



Details, Joel Mamboka, *L'illusion de la facilité*

## **THE ILLUSION OF EASE**

by Joel Mamboka

2026

### ***Joel Mamboka***

In this new body of work, *The Illusion of Ease*, Joel examines what lies beneath images of apparent perfection, asking viewers to consider the labour, discipline, and vulnerability that shape contemporary visual culture. At the heart of the exhibition is the idea that behind every flawless image lies a history of labour. Through references to the model's body, the Sapeur's self-fashioning, and the female body in labour, Joel reveals beauty as a product of endurance, resistance, and economic defiance. In the context of the Democratic Republic of Congo, a Sapeur is a member of La SAPE (Société des Ambianceurs et des Personnes Élégantes): a cultural movement in which individuals invest in elegant dress and refined style as an assertion of dignity, identity, and quiet resistance in the face of social and economic hardship. By foregrounding these practices, *The Illusion of Ease* reframes aesthetic refinement not as effortless glamour, but as the transformation of struggle into visual power. This exhibition affirms Joel's position as one of the most compelling voices of his generation and invites collectors and audiences to engage with work that is both visually refined and intellectually rigorous. *The Illusion of Ease* challenges easy consumption and rewards sustained attention.

## EDUCATION

- 2013 BFA Art studio (painting) l'Académie de beaux-art, Kinshasa, DRC.
- 2009 Diploma ( visual art) Institut de Beaux-Art, Kinshasa, DRC.

## ART FAIRS

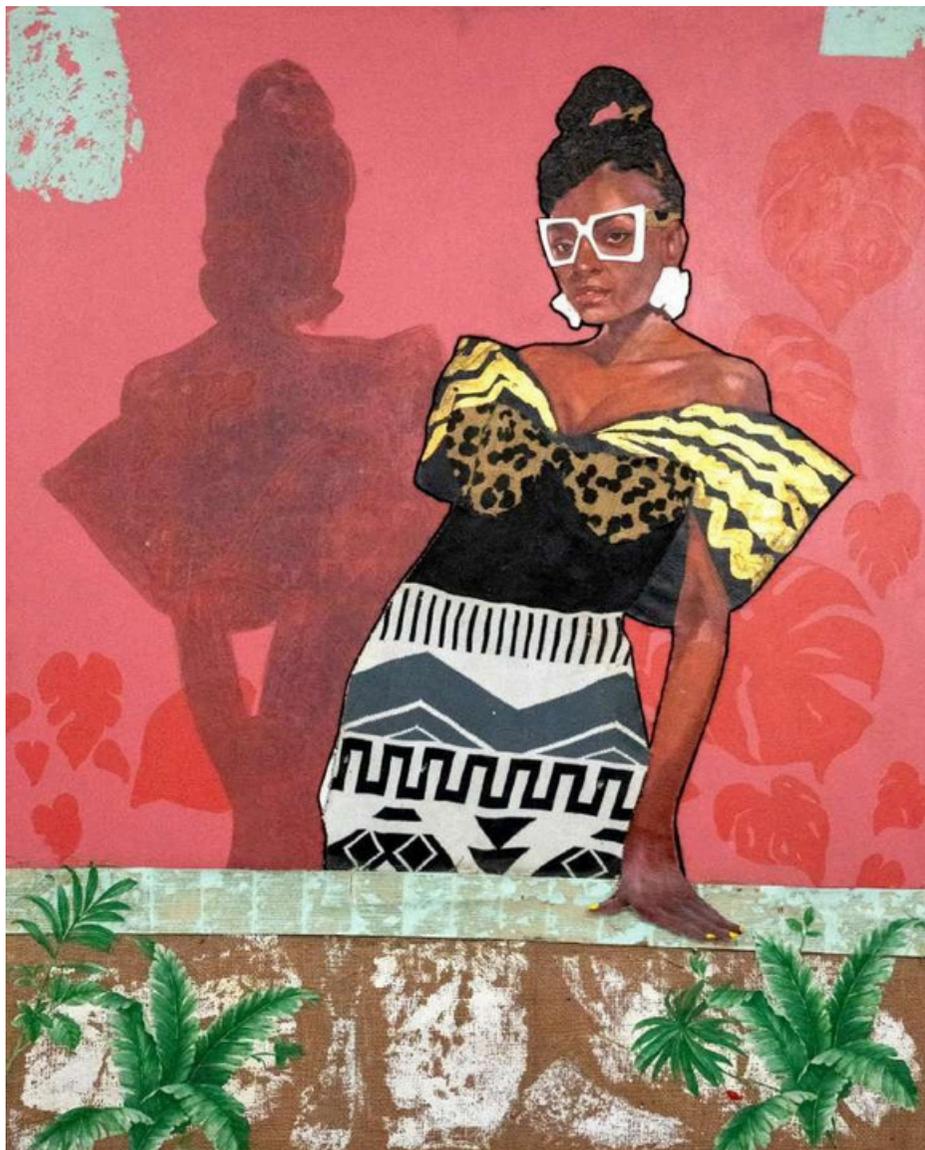
- 2025 Atlanta Art Fair Ella West Gallery
- 2025 Investec Cape Town International Art Fair
- 2024 Latitudes Art Fair

