



GALERIE ANGALIA

elembo (trace)

CATHERIS MONDOMBO

14.03 - 27.04.24

OPENING
14 March 2024

Solo show
Elembo (trace) - Catheris Mondombo
15 March - 27 April 2024

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Catheris Mondombo was born in 1992 in Kinshasa, where he lives and works.

Following two years of study at ABA Kinshasa (2012-2013), Catheris devoted himself to painting. However, he was not satisfied with the results of his first attempts on canvas. He then got hold of second-hand tarpaulins, salvaging them from markets and street sellers in Kinshasa. In his own way Catheris is addressing Kinshasa's excess waste issue by collecting and giving these salvaged tarpaulins a new lease of life. However, the symbolic aspect goes further. For Catheris, the salvaged tarpaulins reflect the socioeconomic situation of the people of Kinshasa, and beyond that, the precariousness of the human condition.

His first series depicted astronauts in a semi-abstract, semi-urban setting. The series was inspired by a science fiction film in which the inhabitants of earth are forced out by pollution and try to take refuge in space. Catheris draws a parallel with the residents of Kinshasa who rush around in all directions in a quest to survive daily life.

He then started producing portraits, mainly of women, using acrylics. He conveys classic beauty on a damaged medium. Catheris adds symbolic elements, such as wrapper fabric patches and red stitching, to this contrast effect. With these additions, he simultaneously repairs the medium and the subject, and is developing a visual language about the violence perpetrated against women and repair.

In 2021, Catheris embarked upon a series called *Notre histoire*, exploring his country's colonial past. The shapes are simplified and

the subjects are primarily depicted as shadows on backgrounds of pure colours. The large format of the works makes the end result even more striking.

For two years, he has been devoting many works to women and their lives. Catheris pays tribute to their sensitivity, their mental strength, and their ability to overcome hardship.

He joined Angalia in 2022. In the same year, the Ethan Cohen Gallery, his US representatives, hosted a solo exhibition of his work in New York.

Elembo is the artist's first solo show in Europe.

It showcases five works exploring DR Congo's history. The *Roi du Congo belge* is a large-scale striking portrait of the chilling figurehead of King Leopold II, based on the equestrian statue in Brussels. The other works depict Henry Morton Stanley, the *Force Publique* (military and police force), and Tabora, the scene of a battle won by the Belgian-Congolese forces during World War 1.

In keeping with his work on his country's history, Catheris has produced several works on the sensitive issue of the restitution of African works of art and cultural artefacts. The exhibition includes one such work: *Malentendu*. The work's title, meaning "misunderstanding", conveys the tremendous gulf between the concerns of Europeans focusing on reparation and a population concentrating on subsisting.

Four artworks illustrate the importance of women in the artist's work. They all evoke the injuries inflicted on women, but also their resilience and repair. One evokes childbirth, drawing on the artist's personal experience (*Naissance*), and two provide a touching reminder of lost youth (*Regard vers le passé* and *Reflet*).

Nevertheless, hope persists, despite bitter national memories, suffering and misunderstandings. For the artist, emancipatory knowledge, the theme of the work *Renouveau*, is the source of this hope..



1. Catheris Mondombo, *Le roi du Congo belge* (2021)
Mixed media on used tarpaulin,
230 x 280 cm
© PCP - Courtesy C. Mondombo & Angalia



2. Catheris Mondombo, *A vos ordres !* (2021)
Mixed media on used tarpaulin,
200 x 150 cm
© PCP - Courtesy C. Mondombo & Angalia



3. Catheris Mondombo, *Sans le chemin de fer...* (2021)
Mixed media on used tarpaulin,
177 x 147 cm
© PCP - Courtesy C. Mondombo & Angalia



4. Catheris Mondombo, *Naissance* (2023)
Mixed media on used tarpaulin,
128 x 88 cm
© PCP - Courtesy C. Mondombo & Angalia



5. Catheris Mondombo, *Regard vers le passé* (2023)
Mixed media on used tarpaulin,
127 x 88 cm
© PCP - Courtesy C. Mondombo & Angalia

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

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