

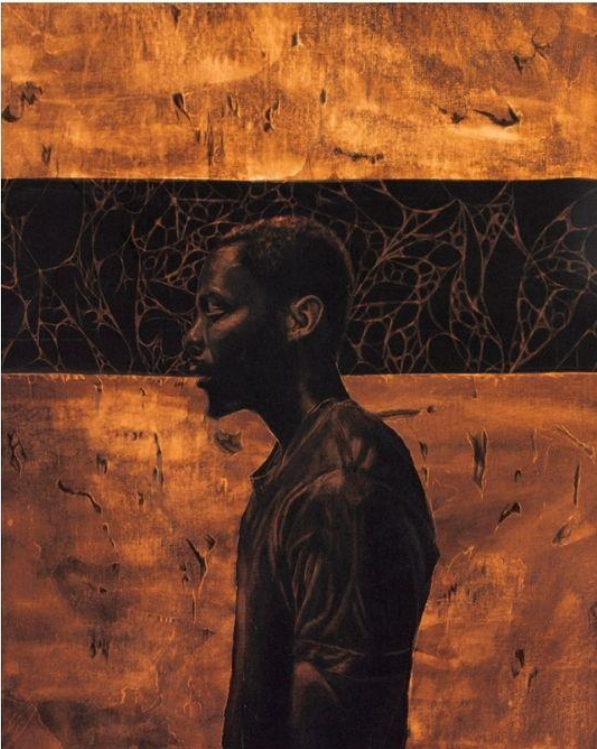
**SHOW, MEMORY  
AND SOUL**

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AMANI BODO  
GOSETTE LUBONDO  
ELI MADE

18.07 - 19.09.2024

GALERIE ANGALIA



## SHOW, MEMORY AND SOUL

Amani Bodo, Gosette Lubondo, Eli Made

### Group exhibition

From 18 July to 19 September 2024 (except during summer closure from 10 to 31 August)

Looking and seeing what is visible, and invisible... The artists in this exhibition use three totally different media to offer us three takes on appearance. Amani Bodo's work is all about ostentation, Gosette Lubondo majors on ghosts and mirages, and there are enigmas behind Eli Made's faces.

Fine attire and showmanship are at the heart of *Sape* dandy culture, a subject dear to Amani Bodo, who excels in the art of depicting *sapeurs* and their gift for elegance and creativity.

The *sapeurs* truly started appearing in his art from 2015. They featured heavily in his first solo exhibition (*Tambola malembe*, Kinshasa, 2016), with a series entitled *Tous sapeurs* in which he portrayed international celebrities as Congolese *sapeurs*. *Messi le roi Léo* (2015) is one such work. Drawing on the imagery of the great classical tradition of full-length portraits, he depicts Lionel Messi in a pose similar to that of a great king. Amani Bodo raises the issue of depiction twice over by portraying one of the world's best-known sports stars with a nod to the well-known formal portrait of King Louis XIV in his coronation robes.

Stunning depictions of *sapeurs* ensued from 2017 onwards, particularly four artworks in which they pose with birds. Playing on the similarity between the birds' feathers and dressing-up, Bodo gives free rein to his creativity and his talent as a colourist. His *Sapeur bilengi ya nzoyi* (2023) stems from the same quest and pleasure derived from drawing a parallel between the natural world (bees in this case) and the human taste for showing off. With *What sape* (2023), Bodo humorously depicts the omnipresent smartphone and the role played by new communication technologies in the game of appearances and its competitive nature.

Playfully, alongside the series on *sape* culture, the exhibition displays *Réunion extraordinaire* (2021), a product of the artist's imagination in the midst of the COVID lockdown. We are invited to test our

art history knowledge when looking at this impressive artwork that reproduces and portrays art masterpieces. At the exhibition, a crib sheet will enable visitors to check the accuracy of the references.

The photographer Gosette Lubondo invites us on a completely different sort of journey. Through her two *Imaginary Trip* series, she invites us to look beyond what is immediately perceptible, making use of photography to conjure up memories or dreams. Lubondo recreates the look of a world by inviting in both the past and all the projections it brings to mind in the person viewing the works.

