

Spike Island

PRESS RELEASE

DAN GUTHRIE
EMPTY ALCOVE / ROTTING FIGURE
8 February 2024 to 11 May 2025



Empty Alcove / Rotting Figure is a new commission and solo exhibition by artist Dan Guthrie. Working primarily with moving image, Guthrie's practice explores representations and mis-representations of Black Britishness, with a particular interest in examining how these manifest in rural areas. His latest commission continues his ongoing exploration of the Blackboy Clock; an object of contested heritage publicly displayed in his hometown of Stroud, Gloucestershire.

The clock, which incorporates a wooden blackamoor figure in its design, was originally assembled by a local watchmaker in 1774, during the height of the transatlantic slave trade. Relocated to a specially constructed niche on the front of a former schoolhouse in 1844, the clock has undergone restorations in 1977 and 2004 and has remained a constant presence throughout Guthrie's life in Stroud.

Guthrie's exhibition presents two newly commissioned videos that put forward the 'radical un-conservation' of the clock—a new theoretical concept proposed by Guthrie to describe the acquisition of an object with the express intent to destroy it. Central to this new body of work are questions about what society chooses to memorialise and how we do so. A new online platform documenting the clock's timeline, from its historical origins to current debates over its future, will launch at earf.info.

Commissioned and produced by Spike Island and Chisenhale Gallery, London. This exhibition is supported by the Henry Moore Foundation.

Image credit: Research image by Dan Guthrie. Courtesy the artist

– Ends –

For press enquiries please contact Isabel Davies at isabel@sam-talbot.com

NOTES FOR EDITORS

- The exhibition preview takes place on Friday 7 February 2024

ABOUT THE ARTIST

- **DAN GUTHRIE**
Dan Guthrie is an artist who often works with the moving image to explore representations and mis-representations of Black Britishness with an interest in examining how they manifest themselves in rural areas. Recent presentations of his work include Prismatic Ground, Berlinale Forum Expanded, the Independent Cinema Office and LUX's Right of Way screening tour.
- **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 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.
www.spikeisland.org.uk