

# PRESS RELEASE

**SYSTEM BY GAIKA**  
**IN COLLABORATION WITH BOILER ROOM**  
Free, Lancaster Rooms, 2 – 26 August 2018



**Boiler Room and Somerset House Studios artist Gaika collaborate on ‘System’, a sound system culture installation. Marking 70 years of Windrush, the month long installation explores sound systems and Notting Hill Carnival’s heritage beyond the borders of West London at Somerset House**

**SYSTEM** by musician and performance artist **Gaika** is an evocative art installation at Somerset House Studios telling the history of sound system culture in London commissioned by **Boiler Room**. **SYSTEM** challenges the media perception of Carnival by showcasing a fair representation of the stories, characters, statistics and under celebrated sound system culture at Carnival and beyond. It forms part of a wider campaign from Boiler Room to celebrate the positive cultural impact of migration.

The audio visual installation will be made up of curated archive material from institutions, such as Black Cultural Archives and the BFI. **SYSTEM** will open 2 August and run until 26 August.

For Somerset House Studios’ artist Gaika, Carnival and the fixed sound system are a bold demonstration of immigration, blackness and raw technical power. By creating **SYSTEM**, Boiler Room and Gaika invite guests to immerse themselves in a shared narrative, historical knowledge and interact with an overwhelming black architectural system. Visitors can interact at **SYSTEM** through a jack input, allowing one song per person which will then be recorded and fed into the archive.

The installation will serve as a real world architectural access point to the audio visual interpretation of Notting Hill Carnival archive source material. The installation is designed to be an interactive, functioning large scale audio visual sculpture at Somerset House into which visitors can plug in and play music.

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Each Thursday during SYSTEM, Boiler Room, Gaika and Somerset House Studios will be hosting a number of events with King Tubbys, Channel One, Saxton Sound, Rap Attack plus more to be announced in the weeks building to Notting Hill Carnival. Featuring sound systems from the most cutting-edge creators in the industry, the series will give a platform to new talent inspired by sound system culture to perform alongside the original selectors, in events broadcast worldwide by Boiler Room and co-hosted by Gaika.

SYSTEM is part of a 360° campaign from Boiler Room designed to celebrate migration and the positive cultural impact it has on society. The campaign brings together a community of artists, activists, and families to tell their stories through installations, film, editorial, music and performance.

### **Gaika says:**

*"I chose to work with Boiler Room because it represents what I love about London; it is diverse in its make up and forward thinking in its approach. I think it's a great platform to tell important stories directly.*

*I'm proud to be an artist at Somerset House Studios. There's somehow a quiet rebelliousness to the place which I fully rate. It's a rare and vital space for experimentation in a city where the establishment is often at odds with the people.*

*I'm a second generation Caribbean immigrant, I grew up waiting on that day in summer when every tube train would be filled with faces like mine, eyes locked in silent acknowledgement, all heading to the same destination with the same purpose.*

*I first went as a small child with my father, who before becoming a scientist had been deeply involved with sound system culture on his arrival to Britain. I remember weaving through the crowds sat on his shoulders and the smile on his face as the music rumbled through our bodies as I looked on in awe of the spectacle. This time was ours to love each other amongst the concrete, brief emotional respite where we didn't have to compute the grim reality of Thatcherite Britain as it was for black boys like me. I remember running for cover as the bottles flew over head, the police charged and the cameras rolled.*

*Notting Hill carnival is, in all its contradictions, a powerful expression of my immigrant culture. It is a political act of community congregation. This chaotic mass of wildly expressed emotion is a technologically advanced ritual that represents, at its core, a militant holding of space. Carnival simultaneously bucks and becomes the system with its defiance and pride and must never be moved.*

*I'm excited to be working on something that held so much sway in my childhood imagination, i hope in some small way my work can help protect and support its vitality."*

SYSTEM is commissioned by Boiler Room, and runs from 2 – 26 August at Somerset House.

**FOR PRESS ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:**  
[press@somersethouse.org.uk](mailto:press@somersethouse.org.uk)/0207 845 4624

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## ADDITIONAL LISTINGS INFORMATION

**Address:** Somerset House, Strand, London, WC2R 1LA

**Transport:** Underground: Temple, Embankment / Rail:  
Charing Cross, Waterloo, Blackfriars

**Website:** [www.somersethouse.org.uk](http://www.somersethouse.org.uk)

**Somerset House Facebook:**

[www.facebook.com/SomersetHouseStudios](https://www.facebook.com/SomersetHouseStudios)

**Somerset House Twitter:** @sh\_studios\_

**Somerset House Instagram:** @SomersetHouseStudios

## SYSTEM

### 2 – 26 AUGUST

Free, Lancaster Rooms, Somerset House

10.00 – 18.00 on Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat, Sun

Sound System Parties 1 (press night), 2, 9, 16 and 23 August

Streamed live via Boiler Room

19.00 – 23.30

Plug & Play sessions 7, 14, 21 August

## GAIKA IN CONVERSATION WITH ASH SARKAR

15 August, 18.45 – 20.30, River Rooms, New Wing, £8.00

To further explore his audio-visual installation SYSTEM, visitors are invited to join Gaika for an evening in conversation with writer, broadcaster and journalist Ash Sarkar, delving deeper into the installation's commentary on the politics of sound system culture and celebration of the Windrush generation.

