



AMANI BODO

Congo avenir

07.09 - 21.09 puis
06.10 - 04.11.23

GALERIE ANGALIA

Opening
7 September 2023

Solo show
AMANI BODO – *Congo avenir*
Sept. 7 - 21 then Oct. 6 - Nov. 4, 2023

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Sept. 7 to 21, then Oct. 6 to Nov. 4, 2023

Opening Thursday, September 7, 6 to 9 p.m.

The gallery presents *Congo avenir*, Amani Bodo's first solo exhibition in France.

Born in Kinshasa in 1988 (aged 34), Amani is the younger son of the late Pierre Bodo (1953-2015), a leading Congolese artist. He is also the younger brother of painter Bodo-Fils. Although influenced by his family's artistic universe, Amani has developed his own style with figurative and symbolic paintings with a surrealist feel.

A full-time artist since the age of 20, Amani joined the famous Pigozzi Collection at the age of 21. He is regularly exhibited at art fairs and auction houses in Europe.

Backgrounds to the fore

The backgrounds of Amani Bodo's canvases are his artistic hallmark and are easy to spot. The artist calls them *mwangisa*, referring to the rash of flecked colours, a cosmic nebula which immediately grabs the attention and contributes to the dazzling yet mysterious feel of his works. The other noteworthy feature of these backgrounds is that they are shaded, with the earth and sky forming a single continuum, just like in some of the portraits painted by the great masters, such as Manet's *The Young Flautist* and Velázquez's *Portrait of Pablo de Valladolid*.

A reinterpretation of classical and modern masterpieces

Amani developed a taste for reinterpreting famous paintings. This genre gave him the means to express his feelings about the place of Africa and Africans. Among the most successful reinterpretations are two revivals of cult paintings by Norman Rockwell, including *Afrique bien protégée* (2022), a clever adaptation of the painting *The problem we all live with*. Amani does not imitate for the simple pleasure of it. Most of his reinterpretations have a purpose: to showcase Black people and restore Africa to its rightful place in the world.

Africa's place

Just like so many Africans and Congolese, Amani Bodo is saddened by the state of his country, and wonders: what is going wrong? To what extent are Africa's supporters or protectors to blame?

In the aforementioned reinterpretation of Norman Rockwell's painting, the little Black girl in the white dress (Ruby Bridges) becomes Africa, while her bodyguards sport armbands bearing the names of big institutions and global powers. Are they there to support Africa, or rather to protect their own interests? It is unclear. The same suspicion of duplicity can be found in *Qui est derrière toi* (2022). With the work entitled *Besoin d'un nouveau regard sur l'Afrique* (Need for a new view of Africa), Amani calls on the countries from the Global North to shake up their vision of Africa.

However, he does not forget to question the responsibility held by the Africans themselves. A slogan appears in *L'esprit des ancêtres en captivité* (2022): *No culture, no future*. And Amani asks... "Why has Africa neglected its own culture? We have turned our backs on the masks and statues. They are shut away in distant museums. But can we really grow while disowning our culture?"

Society and family

Social issues are another common thread in Amani's work. The exhibition features works on the scandals affecting the Catholic Church (*Les chocs du Pape*, 2019), the smartphone society (*Réunion entre amis*, 2022); SAPE, of course (see next paragraph); but also the family, with a painting paying tribute to his father (*Héritage Bodo*, 2019), as well as *Congo avenir* (2023), a painting in which Amani depicts his sons. Staring, determined, the children seem to be reaching for the future, embodying the hope of better days ahead.

The *sapeur* master

Since 2016, *sapeurs* have made regular reappearances in Amani Bodo's work. The challenge is not so much choosing outfits for the subjects, but instead depicting their energy and movement, as well as the skilful rendering of their extravagant behaviour, which needs to remain classy. Two paintings in the exhibition: *Religion Kitendi* (2022), a work that refers to the fact that SAPE is elevated by some of its followers to the rank of a religion, and *La vieillesse attendra* (2023), a charming and rare transposition of the Congolese SAPE movement in the female form and with no age limits.

Amani BODO

Born in Kinshasa (DR Congo) in 1981. He lives and works in Kinshasa.



SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 : *Amani Bodo - Congo avenir*, Galerie Angalia, Paris, France
 2022: *Amani Bodo, Unveiling the enigma and the surreal*, Primo Marella Gallery, Lugano, Switzerland
 2021: *Amani Bodo - Journey into the African neo-surrealism*, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy
 2016: *Tambola malembe*, Angalia & Texaf-Bilembo, Espace Texaf-Bilembo, Kinshasa, DRC