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 The illusion of ease, WORLDART, Cape Town
- 2025 Kizoba zoba Grand Provence Gallery, Franschhoek
- 2024 Solo exhibition (Johannesburg) with The Gallery at the Steyn City associate with Everard Read and Knysna Fine-Art Gallery.
- 2023 La sapologie at Youngblood Africa Gallery, Cape Town
- 2022 Monzele Beauty at Youngblood Africa Gallery, Cape Town
- 2021 The Last Generation, Youngblood Africa Gallery, Cape Town
- 2021 Untitled 1, Hilarious Hotel, Cape Town
- 2020 Untitled2, Cartel Hotel, Cape Town

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 Audacity in Motion, Ella West Gallery, North Carolina
- 2023 Le rendez-vous at Patrick Bongoy Studio, Cape Town
- 2023 Knysna Fine-Art with Everard read Gallery, Franschhoek
- 2023 The Stellenbosch art auction, the Woordfees exhibition. @strauss\_and\_co, @woordfees is curated by Teresa @lizamoregallery
- 2023 25th anniversary Exhibition of Knysna Fine-Art.
- 2023 Season's Greetings, Curated by Teresa Lizamor gallery.
- 2022 Africa Art Life (Bobu) - Online Gallery, Kenya.
- 2022 Group Exposition a Art in the yard, Franschhoek
- 2022 Home is Where the Art is, ZeitzMOCAA
- 2021 Group Exposition a Young Blood, Cape Town
- 2020 Group Exposition a l'universite de Stellenbosch
- 2020 BLK Art House, Online Gallerie, New York
- 2019 Kwanele Genoeg with Seemah Toefy curated, Cape Town
- 2019 Emerging Artist Program at ZeitzMOCAA Museum
- 2018 Emerging Artist Program at Sending Questing Museum, Cape Town
- 2011 "J'ai un reve" expo, Embassy US, Kinshasa, DRC
- 2011 "Eau " ( Competition ART), Mairy Kalamu, Kinshasa, DRC
- 2011 Essu expo (fair), Académie de beaux- arts, Kinshasa, DRC
- 2010 50ans d'indépendance du Congo, Académie de beaux-arts, DRC
- 2008 Journée de la femme, Atelier Innovation, Ymca, Kinshasa, DRC
- 2007 Francophonie( compétition de la jeunesse), Kinshasa, DRC



