

The Arion Press announces its one hundred and fourth publication

THE LULU PLAYS

by

Frank Wedekind

a limited edition artist book with sixty-seven drawings

and a suite of four prints by

William Kentridge

to be published in the fall of 2015.

THE CONCEPT. For many years, Arion Press has exhibited at the fall Print Fair at the Park Avenue Armory in New York City, where original prints from every era are offered by dealers from around the world. In 2009, we had a visit there from the South African artist William Kentridge. He purchased as a gift for his wife a copy of our edition of *Squarings*, poems by Seamus Heaney with prints by Sol LeWitt. During our conversation, I asked if he might be interested in making an artist book with Arion. He replied in the affirmative and we agreed to correspond about possible literary works for such a project. Several ideas were passed back and forth by email and during a meeting in Cambridge, Massachusetts, when he was delivering the Norton Lectures at Harvard University in 2012. In 2010, Diana Ketcham and I attended the New York premiere of a new Metropolitan Opera production of Dmitri Shostakovich's *The Nose* designed and directed by Kentridge. Following the success of his highly original staging of *The Nose*, the Met invited Kentridge to do the set design and stage direction for Alban Berg's *Lulu*. He suggested that we use the libretto for that opera and his drawings for an artist book. I was aware of the two plays by Frank Wedekind that are the basis for the libretto. I had seen an experimental stage production in San Francisco in 1964, directed by Lee Breuer, starring the unforgettable Susan Darby in her first leading role, and had purchased a copy of the earlier play, *Erdegeist (Earth-Spirit)* to revive my college German. So I proposed to Kentridge that we print the plays instead of the libretto and give our readers the literary background of the opera. A more compelling reason for using the plays is that these works from the turn of the last century changed the course of drama, not just in Germany but worldwide, and have had a profound effect on film and opera as well.

THE PLAYS. Benjamin Franklin Wedekind (1864–1918) was conceived in San Francisco and born in Hanover, Germany, to a Swiss mother and a German father, and grew up in a Swiss castle. He lived in Munich most of his adult life. He claimed American citizenship until the First World War, when he was required to have a German passport. Initially, he worked in business, then in the circus, and became an actor and singer. He starred in satirical cabaret and began to write for the theater. At age 34 he became a dramaturg at the Munich Schauspielhaus. His creative and sexual life was strenuous, to put it mildly, even though he became monogamous after his marriage in 1906 to Tilly Newes, an Austrian actress, when he was 42 and she was 20. They had two daughters. Wedekind died at the age of 53.

His first major play, *Frühlingserwachen / Spring's Awakening* (1891) caused a scandal with its homoerotic and sado-masochistic scenes carried out by young German students as the characters. There followed the “Lulu” plays, *Erdgeist / Earth-Spirit* and *Die Büchse der Pandora / Pandora's Box*, published in 1895 and 1904, respectively. They were originally planned as a single play. In the last act of the first play, Alwa, the son of Lulu's lover Dr. Schön, envisions writing a play about Lulu based on the action up to that point. In the first act of the second play, Alva, who now holds a Ph.D. and also is called “Dr. Schön”, refers to the play he has written about Lulu, which is entitled “Earth-Spirit”. So the character Alva stands in for the playwright Wedekind. In the first production of *Pandora's Box*, Wedekind himself played the role of Jack the Ripper, who appears in the final act and kills both Lulu and her lesbian admirer Countess Geschwitz.

In 1929, the silent film director G. W. Pabst released *Pandora's Box*, starring Louise Brooks as Lulu, which continues to be regarded as a great classic of the cinema. In the film adaptation many details were changed, but the main story line was faithful to the Wedekind plays.

