where it is going or whether there is an end. It never manages to step outside this closed-off space. This work presents a drama of a cruel and ridiculous life, and we are compelled to face up to the fact that, once our fantasy has been taken away, we too are just bodies composed of organs and muscle tissue. Odani's painstaking work depicts the fate of living creatures that keep on walking as time goes by, even though they have nowhere to go.

#### Individuals' stories and society

Tracey Moffatt uses photographs and video to spin stories that cut across the boundaries between documentary and fantasy. *Scarred for Life* (p.86) mimics the style of *Time/Life* magazine in the 1960s in a series of snapshot photographs, each with a short text comment. The series presents incidents that left someone 'scarred for life,' such as, "Her father's nickname for her was 'useless'." Each of the nostalgic yellow-tinged photos with unemotional journalistic commentary is so true to life that it doesn't feel like fiction at all. Witnessing

someone else's hidden scar causes pain to well up from the depths of memory.

Another series of photographs, *Up in the Sky* (p.87), consists of fantasy images set in the outback. Images that leave a particularly strong impression are the white mother with a black baby, and nuns lifting a baby high in the air. These photographs recall Australian government policies that permitted the removal of aboriginal babies from their true parents, a practice that started in the second half of the nineteenth century and continued in some form or other until about 1970, and they also arouse thoughts about how those policies relate to Moffatt's own identity and aboriginal background. The stories in Moffatt's works, though, are ambiguous. Dream-like visions transcend time and place, endlessly awakening the imagination. Moffatt says that her works are opinions about events occurring around her, or fantasies that she has seen.<sup>9</sup> Her stories develop through fusing together individuals and society, real and virtual images.

For *Adventure Series* (pp.83-85), Moffatt tried a new approach. She incorporated painted comic book-style backdrops into a narrative photo series of kitsch adventure scenes, with the roles in the adventure stories given to actors of different types, such as 'blond gal,' 'handsome brown guy,' and 'gorgeous Asian girl' (p.82). Such blatant stereotyping effectively circumvents any question of gender and racial discrimination. These 'casting' decisions were just like those for the kangaroos and the lizard, the boat and the model planes. Macho men and sexy women were simply ingredients needed to produce an adventure story. In a completely flat world devoid of reality, real people were stripped of their identities. Moffatt deconstructs through excessive stereotyping, revealing the potential of narrative in situations where power has been negated.

Kara Walker makes paper cutout figures and

then sticks them on the wall, spinning stories of whites and black slaves in America at the time of the Civil War. In those days, silhouetting was popular with the genteel ladies and gentleman as a technique for producing elegant and beautiful images. Walker turns the technique's 'polite' reputation on its head, producing many stimulating but 'impolite' images, incorporating excretion, violence and sex.

Walker made her artistic debut in 1994 in New York, where she was an immediate success. Her works, however, sparked a controversy, and she was fiercely criticized by a group of older African-American artists for presenting negative images of black people.<sup>9</sup> Walker's interest, however, was not in verifying historical facts, but in working out whether the history that has been retained as fantasy in society's memory is still valid today. Walker describes her approach as being like a "Harlequin Romance author" (p.100), finding the ingredients she requires from a wide range of novels, historical documents and paintings, and then appropriating them to produce a reconstructed imitation of 'history' like the fake history of period TV dramas. Skillfully manipulating the silhouettes, Walker produces flat, two-dimensional *outlines* of people, as opposed to actual people with real identities. Setting loose sex and race taboos as if driven by aphrodisiacs, Walker renders ineffective all sorts of dichotomies, including those between past and present, good and evil, control and obedience. Viewers will most likely realize that their own values and desires are being tested when they make their own readings of these stories.

As an African American, Walker uses her own story as a medium, and also recognizes the effect of the voices of others: "I've been thinking about the whole ancestor idea, of ghosts.....so I'm not sure if it's just my own psychosis or if they actually hold the answer."<sup>10</sup> Walker is picking up the scraps



of history and spinning stories that transcend the individual.

William Kentridge creates animations based on his charcoal drawings. He draws scenes from South Africa in the context of his own experiences of Apartheid and the post-Apartheid period. In the series of short animation films he began in 1989, the story proceeds through the experiences of different characters, such as the Jewish whites, Soho Eckstein and Felix Teitlebaum, who can be seen as Kentridge's alter ego. In contrast to Felix, who indulges in love affairs and imaginary worlds, Soho is always wearing a pinstripe suit, appearing as a real estate developer, or as the owner of a coalmine. Soho's image is that of the privileged white who has exploited a great number of poor blacks. Presenting a variety of images that include rough land under development, violence and massacre, a workaholic businessman and protesting crowds, Kentridge addresses essential human issues such as desire, greed, loneliness, and guilt.

It is not Kentridge's intention to incorporate political value judgments into his work; he says that his primary objective is simply the pleasure of putting charcoal marks on paper, but ethical and moral questions arise from this act.<sup>7)</sup> His animations are made by first photographing one of his drawings, then deleting part of it and adding in changes, followed by photographing it again. This process is repeated until the work is complete. Because the drawings undergo physical changes a little at a time, the changes leave their tracks on the screen as positions shift. The tracks left by this manual process and the progress of time together produce works that are ambiguous and easily shift from one state to another, flitting between memory and oblivion, as the story also undergoes value changes and fluctuations in ethics.

*Tide Table* (pp.71-75), a lyrical work set at the sea's edge, marks the reappearance of Soho, who

had lain dormant since 1999. In contrast to the aggressive persona that appeared in the early films, Soho is now drawn as an ambiguous bystander. He plays a guest in a seafront hotel, peering out from his balcony with binoculars, or reading a newspaper and taking a midday nap in a deckchair on the beach. Images of slaughtered cattle and hospital beds filled to overcapacity with black patients give rise to thoughts of the lynchings under apartheid and of the AIDS epidemic currently hitting African countries. Soho, however, appears to be totally out of that loop as he snoozes and reads his newspaper. Keeping a distance as a bystander or oppressed by the weight of information (the newspaper), he seems incapable of finding the right thing to do, and appears to have given up trying.

In the last scene, however, when a black boy throws a stone into the waves, Soho copies him and throws one too, ending the work with a glimpse of hope for the future. Recognizing the imperfection of people who do not have plans for settling and resolving issues from the past, and who do not have plans mapping out a future, the waves quietly approach and roll back as if in forgiveness. Through observation of his home region and history, Kentridge has succeeded in depicting issues that face all people in these beautiful dramas.

Stories of turning to face the world and seeking out human nature are spun into new stories by each and every one of the works as we read them.

(Curator, Mori Art Museum)

#### Notes

- 1) Jean-François Lyotard, *The Post Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* [1979], (trans.), Geoffrey Bennington, Brian Massumi, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1988

- 2) Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author" [1968], Stephen Heath (ed. and trans.), *Image, Music, Text*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1977
- 3) Sergio Bessa, "Trading Email with Karen Yasinsky," *Zingmagazine* 17, Fall, 2002
- 4) Marta Gili, "An Interview with Tracey Moffatt," *Tracey Moffatt* (catalog), Fundació "La Caixa," Barcelona; Centre National de la Photographie, Paris, 1999, p.108
- 5) Hilarie M. Sheets, "Cut It Out: Kara Walker Plays Havoc with Racial Stereotypes," *Artnews*, April, 2002
- 6) Thelma Golden, Kara Walker, "A Dialogue," *Kara Walker: Pictures from Another Time* (catalog), University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, MI, 2002, p.49
- 7) Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, "Interview," *William Kentridge*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, 1999, p.19