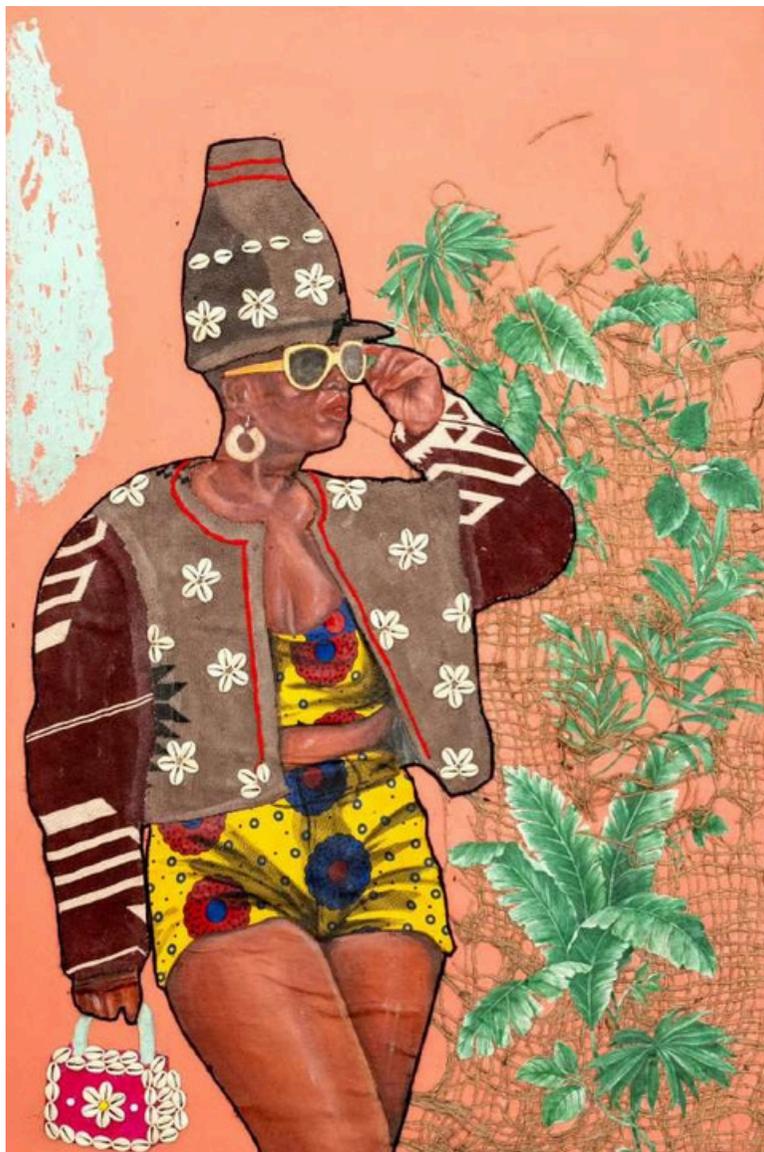
**Joel Mamboka**

*L'illusion de la facilité*, 2026

Mixed media on canvas

150 x 120cm

R112 000



**Joel Mamboka**

*Look at the future, 2026*

Mixed media on canvas

120 x 80cm

R82 000



**Joel Mamboka**

*Elegance & inner confidence, 2026*

Mixed media on canvas

150 x 120cm

R112 000



**Joel Mamboka**

*Kanga nga photo, 2026*

Mixed media on canvas

