

Nathaniel Trost

## Artist's Portfolio

I am an artist working in installation, sound, and functional pottery from Tuscaloosa, Alabama. I work with places where the built environment meets ecological systems. Of course, this happens everywhere: buildings are weathered by rain, tree roots crack pavement, rivers power dams and so on. These interactions happen at boundaries often maintained by oppositions like rural and urban, new and old, clean and messy, wild and domestic. Such boundaries make it harder to see this in-between space that doesn't fit well on either side and in which (I would say) we all actually live. I make works which represent inhabited environments that emphasize this in-between. To do this, I spend time developing a vocabulary from the materials present in a place and exploring their aesthetic, social and material properties. These materials are then collaborators in creating site and context specific works.

**Nathaniel Trost**

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**Tuscaloosa, AL**

installation,  
sound,  
objects.

## Education

Goldsmiths University: MFA Fine Art (2022 Marshall Scholar), London, England 2022 — 2024

Maze Hill Pottery: year long part time work — study position under Lisa Hammond, London, England, 2023

The University of Alabama: BA (Fine Art), BM (Music Composition), Tuscaloosa, AL 2016 — 2021

The Alabama School of Fine Arts — specialty in flute performance. 2011 - 2016

## R e s u m e

## Selected Recent Events

**2024**

**No Fixed Points** — Yushu Gallery Guangzhou, solo show. Exhibition of ceramics works made as part of a two month residency at Yushu Jingdezhen from Sept. — Oct. Exhibition Nov. 1 — 30, Guangzhou, China.

**El Calcehtok** — Victoria and Albert East. collaborator (ceramics artist) in food performance by Nina Gonzalez-Park. Part of V and A East Latinx takeover. London, UK. Sept. 28

**Goldsmiths MFA Degree Show** — Art fair style siloed mini-solo shows. London, UK. 6 — 16 July

**2023**

**Maze Hill Open Studio** — Maze Hill, UK. 2 — 3 December  
**Monochromatic Comfort** — group show, APT Gallery, London, UK. 16 — 20 November

**Support Structures** — solo show, hArts Lane Gallery, New Cross UK. 9 — 11 October

**Entwined Intimacies** — group show, hArts Lane Gallery, New Cross UK. 16 — 20 May

**Worth more/Worthless** — group show, KL8 Gallery, Brussels, Belgium. March 25 — April 9

**Belonging[s]**: group show, Spare Room Gallery. Baltimore, MD. March 3 — Feb. 3

**2022**

**Unclaimed Baggage/Reclaimed Space** — group show, All American Self Storage facility, Tuscaloosa, AL June 19 — July 31

**A Thank You** — concert of new compositions dedicated to and performed with teachers and friends, with Amir Zaheri, Jane Weigel, Diane Boyd-Schultz, Kim Strickland, Funmi OmoMoji, and Steven Keith. Canterbury Chapel, Tuscaloosa AL Sept. 1

**Installation**



*Deptford Sounding*  
mixed media installation with  
sculpture, local clay and brick dust  
whitewash, and music.  
2024

album link:  
<https://soundcloud.com/trost-nathaniel/sets/deptford-sounding>

This work developed out of my repeated wandering and gleaning from Deptford High Street to the Thames riverbank. The sculptural assemblages I made from objects collected along this route reflect the play of human and nonhuman processes that shape this urban landscape.

As the substrate through which the Thames flows as well as the foundational building material of the city, I use clay to unite the various elements of the exhibition. The walls are covered in a mixture of raw clay and London brick dust, and many elements are crafted from local clay, either fired, or raw.

The album is composed of a soundwalk through Deptford which is interjected with pieces for electronically modified flute.



*Deptford Sounding*



*Deptford Sounding*



*Deptford Sounding*  
details



*Deptford Sounding*  
details





*Support Structures,*  
installation and performance  
2023

In this piece, twenty four bundles of trash items from the Goldsmiths MFA studios were carried across the neighborhood of New Cross by hand. During the first day and a half of the performance, the items were carried to Hartslane Gallery. During the second day and a half, all of the items were returned to the Goldsmiths studio.



