

# EXHIBITION GUIDE

TREVOR MATHISON

*From Signal To Decay: Volume 1*

13 Aug – 16 Oct 2022

Basement

*From Signal to Decay: Volume 1* is the first solo exhibition in a UK institution by composer, artist and sound designer Trevor Mathison. This presentation comprises an ambitious sound installation, drawings, archival material, sculpture, video, and live performance.

In the months leading up to this exhibition Mathison has undertaken a sonic investigation of the Goldsmiths CCA building, producing numerous recordings using an Ambisonic microphone. These samples are periodically played back in the first basement gallery, reverberating with the architecture and providing a constant signal with which the sound pieces in other gallery spaces can converse and collide. In the Oak Foundation Gallery, a number of compositions – which have been selected from Mathison's archive, reconfigured and combined with new sounds – are played back, while in the back basement a video work, shot in Scotland and featuring an independent soundtrack, is on display. In an adjacent corridor, a microphone provides a live feed from outside the building, picking up sounds from New Cross Road. Mathison's sound installation plays the building back to itself, using its open and porous layout as an opportunity to mix different sounds into a multi-layered, mutating composition.

The drawings and archival material featured in this exhibition extend across 40 years, from the early 1980s to 2022. As Christoph Cox has noted, 'The emergence of electronic and tape music in the 1950s called for new notational techniques. How to score factory noises, or the sweeps and squiggle of sine tones?' This is a similar problematic to the one that Mathison, with his experimentation with the tape loop and synthesizers, and interest in dub, *musique concrète* and industrial, was first engaged. His diagrams or scores are sometimes preparatory and sometimes for imaginary sound pieces, visualising expansive sonic landscapes, the movement of sounds and different sonic procedures. Mathison's drawings for sonic installations are mostly related to his work as part of Dubmorphology, a collaborative project with interdisciplinary artist Gary Stewart, and various presentations at museums and conferences.

The vitrines in this exhibition present material relating to many different projects and processes with which Mathison has engaged. In the first, drawings, DAT tapes and paper materials relating to music made as Hallucinator and an installation made as Flow Motion (the names of two collaborative projects with Anna Piva and Edward George) are on display. In the second, examples from a black and white photographic project, undertaken in the early 1980s with fellow Black Audio Film Collective (BAFC) member

Edward George, are juxtaposed with more recent colour photographs, presented on digital photo frames by Mathison. The third displays some of Mathison's sketchbooks that date from the late-1980s, when BAFC's crucial film *Twilight City* (1989) was released, to the present. The final two tables present cassette tapes, that date back to the early 1980s, for which Mathison produced imagery and collages. The tapes themselves relate to Mathison's pioneering experiments with tape loops, which were praised by Kodwo Eshun who argued that "Within the spectral temporality of the tape loop, the imperial anxieties of the early twentieth century resonated with the multiple fears of the present."

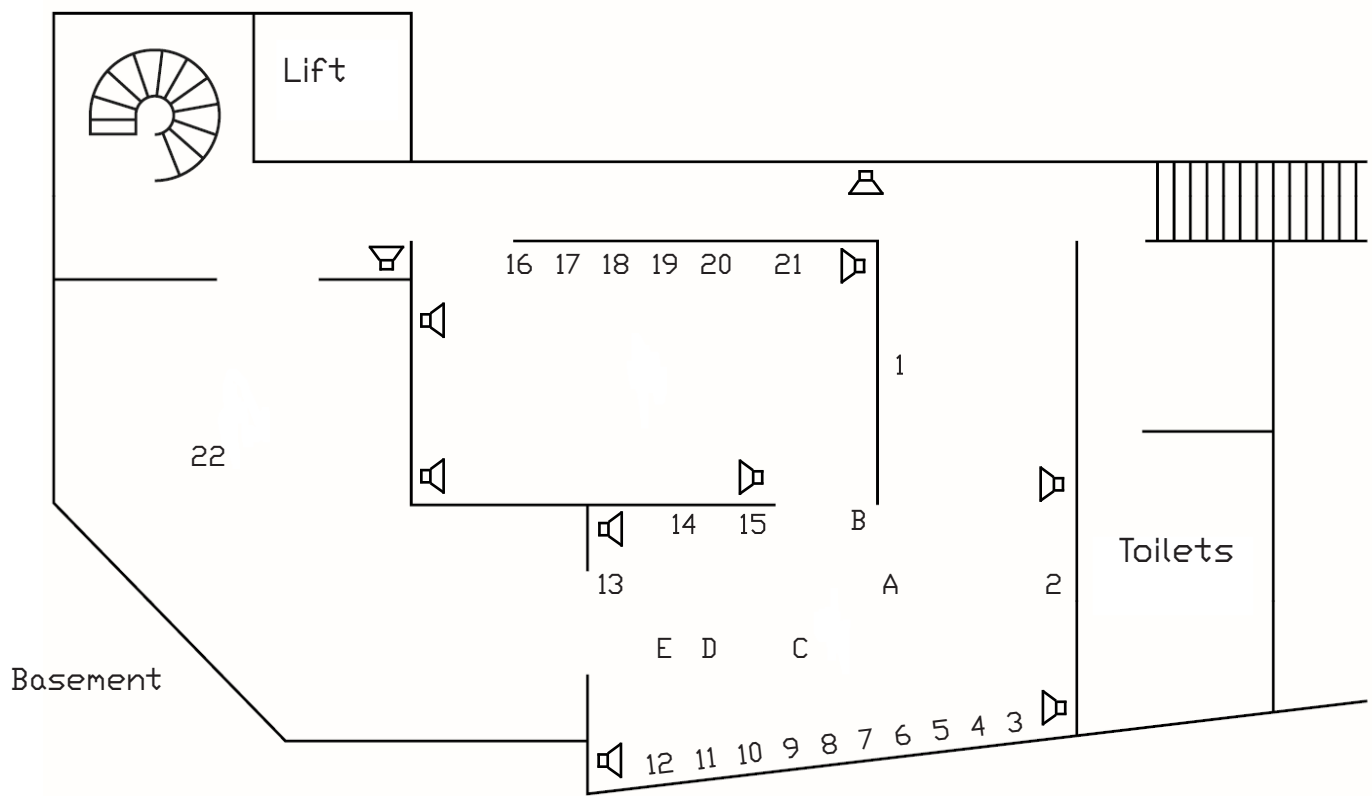
Mathison has commented on the relationship between his work with sound and his recent drawing made using graphite: "I approach drawing in the same way I approach sound. In music, I have been working with granular synths. They allow me to take one small element of sound and by breaking it down, find numerous textures within it. Similarly, [these drawings] involved taking a cube of graphite, scraping, then spreading its particles across the paper to pick up the shifting variations within the grain of the paper. It is equivalent to a single tone, shimmering like a visual wall of sound. A still, frozen note held in suspension." This exhibition will offer a new perspective on Mathison's ground-breaking sonic practice and his changing ideas about sonic composition and installation.