150 x 120cm

R112 000



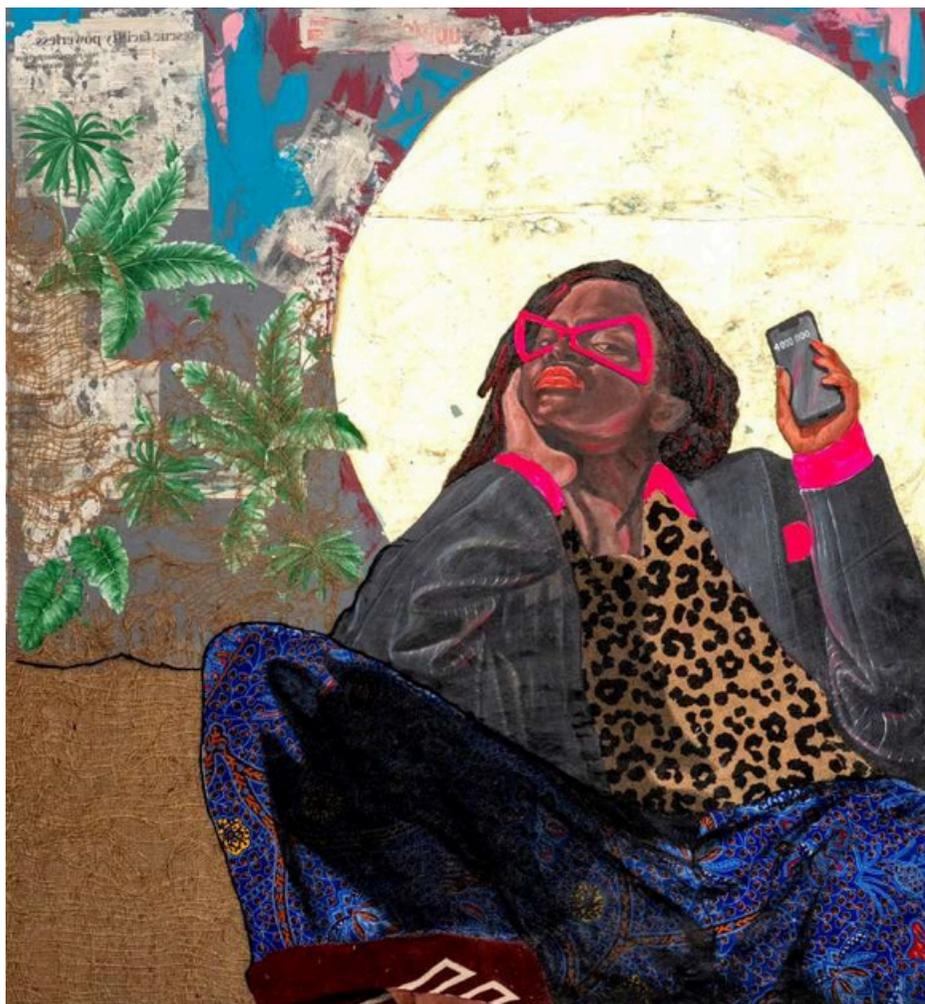
**Joel Mamboka**

*Beaux garçon, 2026*

Mixed media on canvas

120 x 80cm

R82 000



**Joel Mamboka**

4 000.000, 2026

Mixed media on canvas

145 x 135cm

R112 000



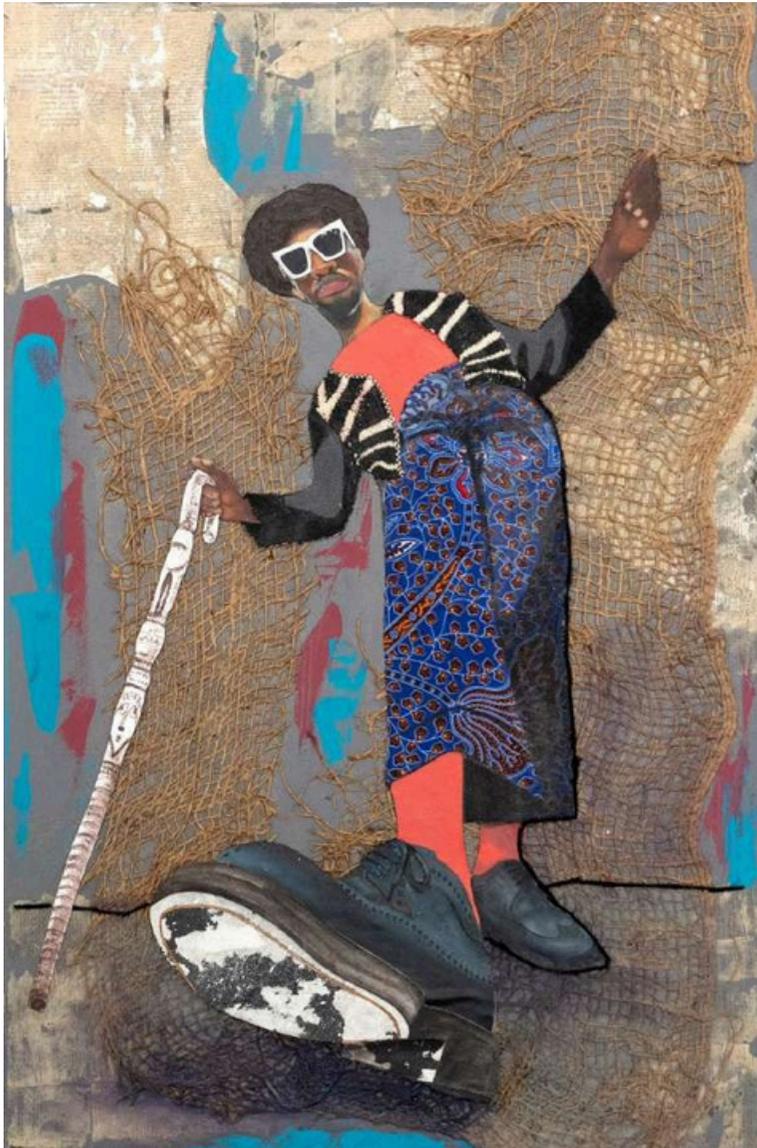
**Joel Mamboka**

*Sape news ladies, 2026*

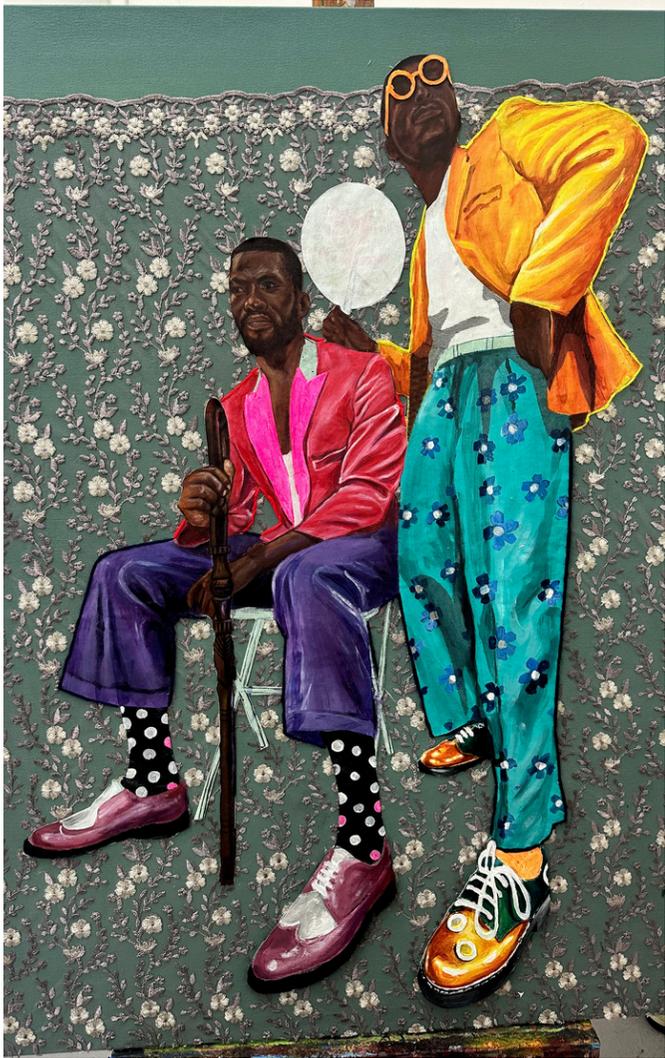
Mixed media on canvas

120 x 80cm

