

PRESS RELEASE

Emeka Ogboh

B(D)ackroom

21 June — 18 July 2026

Opening: Sunday 21 June, 5pm—11pm



Emeka Ogboh, *Sufferhead Original Gin*, 2026. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Imane Farès

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Emeka Ogboh



Emeka Ogboh, © Igor Emmerich

Emeka Ogboh
(born 1977 in Enugu, Nigeria)
Lives and works between Lagos and Berlin

Emeka Ogboh engages with places by using all five human senses: sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. His art installations and culinary creations incorporate sensory elements to explore how private, public, collective memories and histories are translated, transformed, and encoded into different sensorial experiences. Ogboh's works delve into how sensory perceptions capture our connections to the world, shape our comprehension of reality, and offer a backdrop for examining critical issues such as migration, globalization, and post-colonialism. Recently, he has ventured into the world of music, debuting with the album "Beyond the Yellow Haze" on the Ostgut Ton sub-label A-TON in 2021. He continued this musical journey with his second album, "6°30'33.372"N 3°22'0.66"E," released under his self-founded label, Danfotronics in 2022.

His work has been presented in numerous exhibitions, notably at the São Paulo Biennial (São Paulo, Brazil, 2025), at the Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration, Paris (*Migrations, une odysée humaine*), at Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart (*Nationalgalerie: Narrative Wisdom and African Arts*), at the Saint Louis Art Museum (*The True Size of Africa*, 2024), at Völklinger Hütte (ABJ, 2024), at Something Art Space, Abidjan (*A Collection for the 21st Century*, 2023), at Museum Tinguely, Basel (*A bruit secret – Hearing in Art*, 2023), at MoMA, New York (*Collection 1980s–Present*, 2022–2023), at Humboldt Forum, Berlin (*Der Kosmos – Things Fall Apart*, 2021), at Friche La Belle de Mai, Marseille (*Stirring the Pot*, 2020), at the Cleveland Museum of Art (*Àmà, the Gathering Place*, 2019), at The Power Plant, Toronto (*The Song of the Germans*, 2018), at Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden (*If Found Please Return to Lagos*, 2017), and at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington DC (*Market Symphony*, 2016).

He is currently participating in the group exhibition *Aux origines* at the Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration. In June, the artist will present the solo exhibition *B(l)ackroom* at Galerie Imane Farès. On this occasion, a performance will take place on 21 June at the gallery, as part of the Fête de la Musique, under the title *Fête de la Synesthesia II*.

Emeka Ogboh is the co-founder of the Video Art Network Lagos. He received the Böttcherstraße Prize in Bremen in 2016 and was a finalist for the Hugo Boss Prize in 2018. In 2019, he shared the Sharjah Biennial 14 Prize with Otobong Nkanga. In 2026, he was among the laureates of the CHANEL Next Prize.

B(//)ackroom

21 June – 18 July 2026

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The Imane Farès gallery is pleased to present *B(//)ackroom*, the third solo exhibition by Emeka Ogboh at the gallery.

B(//)ackroom is an immersive installation that explores the intersections of language, consumption, and power through the figure of the backroom—a semi-private space where access, belonging, and visibility are quietly negotiated. By merging “backroom” with “blackroom,” the project transforms opacity into a critical position, resisting the demands of transparency and the systems of classification that have historically shaped Black and migrant lives.

Structured as a sequence of interconnected spaces, the installation moves from a darkened café-like environment to a text and sound installation. At its center is *Sufferhead Original Gin*, conceived as a liquid artwork and the distilled continuation of *Sufferhead Original*, a beer first developed for documenta14 as a sensory critique of European projections onto African migration. Through distillation, the stout is transformed into a clear gin that nevertheless retains the traces of its origins, becoming a metaphor for migration, translation, loss, and recomposition.

Rather than relying on images, *B(//)ackroom* foregrounds language, taste, and atmosphere as sites where colonial histories and contemporary forms of exclusion persist. Visitors encounter texts, voices, and fragments drawn from philosophy, poetry, colonial discourse, and bureaucratic language, which appear without hierarchy or fixed narrative. Refusing explanation or resolution, the work asserts the right to opacity while exposing how empire, migration, and racialized identities continue to be shaped through naming, consumption, regulation, and everyday acts. Both convivial and critical, *B(//)ackroom* invites audiences to experience history not as representation, but as something embodied, tasted, and continually negotiated.

On the occasion of the exhibition opening on 21 June 2026, the artist presents the second chapter of Fête de la Synesthesia II. Building on the inaugural edition held in 2023, the event transforms the gallery into a site of sensory experimentation, where taste, scent, sound, and image converge. The evening begins with a performative tasting of *Sufferhead Original Gin* led by Emeka Ogboh, followed by a DJ set by the artist and an olfactory installation developed in collaboration with Hervé Domar.

Sufferhead Original Gin



Emeka Ogboh, *Sufferhead Original Gin*, 2026. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Imane Farès

Sufferhead Original Gin is an artistic and political project initiated in 2017 at documenta 14 in Kassel. It first took the form of a dark beer, *Sufferhead Original*, inspired by Fela Kuti's song *Original Suffer Head*. In the Nigerian musician's vocabulary, "Sufferhead" refers to those exposed to the combined effects of poverty, corruption, and systemic violence in postcolonial Nigeria. The project appropriates and expands the term, shifting it from its local context into a broader imaginary in which African migrants in Europe are often reduced to narratives of suffering, exile, and crisis.

For this exhibition, the beer is transformed into gin. This passage from opacity to transparency functions as a figure of displacement: nothing disappears; everything is recomposed. The material is distilled, retaining its layers, aromas, and memory. In this way, *Sufferhead Original Gin* gives form to diasporic identities in motion, transformed through movement while remaining connected to their origins.

The gin combines European ingredients, juniper and coriander, with African spices such as Negro pepper and habanero chili. More than a recipe, it stages a tension in which cultural circulations, colonial legacies, forced migrations, and contemporary exchanges become intertwined.

Presented as sculptures, the matte black bottles evoke Édouard Glissant's "right to opacity": the right not to be fully legible, classified, or reduced by a dominant gaze. The project thus unfolds as a hybrid form, situated between object, artwork, and critical gesture, where taste, materiality, and transformation become vehicles for memory and diasporic narratives.

Sufferhead Original Gin 2026

Gin bottle with wooden frame
23.2 cm x 10 cm (bottle)

24,7 cm x 13 x 11 cm (frame)

Edition of 100

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Imane Farès represents Sinzo Aanza, Basma al-Sharif, Sammy Baloji, Minia Biabiany, Ali Cherri, Emeka Ogboh, Younès Rahmoun, James Webb.

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