

Spike Island

OLUKEMI LIJADU

FEEDBACK

31 January to 10 May 2026



Olukemi Lijadu, *Feedback* production still (2025). Courtesy the artist

Feedback is the first institutional solo exhibition by Nigerian-British artist, filmmaker and DJ Olukemi Lijadu (b.1994, London). Centred around a new film, it traces the legacy and influence of West African sonic traditions on house music, investigating feedback, loops and drum rhythms as metaphors for the circulation of memory and cultural codes within the African diaspora.

Developed through extensive research in Chicago, Detroit, Lagos and Bristol, *Feedback* follows the artist's quest for echoes and links across the cultures of the Black Atlantic. A throbbing collage of found and original footage, the film moves between three continents, between family memories and collective histories.

Inspired by early abstract cinema, *Feedback* embraces repetition, musical and visual rhythms as cinematic devices. It also complicates and subverts this vocabulary, allowing the artist to reclaim and rework the legacy of a Western-centric art history.

The film installation is partly powered by a sound system sourced from local crew Ramsham Hi-Fi, paying tribute to Bristol's renowned sound system culture and the Black communities that have founded and sustained it.

The installation will also form the set for Lijadu's new performance, merging the virtual space of the film into the physical architecture of the exhibition. It will be presented at Spike Island on 23 April in partnership with Bristol New Music.

FEEDBACK

By Camille G. Bacon, with poetry* by Olukemi Lijadu

'Growing up I had this common misconception, because of how [musical] genres are racialised, that black people were not a part of electronic music,' recalls Olukemi Lijadu. *Feedback* revises the family tree of sonic innovation and repatriates, re-situates, and remembers the Afro-diasporic origin story of electronic music by positioning it as a descendant of West African percussive traditions. A heart transported – even across the expanse of an ocean – refuses to leave its music behind.

**Lagos, Chicago,
Detroit, Bristol,
Taken, moved,
Migrated, returned,
African time is
Somewhere outside of
The past and the future,
The drum makes
This zig zag of a
Timeline,
Do I remember?
How to speak my language,
I don't but maybe
I can find language
In this other mode,
You see anything can
be a drum if it beats?
Our hearts are the first
Drums we ever felt.*

If the heart is a drum, when the body encasing it is 'taken, moved, migrated, returned', its rhythm too must follow. *Feedback* follows a beating organ as it embarks on a wavering journey and returns to the shore of Badagry with both ears attuned to a Black world.

Rhythm not only rouses the body, but directs it. 'The voice of the drum is employed to communicate a piece of news or to send a message from one village to another' writes Francis Bebey. The drum, then, is an open mouth that summons the chorus into a crucible of shared feeling. Drawing cues from *Rhythmus 21* by Hans Richter, Lijadu diverges from the recurrence of rectangles (which signals control, foreclosure, and limitation) and opts instead for the circle: a geometry of gathering, a configuration of connection, a morphology of togetherness. *Feedback* remains faithful to the wisdom of the curve, and both aesthetically and conceptually (by positioning itself 'somewhere outside of the past and the future') traces a continuum between the Middle Passage and the development of electronic music.

**Distant cousins
Twice removed
On these shores
Echoes linger
And show up
When we meet
Behind closed doors
In church
They think it's just a dance*

*But it's a memory
It is a call,
It is a communion,
Just like the drum
Told stories,
Our music,
Sounds a signal,
A code that is
Deciphered through
Feeling, feeling, feeling...*

Electronic music is a Black metronome with an aqueous backbone. 'The water is important in terms of endless repetition,' Lijadu tells me. Waves transfer energy to one another, influencing the amplitude, force, and scale of their neighbours. *Feedback*, like waves, is another process where 'endless repetition' calls home: a sound emerges, changes shape as it cascades through space, loops back to its origin, and invariably sculpts the form of sounds that are henceforth uttered... A talking drum in Lagos influences the emergence of House music in Chicago, which influences the birth of Techno in Detroit, which influences the inception of Drum & Bass in Bristol, which influences the innovations in contemporary West African sonic tradition...