This performance was meant to be somewhat absurd in line with the incoherence of dumpsters in general. Dumpsters hold the end of many different stories, or at least, they are where many objects make their exits from our lives. These assemblages that come from dumpsters will therefore carry stories that don't make much sense; these things have already served their purpose and are part of the immense category of "junk." Spending time with these items and making them part of a new story goes against how we are accustomed to dealing with rubbish.

Unlike some art made with salvaged materials though, I was not interested in recycling or transforming the waste into something else. The questions I tried to shape this work around were:

"How can I create and share a relationship to these objects that does not disguise their lack of function but which makes obvious my own and by extension anyone's closeness to this massive, weighty accumulation of dead ends? How can I make visible what comes after the last recorded chapter in an object's life without insisting that it has to be the start of a salvation story?"

This non-salvific awareness of waste and of my implication in ways of life that produce large quantities of waste is part of a broad aesthetic goal in my work. I want to find ways of making visible material flows and forms of labor that are intentionally obscured in much of modern urban and social planning.



*Entwined Intimacies*  
mixed media performance installation  
video, couch, kitchen compost, bread dough, bedding, kombucha scoby  
2023

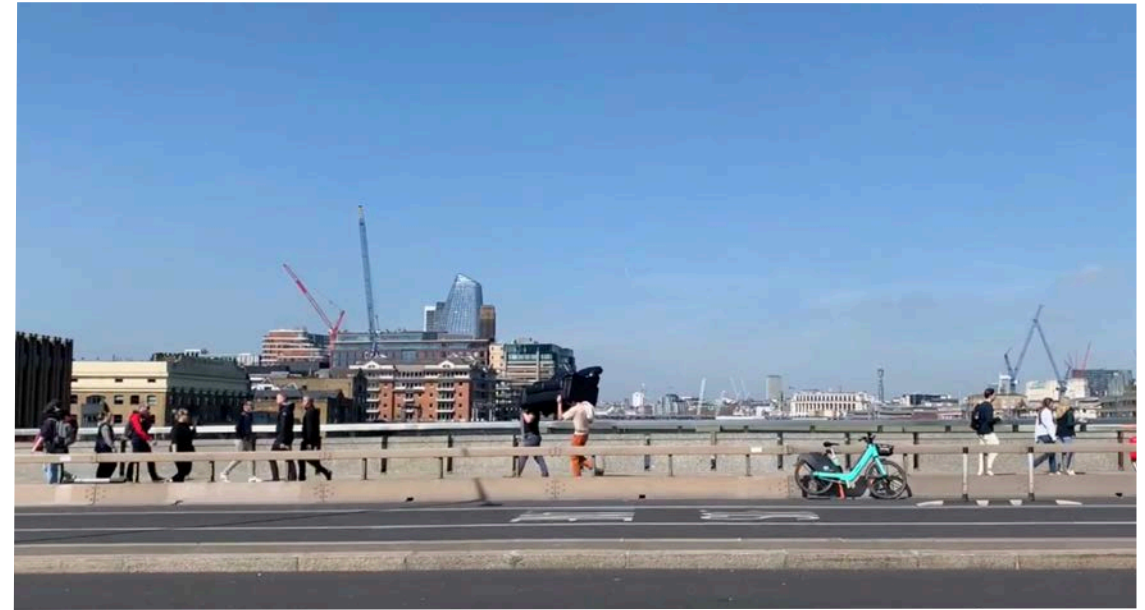
This installation celebrated the various relationships developed among the beings sharing the apartment I lived in. I explored the constant subtle labor of living with someone through a video piece titled *Sofa So Good* in which my flatmate and I carry a couch from our apartment to my studio in preparation for the exhibition. This work was shown on a tv screen viewable from the couch the very couch in question.

Thinking about processes of consumption, digestion, and decomposition, I saved a year's worth of kitchen scraps in a vermicomposting system and presented this compost in the gallery. During the opening, this was activated as a performance in which I was buried entirely in the compost for several hours.