For more information on the installation, visit [blrrm.tv/system](http://blrrm.tv/system)  
[somersethouse.org.uk/whats-on/system-by-gaika](http://somersethouse.org.uk/whats-on/system-by-gaika)

## ABOUT GAIKA

Gaika is a multidisciplinary recording and visual artist, working across genres and platforms to create compelling audiovisual experiences. The technically complex worlds Gaika creates merge the futuristic with contemporary culture, with his 2016 debut mixtape *Blasphemer* shifting the paradigms of what it means to be a black musician in Britain today.

Grime, dancehall, and R&B-inflected songs push radical political commentary about the racial, economic, and social inequalities in the UK and abroad. Gaika has released two independent mixtapes—*Machine* and *Security*—as well as a Warp Records-released EP, *Spaghetto* and a series of releases on his own concept label *The Spectacular Empire*. He is the Political editor at large for *Dazed and Confused*.

On the 27 July, Gaika will be releasing his debut album *BASIC VOLUME* in digital format, with physical copies available later this year. Named after his late father's technology company. Speaking about the album, Gaika says, "BASIC VOLUME is collection of alchemical parables for all the Immigrants who wander the earth in search of themselves".

Watch Gaika, Crown & Key [here](#)

## ABOUT BOILER ROOM

Boiler Room is an independent music platform and cultural curator, connecting club culture to the wider world, on screen and irl through parties, film and video.

Founded in 2010, Boiler Room started with a webcam taped to a wall, broadcasting from a warehouse in London, opening a keyhole to the city's underground. DIY at its finest; raw, uncut, homemade. Since then we've built a unique archive; featuring over 4,000 performances, by more than 5,000 artists, spanning 150 cities, enabling everyone regardless of where they live to enjoy the freedom it stands for.

With its award winning content Boiler Room reaches more than 189m p/month. Boiler Room has a significant and growing fan base in Latin America, key broadcast hubs in New York, London, Los Angeles and Berlin and the dedication of the world's most committed music fans, who consume shows expertly- curated by its passionate music team.

Their remit is to platform music in new ways - sound on for the voices and stories of the fringes of the mainstream.

Boiler Room - watch, listen, dance.

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This exhibition and series is not officially associated with Notting Hill Carnival and has no official association with BASS, LHCET or CARNIVAL VILLAGE TRUST. Currently SYSTEM is entirely funded by Boiler Room.

[facebook.com/boilerroom.tv](https://facebook.com/boilerroom.tv)

[twitter.com/boilerroomtv](https://twitter.com/boilerroomtv)

[instagram.com/boilerroomtv](https://instagram.com/boilerroomtv)

### **ABOUT SOMERSET HOUSE STUDIOS**

Somerset House Studios is a new experimental workspace in the centre of London connecting artists, makers and thinkers with audiences. The Studios are a platform for the development of new creative projects and collaboration, promoting work that pushes bold ideas, engages with urgent issues and pioneers new technologies. Since its launch in October 2016, the number of artists working on site has grown to 85.

### **ABOUT SOMERSET HOUSE**

Inspiring contemporary culture

One of the city's most spectacular and well-loved spaces, Somerset House is a new kind of arts centre in the heart of London, designed for today's audiences, artists and creatives – an inspirational community where contemporary culture is imagined, created and experienced.

From its 18th Century origins, Somerset House has played a central role in our society as a place where our culture and collective understanding of the world is shaped and defined. In 2000, it began its reinvention as a cultural powerhouse and home for arts and culture today, creating unique and stimulating experiences for the public, bringing them into direct contact with ideas from the greatest artists, makers and thinkers of our time. Our distinctive and dynamic year-round programme spans the contemporary arts in all its forms, from cutting-edge exhibitions and installations to annual festivals, seasonal events in the courtyard including Film4 Summer Screen, Summer Series and Skate, and an extensive learning and engagement programme.

As well as welcoming over 3million visitors annually, Somerset House houses the largest and most diverse creative communities in the country – from one-person start-ups to successful creative enterprises including MOBO, British Fashion Council, Dance Umbrella, Improbable Theatre, Hofesh Schecter Company, and Dartmouth Films.