

Press Release

Ain Bailey The Jamaica Project 10 April/14 June 2026

Still from *5C Jacques Road: Part One*, 2026. Courtesy of the artist.



Camden Art Centre is pleased to announce a major new exhibition with London-based composer, artist, and DJ Ain Bailey (b. 1963, London). Central to the exhibition is a major new commission located in Gallery 3: the latest part of a trilogy of films begun in 2021. Rooted in the artist's own biography, which centres her family and her relationship to Jamaica (a place which, until recently, she had never visited) these works explore Jamaican culture, history and resonances beyond the island. While the first two works in this trilogy have focused on music, food and honouring Bailey's heritage, the new film, titled *5C Jacques Road: Part One*, the former address of her mother's family, focuses on Jamaica itself and was shot on location during the artist's first visit to the country in 2025.

For over 15 years Bailey has worked at the forefront of sonic exploration across various sites, spaces, platforms and settings. Her practice involves a deep and engaged exploration of identity, place and architectural acoustics. Responding to the architecture of Gallery 3, Bailey is making an intervention on the original Victorian windows, chromatically altering the light in the room to evoke the colours of the Jamaican flag. The space is transformed into an immersive environment, enveloping the viewer in colour and warmth.

The installation in Gallery 3 comprises *5C Jacques Road: Part One*, a new moving image work with an original score, featuring audio captured in Jamaica; as well as paintings by her grandfather Ezekiel Laws and paintings by Gemma Romain, who has rendered frames from the film in oil on canvas. Conceived as a travelogue, the single-channel video charts the artist's first and only trip to Jamaica, and her encounters with people and landscape. Captured with an energised immediacy on her iPhone, her journey unfolds as an episodic sequence beginning and ending at the airport.

Redeploying methods familiar from her musical compositions – dissolves, fades, loops and delays – the film charts a voyage of discovery: by car and on foot, moving out of Kingston and into the surrounding environment, progressing towards 5C Jacques Road, the former home of her mother's family. The film's three chapters loosely relate to the symbolism in the Jamaican flag: air, land, sea. The film's score opens with a bass-heavy composition paying homage to dub – a musical genre emerging out of reggae in the late 1960s and early '70s – and proceeds through manipulated field recordings: sounds of the ocean recorded with a hydrophone and the song of a cockerel in the blue mountains are synthesised in an ethereal soundtrack that conveys feelings of air and altitude.

Version (2021), installed in the Central Space, comprises three videos and 64 suspended Jesmonite sculptures – scaled-up representations of the ackee fruit, one for each year since Jamaica gained independence in 1962. The ackee fruit is revered in Jamaica where it is typically eaten as a savoury ingredient, a key component in ackee and saltfish, the country's national dish. A resampled and textured recording of the artist preparing this meal features in the acoustic soundtrack of *Version: Ackee*, one of the three films, reflecting on the importance of food and music in Black sociality, and forms of shared culture and history amongst the African diaspora.

Version, the installation's umbrella title, alludes to the methods of sampling and remixing which characterise reggae music. *Version: Dub* is a direct homage to this form of composition originating in Jamaica, defined by resampling, echo, delay and reverb techniques. The third film, *Version: Linstead Market* is a rendition of the traditional Jamaican folk song *Linstead Market* by experimental British-Caribbean vocalist, composer, and movement artist Elaine Mitchener. A traditional Jamaican calypso

song that has been arranged for various styles, including steel band, it narrates a mother's plight heading to the market to sell ackee fruit in an unsuccessful attempt to provide food for her children. It has personal resonance for Bailey – she refers to its melody “being in her DNA”, a familiar sound from her upbringing in Brixton where she recalls it being played by steel pan bands and at community gatherings. In her vocal delivery and as she inhabits the source material, Elaine Mitchener brings her own Jamaican heritage to the work.

Each video is presented on a free-standing screen which displays a slow-rolling stream of text, written by Taylor Le Melle, that offers an interpretation of the films' vibrant soundscapes: crescendos of layered notes, static interference, and echoes which reverberate to the point of abstraction. Mindful towards D/deaf audiences, the rich and emotive audio works are articulated through the on-screen translation – another ‘version’ of the compositions – in an experimental approach to the sonic that seeks alternative channels for experience.