This publication honors the artistry of Frank Wedekind, a celebrated radical who was censored, banned, and even jailed for his stage expressions against conventional behavior, although he aspired personally to upper-class respectability. His borrowings from circus, pantomime, vaudeville, and Grand-Guignol aimed to give pleasure and immediacy on stage rather than a distanced literary satisfaction. An accomplished actor, Wedekind would demonstrate, when directing, a harshly stylized technique of disjointed actions and puppet-like movements, using, according to Berthold Brecht, his “metallic, hard, dry voice” in a riveting manner. He influenced Expressionism, Dadaism, and the Theaters of Cruelty and the Absurd. In Brecht's estimation, Wedekind “belonged with Tolstoy and Strindberg among the great educators of the new Europe”.

THE TRANSLATION. The translation we have used is from *Trajedies of Sex* by Frank Wedekind, translation and introduction by Samuel A. Eliot, Jr., New York, Boni and Liveright, 1923. The volume contains *Spring's Awakening (Frühlingserwachen)* and *Damnation (Tod und Teufel)*, as well as the two Lulu plays. Because the copyrights date from 1914, the work is in the public domain. Eliot's text has been somewhat modernized by Arion editors. Samuel Atkins Eliot, Jr. (1893–1984) was the grandson of Charles W. Eliot, a long-time president of Harvard, and was

educated at that college. He wrote about theater, did translations, and was co-author of a book on birds of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts.

THE OPERA. Alban Berg's *Lulu* (1937 / 1979) is a masterpiece of twentieth-century opera. The Austrian composer Berg (1885–1935) began to teach himself music when he was fifteen and later studied with Arnold Schoenberg for six years. In 1905, at the age of twenty, he had seen a production of Wedekind's *Pandora's Box*, staged in Vienna by his friend Karl Kraus, and determined to create an opera version. But work on his other opera, *Wozzeck*, intervened, as well as instrumental, orchestral, and vocal pieces, so he did not begin his *Lulu* until 1929. The opera was left uncompleted at his death in 1935, although he had finished the third act in partcell format (short score). His wife Helene Berg forbade completion of the final act and allowed only performances of the first two. But after Helene's death, the opera was completed by Friedrich Cerha and premiered in 1979 in Paris, conducted by Pierre Boulez. Berg himself had written the libretto, which was very faithful to the two Wedekind plays, even down to constructing the scenes in the three-act opera to follow the seven acts in the two plays. As a composer, Berg was influenced by his teacher Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique and by his theory of developing variation. They were lifelong friends, and Berg dedicated *Lulu* to Arnold Schoenberg in honor of his sixtieth birthday.

The Kentridge production of *Lulu* opens at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City on November 5, 2015, sung in German and conducted by James Levine. There will be eight performances, through December 3. This is a co-production with the Dutch National Opera and the English National Opera. On October 13, 2015, Kentridge and Hoyem will speak about the *Lulu* project at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

THE ARTIST. William Kentridge was born in South Africa in 1955, into a family of lawyers active in the campaign against apartheid. He attended the University of Witswatersrand in Johannesburg, studying politics and African history, then fine arts at the Johannesburg Art Foundation, then theater in Paris at Ecole Jacques Lecoq. A draughtsman, sculptor, filmmaker, and man of the theater, Kentridge worked out of his studio in Johannesburg, independent of currents in the American and European art world, for more than a decade. His major work from that period is a cycle of films that allegorize South Africa's political upheavals. Kentridge's persistent involvement in theater, as a designer and actor, is evident in the large body of charcoal and pen and bush drawings linked to his films and to opera projects, which include a series on Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. His graphic work continues the satiric tradition of Daumier, Goya, and Hogarth. By the early 1990s, Kentridge was participating in the Venice and Documenta biennales and garnering worldwide recognition. A travelling retrospective organized in 2009 opened at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and ended at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2012. Among his awards are the Kyoto Prize (2010), Oskar Kokoschka Award (2008), the Kaiserring Prize (2003) and the Carnegie (International) Prize (2000).

