



## **Eva Obodo: *Dry Season***

March 4-April 5, 2025

Curated by **Ugonna Ibekwe**

Private Preview: Saturday, March 1, 2025, 6-8 PM (by invitation)

Artist Talk: In Conversation with Ugonna Ibekwe: Saturday, March 29, 2025, 3 PM

**kó is pleased to present *Dry Season*, a solo exhibition featuring recent charcoal and fibre artworks of Eva Obodo.** This exhibition explores the artist's fascination with the intricate terrains of human experience, presenting a powerful narrative of contemporary social and political landscapes.

Eva Obodo is a professor of Fine and Applied Arts at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, specialising in sculpture. Over the past two decades, Obodo's artistic practice has evolved significantly. Initially focused on exploring dry wood through techniques of tying, binding, and polishing, his recent work incorporates wood in its charcoal state—a transformative phase following burning that is often deemed aesthetically depleted. Similarly, his approach to fibre art has shifted from creating soft sculptures using jute bags to crafting cylindrical forms and bold, thread-like wave lines, alluding to the artist's experimental process with materials.

The exhibition's title refers to the harsh ecological period when resources are scarce and survival of natural vegetation becomes a delicate negotiation—a metaphor that resonates through the individual artwork titles. This theme reflects the tensions and limitations present in the social, political, and personal ecosystems of Nigeria, Africa, and the world. Several series within the exhibition offer critiques of political institutional dysfunction, while others explore interpersonal dynamics and social proximities. Obodo's work also engages with themes carrying deep religious implications across various faiths and addresses contemporary economic challenges.

Although Obodo has transitioned from using wood and jute bags as primary elements in his work in favour of charcoal and thread, he continues to employ the tying and binding techniques that have become the hallmark of artists from the Nsukka School. The careful assembly of small loops of charcoal and strands of thread into expansive compositions points to the contemporary "Igwebuiké" idiom of the Nsukka School that expresses the belief in the strength of a multitude. Here, individual fragments that might have been discarded as negligible are reimaged.

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*Dry Season* stands as a meditation on adaptation and the persistent hope of survival that emerges even in seemingly barren contexts. It mirrors our collective and individual struggles within harsh, inequitable systems and pays homage to the resilient, sustainable experimental spirit of the Nsukka School.

This exhibition is proudly supported by **Le Connoisseur**.



## About the Artist

**Eva Obodo** is a professor at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where he previously earned both his MFA and PhD in Fine and Applied Arts and has also served as Head of the department. His academic career includes a former position as a lecturer at Benue State Polytechnic, Ugbokolo. His work has been featured in numerous exhibitions internationally, including the Osaka Triennale (2001, Japan) and the DAK'ART Biennale (2002, Senegal). He has held three solo exhibitions with kó and Arthouse Contemporary in Lagos, including *Recent Works* (2021), *Ngwugwu (Packages)* (2019), and *Line.by.Line* (2015). His work has been exhibited at Art Dubai, 1:54 Marrakech, and Investec Cape Town Art Fair. In 2025, Obodo was selected as finalist for the Norval Foundation Sovereign African Art Prize.

Beyond his artistic practice, Obodo has made significant contributions to the art community. He served as an adjudicator for the Life in My City Art Festival Grand Finale (2012) in Enugu, Nigeria, participated in the inaugural African Regional Summit and Exhibition on Visual Arts (ARESIVA) in Abuja (2008), and was an invited observer and resource person at ART X Lagos (2017). In 2013, he received a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship Award.

## About the Curator

**Ugonna Ibekwe** is an art historian trained at the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria. His curatorial interests primarily focus on the representation of contemporary artists. During his academic journey, Ugonna served an internship in art history at the Anvil Studio extension. There, he benefited from the mentorship of Professor Ozioma Onuzulike, acquiring comprehensive knowledge in African and contemporary art.



This experience has shaped his professional trajectory, leading to his current roles as supervisor for Anvil's art history section and guest curator at the Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He is one of the pioneering members of the "10 for 10 Art Society," an organization dedicated to promoting a closed circle of young artists. Additionally, his diverse interests are reflected in his membership with the "World Organization of the Scout Movement," demonstrating his engagement with broader social and cultural initiatives.

### **About kó**

kó is an art space based in Lagos, Nigeria, that is dedicated to promoting modern and contemporary art. kó has a dual focus in championing Nigeria's leading artists from the modern period and celebrating emerging and established contemporary artists across Africa and the Diaspora.