

Chisenhale Gallery presents a new commission by London and Amsterdam based artist Ima-Abasi Okon. Okon works with sculpture, sound and video to produce installations that explore exhibition-making as an exercise in syntax, adopting linguistic and grammatical structures within her installations as a way of complicating the construction of knowledge.

For her new commission at Chisenhale Gallery, Okon brings together a vocabulary of symbols embedded in both hand-made and mass-produced materials to explore representations of the body and the formation of taste, value and excess. A series of industrial air conditioners are adapted to become hosts for a new multi-channel sound piece comprising an existing audio track that has been slowed down. Acting as both a cooling system for the gallery and as a vehicle for the sound work, the fans perform at various speeds and durations.

The gallery ceiling has been partially lowered using a standardised modular system, often found within offices, retail spaces, waiting rooms and other administrative environments. The mass-produced ceiling tiles have been smeared with an invisible mixture of morphine, insulin, ultrasound gel and gold, imbuing the otherwise everyday objects with a personal, totemic charge.

Hand-crafted glass light shades, each adorned with an opulent design and filled with palm oil and Courvoisier VS Cognac, hang from the ceiling. With the introduction of these liquids, the lights emit a golden glow, further highlighting an atmospheric friction between Okon's production processes, pointing to the possibilities of magic as a sculptural act. Okon's ongoing use of oriented strand board, painted with varnish and framed with 'exotic woods' further explore how value is assigned to a given object or material through its categorisation, modes of display and origin. Through the use of sound, scale and light, Okon's new commission makes audible and palpable an excess, or surplus, that is often silenced or not seen and in doing so questions how to represent a body in its absence.

As part of the commissioning process, a series of discursive events have been programmed in collaboration with Okon and run throughout her exhibition. Okon's exhibition continues Chisenhale Gallery's *Commissions Programme* for 2019, which includes new commissions by artists Ghislaine Leung, Mandy El-Sayegh and Sidsel Meineche Hansen. Through her work, Okon explores new discourses on institutional critique, labour and value, themes that recur throughout Chisenhale Gallery's programme for 2019.

Okon's exhibition is commissioned and produced by Chisenhale Gallery, London and will tour to Void, Derry~Londonderry in 2020.

*Biography:*

Ima-Abasi Okon lives and works between London and Amsterdam. Selected exhibitions include: *The Weather Garden: Anne Hardy curates the Arts Council Collection*, Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne; *Sur— [MIX-USE COMMODITY] —plus*, Kingsgate Project Space, London; *Parables for the BLAZER: Mahalia's EXCISTENCEandEXISTENTS-HyPE fragrant stacking balm (306.HAL)*, Plaza Plaza, London; *13th Dak'Art Biennale*, Dakar, Senegal; *There's something in the conversation that is more interesting than the finality of (a title)*, The Showroom, London (all 2018); *UNTITLED: Art on the Conditions of Our Time*, New Art Exchange, Nottingham (2017); and *OUTPOST Members' Show 2016*, Norwich (2016). In 2018, she was awarded both the Nigel Greenwood Research Prize and the Summer Residency at Hospitalfield, Scotland. She is currently participating in the residency programme at Rijksakademie voor beeldende kunsten (Academy for fine arts), Amsterdam.

Ima-Abasi Okon's commission is produced with support from the Chisenhale Gallery Commissions Fund and Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants. With additional support from the Ima-Abasi Okon Supporters' Circle.

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