



Spike Island

OLU OGUNNAIKE
FIX YOUR FACE

3 FEBRUARY TO 5 MAY 2024

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Fix Your Face is a site-specific commission by London-based artist Olu Ogunnaike. The title refers to Ogunnaike's use of veneers and the fact that two key materials in the exhibition, mud and charcoal, are used in facial treatments to conceal imperfections.

The centrepiece of the commission is a monumental, curved wall that morphs and extends the existing architecture of Spike Island's galleries. An aluminium framework wall is clad with wood offcuts that have been transformed into handmade versions of the industrial sheet material OSB, or oriented strand board. It is layered with glossy white paint that fades to a thin layer of roughly applied mud collected from the Avon riverbed and, eventually, no coating at all, revealing the natural colours and fibres of the different species of wood that have been used to construct it.

Red, green and blue lights shine directly on the glossy end of the wall, producing refracted colour-shadows in cyan, magenta, yellow and black: the four 'process' colours that can be used to reproduce any colour on the spectrum. The lights create silhouettes of audiences' movements through the space, and of the free-standing contorted metal shelves that have been salvaged from the recent fire at Underfall Yard, a historic boatyard near Spike Island.

Both the wall and the shelves echo organic forms that resonate with the traditional craft skills practiced at the boatyard: the curved wall being reminiscent of a boat's hull, and the shelves standing upright like barren trees, the raw material of boat building.

Also on display are a series of found marquetry* pictures depicting typical British landscapes. Certain motifs, such as barns or trees, have been removed and used to create a further series of charcoal screen prints on metal. The screen prints are displayed adjacent to another, only partially clad temporary wall that blocks the exit. The wall incorporates a large charred beam, also salvaged from Underfall Yard, that is, remarkably, still structurally sound. This kind of reuse and reinterpretation of remnants is central to the exhibition.

*Marquetry is an age-old technique of applying pieces of veneer to the surface of a structure to form decorative patterns.

This exhibition is supported by the Henry Moore Foundation and the Foundation Foundation.

Image: Photograph by Olu Ogunnaike.
Courtesy of the artist

Spike Island is an international centre for the development of contemporary art, located in Bristol's harbour area.

Admission to the gallery is free.
Spike Island, 133 Cumberland Road
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