

Olu Ogunnaike is currently exhibiting in 'Memory Game', at Villa Lontana, Rome. The first episode from his film series 'Drives' was presented at Tate Modern, London as part of 'ELC TV Dinner Episode III'. Solo exhibitions include 'Nutrition for the Next', at Jupiter Woods, London, (2018) and 'Let Me Just Put My Face On, Creatorex, London (2016) with selected group exhibitions in 2018 including '...and their tooth, finest gold', Les Urbaines, Espace Arlaud, Lausanne, 'The Share of Opulence; Doubled; Fractional', Sophie Tappener, Vienna, 'Le Colt est Jeune & Haine', Doc, Paris and 'The Way Things Run: Loose Ends Don't Tie', PS120, Berlin. Ogunnaike participated in the residency programme 'Formerly Called' at Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge in 2018 and 'The Conch', South London Gallery in 2017.

Due to social distancing measures, the gallery can accommodate six visitors at one time.

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With thanks to:

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# London Plain

## Olu Ogunnaike

31st October - 12th December 2020

Open 12-6pm Thursday-Saturday

By Appointment only

Cell Project Space presents *London Plain*, an intervention by London-based artist Olu Ogunnaike. Staged during an interim period whilst the exhibitions programme has been postponed, Ogunnaike has been invited to consider the gallery at a time when it would have otherwise continued to be temporarily empty.

Taking trees as repositories of memory within the places and communities in which they grow, Ogunnaike cites wood as a marker of possible encounters: between past and present; between people and the spaces they inhabit. Ogunnaike is interested in the parallels that can be drawn between humans and trees, tracing the moment a tree is uprooted from one geographical setting and placed in another, where it might be transformed. This story – of the composite and accumulative nature of our identities – is inextricably linked to community, labour and the transaction of exchange.

For his new commission, Ogunnaike uses the lumber from seven London Plane trees that were felled on High Street Kensington in 2012. Due to its capacity to absorb pollution, this common hardy species was planted en masse during a time when London was black with the soot of the Industrial Revolution. Now abundant along the capital's roadsides, London Planes are often treated as disposable organic debris to make room for varying municipal enterprises.

Deemed too characteristically unique to be used for furniture, and commercially unviable due to its



long drying periods and laborious cutting processes, London Planes are usually met with the fate of a wood chipper. Machined, sliced and arranged into a herringbone parquet, Ogunnaike has used the wood to cover the entire surface of the gallery floor, giving it a rare new lease of life. Embedded into the site's architecture, the floor invites the presence of people in the space, facilitating Ogunnaike's desire to create situations for togetherness.

Nodding to deceleration as an act of undoing, *Tools*, (2020) a crowbar cast in bronze and a London Plane mallet, lay prescient in the gallery. Imprinted on the crowbar's surface are the traces of fingerprints, and with them the promise of its use. Evoking the physical actions of wrenching, breaking and pulling, the artist opens up the possibility of enacting further interventions over the duration of the project, inviting the audience to partake and bear witness to an unstable and active site.

In *London Plain*, questions of labour, production and regeneration are integral to the artist's gesture. If a parquet floor is an archetypal feature in the production of ornate space, Ogunnaike considers what it means to repurpose material excess for its making. As individual wooden tiles are gradually pulled up over time, the physical and symbolic dismantling of the floor alludes to a moment when the anticipation of physical encounters in public space conflicts with a need for cycles of withdrawal and pause. Speaking of the constant rhythms of consumption and flux in the city, Ogunnaike's intervention proposes a slowing down – an interruption – to usual patterns of life and activity.

1.  
*London Plain, 2020*  
London Plane, Parquet Adhesive,  
Silkscreen on Substrate, Underlay  
L.520cm x w.1110cm

2.  
*Tools, 2020*  
Bronze Crowbar  
L.89cm x w.10.3cm x d.4cm  
London Plane Mallet  
L.37cm x w.17.5cm x d.6cm