The yeasts and other bacteria of the apartment were present in sourdough bread served at the opening and also in a floor piece consisting of my sheets, covered in bread dough and my pillow case, covered kombucha scoby.

Finally, to honor my flatmate's cat and once again thinking about durational labor and dynamics of pet/pet-owner relationships, I created a video work in which I followed my flatmate's cat, Ozymandias, King of Kings, around our apartment for the duration of my phone's battery, approximately 5 hours.

Overall, I tried to use long durational work to present subtle, ongoing dynamics of living with others. Isolating those relationships, taking them out of the rational stream of everyday life and placing them in acts of bizarre and overextended intimacy framed the relationships, giving them a weight that it can be hard to feel in the flow of everyday life.



Still images from *Sofa So good*

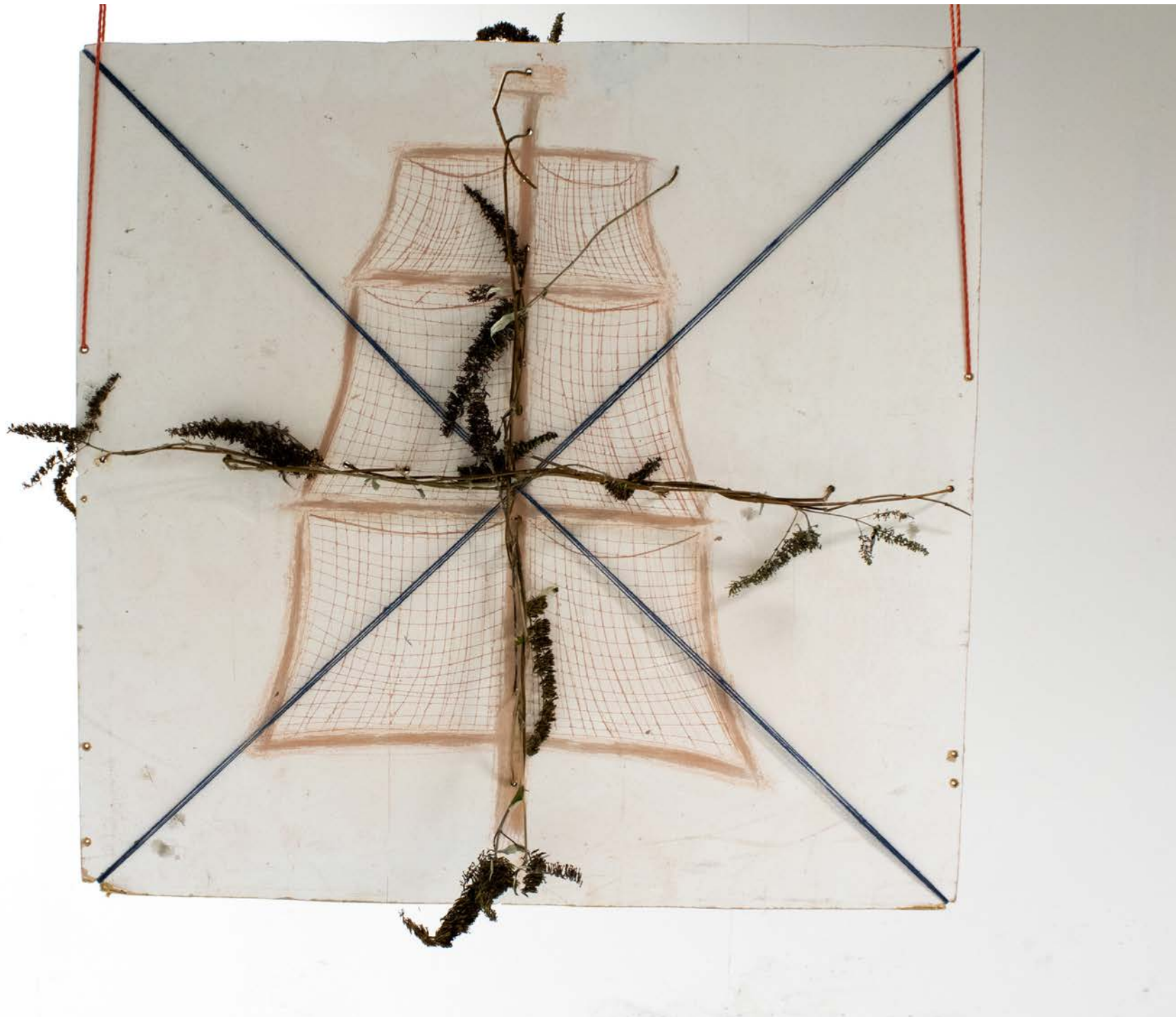


*When place is bloated because it  
drinks the world*  
