

# Spike Island

PRESS RELEASE

OLU OGUNNAIKE

*FIX YOUR FACE*

3 February to 5 May 2024



*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

Image: Photograph by Olu Ogunnaike. Courtesy of the artist

– Ends –

For further information and high-resolution images please contact Niquita Munowenyu, Communications Manager on [niquita.munowenyu@spikeisland.org.uk](mailto:niquita.munowenyu@spikeisland.org.uk), or call +44 (0)117 9292266.

#### NOTES FOR EDITORS

- The exhibition is supported by the Henry Moore Foundation and the Foundation Foundation.
- **OLU OGUNNAIKE**  
Olu Ogunnaike is an artist based in London. Recent solo exhibitions include: An enclosed garden, gb agency, Paris (2022); I'd rather stand, Museum Folkwang, Essen (2021); Crumbs, CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux (2021); The Same Way You Came In?, Royal Academy of Arts, London (2021); London Plain, Cell Project Space, London (2020). Recent group exhibitions include: Systemic Love, CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux (2023); To "the fire next time", Villa Arson, Nice (2023); Testament, Goldsmiths CCA, London (2022); Domestic Drama, HALLE FÜR KUNST Steiermark, Graz (2021); Reconfigured, Timothy Taylor, New York (2021).
- **ABOUT SPIKE ISLAND**  
Spike Island supports, produces and presents contemporary art and culture across an 80,000 square foot former industrial building in Bristol. Its diverse artistic programme includes free major exhibitions, events and engagement activities taking place on-site and online. Championing outstanding work by emerging and underrepresented local, national and international artists, the programme enhances access to contemporary art for audiences from all backgrounds.

Alongside its public offer, Spike Island directly supports artists through new commissions, over 70 subsidised studios, and sector-leading artist development opportunities that widen access to its programme and facilities. Its Exhibition Services business supports the bespoke production and installation of artists' film and video throughout the UK and



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internationally. Spike Island is home to a dynamic community of hundreds of artists and creative businesses, working in flexible, affordable workspaces, alongside UWE Bristol's Fine Art department, Spike Print Studio, and café bar Emmeline.  
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