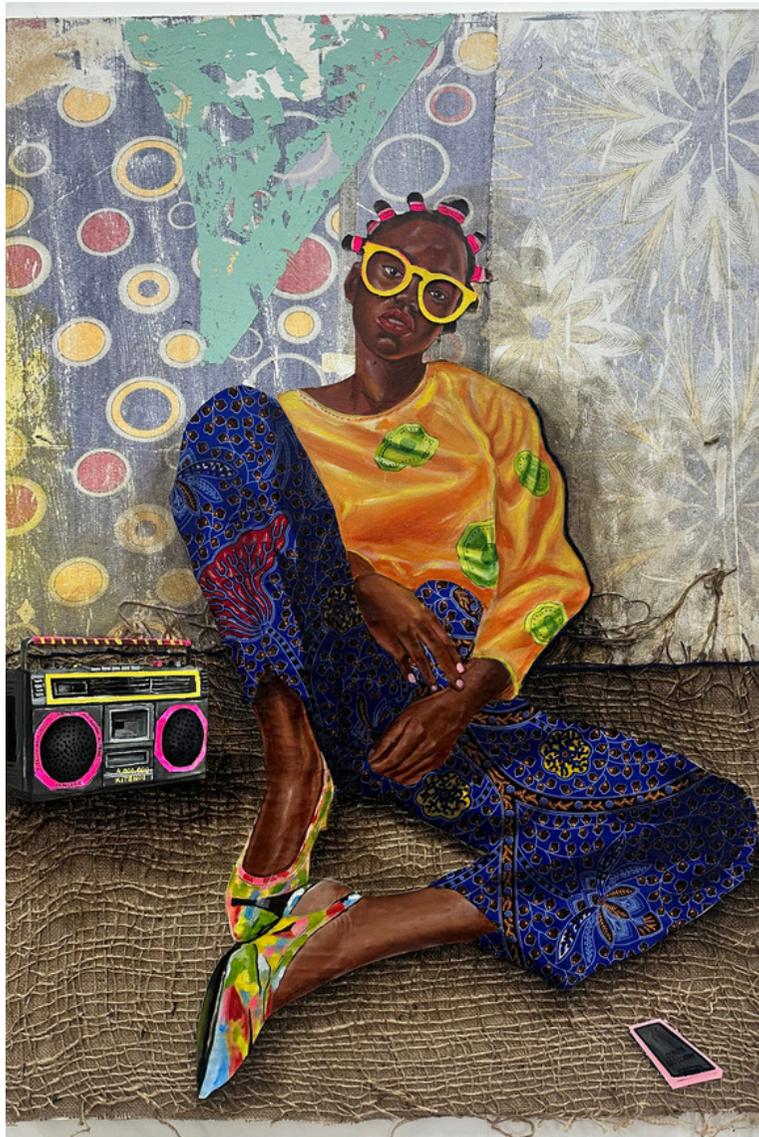
R82 000



**Joel Mamboka**  
*Step Out*, 2026  
Mixed media on canvas  
120 x 80cm  
R82 000



**Joel Mamboka**  
*Level up, 2026*  
Mixed media on canvas  
120 x 80cm  
R82 000



**Joel Mamboka**  
*Level up, 2026*  
Mixed media on canvas  
120 x 80cm  
R82 000



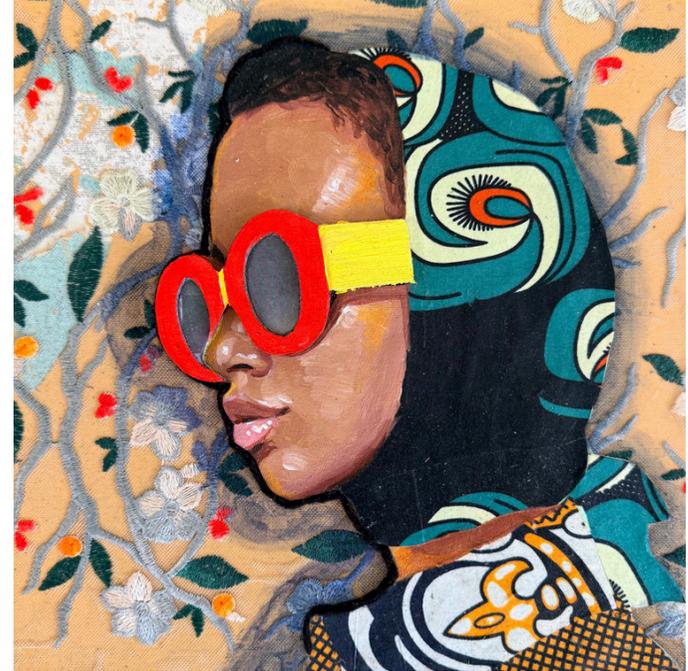
**Joel Mamboka**  
*Level up, 2026*  
