

## MADE IN TORONTO

Okavango unites musicians rooted in seven African nations, **E4**



WHAT'S ON:  
REEL ARTISTS FILM FESTIVAL

# Haute docs



Great stories outweigh the art at Reel Artists festival

COURTESY OF THE CINEMA GUILD

**PETER GODDARD**  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

The eighth annual Reel Artists Film Festival opening gala Wednesday night featured the world premiere of *Koop*, director Katherine Knight's new documentary on painter Wanda Koop.

In addition to recognizing the Winnipeg artist's remarkable 25-year-career — also being celebrated with a National Gallery of Canada retrospective — the 17 visual art-related documentaries, organized by *Canadian Art* magazine, can be divided into at least three themes and six other films worth noting. All are screening at TIFF Bell Lightbox.

**THE GREAT INDIVIDUALISTS**

• **William Kentridge: Anything is Possible** (Thursday, 9 p.m.) The PBS-produced documentary focuses on the South African multimedia artist's direction of *The Nose*, the Dmitri Shostakovich opera based on the Nikolai Gogol story, last year at New York's Metropolitan Opera. Directors Susan Sollins and Charles Atlas frame Kentridge's life and career against the background of his country's anguished racist history. His parents, both lawyers, felt "an incandescent rage against what was happening"

Kentridge says. He seems himself somewhat ambivalent about being an artist struggling with "ideas endlessly trying to get out."

• **The Colour of Your Socks: A Year with Pipilotti Rist** (Friday, 7 p.m.) Rist exudes such boundless good will that her work — including *Pour Your Body Out* (7354 Cubic Meters), her 2008 pink flood of a video projection at the MoMA in New York — allows viewers "a little more in life," she claims.

• **China, the Empire of Art?** examines the country's rebellious art stars.

REEL continued on E6

**THEATRE**

## Canadian Stage plays it risky

Part of Africa Trilogy, fringe shows included in new season lineup

**MARTIN KNELMAN**  
TORONTO STAR

Matthew Jocelyn, the artistic and general director of Canadian Stage, is boldly marching forward with his plan to challenge audiences — and eschew safe, predictable programming.

On Wednesday Jocelyn unveiled a tantalizing and risky 2011/2012 program for the civic theatre he vowed to reinvent when he took over the organization a year ago.

The most exciting news for theatregoers who missed Volcano Theatre's *The Africa Trilogy* when it had its world premiere during the 2010 Luminato festival is that a reconstructed version will open Jocelyn's 2011/2012 mainstage season at the Bluma Appel Theatre in September.

Commissioned for and by Luminato, the original version had three one-act plays. Now, collaborating with Volcano, Canadian Stage has dropped the weakest of the three and is presenting the other two under the title *Another Africa*.

The two plays — with a cast including Toronto favourite Kristen Thomson — will reach a larger audience, enjoying a four-week run at a larger theatre than its original Harbourfront venue.

Whereas the previous regime often included many plays recently seen on Broadway as part of its formula, Jocelyn has just one.

It's *Red*, the play about painter Mark Rothko. The role of Rothko has not been cast, but Siminovitch Prize winner Kim Collier has been hired to direct.

In an interview after the announcement, Jocelyn dismissed questions about empty seats and revenue shortfalls during the current season.

"I was hired to bring in a new vision and we're doing everything we can to make that happen, because the city needs it."

"Our board is excited and supportive," he said.

And his lineup reveals a lot to justify excitement.

THEATRE continued on E8

# Vancouver school gets its close-up

REEL from E1

The Zurich artist's relentless perkiness also helps whisk you through director Michael Hegglin's meandering movie.

## THE CHINESE CONNECTION

• **Ai Weiwei: Sunflower Seeds** (Friday, 5:15 p.m. shown with *Ghost Noise* about Inuit artist Shuvinai Ashoona.) Directed by Tate Modern's Kate Vogel, the 15-minute film goes beyond Ai Weiwei's recent installation of 100 million porcelain sunflower seeds in Tate Modern's Turbine Hall in London, to include

his visits with the Chinese workers who painted them by hand.

• **China, the Empire of Art?** (Saturday, 9 p.m.) In looking at a roster of internationally known Chinese art stars — including Xu Bing, whose move to the United States in 1990 helped begin the “Chinese invasion” of western visual culture — the documentary directed by Chinese filmmaker Sheng Zhimin and French journalist/writer Emma Tassy indicates how the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests fostered a rebellious '90s generation of Chinese artists. But it doesn't ignore the “cynical realism” behind these

artists' staggering sales figures at western auctions.

## PHOTOGRAPHY'S CLOSE-UP

• **Picture Start** (Sunday, 3:30 p.m.) If ever a documentary begged to be a feature, it's this group portrait having its world premiere, of photography's “Vancouver School,” by director Harry Killas. Here's a classic buddy movie — with photographer/artists Jeff Wall, Ian Wallace and Rodney Graham wandering in and out of one another's lives — who just happen to go on to become international art stars.

• **Andreas Gursky: Long Shot**

**Close Up** (Sunday, 5:30 p.m.) Director Jan Schmidt-Garre's dour documentary zeros in on German photographer Gursky's techno-intensive perfectionist practice and the production of *Hamn, Bergwek Ost*, a monumental, digitally assembled composite image of worn miner's clothes hanging from the ceiling in a German mine. Gursky's drive to show humanity and spatiality is positively Wagnerian in its scope. As one critic notes in the film, you're left feeling “you're drowning in what's being depicted.”

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KATHERINE KNIGHT PHOTO

Koop, featuring the Winnipeg artist, screens again Friday.