

GRAY CHICAGO
NOV 8, 2024 – JAN 25, 2025

GRAY

TORKWASE
DYSON

Of
Line
and
Memory

Torkwase Dyson: Of Line and Memory

Nov 8, 2024 - Jan 25, 2025

GRAY Chicago, 2044 W Carroll Ave

(CHICAGO - October 11, 2024) — GRAY is pleased to present *Torkwase Dyson: Of Line and Memory*, the artist's first solo exhibition in GRAY's Chicago gallery. Installed over three distinct spaces, the exhibition debuts a monumental sculpture in steel and painted wood, an immersive installation of new paintings, and new cast glass and wood constructions. *Of Line and Memory* opens at GRAY Chicago with a public reception for the artist on November 8 and remains on view through January 25, 2025.

Dyson works across the disciplines of painting, drawing, installation, and sculpture, distilling the spatial and affective residues of diasporic histories to envision new modes of environmental liberation. Through an improvisational process of mindful abstraction, which she calls "Black Compositional Thought," Dyson seeks to create work that is fluid, abstract, poetic, and open to possibility. "If there is systemic oppression, there must be systemic liberation," says the artist, "and I am in that zone... trying to condition myself in this relationship of a transhistorical liberation practice."¹

Of Line and Memory draws from years of research and Dyson's own spatial memory of navigating the waterways and urban architecture of Chicago. Using the South Shore Cultural Center, a lakeshore landmark with rich historical and architectural significance, as a point of departure, Dyson extracts, reduces, and refines architectural and visual cues into geometric shapes and painterly abstractions. According to the artist, "*Of Line and Memory* asks, as we move through dramatic and ever-changing geographies, what memories are stored in these new and improvisational choreographies?"

An immersive, dynamic interplay of materials emerges throughout the exhibition. The *Clearing*, a cantilevered steel, wood, and graphite sculpture in two parts, balances monumental, curved shapes upon the weight of rectangular steel bases. Dyson's new paintings unlock a sense of "state change" between thinly poured layers of deep blues and reds, opaque blacks, and the shapes and lines of geometric abstraction. Likewise, her *Hypershape* constructions in glass and graphite-coated wood balance the solidity of wood and graphite with the translucence of cast glass.

Of Line and Memory underscores Torkwase Dyson’s deep commitment to transforming complex histories of diasporic and urban landscapes into powerful abstractions. The artist states: “the topography echoes familiar and enigmatic ecologies in my consciousness without the promise of stability. Embracing this indeterminacy, I think through how the transhistorical ethos of infrastructure space, both visible and invisible, resonates in liberation and world-building.”

ABOUT TORKWASE DYSON

American interdisciplinary artist Torkwase Dyson (b. 1973, Chicago) combines expressive mark-making and geometric abstraction to explore the continuity between ecology, infrastructure, and architecture. Working across the disciplines of painting, sculpture and architecture, Dyson deconstructs, distills, and interrogates the built environment, exploring how individuals, particularly black and brown people, negotiate, negate, and transform systems and spatial order. Throughout her work and research, Dyson confronts issues of environmental liberation and envisions a path toward a more equitable future.

One of today’s most innovative artists, Dyson’s work has been the focus of solo exhibitions at ‘T’ Space Rhinebeck, New York; Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri; New Orleans Museum of Art, Louisiana; Colby College Museum of Art, Maine; Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, Chicago, Illinois; Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Suzanne Lemberg Usdan Gallery, Bennington, Vermont; Hall Art Foundation, Derneburg, Germany; and Serpentine Galleries, London, UK.

Group exhibitions and biennials include the Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool, UK; Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil; Desert X, California; California African American Museum, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Drawing Center, New York; Corcoran School of the Arts and Design, Washington DC; Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington, DC; and Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio, among others. Her architectural sculpture *Liquid Shadows, Solid Dreams (A Monastic Playground)*, commissioned for the 2024 Whitney Biennial, is on view at the Whitney Museum of American Art’s fifth floor terrace through February 9, 2025. Torkwase Dyson will create the conceptual design for The Costume Institute’s Spring 2025 exhibition, *Superfine: Tailoring Black Style*, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Public collections include the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois; Hall Art Foundation, Reading, Vermont; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; The Long Museum, Shanghai, China; Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Massachusetts; Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri; Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts; Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture, Washington, DC; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; and Williams College Museum of Art, Massachusetts. Dyson studied sociology and social work at Tougaloo College, Mississippi, and received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting from Virginia Commonwealth University and a Master of Fine Arts in Painting from Yale School of Art. Dyson lives and works in Beacon, New York.

PUBLICATION

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, to be published in 2025.

ABOUT GRAY

GRAY is a globally recognized team of art professionals devoted to fostering the development of historically important artists' careers and to building outstanding art collections. Founded in 1963, GRAY has established its reputation as a resource for Modern, Postwar, and Contemporary art with prominent private and institutional clients worldwide. Known for producing critically acclaimed exhibitions and programming from its galleries in Chicago and New York, GRAY represents a roster of internationally recognized artists such as McArthur Binion, Torkwase Dyson, Theaster Gates, David Hockney, Rashid Johnson, Alex Katz, Ellen Lanyon, Jaume Plensa, Leon Polk Smith, and Evelyn Statsinger.

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