



David-Jeremiah's *FOGA: Real N\*gga Edition*  
16 July 2022 – 7 July 2023  
Presented by CulturalDC  
Virtual project with temporary art installation

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*ADVANCE NOTE: CulturalDC and krause co. strongly support the right of David-Jeremiah, a Black artist, to present his work in a manner authentic to his creative vision. We also deeply condemn the use of the "N-word" by anyone not of Black heritage, including in quote repetition. In amplifying his latest project to an inherently diverse audience, we use the written stylization "n\*gga" and the spoken stylization "N-word," though please note that **the artist intends the artwork title to be stylized in an uncensored manner.** David-Jeremiah remarked, on the topic of his titling decision: "N\*gga is my culture. It's how I've always communicated myself. And it's lame as fuck that that has to be explained."*

## Set within an immersive art installation inspired by a prison day room, *FOGA ("Felon Yoga"): Real N\*gga Edition* is a virtually accessible conceptual artwork of guided exercise class videos

*Taking place within a cross-disciplinary universe of the "FOGA"-branded wellness franchise, in-canon literature describes FOGA as "a therapeutic wellness program centered on healthily and mindfully channeling your desire to kill cops into imaginary acts of violence by way of yoga-inspired movements." Utilized in the videos, and available for purchase, is art-object 'exercise equipment' branded with the FOGA logo (a peace sign made of shell casings), such as cinderblocks in place of yoga blocks; guns in place of free weights; and limited-edition merch with which an in-canon infomercial encourages you to "tone up your athleisure wardrobe"*

→ Visit [www.fogareal-niggaedition.com](http://www.fogareal-niggaedition.com) to enter the FOGA universe ←

**Washington, DC — Summer 2022** — The Dallas-based interdisciplinary artist David-Jeremiah (b. 1985, Dallas; permanent collections include the Dallas Museum of Art) is pleased to announce *FOGA: Real N\*gga Edition*, a new, nonprofit-presented conceptual artwork in which a fictional lead character—a newly released felon with an entrepreneurial drive, who is sincere about his intentions to positively impact society—creates a guided yoga and meditation class program that appropriates the structure of the mid-2010s branded exercise class trend that was popular during his incarceration. A non-exhaustive list of themes explored in *FOGA: Real N\*gga Edition* includes empathy, radical nonviolence, redemption, Black male mental health, and expectations and manifestations of Black masculinity.

The conceptual artwork entails **three components**: an intricate art installation modeled to-scale after an authentic prison day room but with small, thoughtful "Easter eggs" throughout; a performance art video content series of guided yoga and meditation sessions (and a "mid-2000s blog aesthetic" graphic website to access the videos), which are enactments of formal screenplays (rather than improv) performed within a similar day room installation by a cast of three recurring characters who often wear ski masks to conceal their identities; and a series of sculptures: the FOGA-branded 'exercise equipment' art objects that appear in the videos, each a handmade-variant edition of five.

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INT. FOGA DAYROOM
LOOKING UP AT DAYROOM TV; ROCKING
RED SKI MASK; BACK FACING US; TURNS
AROUND INTO DIALOGUE

X
What's poppinton, my niggas? It's
dat boy ( )-( ) in dis bitch
and welcome to Felon Yoga-a*k*a
FOGA...DA REAL NIGGA EDITION. FOGA
is a 8 disc, 30 day, Release Yoga
program. Nigga, we got all kindz'uh
shit in dis bitch. A nigga got da
classes deyself. A nigga got'uh
Daily Meds-a*k*a guided-muh-fuckin-
me'uh-meditations. A nigga got'uh
Spread-a*k*a complete diet change-
up. -You here meee! And last but
not least, bitch...a nigga got'uh
Ultimate...Fire-ass...Real-ass-
real-nigga-ass Surrender Endurance
Workout-a*k*a nigga-please-don't-
shoot-my-muhfuckin-ass class.

