

Press Release

Museum Folkwang

New seating arrangement: Museum Folkwang presents spatial installation by Olu Ogunnaike in the *6 ½ Weeks* series

Essen, 22.11.2021 - From 25 November 2021, the Museum Folkwang will present the first institutional solo exhibition by Olu Ogunnaike (*1986) in the German-speaking world in the *6 ½ Weeks* series. The British artist is a fellow of the residency programme *Neue Folkwang Residence*, which the Museum Folkwang and Neuer Essener Kunstverein initiated this year. During the five-month residency, Ogunnaike developed several works that he is now presenting in the exhibition ... *I'd rather stand* as a spatial installation.

In the exhibition space, eighteen chairs, each made of different industrial steel, stand around an imaginary table. The chairs, however, lack a seat. Olu Ogunnaike uses them as a support material for charcoal silkscreen prints showing photographs of so-called "pioneer plants" that he took on the grounds of the Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex. Pioneer plants are shrubs and trees that are the first to grow in destroyed and barren environments. He attaches the printed seating surfaces to the exhibition walls. On the wall in front of the exhibition space, whole, intact chairs are mounted, the surfaces of which Ogunnaike prints with a photograph using a UV colour printing process. The photograph shows various plant species in front of the chimneys of the old coking plant at the Zollverein colliery.

In his installations, graphics and performances, Olu Ogunnaike interrogates, among other things, the historical and social properties of materials and places. Again and again, he extracts a complex history from materials and at the same time inscribes new ones on them. He arranges the works conceptually and connects the individual elements as if in a spider's web. In the exhibition ... *I'd rather stand* he concentrates on the material steel, inspired by the regional history of steel and coal production in the Ruhr area. The central motif is the table, which – equally mundane and complexly coded – is a symbol of social gathering: the table offers a space of possibility for social utopias, for the dissolution of hierarchies and the negotiation of new seating arrangements. The spatial installation that Ogunnaike constructs at the Museum Folkwang revolves around the question of what it means to choose to 'stand rather than sit' at a table that represents a particular social system.

Olu Ogunnaike graduated from the Royal Academy, London in 2020. His work has been and continues to be included in group exhibitions at Halle für Kunst (Graz, 2021), Galerie Timothy Taylor (New York, 2021), Villa Lontana (Rome, 2020) and during an evening by the *East London Cable* collective at Tate Modern (London, 2019). Ogunnaike's solo shows include *London Plain* at Cell Project Space (London, 2020) and *Crumbs* at Capc Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux

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(2021). *Nesting* (2021), which he is creating as part of the *Sunken Ecologies* project, *Margate Now21* (Kent), is his first permanent sculpture in public space.

The exhibition format *6 ½ Weeks* is based on short-term planning and offers young artists the opportunity to present their works at the Museum Folkwang. The format offers space for artistic and curatorial experiments and enables visitors to discover as yet unknown artists from different countries. *6 ½ Weeks* is sponsored by the Stiftung Kunst, Kultur und Soziales der Sparda-Bank West.

Neue Folkwang Residence

Within the framework of the residency programme, two scholarships are awarded each year to international artists for a five-month working stay in Essen. The scholarship is linked to a solo exhibition at the Neuer Essener Kunstverein or the Museum Folkwang in the *6 ½ Weeks* series. The 2021 scholarship holders, Olu Ogunnaike and Min Yoon, were selected from an applicant pool of twelve artists. Min Yoon's exhibition *A Scene for 210cm* at the Neue Essener Kunstverein will open on Friday 26 November, 7pm, and will be on view until 13 February 2022. The *Neue Folkwang Residence* programme is made possible by the Folkwang-Museumsverein e. V. and the Olbricht Foundation. Funded by Vonovia.

Information

6 ½ WEEKS

Olu Ogunnaike

... I'd rather stand

25 November 2021 – 9 January 2022

The opening takes place on the 25. November, 6:30 p.m.

Free admission.

From 23 November, the 2G rule will apply in the Museum Folkwang. All information on this can be found at: <https://www.museum-folkwang.de/en/your-visit/opening-times/opening-hours.html>