

Spike Island

PRESS RELEASE OLUKEMI LIJADU *FEEDBACK*

Saturday 30 January to Sunday 10 May 2026



Spike Island presents *Feedback*, the first institutional solo exhibition by Nigerian-British artist, filmmaker and DJ Olukemi Lijadu (b.1994, London). Developed through extensive research in Chicago, Lagos and the UK, *Feedback* centres on a major film commission.

The film traces the legacy and influence of West African music on electronic music in Chicago and the UK, investigating sound elements such as feedback, loops and drum rhythms. It draws on the concept of audio feedback – in which sound creates a loop between input and output, amplifying itself – as a metaphor for the circulation of memory and cultural codes within the African diaspora. With *Feedback*, Lijadu considers rhythm as a way to understand how cultures, stories and histories reverberate across continents and generations, underpinning collective memory and (dis)connection. The drum, both as a physical instrument and as a symbol of rhythmic connection, sets the film's beat.

Lijadu's research spans sites crucial to Black culture and history: from Chicago music festivals to the beaches of Lagos, with references to the UK's African-Caribbean heritage. The film follows the artist's quest for echoes and links across the Black Atlantic (as coined by Paul Gilroy) within histories violently uprooted by the slave trade – reflecting her own heritage. A throbbing collage of found and original footage, *Feedback* digs into the archives of house music legend Frankie Knuckles and picks the minds of other music mentors; it moves between three continents, between personal and collective stories and histories, and from the meditative reading of the artist's poetry to the high tempo of a drum'n'bass night. Inspired by early

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abstract cinema, particularly Hans Richter's *Rhythmus 21* (1921), *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.

Feedback is a tender homage to Lijadu's personal history and the shared passion for music that runs in her family. Some shots, taken while growing up in Lagos with a small camcorder she was gifted for her sixteenth birthday, complete this intimate search for connection and transmission.

Presented in an immersive setting, the film installation will be partly powered by a sound system made by a local fabricator. This sculptural element draws from Bristol's renowned sound system culture and the Black communities that have founded and sustained it. The sound system will function both as a practical object and as a physical metaphor for the amplification of histories, voices and vibrations.

Following the film's beat, the exhibition will unfold as a dynamic environment, alternating between the screening of the film and a soundscape designed by the artist. On 23 April 2026, as part of the experimental music festival Bristol New Music, Lijadu will further activate the galleries with a newly commissioned performance. She will perform behind the sheer screen, blurring the lines between the virtual realm of the film and the physical space of the exhibition to offer an expanded cinema experience.

The exhibition is generously supported by the Elephant Trust.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

As an artist, musician and DJ, Lijadu's work traces constellations across the Black Atlantic, through research and experimentation. Drawing on her mixed heritage from Nigeria, Brazil and the Caribbean, and background in Yoruba philosophy, she seeks to (re)connect the fractured histories and musical cultures of the African diasporas worldwide through rhythm.

Her work has been shown in institutions and festivals, including The Kitchen (New York City), Blackstar Film Festival (Philadelphia), Frieze Cork Street (London), ICA (London), V.O Curations (London) and Mariane Ibrahim Gallery (Chicago). Under the moniker Kem Kem, she has performed live concerts and DJ sets in prestigious art institutions in the UK and abroad, including Tate Britain, Serpentine Galleries, ICA (London), Luma Foundation (Arles), Bozar (Brussels), La Gaite Lyrique (Paris) and the Nigerian National Museum (Lagos). In 2024, she was selected to take part in a residency with Villa Albertine, a programme run by the French Embassy in New York. In October 2025, she was awarded the CIRCA Public Vote Prize, and she has been selected to take part in the VISIO – European Programme on Artists' Moving Images in November 2025.

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Supported using public funding by
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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

IMAGE CAPTION

Olukemi Lijadu, *Feedback* behind the scenes image (2025). Courtesy the artist.