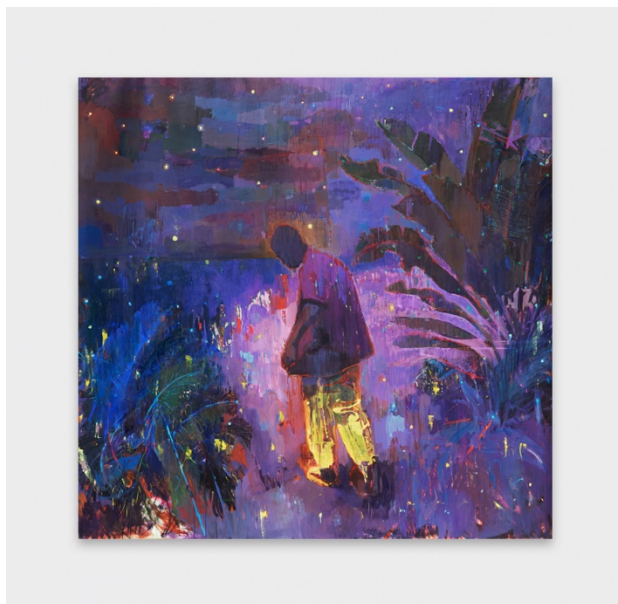


## Hélio Luís

### *Before the Light Fades*

May 14—June 27, 2026

Kutlesa New York



Hélio Luís, *The West Yet Glitters with Some Streaks of Day*, 2025–26  
Photo © Hélio Luís. Courtesy the artist and Kutlesa

Kutlesa is pleased to announce *Before the Light Fades*, Hélio Luís' first solo exhibition in New York and the gallery's third presentation of his work, opening in Chelsea on May 14, 2026. The exhibition follows the end of the day, as it progressively gives way to night. The setting — cliffs above the sea — echoes the landscape where the artist grew up, along the coastal area just north of Lisbon.

As darkness spreads through the air, and light drains slowly from the west, a sense of adventure, of thrill and exploration, descends upon the coastal villages, where a vibrant night life is ready to unfold. Every possibility comes true in that moment, when the world is alive with the promise of night beginning. Nocturnal adventures play out against this landscape of cliffs and beaches, of mist and rock and wet sand, bounded by the sea.

These works have been painted over the past two years. Developed slowly, layer by layer, the composition changes radically throughout the process. In the end, many of the early stages surface in the final painting, giving it depth and richness. Oil sticks are often used to draw directly on the canvas. New to this process is the setting of the large canvases, rooted in the landscape of the artist's early years.

Source material, true to a longtime practice, comes from found images, film frames and old photographs, worked and altered through the act of painting. Art history and literature run through the paintings as constant presences.

This influence can be seen in the title of one of the largest works in the exhibition: "The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day" – a line from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (Act 3, Scene 3), spoken by the First Murderer as they wait for Banquo. It describes the fading twilight, creating an atmospheric, ominous tone that marks the last remnants of order and safety before darkness takes over.

## **About the Artist**

Hélio Luís (b. 1980, Portugal) is a self-taught artist from Lisbon, whose large-format paintings depict a space between reality and the imagination. Sourcing from literature, photography, and archival cinema, Luís confronts fraught and complex legacies such as the presence of colonialism and the "exotic" within European art and art history, contextualizing them within the contemporary world. Luís' gestural handling of paint ranges from the subdued to the boldly expressionistic, the technical application and materiality taking a foreground in his practice. Vibrant hues and discernible layers are juxtaposed with a refined, traditional figurativism—a collision of the past and present on the canvas.

## **Hélio Luís**

*Before the Light Fades*

Opening Reception: Thursday, May 14, 6–8pm

537 West 23rd Street, New York, NY 10011

## **For exhibition and sales enquiries please contact**

[inquire@kutlesagallery.com](mailto:inquire@kutlesagallery.com)

+1 212 204 7659

## **For further press information please contact**

[press@kutlesagallery.com](mailto:press@kutlesagallery.com)

+1 212 204 7659

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