THE IMAGES. William Kentridge writes: "The drawings in this book were made between 2011 and 2015 for use in the production of Alban Berg's opera *Lulu*. The drawings are to be projected onto the stage set, each image being broken up by the different layers of scenery the projection encounters on the stage. Sometimes a detail of an image is projected, sometimes the entire image is projected to a size of around 11 by 20 meters. The images used in the production span the period of the plays at the turn of the twentieth century to the opera in the early 1930s. Amongst the images are translations from Beckmann, Kirchner, Klimt, Nolde, Kollwitz, as well as images from documentary and fictional films of the period."

Kentridge drew with brush and ink on dictionary pages. The definitions are in the background as texture but the opening and closing words at the tops of pages in larger type can be read. Often, after drawing, Kentridge moves the sheets, rearranging elements of the drawings so that they become collages and can seem like moving pictures. The appearance of the drawings on the pages of our book is quite different from when they are enlarged and projected. Unlike the opera audience, readers experience the entire image on an intimate scale.

As the designer of the book I have established the sequence of the 67 images through the front matter (frontispiece, introduction), the first play, *Earth-Spirit*, with its prologue and four acts, then the Entr'acte between the two plays, and the second play, *Pandora's Box*, in three acts. Kentridge was welcoming to my interpretations of where the pictures should be placed in the text, and made several key suggestions.

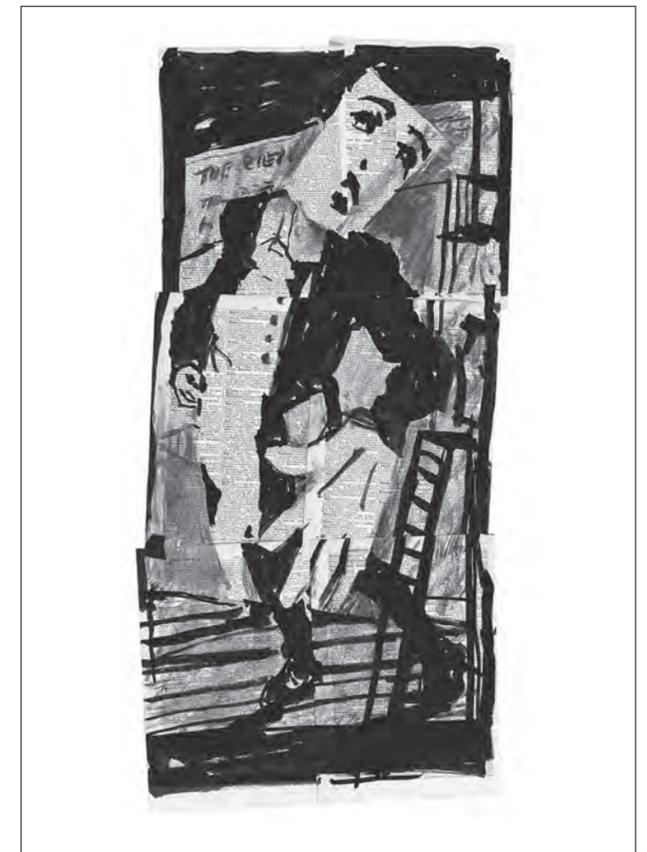
The sequence begins with portraits of Wedekind, Berg, and Schoenberg, then follows the story line of the drama. The prints show the influence of films from the 1920s and 1930s, as Kentridge acknowledges above. Also, he has used existing photographs and artworks as sources for his portraits of Wedekind's characters. As a conceit, he has used historical figures to represent certain characters, such as having the young Alban Berg play the son of Dr. Schön, Alva; Gustav Mahler play the Count Casti-Piani, a high-class pimp; Richard Strauss play the banker Puntshu; and Sigmund Freud play the Stage Manager, who has no speaking lines in the play. The soprano singing the role of Lulu in the Metropolitan production, Marlis Petersen, whose hair is in the style of Louise Brooks, is portrayed in some of the depictions of the Lulu character in the book. To warn the reader of the violence in the plays, the endpapers evoke splatterings of blood.

