

# Spirit to Matter: Alchemy in the Making

LCB Depot's exhibition & events programme highlights work from different creative practices every month.

This month the focus is on art including 2D, 3D, film and performance with work from our commissioned artist respondents to the open call. Exhibitions and events run from **28<sup>th</sup> October – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024**

Find out more [@lcbdepot](https://www.instagram.com/lcbdepot) or at [lcbdepot.co.uk/event/art2024/](https://lcbdepot.co.uk/event/art2024/)



## ***Inscription Mirror***

Yusuf Dongo

'INSCRIPTION MIRROR is a metallic wall sculpture, inspired by West African culture and religious beliefs. Its border resembles tree branches, and the outline includes etchings of cowries, combs, small gourds, and Guinea fowl feathers. // These motifs are symbolic and carry strong connotations among the Yorùbá people of West Africa. The cowries represent wealth and fortune; the combs represent wealth and beauty; and the small gourds and Guinea fowl feathers mostly connote sacrifice (or ÈTÙTÙ).'

This piece explores the African Traditional Religious (ATR) practice of IFÁ consultation to gain better insight into a person's life – their present and

future. IFÁ is a figure of ÒRÚMÌLÀ and is regarded by the Yorùbá as the deity of wisdom and intellectual development. He is often consulted for spiritual help, guidance, and intervention in daily life.'

'The INSCRIPTION MIRROR is reminiscent of the OPON IFÁ (a divination board) used by Babaláwos (Diviners) to seek information and guidance from IFÁ during consultation. Without this, they cannot consult the IFÁ oracle. The Babaláwo also uses this divination board to examine a person's ÀYÀNMỌN (destiny) – whether life ahead will be a rough or smooth journey.'

'INSCRIPTION MIRROR is part of Yusuf's practice of interrogating value. A history of slavery and colonialism has contributed to a perspective that does not value Yorùbá spirituality. Unfortunately, the influence of colonial rule and religious pressure has brought discrimination against traditional beliefs and practices. I seek to challenge a value system that is dictated by white supremacy, highlighting the beauty and significance of traditional spirituality as something to be learned and appreciated, if not practised by Africans, including displaced Black people and diasporans.'

## **Artist Bio**

Originally from Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria, Yusuf Dongo is a multidisciplinary artist with a deep passion for his culture, the environment, and craftsmanship. He grew up and was educated in Ogun State, earning a degree in Fine and Applied Art from Obafemi Awolowo University in 2017.

Currently based in the United Kingdom, Yusuf completed his master's degree in Fine Art at De Montfort University. He specializes in upcycling and repurposing, with some of his early works utilizing scrap metal to reduce pollution and waste. He is drawn to found objects and discarded automobile parts, transforming them into intricate sculptural pieces that often feature animalistic or symbolic elements. Yusuf describes this process as 'turning scrap to luxury.'

Yusuf is an alumnus of STEAMhouse, affiliated with Birmingham City University, and has been active in facilitation since joining the Eastside Projects EOP program. He is also a member of the local collective BRMTWN, which marks his initial steps into art-making and social practice. His work is part of an ongoing effort to build Black British culture in Birmingham, aiming to create healthier associations and identification with the group identity by establishing new rites of passage and commemorating Black presence in the country, both historically and speculatively.

Yusuf's flexible practice allows him to explore ideas in various ways and create art wherever he is, regardless of the theme or medium. His works are designed to capture attention and spark conversation in society at large. He has exhibited his art in both Nigeria and the UK.

[@ayokunledongo](https://www.instagram.com/ayokunledongo)