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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vertical Painting ***Stair Procession* by William Kentridge** A Long-Term Installation at P.S.1, Opening May 21, 2000

(Long Island City, NY, May 1, 2000) -- Opening on May 21, 2000, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center presents ***Stair Procession*** a long-term installation by the South African artist William Kentridge (b.1955). Organized by P.S.1 Senior Curator, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, this wall drawing continues P.S.1's series of large-scale "Vertical" works set in the many stairwells of P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center. This series of works called ***Vertical Paintings*** was initiated by P.S.1 Director Alanna Heiss in 1997.

Created for P.S.1's northwest stairwell, ***Stair Procession*** is a white-on-black drawing akin to white chalk graffiti. Kentridge literally draws from the former school building for his subject matter and methods. He negotiates the constricted spaces of the stairs using "anamorphic distortions." Kentridge asserts, "I am interested in the steel mesh that encloses the stairway. The stairway seems redolent of control and incarceration, as schooling always entails."

The art of William Kentridge is an expressive and personal attempt to address the nature of human emotions and memory, as well as the relationship between desire, ethics, and responsibility. He investigates how our identities are shaped through our shifting ideas of history and place, looking at how we construct our histories and what we do with them. His is an elegiac art that explores the possibilities of poetry in contemporary society, and provides a vicious satirical commentary on that society. It posits a way of seeing life as process rather than as fact, and constantly questions the impact of artistic practice on today's world.

William Kentridge has been acknowledged over recent years as one of the prime figures of contemporary art and his work has resonated against the backdrop of recent South African history and politics. However, as we see in ***Stair Procession***, his work evokes issues that characterize the human condition in general.

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In 1989 Kentridge began making his well-known animated drawings films. These are made by shooting still frames of his drawings, then altering them through erasure or addition, and shooting them again. The results openly reveal disjunctions of time and space. Erasures remain as traces, visually translating the overlapping nature of experience, memory and consciousness.

Alongside these animated films, Kentridge has created a number of wall drawings where drawings on paper are joined with parts created directly on the wall. This way of working was first used by Kentridge for his installation at the Havana Biennial in 1997 where he premiered "Ubu Tells the Truth," an animated film with wall drawings of large Ubu figures stemming from his earlier theater production, "Ubu and the Truth Commission." Kentridge states "This *Vertical Painting* will be a trace or pattern for a possible but unrealized theatre piece."

Special thanks to Marian Goodman, Anne McIlleron, and Linda Givon.

P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center

Background: P.S.1 was founded in 1971 by Alanna Heiss as The Institute of Art and Urban Resources Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to the transformation of abandoned and underutilized buildings in New York City into exhibition, performance, and studio spaces for artists. The Center now operates two internationally acclaimed spaces for contemporary art: P.S.1 in Long Island City and The Clocktower Gallery in Tribeca, both of which contain museum-quality galleries and extensive studio facilities for the National and International Studio Program. P.S.1 is one of the largest and oldest arts organization in the United States solely devoted to contemporary art. Recognized as a defining force of the alternative space movement, P.S.1 stands out from major arts institutions in its cutting edge approach to exhibitions and direct involvement of artists within a scholarly framework. P.S.1 acts as an intermediary between the artist and its audience. Functioning as a living and active meeting place for the general public, P.S.1 is a catalyst for ideas, discourses and new trends in contemporary art. With its educational programs, P.S.1 assists the public in understanding art and provides the tools to appreciate contemporary art and its practices.

Funding: P.S.1 receives annual support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs towards operating costs. Programs of P.S.1 are supported by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, The Office of the President of the Borough of Queens, The Council of New York City, the P.S.1 Board of Directors, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional funding is provided by foundations, corporate and individual contributions, and membership and admission donations.

Directions: P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center is located just across the Queensboro Bridge from midtown Manhattan, at the intersection of Jackson and 46th Avenues, in Long Island City. It is easily accessible by bus and subway. Traveling by subway, visitors should take either E or F to 23 Street-Ely Avenue; the 7 to 45 Road-Courthouse Square; or the G to Court Square or 21 Street-Van Alst. They may also take the Q67 bus to Jackson and 46th Avenues or the B61 to Jackson Avenue.

Hours and Admission: P.S.1 is open from noon to 6:00 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday.
\$5.00 suggested donation, \$2.00 for students and senior citizens, members free.

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