Feedback also asserts that not only have Afro-diasporic artists been at the forefront of the evolution of electronic music, but they have historically been pioneers in the technologies of sound transmission too. The score for Lijadu's film will emanate from speakers constructed by local fabricators who carry forth the tradition of sculpting sound systems, which was catalyzed by Caribbean communities in Bristol throughout the 1970s. Within the film itself, Lijadu is pictured listening to music with her father. The pair sits before a futuristic object whose shape recalls an altar, thereby positioning speakers as a portal that connects the diaspora to its natural rhythm.

**I feel it,
I feel it,
I felt it,
We felt it,
We feel it,
And it moved me,
And it moves us,
And I move,
And we move,
And it starts,
It can't stop,
We don't think about such feelings,
We are lost,
In the sound,
Together,
a reminder
No matter how far
Again + again +
Again...*

To position electronic music as an inheritor of sonic traditions that sit at the inner sanctum of West African rituals (like masquerade ceremonies and drum circles) is also to understand the form as a technology of surrender.

Just as in the case of such rituals, the accumulation of percussive pressure inherent to electronic music can deliver those who allow the beat to bend them into a state of shared ecstasy in which we are set adrift and get 'lost in the sound together.' The momentum of the music carries with it a collective consciousness, an invitation to slide from 'I' to 'us' that hinges upon a plummet into pure instinct. *Feedback* emphasizes the role of affect and intuition through an editing strategy inspired by filmmakers like Kahlil Joseph, John Akomfrah, Steve McQueen, and Ja'Tovia Gary that embraces a philosophy of pandemonium: to let rhythm conduct the body is not a cerebral act but, rather, requires a willingness to capitulate to the intelligence of entropy.

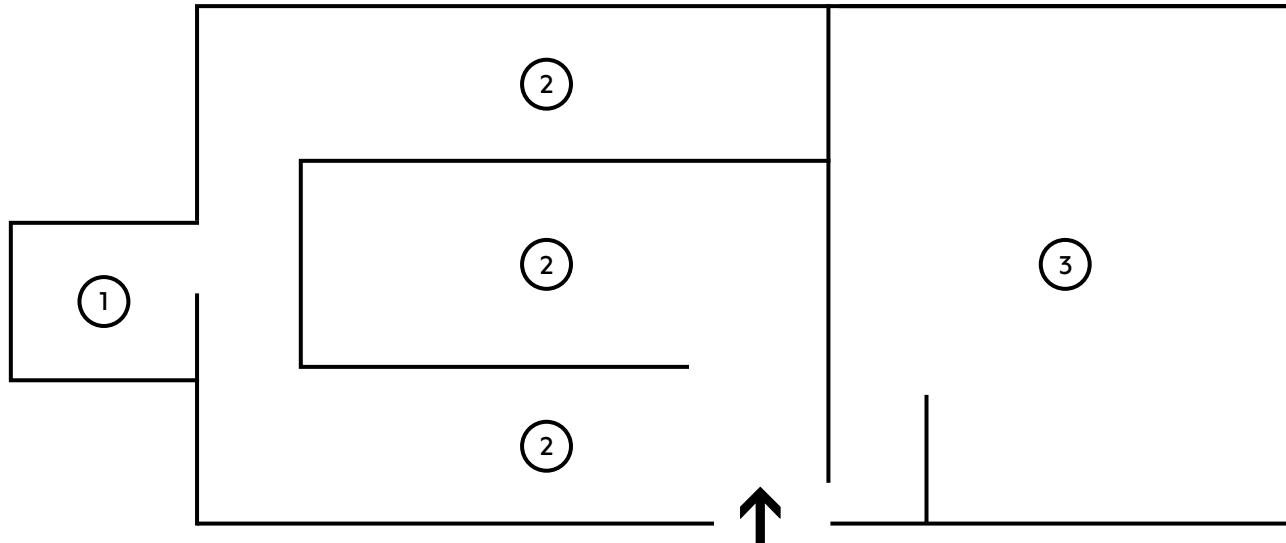
Camille Gallogly Bacon is a Chicago-based writer and the co-Founder/Editor-in-Chief of *Jupiter Magazine*.

CREDITS

Feedback is generously supported by The Elephant Trust and the Olukemi Lijadu Commissioning Circle:
Frank Dupuis and Ms. Bimpe Nkонтчou.

