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William Kentridge, *Drawing from Tide Table (Soho in deck chair)*, 2003.

William Kentridge

Marian Goodman, through Apr 10
(see 57th Street area)

In a mesmerizing sequence from William Kentridge's animated film *Learning the Flute* (2003), a silhouetted figure pantomimes the sweeping gesticulations of an orchestra conductor to the tune of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*; as he gestures, falcons alight, using his hands as ad hoc perches. Moments later, the character literalizes his role, clasping sketchily drawn wires and thus "conducting" a caricatured electrical current.

The primal fantasy of mastering nature—whether fauna or electrical force—is just one of the dreams rendered real, albeit exaggerated, by animation. In the second film in the exhibition, *Tide Table* (2003), cartoon hyperbole appears far less whimsical. One scene depicts longtime Kentridge character Soho Eckstein, a pinstriped tycoon seen here vacationing at the beach. He reads a newspaper that grows ludicrously as he

turns each page until it enshrouds him completely. Though undeniably comic, the image is nonetheless powerful, evoking the overwhelming weight of daily news reports about apartheid in South Africa, where Kentridge lives.

The subtle alterations in Kentridge's animation are achieved through a painstaking process of drawing and erasure, on view here in a series of the works on paper he uses to create the films. The palimpsest character of the drawings yields some shrewd contortions. In a pair of drawings from *Tide Table*, for example, old-fashioned changing stalls blithely lining the beachfront mutate into tiny shacks in a grim township shantytown. A related drawing of uniformed guards peering through binoculars makes this transformation from leisure to squalor all the more agonizing. For Kentridge, the slow process of racial reconciliation in South Africa has left some new citizens behind.—*Eva Diaz*