CUT FROM FINISHING UP A PHONE CALL
INTO DIALOGUE; ROCKING WHITE SKI
MASK.

X
Now I bet ya'll niggas like what is
poppinton wit dis shit? -Ain't no
g-ass niggas do no yoga where I'm
from! But, nigga in a country wit
all deez
atrocities...savageries...Muh-
fuckin-me-uh...bullshitteries bein
done wit guns...Who bedda?! Who
bedda in dis bitch to find not only
a positive...but healthy way duh
use dem hoes dan duh muhfuckas dat
ain't never 'pposed'uh have'em no
moe...FELONS! -You hear meee! -Real
niggas, guns, yoga-a*k*a real
niggas...using guns...yoga, bitch.

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David-Jeremiah in his Dallas studio (Photo by JTaylor) • Stills from *FOGA: Real N\*gga Edition*, featuring art objects including *FOGA Prison (Cinderblock): Instead of conventional yoga blocks hit these hoes* (2022) and *Assault Rifle (11.3 lbs)*, from the series *Weighted Weapon Cutouts: For the hoe-ass, scary-ass n\*ggas that ain't 'bout using real straps and shit. Cannot be copped individually. Complete set only.* (2022) • Photo of intro sequence of David-Jeremiah's screenplay for *FOGA: Real N\*gga Edition*

"A lot of people try to classify my art as angry, violent, shock art, shit like that," said David-Jeremiah. To the contrary, contends Darryl Ratcliff, a Dallas-based community organizer and artist, in an essay: FOGA is actually the ultimate embodiment and ideal of radical nonviolence. "The brilliance of FOGA is that the character performed by David-Jeremiah is at once absurd, menacing, and profound. The work directly acknowledges the fact that many people of color have strong negative feelings towards police officers because of hundreds of years of police brutality and harassment. However, instead of ignoring these feelings, David-Jeremiah creates constructs to express and process through them. As jarring and violent as his artwork sometimes appears, the violence is only metaphorical or perhaps even meditative. In fact, by ultimately choosing dialogue over actual violence, Jeremiah pursues the path of radical nonviolence."

In the universe of the conceptual artwork, shortly after its launch, FOGA becomes a nationwide hit, leading to other themed editions (beyond *Real N\*gga Edition*) as well as ubiquitous FOGA 'equipment' in gyms and homes across the country. David-Jeremiah considers the most important sculptural work in the show to be *FOGA Box Set* (2022), a handmade-variant edition of five, which contains numerous 'equipment' art objects that collectively allow the viewer to fully follow along with the videos. Each *FOGA Box Set* also includes Blu-ray DVDs of the otherwise-online video content—a nod to the prison popularity of mail-order subscriptions, as well as how incarcerated people, like the artwork's lead character, often have an outdated sense of trends and technology upon their release. Said David-Jeremiah: "Of course no one needs a DVD in 2022, yet [the FOGA founder] includes them anyway because he doesn't realize it's damn near obsolete. I wanted to make his narrative authentic, down to the small details."

In addition to *FOGA Box Set* (2022) is *Weighted Weapon Cutouts: For the hoe-ass, scary-ass n\*ggas that ain't 'bout using real straps and shit. Cannot be copped individually. Complete set only.* (2022), an in-canon "bonus set" of weapon-shaped weights (made of hollowed-out wood filled with lead) including a handmade shank and several types of guns. Aside from the two object sets, a handful of edition-of-five objects are available for standalone purchase, including FOGA blocks (cinderblocks sandblasted then

hand-painted with the FOGA logo), FOGA mats, and tank tops with graphics that allude to in-canon phrases and themes.

