VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Wangechi Mutu:

My Cave Call

January 12–March 31, 2024

GALLERY 301
Out there.

In the middle of the oldest place on earth, there is a piece of land.

A land that sits between two mountain ranges.

A place where we were taught everything there is to know about being people.

All of us first learnt from the trees and the soil and the rivers...

How to speak.

How to dance.

How to stand upright.

How to make poetry.

And how to brew spells and medicines.

And even how to birth breech babies.

But today, in this great valley, scattered all over everywhere, there are many messages, signs of human fear and heart ache and greed from the past and from today, and from the future.

Only a few people can see them, and even fewer can read them.

Those who see the future by looking carefully at the past like Or-koi-yot of the Nandi, whose
deep wide eyes saw beyond the horizon.

Past me

He even saw what was coming ahead.

He saw the wounds of a metal snake slithering across the land.

And he told of deep cuts that slashed humans in half, separating their hearts from their minds. There was a tall Cege wa Kiburu.

He moves slowly, fast.

Walking past the sunset.

Beyond the slow rolling seasons, he saw the killing of wildebeest.

The sawing of elephant's teeth.

And the murder of Gikũyũ soldier brides.

Out there, folded tightly into the rocks of the original Motherland.

Hiding in plain sight, is an enchanted place where the belly of the Earth sits wide open, like a silent scream.

She always ended up here reading under these trees and without sound.
They called her and her mother and her grandmother's mother.

Many had tried to ask the trees to help them find this exact place.

And the wind howled back to them “be gone”.

And then the tree said that in 1896, when an old metal track was being cut into the ground by brown vegetarian men from across the sea.

These man-eating lions without permission or shame ate them one by one.

How?

Pray tell us, do we find this peculiar big hole where bats and baboons come to hold court, to eat wild fruit, to defecate, and mate, surrounding this ancient orifice.

This wild and holy pasture are great retired ghosts disguised as holy bulls and their queen cow wives.

They're watching, dozing, chewing, shitting.

Although, the beasts never speak, they do ask that you come in peace with a strong heart and humility.

This is where she came and sat and read long, creepy stories peppered with even creepier prophetic pictures.
It's then that the leaves in the trees began to moan and roar in a terrifying way.

Like the British soldier, whose throat was slashed open, by Laikipia The Great.

When his prize bull had been stolen, sold, and slaughtered, she read and learned how the Earth was ready to raise her voice, to hear from us again.

To know if we understood how he had scratched, whipped, and burned her.

And starved and screamed,

and bound her arms and legs,

and cut her ribs, and gouged out her eyes.

How we’d stroke her hair, and lied to her and touched her mouth,

before stitching it shut.

how we planted metal worms in her back and broken glass under her feet.