

Wangechi Mutu | *Nguva na Nyoka*

14 October to 19 December 2014

Gallery I, Victoria Miro, 16 Wharf Road, London N1 7RW



Wangechi Mutu, New York 2014. Photography © Kathryn Parker Almanas

Victoria Miro is delighted to present the gallery's second exhibition by Wangechi Mutu, widely known for her elaborate collages that explore and subvert cultural preconceptions of the female body and the feminine.

Mutu's practice has been described as engaging in her own unique form of myth-making. This exhibition, *Nguva na Nyoka* (meaning "Sirens and Serpents" in Kiswahili) presents Mutu's latest body of collage, video and sculptural works. Drawing on such diverse references as East African coastal mythologies (particularly of *nguvus*, or water women), gender and racial politics, Western popular culture, Eastern and ancient beliefs and autobiography, in her works Mutu proposes worlds within worlds, populated by powerful hybridised female figures.

Mutu's latest collage-paintings are defined by a shift away from her much-documented use of Mylar as a substrate to a use of vinyl and linoleum as the basis for the works, allowing for a more densely textured and sculptural ground. Painterly techniques are employed alongside Mutu's signature construction of images comprised of deftly cut-out and collaged forms. In addition, Mutu's visual language is further enriched in these works by her use of unexpected materials such as tea, batik fabrics, synthetic hair, Kenyan soil, feathers, and sand, amongst other media – many of which are imbued with their own cultural significations.

The interweaving of fact with fiction and an extension of the possibilities for yet another group of symbolic female characterisations that co-exist in various cultures as another understanding (or constructing) of femaleness underpins this new body of work. The exhibition will also feature a video, entitled *Nguva*, a multi-tiered performance featuring the mesmeric eponymous role: a mysterious aquatic character who emerges from the sea onto land and wanders, restless, vicious and curious.

Biography:

Born in Nairobi, Kenya, Wangechi Mutu currently lives and works in New York. Her work has been shown in solo exhibitions at the Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin; the Wiels Contemporary Museum, Brussels; the Art Gallery of Ontario; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; The Sydney Museum of Contemporary Art; The Brooklyn Museum; and other venues. Her work has been featured in group exhibitions at many other major museums nationally and internationally, including the Palais de Tokyo, Paris; the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate Liverpool; the Vancouver Art Gallery; Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; and Moderna Museet, Stockholm. Wangechi Mutu was named as the first Deutsche Bank “Artist of the Year” in 2010.

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