On 16 September, there will be a vinyl release of Mathison's music with *purge.xxx*, the second event in this ongoing research project, titled *From Signal to Decay: Volume 2*.

Curated by Appau Jnr Boakye-Yiadom and Oliver Fuke.

We are very grateful to The Elephant Trust for their generous support. The curators would also especially like to thank Kodwo Eshun, Claudette Johnson and Gary Stewart for their support and guidance in realising this exhibition.

25 Aug, 7–8:30pm	PERFORMANCE: <i>Sonic Intervention by Kate Shortt</i>
02 Sep, 7–8:30pm	PERFORMANCE: <i>Sonic Intervention by Aniruddha Das</i>
09 Sep, 7–8:30pm	PERFORMANCE: <i>Sonic Intervention by Gary Stewart</i>
16 Sep, 7–8:30pm	CONVERSATION: <i>Ain Bailey and Trevor Mathison in conversation + record launch</i>



1. *Untitled*, 2022  
Single-channel video (silent)  
Duration: 6'54"

2. *Untitled*, 2022  
Mixed media sculpture

[3-5]. *Untitled*, 2018  
Charcoal on paper

6. *Untitled (Imaginary Score)*, 2018  
Pen on paper

7. *Untitled (Imaginary Score)*, 2022  
Digital print on Hahnemühle paper

8. *Untitled (Imaginary Score)*, 2016  
Pencil and felt tip on paper

9. *Untitled (Plan for Unrealised Sonic Installation)*, 2016  
Pencil on paper

[10-11]. *Untitled (Plan for Sonic Installation at Tate Britain)*,  
2016  
Pencil on paper

12. *Untitled (Plan for Sonic Installation presented as part of  
the paper 'Reflections on Dub and the Aesthetics of Noise'  
at Sound System Outernational #4, organised by Professor  
Julian Henriques)*, 2018  
Pencil on paper

13. *Untitled (Imaginary Score)*, 2018  
Pen on paper

14. *Untitled (Imaginary Score)*, 2022  
Digital print on Hahnemühle paper

15. *Untitled*, 2018  
Mixed media collage

[16-20]. *Untitled (Imaginary Score)*, 2018  
Pen on paper

21. *Untitled (Imaginary Score)*, 2022  
Digital print on Hahnemühle paper

22. *Untitled*, 2018  
Single-channel video with sound  
Duration: 5'34"

Vitrines:

A. Drawings, DAT tapes and paper materials relating to  
projects by Hallucinator and Flow Motion

B. Black and white photography from the early 1980s by  
Trevor Mathison and Edward George

Digital photoframes displaying colour photography by Trevor  
Mathison, 2022

C. Trevor Mathison's sketchbooks from the late 1980s to  
2018

[D-E]. Cassette tapes with imagery and collages by Trevor  
Mathison

Speakers (🔊):

*From Signal To Decay: Volume 1*, 2022  
Audio installation by Trevor Mathison