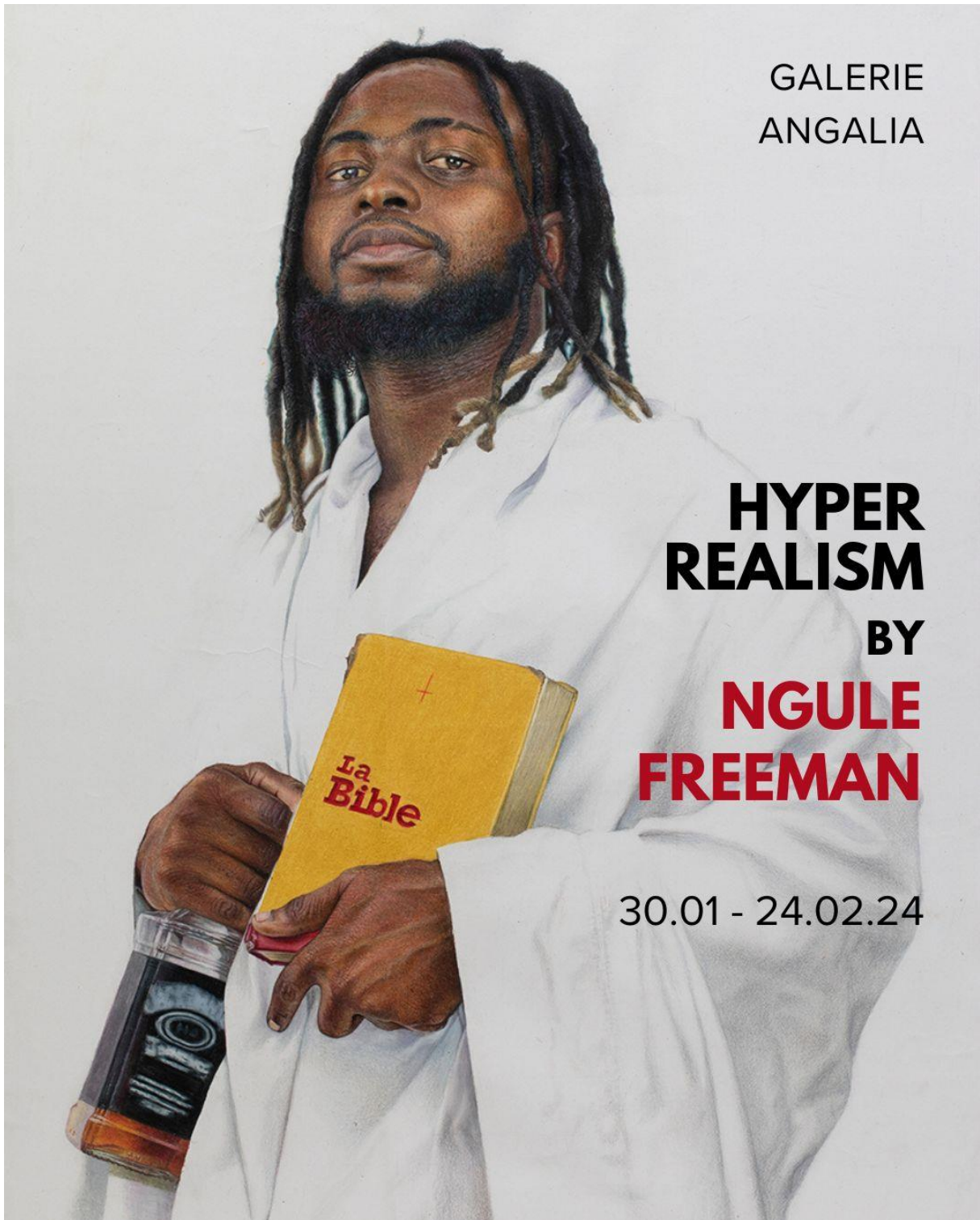


GALERIE ANGALIA

PRESS RELEASE



GALERIE
ANGALIA

**HYPER
REALISM**
BY
**NGULE
FREEMAN**

30.01 - 24.02.24

Opening
30 January 2024

Solo show
HYPERREALISM by NGULE FREEMAN
30 January. – 24 February. 2024

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Ngule Freeman, whose real name is Emmanuel Ngule Mputu, was born in Kinshasa in 1999, and is the youngest of 11 siblings. Ngule's father died, so he did not have the means to study art. Consequently, Ngule started to develop his career as a self-taught artist. He began to earn a living from his drawings from the age of 17 by doing portraits on request.

