

## Members' Corner Emily Nkanga

Image © Emily Nkanga.

The work of Nigerian-British photographer and filmmaker Emily Nkanga spans multiple subjects. Since 2014, Nkanga has photographed Nigerian celebrities, and several UK-based artists, including DigDat, Aitch and Unknown T. She also works on more socially focused documentary projects; notably documenting internally displaced people in northeast Nigeria affected by Boko Haram. Born and raised in Lagos, Nkanga studied for a BSc in communications and multimedia design at the American University of Nigeria. Two years ago, she relocated to complete an MA in filmmaking at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her expressive series *Quiet Exhaustion* explores the tiredness experienced universally following the events of 2020, and her ongoing fatigue, which developed two years ago after she relocated from Nigeria.

### How did 2020 affect you and your photographic process?

The year made me much more introspective. As a portrait photographer, I am used to interacting with people. But being at home with itching fingers and a buzzing mind made me think of ways to express my ideas without involving many people, or even anyone at all. I learned to use props to express ideas, which opened my mind to endless possibilities and other artistic skills, like painting, which I could incorporate into my photographs.



### What inspired *Quiet Exhaustion*?

A personal experience. Towards the end of 2019 and through 2020, I felt intense fatigue and anxiety. I realised many people around me experienced similar conditions, but said little about them. I used my art as a form of release and an opportunity to open dialogue.

### Who are your biggest inspirations?

My father, Air Commodore Idongesit Nkanga; the multimedia artist Marilyn Nance; and Joey Lawrence.

### What's next for you?

On Christmas Eve, shortly after putting

out this project, I lost my dad. It's almost as though I'm reliving this work by having to navigate difficult yet familiar emotions. My father was a big part of my journey and a big supporter of my art. There are projects I'll do to honour his memory, and also work that I had lined up before his demise. I'm ready to experiment more and push my art towards creating more emotive and documentary-based series through photography, filmmaking and other mediums. I'm looking forward to sharing more thought-provoking work with the world in the near future. **BJP**

[emilynkanga.com](http://emilynkanga.com)