Director	Production Assistants	Cast
Olukemi Lijadu	Olutomi Lijadu	Olufemi Lijadu
Assistant Director	Ovie Dominic Asagba	Aima Lijadu
Adedapo Adeniyi		Musa Toyib Babatunde
Executive Producer	Production Coordinator	Omotoso Oriniyi Tobeau
Laetitia Walendom	Ikeorah Chisom Chi-FADA	Oke Abiodun aka Wura
Producer/Production Designer	Aima Lijadu	Samba
Jeremy Mbu		Wura Samba Ensemble
Researcher	Cinematography	(Oke Abiodun, Oke
Sope Soetan	Olukemi Lijadu	Temitayo, Ayanyemi Jelili,
	Granville Wilson	Samuel Idowu, Gbadebo
		Olayemi)
	Analogue Cinematography	DJ Duane Powell
	Rowland Olamide	Jada-Amina Harvey
		Amani Olu
		Curator
		Clementine Proby
		Assistant Curator
		Diana Lage

FLOORPLAN



1 Community Space

2 Phillip Lai
RAIN / RUIN

3 Olukemi Lijadu
Feedback

Editors
Rick Sims
Ekene Amaonwu
Olukemi Lijadu

Sound Recordist
Ekene Amaonwu

Costume
Olagbaise Ayomide Daniel

Animators
A Third World
Tamika Batalova

Grip
Aiden George

Cast
Olufemi Lijadu
Olukemi Lijadu
Aima Lijadu

Musa Toyib Babatunde
Omotoso Oriniyi Tobeau
Oke Abiodun aka Wura

Samba

Wura Samba Ensemble

(Oke Abiodun, Oke
Temitayo, Ayanyemi Jelili,
Samuel Idowu, Gbadebo

Olayemi)

DJ Duane Powell

Jada-Amina Harvey

Amani Olu

Curator

Clementine Proby

Assistant Curator

Diana Lage

Head Technicians
Olivia Jones
Jackson Bateman

Spatial Sound Design
Harry Ovington

Spatial Design
Annelise Agossa

Special Thanks
Nicole Yip
The Spike Island Team
Ramsham Hi-Fi
Olufemi Lijadu
Aima Lijadu
Jada Amina Harvey
Jamilah Abu Bakare
Kesswa Wanogho
Camille Bacon
Laetitia Walendom
OTO Projects
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St Saviours School Ikoyi
Asmaa Jama
Dare Dada

Al Cameron
Dr Michele Curtis
Owen Lloyd
John Lawrence
Bristol Sound Archive
Paul Purgas
Theaster Gates Rebuild
Foundation
Frankie Knuckles Archive
Villa Albertine

EVENTS

SPOTLIGHT TOURS
Every Friday and Saturday, 3pm

RELAXED EXHIBITION HOURS
Last Sunday of each month, 12–2pm

DIASPORAS NOW
Performances by Hannan Jones, Emma Korantema and Hongxi Li
Thursday 26 February, 6–10pm

BSL EXHIBITION TOUR
Saturday 7 March, 2–3pm

BEHIND THE SCENES
Building tour and studio visits with Harriet Bowman and Max Naylor
Saturday 21 March, 11am–12.30pm

VERSIONING THE CITY
Live audio essay by Ashley Holmes
Saturday 28 March, 12–1pm

PHILLIP LAI: ARTIST TALK
Wednesday 1 April, 6–7pm

OLUKEMI LIJADU: FEEDBACK
Performance as part of Bristol New Music
Thursday 23 April, 7–8pm

CREATIVE WORKSHOPS

DREAM AND MAKE: MATERIAL PLAY
With Laura Phillimore
Workshop (5–11 years old and carers)
Tuesday 17 February, 10.30am–12pm

I AM A STRANGE LOOP
With Kathy Hinde
Workshop (all ages)
Saturday 21 February, 11am–1pm

I AM MAKING ART
With Plenderleith Scantlebury
Workshop (all ages)
Saturday 18 April, 11am–1pm

Visit our website for more information
on the events programme

INFORMATION

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OPENING HOURS
Gallery: Wednesday to Sunday, 12–5pm
Café: Monday, 9am–3pm
Tuesday and Sunday, 10am–4pm
Wednesday to Saturday 10am–5pm

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