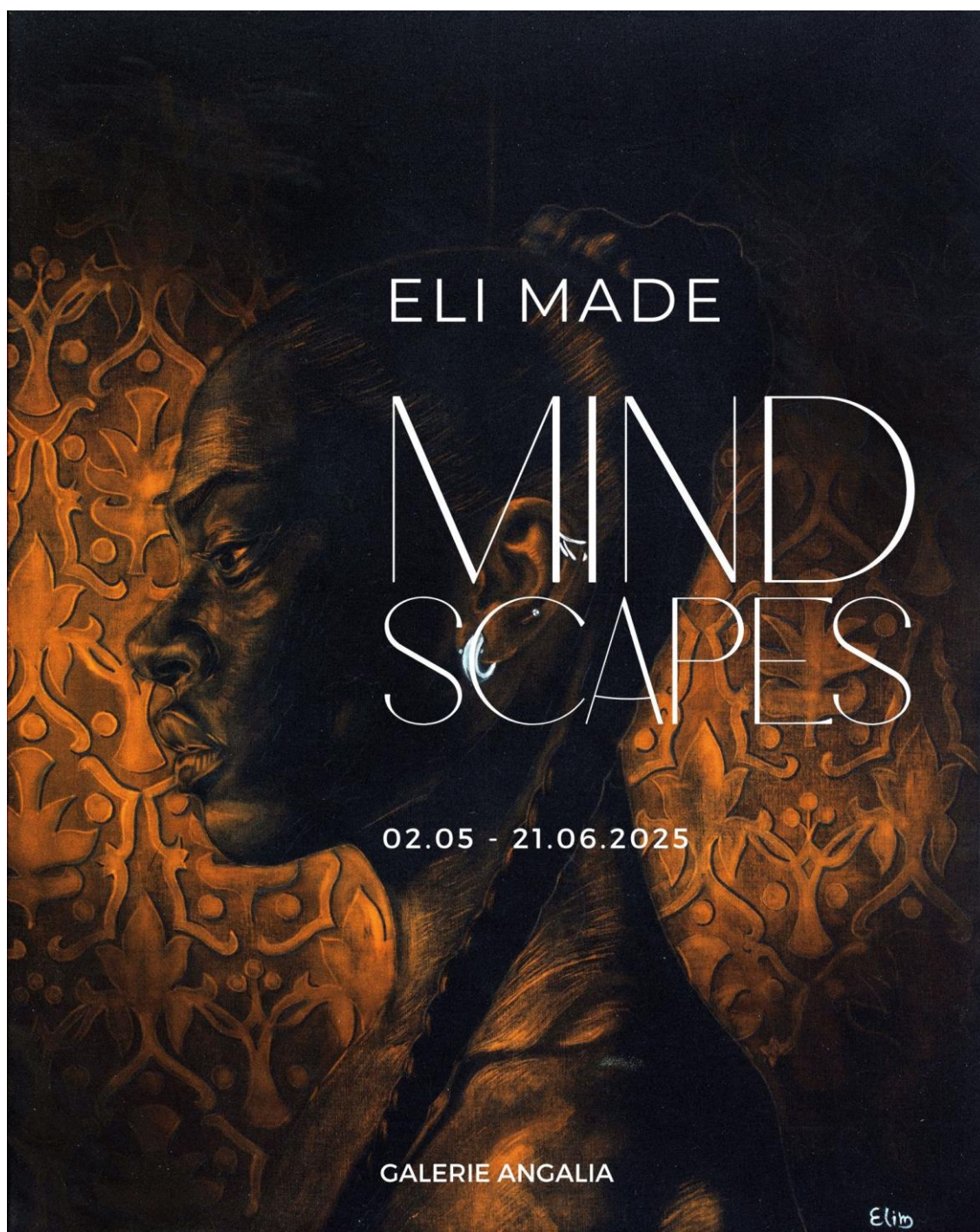


GALERIE ANGALIA

PRESS RELEASE



ELI MADE

MIND SCAPES

02.05 - 21.06.2025

GALERIE ANGALIA

Eli

OPENING
1 May 2025

Solo show
Mindscales - Eli Made
2 May - 21 June 2025

TRAVERSÉES
AFRICAINES

Taking part in *Traversées africaines 2025*

ELI MADE - *Mindscales* Solo show

02.05 to 21.06.2025

Opening on Thursday 1 May
from 5pm to 8pm

Elie Mafundwe (Eli Made's real name) was born in December 2003 in Bukavu in Eastern DR Congo. He had a great gift for drawing, and as a teenager was already exhibiting his work in different spots in his home city, before moving to Kinshasa in 2022 to study at Kinshasa School of Fine Arts. In the end, he only studied there for a few months.

To make ends meet, Eli Made started tie-dyeing t-shirts, using bleach to change the colour of the fabric to create patterns. T-shirt tie-dyeing gave him the idea of using this technique to create art. He bought black fabric and started to "paint" on sateen using a brush dipped in bleach. It only took Made a few weeks to get to grips with the technique. He was only 19, but he was ready.