In the first series, she took over an abandoned railway carriage in Kinshasa to recreate travel scenes. Seemingly real characters rub shoulders with seemingly fictitious, implicitly depicted ones, belonging to an unidentified, maybe past or future, time. In so doing, she brings alive our personal memories and challenges our own relationship with the past. Ultimately, these depictions are an invitation to embark upon our own imaginary trip.

In the second series, the photographer takes us to a former school founded in 1936 by missionaries in what is now Kongo Central. This prestigious boarding school had up to 500 pupils, but did not survive President Mobutu's policy of Zaireanization in the 1970s. The school was to all intents and purposes abandoned, and the heritage of the past reduced to a ghostly place. For the artist, bringing the school back to life is a way of preserving the memory of this place, which she regards as being part of her country's "historic, colonial and postcolonial heritage." Gosette plays with both appearance and apparition by assuming the role of all the subjects depicted in her shots, wearing outfits that she created.

The very young artist Eli Made, whose portraits explore different mental states, also invites us to look beyond form. He endeavours to convey the human experience behind a subject's appearance.

A highly precocious and unique artist, Eli Made uses bleach on fabric to create subtle portraits exploring diverse mental states in a sophisticated and unsettling chiaroscuro ambience. While each artwork is inspired by a particular state of mind – suffering, inner struggle, meditation, mental

transformation, resilience, and so on – it is a surface on which those viewing the work can project their own feelings. It is amazing to observe the intimate dialogue created between the viewer and the subject. People often see a psychological state that they have personally experienced.

In *Midas* (2023), the subject's tension is palpable, but her state of mind remains a mystery. What is she thinking? The same introspective attitude can be seen in *The Wall of Dichotomy* (2023), depicting a man trying to access a memory. The wall behind him is split into two sections, and symbolises conscious and unconscious memories. *Chumba cha kutafakari* (2023) depicts a moment of intense reflection in an enclosed space, a "meditation room". With *Kuchanua* (2023), meaning "to bloom" in Swahili, and *Lotus* (2023), Eli evokes blossoming and sensuality to convey self-confidence and lightness.

## Artists featured in the exhibition

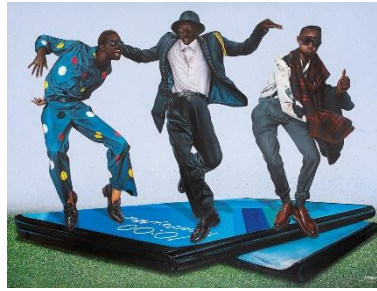
Amani BODO (1988, DR Congo), lives and works in Kinshasa.

Gosette LUBONDO (1993, DR Congo), lives and works in Kinshasa.

Eli MADE (2003, DR Congo), lives and works in Kinshasa.



1. Amani Bodo, *Sapeur bilengi ya nzoyi* (2023)  
Acrylic on canvas, 150 x 110 cm  
© A. Bodo



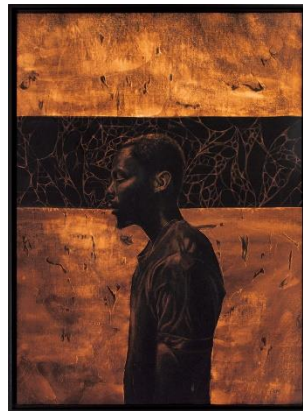
2. Amani Bodo, *What sape* (2023)  
Acrylic on canvas, 150 x 200 cm  
© A. Bodo



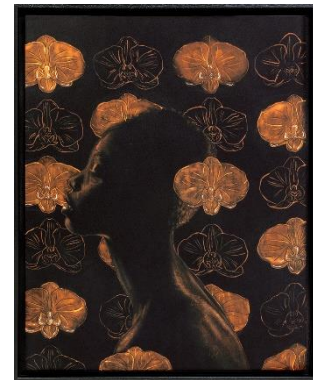
3. Gosette Lubondo, *Imaginary Trip II #23* - Ed. 4/5 (2018)  
Inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag 308 g., 50 x 75 cm  
© G. Lubondo



4. Gosette Lubondo, *Imaginary Trip #8* - Ed. 2/4 (2016)  
Inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag 308 g., 54 x 80 cm  
© G. Lubondo



5. Eli Made, *The Wall of Dichotomy* (2023)  
Bleach on fabric, 93 x 69 cm  
© E. Made



6. Eli Made, *Kuchanua* (2023)  
Bleach on fabric, 61 x 49 cm  
© E. Made

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