In the Reading Room, the film *Untitled: Our Wedding* (2022) takes for its subject Bailey's parents' wedding album, honing in on the photographs (taken by an unknown photographer), the pig-skin-bound book itself, and the construction of the spider-webbed, interleaved pages. These frames are interspersed with text written by poet and musician Remi Graves, describing the melodic, lyrical score that fades, swells, and haunts the film. Previously shown in the group exhibition *Black Melancholia* at the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College (CCS Bard) in New York in 2022, this poignant work is a journey through memory and imagination. Bailey's parents migrated to the UK as part of the Windrush Generation and married a few years later in Stockwell, London. The film's slow and attentive pace amplifies the material grooves, patterns and marks that appear, like lines through skin, as markers of duration and the film itself stands as a poignant meditation on the passing of time.

Using sound in all its forms, Bailey opens up spaces for processing grief, loss, resistance and remembering – produced through an ongoing and sustained engagement with often silenced or marginalised groups, but which create active and radical new models of community, collaboration and connection. Her work is a rigorous exploration of the material and immaterial world which shapes each and every one of us. Previous works have employed contact and induction mics to gather, manipulate and process sounds from objects and architectural sites, often playing the works back into the spaces from which they are generated. She has also worked closely with communities across the UK and internationally to facilitate ‘sonic autobiographies’, exploring our relationship with auditory and musical memories.

The cultural heritage of Jamaica has had a continuing influence on British culture with calypso, ska, dub, reggae and drum and bass among the many sounds that contribute to the identity, not only of those who have ancestral ties to the Caribbean, but many others who have never visited the region, yet feel captivated by the art and culture it inspires. This exhibition pushes forward Bailey's sonic exploration of embodied sound, architectural acoustics and creating spaces that expand ideas of community, sharing and collective action.

Ain Bailey and Camden Art Centre were shortlisted for the Freelands Award 2023.

Notes to editors

The exhibition builds on previous projects at Camden Art Centre with artists involved in ground-breaking sonic research. This programme strand includes solo exhibitions centred around new commissions with Rose English (2016), Yuko Mohri (2018), Athanasios Argianas (2019), and Phoebe Collings-James (2020), as well as performances at the gallery by artists including Ryuichi Sakamoto, Mark Fell, Coby Sey, Shiva Feshareki and Black Obsidian Sound System.

Press enquires

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Camden Art Centre

Since 1965 Camden Art Centre has been a place for art and the people that make it. Rooted in our local community and internationally acclaimed, we foster a sense of belonging and a deeper relationship to art. We aim to push boundaries and connect people to their own creativity through our exhibitions, residencies, events and learning programmes. Originally built as a public library, the building now combines historic architecture with open, modern spaces and a secluded garden with free entry for all. Camden Art Centre has always led the way supporting artists and audiences to create and engage with the most vital and inspiring contemporary art and culture today.

Ain Bailey Biography

Ain Bailey (b. 1963, London) is a composer, artist and DJ. She facilitates workshops considering the role of sound in the formation of identity, and the exploration of memory and sound. In 2020 Bailey and Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski created a composition and print entitled *Remember To Exhale* for Studio Voltaire, London. Previous exhibitions include *And We'll Always Be A Disco In The Glow Of Love*, Cubitt Gallery, London (2019); *Version*, Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge (2021); *Atlantic Railton* which was part of the *Listening To The City* sound installation programme in the 2021 Serpentine Pavilion; *Untitled: Our Wedding for the Black Melancholia* exhibition at CCS Bard (2022), New York, USA and *Trio-esque* for Brucknermusik 27 in Cologne, Germany (2022). Bailey's most recent commission was for FACT Liverpool's Resolution research project, for which she created the installation *Four* (2024). She was the 2022-23 Cavendish Arts Science Fellow at Girton College, University of Cambridge. Forthcoming in June 2026 is an audio work commission by Art On The Underground for Waterloo Station.