Mixed media on canvas  
120 x 80cm  
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**Joel Mamboka**  
*Portrait series, 2026*  
Mixed media on canvas  
30 x 30cm  
R25 000



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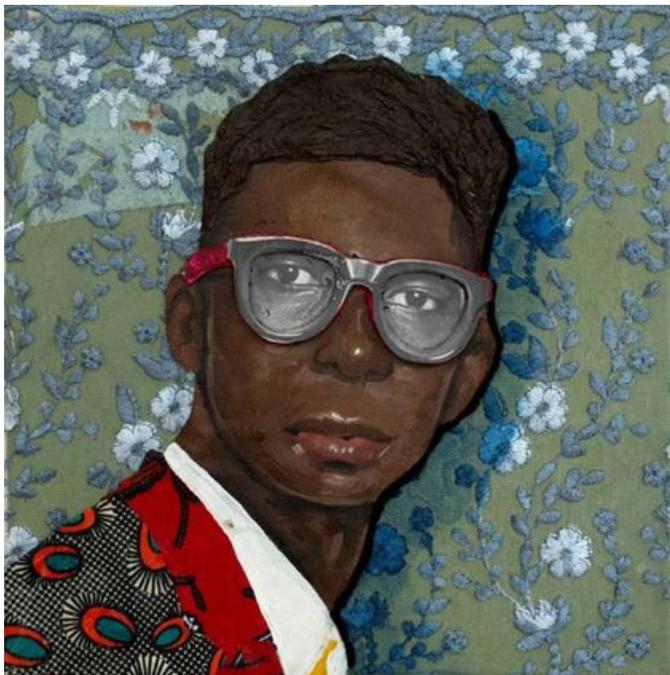
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*Portrait series, 2026*  
Mixed media on canvas  
30 x 30cm  
R25 000



