

PRESS RELEASE

NINA CANELL

Mother of Dust

September 8 – October 28, 2023

Opening reception: Friday, September 8, 6 – 8 pm

303 Gallery, New York



As you pick up this press release and read, “can industrial processes, engineered for reproducibility, also reproduce errancy?”, *Mother of Dust* can be heard assembling an array of pearls along its elliptical belt. Slowed down and transposed to a new workplace, mechanical labor appears sentient; here, it conveys friction, gently corralling iridescent spheroids—products of a molluscs’ itch—with its broom appendage. It is at once a subverted industrial carrier and a continuous sculptural delivery, transgressing the monotony of production with circulatory care. Other forms of adventitious conveyance are also at work: tumbling along mechanized rollers, the movement of a pebble is rendered unpredictable; a roadside puddle contained in a plate, meanwhile, is held in concurrent states of settled and unsettled two-way tectonics.

Nina Canell’s work spreads across time, forging material affinities as they meet, rustle or break down. Crash cymbals dented by rhythmic energy (whether of rain, heat or percussion) are transformed into sinkholes, resonating in myriad directions and evoking an oceanic feedback loop. A Silurian crinoid, having once fed by filtering marine detritus through its feathery tendrils, now nests into its modern anthropogenic analogue: a saturated mophead. The works overlap with each other as much as with the space around them, and the particulate pasts that reside within its concrete, steel, and glass. A scaffold, standing in for a missing load-bearing column, beckons dust with the electrostatic properties of ostrich feathers. Leaning against a wall, a bronze facsimile of a burlled tree branch carries its former carbonic self as ashes within its bulbous interior. Like the pearl, these sculptures are assemblages that introduce new angles of mobility.

As motion ensures viability, it also promises rupture. Each particle of dust represents a beat in the history of movement (“Imma a curve on the straight line, imma roll off, man”, as Milford Graves would say). They are the last of their motley selves: the composite branching of all material, traveling from a desert 4000 miles away; worn from sidewalks, carpets, bottlecaps, cigarette butts, and sweater fuzz; shed from parent bodies; spewed from exhaust pipes; dispersed in search of fertilization; crumbed from a crumb; clinging to a Manhattan wall since 1882, when coal was still hauled to Edison Electric Illuminating Company on Pearl Street (named for the Lenape shell midden it sits on); or lingering since 2001, when the pulverized contents of the World Trade Center took five months to settle. As a visitor fans themselves with this paper, dust is simultaneously raised and contributed to. Dust is traveling through you now, as part of a long contingent curve, inexorably altering your exposome.

– Bitsy Knox

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Nina Canell's practice foregrounds process and synergy. Considering the transitory overlaps between minerals, animals, energies and technologies, *Mother of Dust* reflects the artist's long commitment to duration and circulation as fundamental sculptural tools.

Born in 1979, Växjö, Sweden, she has had solo museum exhibitions at Kunstmuseum St. Gallen; The Artist's Institute, New York (with Milford Graves); Moderna Museet, Stockholm; S.M.A.K, Ghent, Camden Arts Centre, London; Arko Art Center, Seoul; Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (with Rolf Julius); Mumok, Vienna; and the Fridericianum, Kassel. Canell has taken part in the Venice, Sydney, Lyon, Manifesta, Gwangju, Cuenca and Liverpool biennials, as well as group exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Museo Tamayo, Mexico City; Vienna Secession; and Guggenheim, Bilbao, among others. Nina Canell frequently collaborates with Robin Watkins on installations and artist's books.

CONTACT

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Image: detail of Nina Canell, *Mother of Dust*, 2023. Photo: Nick Ash