

# 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. Ogunnaike works across sculpture, printmaking, performance, and installation to explore and intervene in the life cycles of different materials, including wood, mud, charcoal and metal.

The centrepiece of the commission is a monumental, curved wall that morphs and extends the existing architecture of Spike Island's galleries. The wall is made from handmade OSB (oriented strand board) that transforms offcuts of different species of wood into a standardised building material. It is layered with glossy white paint that gradually fades to a thin layer of roughly applied, white-washed mud collected from the Avon riverbed and, eventually, no coating at all. Running floor-to-ceiling, the wall becomes more and more pared back as you walk along it, slowly revealing the natural colours and fibres of the many varieties of wood that have been used to build it.

At the near end of the wall, where it runs parallel to a permanent wall, forming a corridor, several red, green and blue lights shine directly on the shimmering surface. This produces refracted colour-shadows in cyan, magenta, yellow and black: the four 'process printing' 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 contorted metal shelves that stand in the corridor. The shelves were salvaged from the recent fire at



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Underfall Yard, a historic boatyard near Spike Island. Like the wood offcuts used to construct the wall, they no longer serve their intended purpose. And yet both the wall and the shelves echo organic forms 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.

The title of the exhibition, *Fix Your Face*, refers to the fact that two key materials in the show, mud and charcoal, are used in facial treatments to conceal imperfections. As Ogunnaike sees it, this is similar to the surface-level treatments that are being applied by local and central governments to patch up the deep wounds of the UK's deteriorating industrial traditions.

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



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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](http://www.spikeisland.org.uk)



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