A recurring motif in David-Jeremiah's overall practice, evident in this new conceptual work most overtly through the box set shape's allusion to a specific Lamborghini fender as well as one of the "merch" shirts' phonetic mispronunciations of a Lamborghini model that is a play on words with a racial slur. Said art historian Michael Corris, Professor Emeritus of Art at Southern Methodist University:

"David-Jeremiah has been shrewdly employing the Lamborghini as a signifier for most of his career in an attempt to anchor his reflections on the Black male experience. He transforms the "Lambo" into something more than a convenient cliché ... just when you think you are on all-too-familiar thematic ground, David-Jeremiah's nuanced reinterpretation of the trials and tribulations of Black masculinity might cause you to pause and reconsider the hackneyed connections that presume to link affect, agency, and social justice. ... In David-Jeremiah's hands, art is indeed a tool for transformation, but one that cleverly conceals its agenda beneath a layer of seductive aesthetics. ... The depth and authority of David-Jeremiah's entire practice stems from its origins in lived experience, in a lifeworld ingeniously portrayed through a sensitive and resourceful intertwining of medium and content."



All artworks are handmade editions of 5 variants, signed and numbered. Clockwise from left: David-Jeremiah in his Dallas studio with *FOGA Prison (Cinderblock): Instead of conventional yoga blocks hit these hoes* (2022), sandblasted cinderblock and acrylic paint. • *Assault Rifle (11.3 lbs.)*, from the series *Weighted Weapon Cutouts: For the hoe-ass, scary-ass n\*ggas that ain't 'bout using real straps and shit. Cannot be copped individually. Complete set only.* (2022); also includes *Shank (2.5 oz.)*, *Revolver (7.9 oz.)*, *Semi-Automatic Pistol (10.6 oz.)*, *Shotgun (2.6 lbs.)*, and *Sniper Rifle (4 lbs.)*, acrylic paint and laser medium residue on lead-filled wood. • See caption of leftmost image • *Semi-Automatic Pistol (10.6 oz.)* • *Shank (2.5 oz.)*

*FOGA: Real N\*gga Edition* furthers David-Jeremiah's exploration of a conceptual art focus that he refers to as "inverted-performance," wherein the ultimate realization of the piece is for viewers to buy the box set and fully participate in the exercise classes in their own homes. Beyond just participatory artwork, in the inverted-performance construct, the viewer's perceptions and biases are fundamental (rather than incidental) to the artwork's intended meaning. To that end, David-Jeremiah asserts that *FOGA: Real N\*gga Edition* is not at all provocative or shocking to many of his peers or in relation to his own life or experiences; that if any particular viewer were to find it so, it would be due to the differences between their lived experiences and those of the artist. He also emphasizes the importance of the viewer's lingering and evolving takeaway from the social aspects of the piece.

David-Jeremiah directly addressed the question of whether the main character, the fictional FOGA founder, is intended as an alter-ego in any capacity (given the blurred lines of him playing the title role, whose name is pronounced "Bleep-Bleep" in the TV censorship tone): "Like any artist, my lived experiences naturally inform many aspects of the art I am making, and yes, both myself and Bleep-Bleep have been incarcerated. I am not ashamed of it, but it's not important here. Bleep-Bleep is his own dude with a fictional narrative. On a fundamental level: When Bleep-Bleep was in prison, he came up with the desire to

start a social impact fitness brand. When I was in prison, I came up with the artistic desire to create a multiverse conceptual artwork. Those are very different ways to spend your time. Now I want to turn the focus back to Bleep-Bleep and emphasize that he is a special, truly exceptional individual. Nine times outta ten, the psychological effects of incarceration are always the same because prison is so bullshit. It's really not set up to fuckin reform in a real way or re-assimilate people into goddamn society. It's high-key set for you to fail. The schooling that you get in there is trash as fuck, the outreach opportunities support system past the prison walls is damn near nonexistent – they cut you a hundred-dollar check and that's it. But he is a pioneer in this alternate ideal. He's literally created a program that keeps cops from getting killed. In the FOGA universe, the program really takes off; Bleep-Bleep is a felon who is contributing to society in a positive way, while also challenging acceptable ways to reach that outcome."

