

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

For Immediate Release

NICKOLA POTTINGER: fos born

June 8, 2025 to January 4, 2026

**A new body of work, marking the
artist's solo museum debut**

Ridgefield, CT (January 2025) - The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum is pleased to present *Nickola Pottinger: fos born*, marking the artist's solo museum exhibition debut, on view at The Aldrich from June 8, 2025 to January 4, 2026. It will be accompanied by Pottinger's first museum publication with an essay by Amy Smith-Stewart, Diana Bowes Chief Curator.



Nickola Pottinger, *ol'hige*, 2023. Paper pulp, fiberglass, gold leaf, teeth, oil pastels, pigments, black soap, shells, resin, hair clips, and copper; 20 x 36 x 20 inches. Courtesy of the artist

Nickola Pottinger's practice spans drawing, collage, and sculpture. Her objects often appear in the round, on the wall, or sometimes within tableaux. She refers to her sculptural works as "duppies" (Jamaican patois for ghosts) in reverence to her Jamaican ancestry and the West Indian community in Crown Heights, Brooklyn where she was raised and still resides today. Composed out of recovered heirlooms, excavated and recycled materials, Pottinger creates pigmented paper pulp from family documents, past artworks, and rubble using a handheld kitchen mixer.

Akin to clay or concrete and imbued with memories of her family lineage as well as folklore heard as a child, she embellishes her mystical creations, which sometimes manifest as protectors, couriers or even spirits of the deceased, with oil pastel and watercolor, casts of her hands and face, teeth, gilded Yagua leaf, lava rocks, Bantu hair knots, and more. Her titles often reference their origins, places, memories, and adages specific to Jamaica. Sliding between figure and object, with references to her body, as maker and matter, her "duppies" resemble fantastical presences, spiritual talisman, and anthropomorphized furniture, with narratives fueled by dreams, actuality, and something in-between.

"I truly believe each work inhabits a spirit. When I'm making each work, I am channeling a realm from which they become. It varies; sometimes they are past family members or fictional characters from folklore but also often they are the amalgamation of memories that become their own," Pottinger says of her process "This is why I refer to some as inhabiting the past, present, and future. So, each can reside within a split spectrum of time. I am often just a vehicle for what is to come, but I deeply believe that."

The exhibition will include works made over the past two-three years alongside a new body of sculptures that pay special tribute to motherhood. Inspired by the artist's recent pregnancy and the birth of her daughter, the protagonists

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of this exhibition are novelized and true to life maternal figures, as Pottinger resurrects spirits from her family's past and future.

Nickola Pottinger was born in 1986 in Kingston, Jamaica and lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. She received her BFA from The Cooper Union in 2008. Her work has been included in exhibitions at the New Museum, NY; Mrs. Gallery, Queens; Nicola Vassell, NY; Josh Lilley Gallery, London; Swivel Gallery, Brooklyn, Sargent's Daughters, NY and Jenkins Johnson Gallery; among many others.

Nickola Pottinger: *fos born* is curated by The Aldrich's Diana Bowes Chief Curator, Amy Smith-Stewart. This exhibition will be accompanied by Pottinger's first museum publication with an essay by the curator.

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