

# The Mountain

KAB20 Virtual Experience Introduction by Simon Njami.

This is not an exhibition. This is an initiation. This is a journey into the very heart of history; a journey through time and space; an invitation to dive inside ancient new narratives.

At the dawn of humanity, there was Africa. An Africa we probably can't remember. But traces are there. We have decided to unveil a part of all mysteries contained in the wombs of the Mountain, for any mountain always detains a part of magic.

It was always seen as the home of Gods and Devils, of good and evil. Let's go back to the origins and try to reclaim what we have lost. Let's try to create new rites and new Gods and Goddesses; gods that would look like us. Who would share our fears and our joys. Art is definitively part of that magic we have forgotten. It does not win wars, but it allows us to express what we have inside. It allows us to translate what cannot be voiced into forms and sensations.

It is a world of sensations where silence is no longer silence but a spiritual experience. It is a world that forces you to walk with eyes wide open in order to receive the revelation of "the evidence of things not seen". It is a new birth where things are upside down. The masters are no longer masters, and the apprentices are no longer apprentices. We have created a world of perpetual metamorphosis where colours and patterns are in a constant change, a world from which all certainties have vanished where every sound is music. Nothing is eternal. Even the snows are melting on top of mountains. Nature is rightfully angry, and this is the reason why we asked for its protection.

And She welcomed us in this protected space where faces are visible because we have no more reason to be suspicious of the others and we can see our own shadows. The mountain protects its inhabitants. You are free to walk the way you want to walk. No one will tell you what to do or where to go.

You are experiencing one of the most difficult concepts ever envisioned: Freedom.

You are free to think for yourself, you are free to love or hate, you are free to laugh and cry, to dance or shout, to be moved or irritated. Nobody is watching you. You are on your own, confronted with the different propositions made by the doers who

got together to build the mountain that represents any mountain you want it to be. This is what it means to get up and to stand up.

This is the departure point of all knowledge and all projection of oneself. In the belly of the mountain, we have recreated a world within the world.

We have invented caves inside a mountain where new rites are being created and where you can witness the birth of art, with the traces of the painted palms.

We conceived tunnels that, like the Underground Railroad created by the slaves in America, lead to lost worlds and to new landscapes where slavery no longer exists.

We erected control towers to allow you to take control of your history and your past.

We built new glaciers filled with visions that are not visions but recreate the beginning and the end.

In our churches, we claimed new Gods and new ways of worship.

We organized symposia in a *shebeen* where people can get together, drink, recite poems and talk about their own philosophies.

In the Hephaestus workshop that we opened, we forged new weapons that will kill no one.

We created a new Babel where all languages can be spoken and understood by all.

Time will stop and revolve. Night and day are confused, and we have invented a new alphabet with words that suit us better than the old ones, created for domination. To stand up means to take charge of your own destinies. Stories are there, hidden. Some, you might be able to decipher, others you might not even notice; for not all things are to be uncovered. The centre is nowhere to be found because there is no Centre, but centres. We could have written at the door that guards the entrance of the mountain, in a Parody of the Divine Comedy, « Abandon all hope, ye who enter here ». On the contrary, there is no gate to enter the mountain and what we are offering is hope.

Welcome to the inner brightness!

SIMON NJAMI