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2023: *Portraits ya Kongo*, galerie Angalia, Paris, France
 2023: *Art joyeux – Toseka !*, galerie Angalia, Paris, France
 2020: *Welcome home II*, Musée d'Art Contemporain Africain Al Maaden, Marrakech, Morocco
 2020: *AFRICA UNIVERSE - Chapter 3, The art of storytellers. The continuation of the tradition: from Chéri Cherin to Amani Bodo*, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan
 2019-2020: *The Fight of the Century*, Kloser Contemporary Art, online
 2019: *AFRICA UNIVERSE - Chapter 1, Januario Jano: Anthropocene*, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan
 2019: *KINinspire*, Le Monde des flamboyants, Trust Merchant Bank
 2019: *Congo Paintings*, musée des arts d'Afrique et d'Asie, Vichy, France
 2018-2019: *Kinshasa Chroniques*, Musée International des Arts Modestes, Sète, France
 2018: *Congo Paintings*, Musée africain de Namur, Namur, Belgium
 2016-2017: *Essentiel Paysage*, Al Maaden Art Gallery, Centre d'art contemporain africain, Marrakech, Morocco
 2015: *The Remarkable lightness of being*, galerie Aeroplastics, Brussels, Belgium
 2014: *Kin-Babi*, galerie Cécile Fakhoury, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
 2013: *Peintres du Congo d'aujourd'hui*, Musée Baron Martin Gray, France
 2011: *JapanCongo*, Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow, Russia, and Le Magasin, Grenoble, France
 2010: *Emerging Art from Kinshasa*, Jack Bell Gallery, London, UK
 2010: *Père et fils, copie ou continuité ?*, Centre culturel français, Kinshasa, DRC
 2009: *Africa, una nuova storia*, Complesso del Vittoriano, Rome, Italy
 2007: *Congo. Vies du peuple, vie des arts*, Galerie 100 Titres, Brussels, Belgium (as part of the YAMBI ! Festival).
 2005: *15 ans de transition*, Hôtel Memling, Kinshasa, DRC
 2003: *Regard sur la transition*, Hôtel Memling, Kinshasa, DRC

ART FAIRS

- 2022: AKA Art Fair, galerie Angalia, Paris, France
 2022: Arte Fiera Bologna, Primo Marella Gallery, Bologna, Italy
 2022: 1-54 London Art Fair, Primo Marella Gallery, London, England
 2022 : 1-54 Paris Art Fair, Primo Marella Gallery, Paris, France
 2021 : Artissima Art Fair, Primo Marella Gallery, Torino, Italy

2021: 1-54 Paris, Primo Marella Gallery, Paris, France

2018: AKAA Art Fair, galerie Angalia, Paris, France

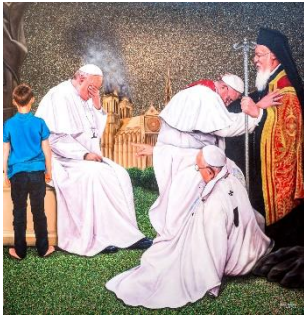
2017: AKAA Art Fair, galerie Angalia, Paris, France

2016: AKAA Art Fair, galerie Angalia, Paris, France

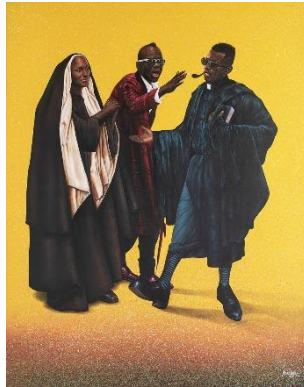
PUBLICATIONS

- *Kinshasa Chroniques*, exhibition catalogue, Editions de l'œil, 2019
- *Africa Universe*, exhibition catalogue, Primo Marella Gallery, 2019
- *Congo Paintings*, exhibition catalogue, Musée des Arts d'Afrique et d'Asie, 2019
- *Essentiel paysage*, exhibition catalogue, Fondation Alliances, MACAAL, 2016
- *Tambola malembe*, exhibition catalogue, Angalia, 2016
- *Africa, una nuova storia*, exhibition catalogue, Gangemi Editore, 2009
- *Les arts du Congo, d'hier à nos jours*, Roger-Pierre Turine, éd. La Renaissance du Livre, 2007

Selection of images



1. Amani Bodo, *Les chocs du Pape* (2019)
Acrylic on canvas, 130 x 125 cm
© PCP - Courtesy A. Bodo & Angalia



2. Amani Bodo, *Religion Kitendi* (2022)
Acrylic on canvas, 138 x 108 cm
© PCP - Courtesy A. Bodo & Angalia



3. Amani Bodo, *Congo avenir* (2023)
Acrylic on canvas, 130 x 102 cm
© PCP - Courtesy A. Bodo & Angalia



4. Amani Bodo, *La vieillesse attendra* (2022)
Acrylic on canvas, 139 x 189 cm
© PCP - Courtesy A. Bodo & Angalia



5. Amani Bodo, *Qui est derrière toi ?* (2023)
Acrylic on canvas, 149 x 187 cm
© PCP - Courtesy A. Bodo & Angalia



Amani Bodo, *Afrique bien protégée* (2022)
Acrylic on canvas (133 x 183 cm)
© PCP - Courtesy A. Bodo & Angalia

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Photos of the exhibition works are available on request, please contact barlet@galerie-angalia.com.

Contact information

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