installation  
various found materials  
2022

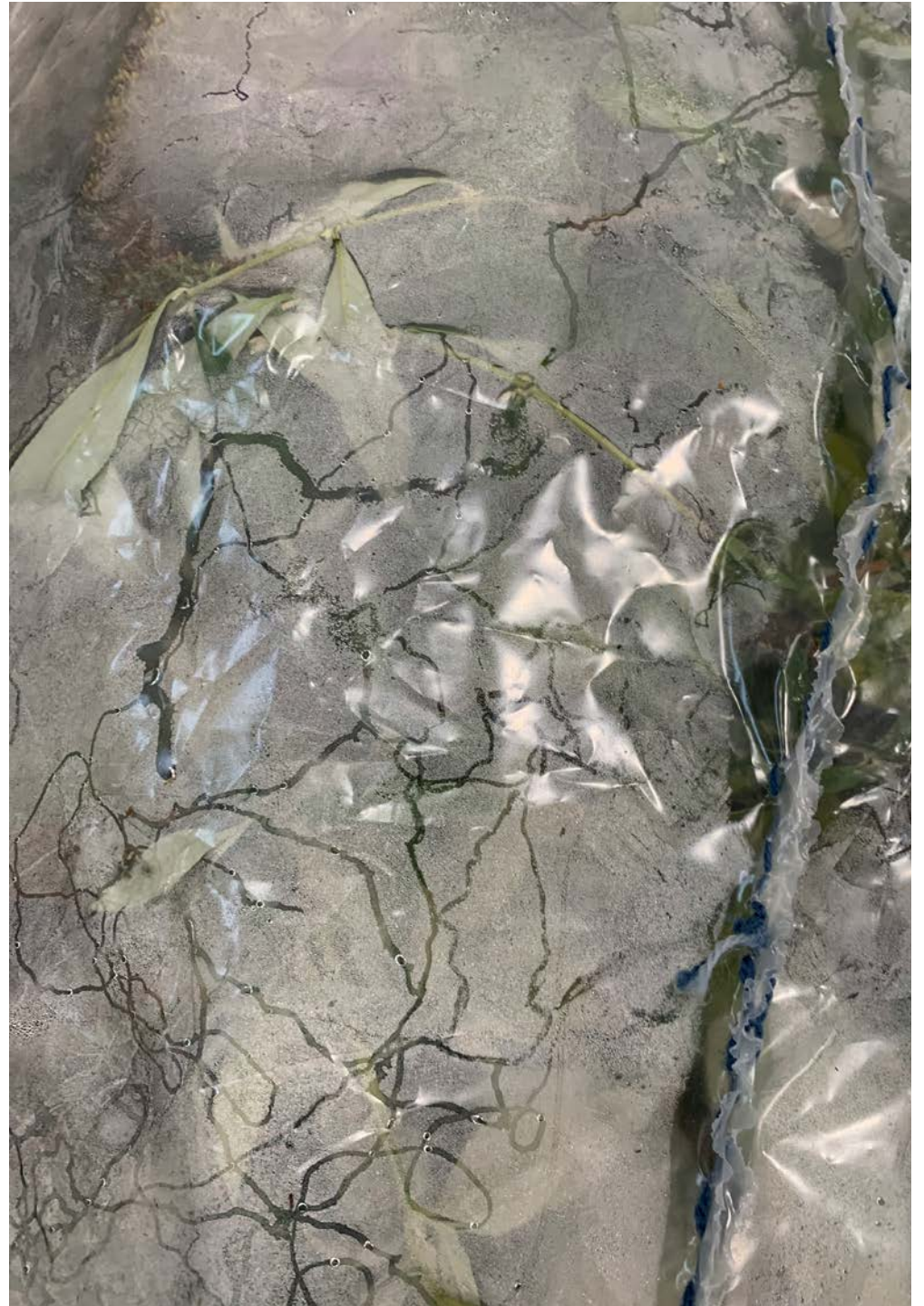
This installation included a variety of independent pieces using motifs from the historical and ecological surroundings of Deptford to give material expression to my early impressions of the area. My main interest was in processes of movement including shipping (Deptford being a ship yard for much of its history), the encroachment of introduced plant species, the Royal Mail, and the flow of tidal rivers with their erosion of various bits of city detritus. These forms of movement, what they deposited and what they expelled, felt significant to the general mechanisms of London. I was interested in actually using the processes I was examining to create the works themselves, so, for instance, the rectangular black hanging in the background was created by leaving the fabric in Deptford Creek for several days, and the board to the right of this image was created by grinding brick-dust into gouges on the surface of the plyboard.