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### **ABOUT CULTURALDC**

Established in 1998, the arts nonprofit CulturalDC supports innovative artists across all disciplines and makes their work accessible to diverse audiences. It provides unconventional space for relevant and challenging work that is essential to nurturing vibrant urban communities. *Past 2021-2022 programming includes presentations from Umar Rashid (Frohawk Two Feathers) and Andres Serrano; press kits are at [molly.nyc/frohawk](http://molly.nyc/frohawk) and [molly.nyc/serrano](http://molly.nyc/serrano), respectively.*

### **A NOTE FROM DAVID-JEREMIAH**

Just so there's no lost-in-translation type-shit: I HATE cops. I was raised and groomed in a culture where that's the norm. A culture that America just loooovvveessss to maintain, consume, mimic, envy, judge, celebrate and condemn all at the same time. Hating cops doesn't make me the hate for cops. Grow up. I'm a Nike addict. I'm a dad in love with his son. I can be super goofy and silly. I'm quite handsome: ALL this other shit aside from hating cops. Same-difference when y'all shout from the rooftops that all cops aren't "wrong," "bad," and "evil." It's the same logic withheld from Micah Xavier Johnson. We just completely conflated the facts into him simply having PTSD or being mentally fucked up. That's cap. Yeah, I hate cops but I'm not out here putting holes in them. You don't have to like or love somebody to be civil and respectful. I can still hate a cop and be humane to one.

## **ADDENDUM: DAVID-JEREMIAH'S IN-CHARACTER BLURBS OF FOGA AND THIS PARTICULAR EDITION OF FOGA**

*In a statement in the canon of the conceptual piece, David-Jeremiah, in-character as the FOGA founder and lead instructor (whose name is pronounced "Bleep-Bleep" in the TV censorship tone, and sometimes written in the redaction stylization " \*\*\*\*\* - \*\*\*\*\* " or " \_\_\_\_\_ " ), describes FOGA as such:*

**ABOUT FOGA THE FRANCHISE:** "Felon Yoga (FOGA), a new therapeutic wellness program inspired by animosity toward cops and ideal for those regularly and unjustly targeted by cops, was developed by a former felon as a means of exorcising his desires to commit acts of violence against cops in a healthy, safe, and mindful way. Launching in July (the anniversary of the Micah Xavier Johnson shooting in Dallas, in which he murdered five police officers and injured nine others), FOGA is an innately therapeutic wellness practice appropriate for anyone looking for a healthy and mindful approach to managing violent tendencies. It also provides a relatively easy access point for anyone looking to better understand – and empathize with – the felon/cop equation."

**ABOUT REAL N\*GGA EDITION:** "FOGA: Real N\*gga Edition is a 7-disc complete "Release" yoga program set in the future of an alternatively calibrated ideal, heralding a time where the therapeutically, maturely and real-muhfuckin-n\*ggaedly processing of all desires to harm cops is accepted, respected, promoted, and even celebrated. FOGA's main approach focuses on incorporating a variety of weapons (each involving an innate degree of difficulty and intensity) during the program's exercises; all leading up to the "release" of an imaginary act of imaginary violence against an imaginary cop.

In a country where so many atrocities, savageries and bullshitteries are committed with guns... Who better? Who better in this hoe to find not only a positive but healthy way to utilize firearms than the last muhfuckas that are supposed to have them in the first place... Felons. If you're felon what would you release? If the answer is all of the "wantin"...The wantin to merc...smoke... whack...spray...Fuckin murder-murder-kill- kill-bring back to life and murder-murder-kill-kill again and a-fuckin-gain Pigs... Laws... Cops....Then that's what FOGA's all about. Instead of going out in real-life and mercin...smokin... whackin... sprayin...Instead of doing all that shit in real-life...You therapeutically, maturely...Real-muhfuckin-n\*ggaedly let that shit out in class throughout the program...Because as we all know...Bacon goes better on a cheeseburger."