It took him some time to devote himself to his own artworks, as his efforts were focused on making ends meet. Ngule's first truly personal work was a self-portrait, *Futur obscur*, produced with graphite pencils at the age of 19. A few months later, he started working with Angalia, meaning that he was able to apply a purely qualitative approach and develop his artistic message. A series of works depicting Congolese society ensued, portraying a wide variety of feelings and ways of life of young people in Kinshasa: jealousy (*Nkento*), young people's views being ignored with *Misu ezo mona nionso* ("The eyes see everything"), perverted religion (*5^e évangile*), identity issues (*Tala sima zonga mutu*), and *Kimia*, the yearning for brotherhood.

Ngule also depicts his own story. He used coloured pencils to create *Elikia* ("Hope"), a drawing evoking a tough period of his life, when there were only cheap biscuits for the children's evening meal. The ballpoint pen self-portrait, *Freeman*, provides a switch to a lighter style. In this case, Freeman depicts a specific moment in time, when he realises, while in the shower, that he doesn't have the art supplies he needs for his next drawing.

The exhibition also showcases portraits of public figures: the iconic Patrice Lumumba, for whom Ngule set himself, following a dream, the challenge of creating a colour

portrait, without any model, as the portrait photos of the icon of African independence are in black and white, and larger than life portraits of the Congolese artists Freddy Tsimba and JP Mika.

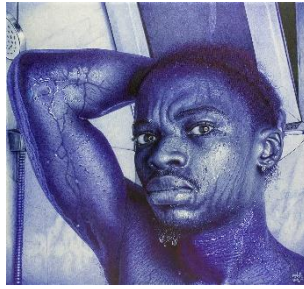
Ngule Freeman made an early choice to opt for hyperrealism and has never regretted that decision. It was a totally logical choice for an artist who is so accomplished at drawing. However, there was another reason for his choice: hyperrealism had been absent from the Congolese art scene until then. Constructive rivalry is important in the vibrant Congolese art scene, as well as the pride of flying the national flag abroad. This desire to assert his identity explains why Ngule gives most of his works titles in Lingala.

Ngule has already demonstrated that he is highly talented, even though he is yet to turn 25. He has a bright future ahead of him. But what direction will his career take? Hyperrealism is a vast world, and is not the exclusive domain of drawing; besides, the movement's pioneers, such as Chuck Close and Robert Bechtle, are painters. Hyperrealism can be applied to a multitude of subjects: portraits, scenes from everyday life, urban landscapes, architecture, nudes, surrealism, and even still life, as is the case of Pedro Campos, Antonio Santin and Jason de Graaf. And this list is far from being exhaustive. One thing is certain: Ngule Freeman has the ambition to write an African chapter in the story of hyperrealism, and in so doing, become one of the leading exponents of the genre.

Selection of pictures



1. Ngule Freeman, *Futur obscur* (2020)
Graphite pencil on paper, 95 x 120 cm
© Romain Beaumont - Courtesy N. Freeman



2. Ngule Freeman, *Freeman* (2023)
Biros on paper, 95 x 120 cm
© PCP - Courtesy N. Freeman and private collection Basel, Switzerland



3. Ngule Freeman, *Elikia* (2023)
Coloured pencils on paper,
100 x 70 cm
© PCP - Courtesy N. Freeman and private collection Basel, Switzerland



4. Ngule Freeman, *Tala sima zonga mutu* (2024)
Graphite and charcoal on paper,
100 x 70 cm
© PCP - Courtesy N. Freeman & Angalia



5. Ngule Freeman, *5^e évangile* (2023)
Coloured pencils on paper,
95 x 67 cm
© PCP - Courtesy N. Freeman & Angalia

Photos of the works in the exhibition are available on request from barlet@galerie-angalia.com.

Galerie Angalia
10-12 rue des Coutures Saint Gervais
75003 Paris - France
Open Tuesday to Saturday
Tue. 12h - 19h
Wed. to Sat. 11h - 19h
07 81 72 30 62
galerie-angalia.com/en

Contacts :

Pierre Daubert (director)
daubert@galerie-angalia.com
06 32 10 55 80

Karin Barlet
barlet@galerie-angalia.com
06 13 92 18 72