A mosaic of states of mind

The vast majority of Eli Made's works convey states of mind: suffering, inner struggle, meditation, mental transformation, resilience, and so on. Each work is to some extent a part of a giant mental fresco, with its apparently endless variants. There is one exception, although the subject is similar: Made also tackles the relationship between contemporary Africans and their ancestral roots.

How is it that a young man in his 20s has such a strong interest in the workings of the mind? His interest stems from the depression that he experienced during his teenage years, following an unthinkable sequence of family tragedies. He beat the illness alone, thanks to the internet, or rather thanks to his

amazing capacity for independent learning and analysis. This is how Eli has acquired a wide body of knowledge about human psychology, enabling him to now depict with finesse a wide range of landscapes of the mind in his realistic portraits.

Mindscales is Eli Made's very first solo exhibition. The exhibition brings together 12 artworks from the 2023-2025 period. Each of his works is accompanied by a clear and informative artist's statement, free of any unnecessary jargon, that visitors to the exhibition can read.

In *Kivuli*, a work in which he tackles the subject of **self-awareness**, Eli symbolically exploits shadows, which embody the dark and repressed facets of our personalities. This work has an autobiographical slant: "when I painted *Kivuli*, I took a further step towards accepting my own self in all of its complexity."

Another autobiographical work, *Chumba Cha Kutafakari*, focuses on **meditation**. It calls to mind the memory of a "fruitful punishment", when his mother told him to go and think things through in his bedroom every time he behaved badly. His bedroom became a place where he learned to concentrate, a place to think about his life choices and values, a place to prepare mentally and emotionally for life, whatever the situation.

Mental suffering is depicted in *Midas*. A young woman plagued by suppressed strain is plunged into a dramatic ambience about which we know nothing, yet her pain is palpable. The decision to show her in profile in the half-light creates an intimate and mysterious atmosphere.

With *Archetypes*, Eli tackles the **quest for meaning**. In this work, a man stands in the middle of a bare and barren landscape, a place where human beings find themselves alone with themselves. Faced with his deepest truth and aspirations, we become witnesses to his quest for meaning and identity. The ammonite fossil calls to mind the collective subconscious; it embodies the archetypes that reside in our souls.

Mental transformation is the subject of *Hawa*, a work in which the young woman looks to the future with calm determination, despite bearing the weight of past experiences. The ongoing transformation provides serenity.

In *Epiphora*, Eli explores **emotional repetition and the feeling of being mentally overwhelmed**, i.e. the fact that some emotions and memories go round on a loop, pervading our souls to an extent that they become a second skin. The floral background intensifies this idea of repetition, persistence and a silent impact. The subject is absorbed by their own feelings yet merged with the surrounding environment.

Wall of Dichotomy looks at the subject of **memory**, its fragility and complex nature. The young man has his eyes closed and head down, and is deep in his thoughts, as he strives to access his memory.

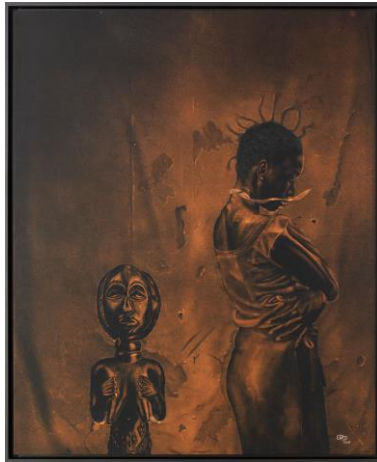
Resilience is the subject of two works. An enigmatic silhouette emerges in *Veiled dawn*. The silhouette is serene yet mysterious. The face seems turned towards an invisible light, as if seeking a path through the darkness. The expression is gentle but intense, suggesting an inner strength able to overcome difficulties. Light is depicted again in *Ô Mwanga*, a painting in which a man is extricating himself from the darkness and his moments of doubt, fear and despair.

Finally, three works explore the **link between contemporary people and their ancestral roots**. In *Spirit*, the man embodies his lineage, and is a vessel through which his ancestors' spirits move. His gaze symbolises his connection to this higher power, his desire to embrace his heritage and seek guidance from those who went before him. The work reflects the enduring power of our ancestry and its ability to shape our identities and guide the paths that we take. *Embodiment* evokes the dialogue between the past and present, the tangible and the intangible. The subject's gestures and stance reflect a feeling of introspection, a silent dialogue with the self and with her inner heritage. On the other hand, the mask symbolises what is solid and ingrained, namely tradition in this case. Finally, *Mrithi*

depicts how ancestral influences are integrated while modernity is also embraced. *Mrithi* means "heir" in Swahili, and is used here in a cultural, spiritual and personal sense.



1. Eli Made, *Midas* (2023)
Bleach on fabric
66 x 51 cm
© Eli Made



2. Eli Made, *Embodiment* (2024)
Bleach on fabric
115 x 95 cm
© Eli Made



4. Eli Made, *Spirit* (2023)
Bleach on fabric
58 x 46 cm
© Eli Made



3. Eli Made, *Chumba cha kutafakari*
(2023)
Bleach on fabric
98 x 80 cm
© Eli Made

Photos of the works in the exhibition are available on request from:

barlet@galerie-angalia.com.

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