



(detail)  
2000

Book with chine collé figures cut from black Canson paper, affixed to pages from *Le Petit Larousse Illustré* (Paris, c. 1906), mounted on Velin Arches Crème paper, folded as a leperello

Image and sheet (unfolded):  
10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 166<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches  
(27.5 x 422.9 cm)  
Portfolio: 11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches  
(28.6 x 24.8 x 2.1 cm)

**WILLIAM KENTRIDGE**  
South African, born 1955

### LET'S LOOK

Where could these people be going? Where might they be coming from?

What sorts of items do they carry?

Could this be a parade?  
A journey? A migration?  
A celebration?

### LET'S LOOK AGAIN

Look closely at the figures' poses. What could each person's story be?

Why do you think the artist used torn paper and pages from an old book in this work of art?

## PORTAGE

This image is a detail from a larger work of art—an **accordion-fold book** that is almost fourteen feet long (see CD-ROM for additional images). To create it, the artist William Kentridge arranged small pieces of torn black paper into figures. He then glued the figures onto pages that he removed from a French dictionary.

While the dictionary definitions in the **background** represent precise, factual information, the procession of shadowy figures presents a **narrative** that is more open to interpretation. Where are the people going, and why? Perhaps they are travelers on a road. Perhaps they are moving from one place to another. Maybe they are participating in a parade or celebration. The people carry various items such as chairs, tools, musical instruments, and other objects. What might these objects tell us about their stories?

The poses of the four figures pictured here give us clues about their feelings. The woman on the left seems to stride forward confidently, while the person in front of her looks down, perhaps tired or lost in thought. The next person holds something above her head. What could it be? The figure on the far right seems especially burdened with a heavy load. Whoever they may be, they move forward together.

Kentridge was born and raised in South Africa. His parents, who had Lithuanian and German-Jewish ancestry, were lawyers who worked against apartheid, a system of racial segregation. Kentridge's work, which includes films, drawings, sculptures, and theatrical productions, often addresses political and social issues.

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