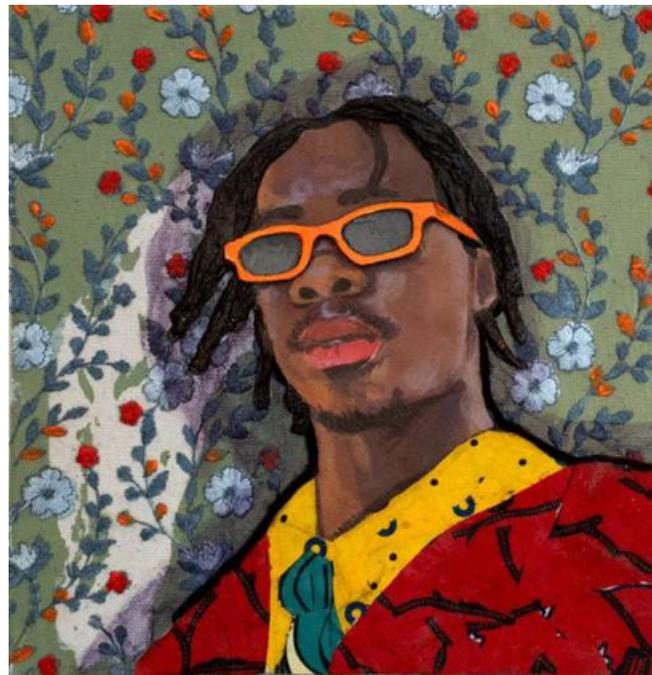
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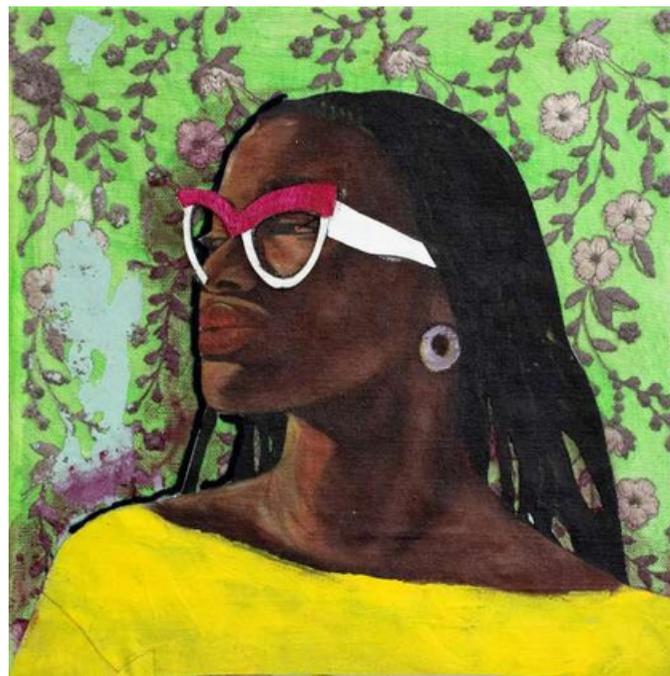
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30 x 30cm  
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### ***Artist info***

Joel Mamboka N’Kumu (b. 1990) is a mixed media artist who grew up in Kinshasha in the Democratic Republic of Congo and now lives and works in Cape Town. He uses oil paint, fabrics and found objects to create stories that exhibit a dynamic exploration of identity, culture and style that is deeply rooted in African heritage. His portraits often depict individuals in moments of joy, connection or introspection and he often uses vintage wallpaper textures with peeling surfaces and intricate designs to evoke nostalgia and a sense of history. “My current work is a visual and conceptual exploration of cultural identity, resilience and the transformative power of textiles. Drawing inspiration from Kinshasha’s vibrant patchwork techniques, I aim to create layered compositions that mirror the complexity and diversity of African cultural identities. By blending disparate fabrics, I seek to evoke the interconnected histories and narratives that shape contemporary African experiences. At the heart of my work lies an investigation into the SAPE movement (La Société des Ambianceurs et des Personnes Élégantes), a phenomenon that celebrates style, individuality and the enduring spirit of post-colonial Congo. Through this lens, I explore how fashion and self-expression become acts of resistance and reclamation. Alongside this, I delve into President Mobutu Sese Seko’s Authenticité policy, which sought to redefine African identity by promoting cultural pride, traditional textiles and attire. These historical and cultural movements provide a rich framework for examining Africa’s textile heritage and its ongoing dialogue with modernity.” – Joel Mamboka, 2025

# Joel Mamboka

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