We have created an entr'acte section, separating the two plays, because Alban Berg wrote into his libretto that the opera should have a film sequence at its mid-section, showing Lulu's arrest, trial, and incarceration, then her escape engineered by the Countess Geschwitz. The cinema director Heinz Ruckert shot a silent film to the composer's specifications. The original film has been lost, so subsequent productions have had new movies made to comply with the composer's wishes. The current opera production, too, has a film, directed by Kentridge. The entr'acte in this book does not depict the same events as do the films. It serves as a visual intermission and shows Lulu going to pieces as she undresses.

Each Kentridge image is identified at the bottom of the page. The dialogue is set in bold type, printed red, with character names and stage directions set in the regular weight of the

IMAGES FROM THE LULU PLAYS

Left to right, top to bottom: Lulu as Pierrot; Dr. Goll dead, staring; Customer at the door; Countess Geschwitz dying



THE SUITE OF PRINTS

Four linoleum block prints, larger and different versions of images in the book and with different titles, in portfolio, to accompany copies of the book.

Paper: English mouldmade 300 grams, 24-7/8 x 19-3/8 inches.

Edition: 40 sets, signed by the artist.

This page:

1. Lulu; 2. Akarova

Facing page:

3. Her Shadow; 4. Jack



William Kentridge signing prints with printer Mlungisi Kongisa in Johannesburg.

type printed in black. As an aid to the reader, a synopsis of the opera libretto precedes each act, following the divisions of the original drama with seven scenes corresponding to the seven acts of the plays. The synopses and titles of the plays are in both German and English.

THE BOOK. The book is folio, 13-1/4 by 9-1/2 inches, 172 pages. The paper is Hanemühle Biblio. The types are from the period of the composition of the opera and creation of the Pabst film: Perpetua (1929) and Gill Sans (1928) in Monotype composition, with handset Perpetua, Claudius (1937), and Neuland (1923) for display. The first two types were designed by Eric Gill in England; the second two types were designed by Rudolf Koch in Germany. The metal types were printed by letterpress on a two-color Miller cylinder press. The drawings were printed by four-color offset lithography. The book is handsewn with linen thread over linen tapes, with handsewn silk headbands in black and red, and bound in full gunmetal grey cloth, in a slipcase covered in the same cloth. Both book and slipcase cloth have titling in type and imagery drawn by Kentridge printed by silkscreen, the word "Lulu" on the front cover of the book and a Rorschach of black blood across the sides and back of the slipcase.

THE SUITE. In addition, Kentridge made four linoleum block prints based on images in the book and titled somewhat differently, reproduced and identified in this prospectus. The suite was editioned at M. K. & Artists Print Workshop by Mlungisi Kongisa in Johannesburg, South Africa. The paper is Somerset Satin soft white 300 gm, 63 cm by 49 cm. The prints are interleaved and are presented in a full-cloth portfolio with a title page giving documentation.

— Andrew Hoyem, *Publisher*

EDITION, PRICE, AND ORDERS. The edition of the book is limited to 400 numbered copies for sale and 26 lettered copies for complimentary distribution to participants in the project. All copies are signed by the artist. The price of the book is \$2,000. The edition of the suite of prints is 40 copies for sale, numbered 1/40 – 40/40, plus 5 artist's proofs, numbered AP 1/5 – AP 5/5, 5 publisher's proofs, numbered PP 1/5 – 5/5, and 3 bon à tirer proofs, numbered BAT 1/3 – BAT 3/3. All prints are numbered and signed by the artist. The price of the book with the suite of prints is \$18,000. The prints are not sold separately or individually. Copies of the book are reserved for Arion Press subscribers and they are given priority of purchase for the suite of prints. To place orders or for more information about this publication and subscription terms and discounts, contact:



THE ARION PRESS

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