

CASE STUDY

GENELEC ADDS AUDIO PRECISION TO ARTISTIC VISION AT WILLIAM KENTRIDGE EXHIBITION



The South African artist's largest Asian exhibition utilised an array of Genelec speakers, which provided outstanding reproduction in a challenging acoustic environment.

William Kentridge is South Africa's most famous living artist, having produced an outstanding body of contemporary work across drawing, print, animation and sculptural mediums, as well as live performance pieces. At the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, Beijing, 'William Kentridge: Notes Towards a Model Opera' provided a comprehensive retrospective view of his work from 1988 to the present. The exhibition harnessed the clarity of a plethora of Genelec loudspeakers – including the 8030, 8330, 4030, G3, 8040, 8050, 1038CF and 1238CF – allowing Kentridge's complex, multifaceted works to be fully realised. The use of sound and its unique properties has become increasingly important in today's contemporary

art installations. Kentridge's works creatively de-structure and restructure various sound elements, which are fused with many different images and installations to generate meaningful artistic statements. In this exhibition, faithful, comprehensive and nuanced sound reproduction was one of the keys to fully convey the messages that the artist wanted to present. The exhibition layout was designed by set designer Sabine Theunissen, Kentridge's long-term co-operator. The core of the exhibition centred around its titular piece 'Notes Towards a Model Opera', a three-channel projection rooted in extensive research into the intellectual, political, and social history of modern China. It utilised four Genelec 4030 speakers, forming crystal clear quadraphonic sound.



The works on show spanned a wide variety of artistic mediums: two-dimensional artworks in Indian ink, charcoal, linocut, and silkscreen print on paper; audio multi-screen images and hand-painted animation; and a large-scale installation in the form of a stage model in combination with audio-visual multimedia. Kentridge chose Genelec to provide sound for all of his works, with a total of 30 speakers used across the exhibition. According to Feng Hanying, National Director of Genelec China, faithful and delicate reproduction of each work was of utmost importance, as was minimising interference between one another in the large hall. The loudspeakers were implemented both to support the large-scale installations as well as match the design style of the entire art space. In addition, the loudspeakers needed to run continuously and stably for 3 months – posing a serious test of the product’s reliability and durability. Genelec loudspeakers lived up to these expectations, handling the challenging requirements with ease, and subtly blending in to the art space.

KIT LIST

The largest room “Refusal of Time”

- 4 x 1038CF

“It’s not me. The horse is not mine”

- 4 x 8050, quadrasonic

“Notes towards a model opera”

- 4 x 4030, quadrasonic

Several other small areas and rooms

- 4030 stereo pairs
- 30 loudspeakers used in total.

Ms Qu Lu, Marketing and Communication Manager of Genelec China, said that the project had faced many challenges in terms of construction and installation. The exhibition hall itself was reflective, and the acoustic environment of each space was different, posing audio issues. However, as each Genelec loudspeaker could be precisely calibrated using the DIP switches, the system was able to be tailored to the unique listening environments by compensating for detrimental room influences. Thanks to Genelec’s Directivity Control Waveguide (DCW™) technology, sound coverage both on and off axis was excellent. With the concerted efforts of the UCCA and Genelec teams, the 30 Genelec loudspeakers delivered audio success, meeting the approval of the artist.

Genelec’s reputation in producing professional quality, crystal-clear speakers has helped to establish itself as a popular choice in the presentation of artistic works. Many Genelec products, such as the M series, G series, F series and the 8351, feature industrial designs by Harri Koskinen, a world renowned industrial designer, combining professional sound quality and timeless Scandinavian design.



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