details



details



details



**Standalone Pieces**



Ceramic figurines are one place in which European culture digests its own fantasies. These figures often presented things that a culture was proud of in a size that will fit into a modest house. Sort of like a trophy but less personal. Not “good job you’ve done it!” but a dreamy nod that “yes, all these good things, you can take some small part in them too.” The fantasies of post-enlightenment culture worked out along classical templates, using new industrial ceramic techniques to bring myth and allegory in miniature onto the mantelpieces of the middle class.

*allée*

thrown pottery, found ceramics, cow bone, brick fragments and coal shards, thread, birch tree branches, compress board.

23 x 94 x 15 cm

2024



While these dynamics have not changed, the substance of aspiration has. Not only does the average British family value different things than it did fifty or more years ago, the material of the ceramic figurine has largely lost its place as a treasured domestic item. These days, they can look a bit old and frumpy. But ceramics do not break down and age quickly, preserving those fantasies and aspirations of an earlier time. Like little time capsules, they go on living, shining, often looking good as new, for generations, projecting the pride and domestic contentment of an earlier time. In several works including this one, I was interested in what these objects bring with them historically, and how they related to contemporary infrastructure.

*allée 2*

thrown pottery and found ceramics, brick fragments, thread, wood

12 x 53 x 9 cm

2024



*S(h)elf*

thrown pottery and found ceramics, brick, river flint, chalk, yarn, butterfly bush, wood

138 x 78 x 10 cm

2024



besom 1

birch twigs, thread, river clay  
ceramic shards, coal fragments  
dimensions vary

2024



*sediment*

pallettes, ceramics found  
and made, brick, butterfly  
bush, chalk, thread

190 x 150 x 140 cm

2024



These vessels are made from clay with additions of eroded brick dust, which darkened the clay body and, when larger chunks were present, created molten brick bubbles. I was exploring the effects of brick dust and butterfly bush ash in glazes and clay bodies. Butterfly bush is an incredibly resilient plant which can take root in the cracks in brick mortar. After World War II it got the nickname “bomb site plant” because it was the first thing to take root in rubble heaps. It is a common sight throughout the brickwork of the UK and responsible for a good deal of erosion.

Ceramic vessels

stoneware, brick dust, butterfly bush ash, liner glaze.

oxidation fired, cone 6

2024



A second series of pots exploring the use of brick dust and butterfly bush ash in glazes. In this series I tried to develop the formal characteristics of the pots more inline with my understanding of the built environment of Southeast London from which I was collecting materials.



Ceramic vessels  
stoneware, brick dust, butterfly bush  
ash, liner glaze.  
oxidation fired, cone 6