

Torkwase Dyson

Liquid a Place

Exhibition: October 8 – November 6, 2021

Performances: October 7, 9, 11, 2021

5 Hanover Square

London



Torkwase Dyson, *I Can Drink the Distance: Plantationocene in 2 Acts*, performed at Pace Gallery, New York, November 22, 2019 © Torkwase Dyson

“Visit the water in your body, think alongside it, imagine alongside it, refract alongside it, refuse alongside it.”
— Torkwase Dyson

London—Pace Gallery is delighted to inaugurate its new gallery at 5 Hanover Square with *Liquid a Place*, a collaborative performance and sculptural installation by Torkwase Dyson commissioned and presented by Pace Live. On view October 8 – November 6, Dyson will transform one of the new gallery spaces with a series of monumental sculptures. On October 7, 9 and 11, the installation will serve as a stage for leading writers, poets, dancers and musicians, selected by Dyson, to engage with issues of environmental racism, spatial liberation and sensoria. This performance is part of the Pace Live programme, the gallery’s platform for the exploration and intersection of multidisciplinary art forms.

Dyson describes her practice through the lens of painting while working across a breadth of mediums, including performance, sculpture, film, and drawing among others. Dyson’s work facilitates conversations around the relationship between Black and brown bodies and the surrounding environment. Using her incisive and original vision, she explores the continuity between ecology, infrastructure, and architecture across time and space. Black Compositional Thought—a working philosophy Dyson uses to consider how bodies of water, geographies and other physical and non-physical spaces are composed and inhabited by Black and brown bodies throughout history—is at the core of her exploratory practice. For Dyson black spatial liberation strategies are critical in the creation of more liveable futures.

Liquid a Place uses water to explore ideas of ontology, perception, liberation and memory. Dyson’s work considers the body as an infrastructure for water, inviting viewers to consider their interconnection with the rivers, meadows and oceans that surround us. In June 2021, as part of the Pace Live commission, Dyson spent a month undergoing rigorous research in London in anticipation of this experimental and visionary project. Following the River Thames and recalling the people and objects it has transported, Dyson’s research looks at the ways in which water shapes our cities and societies, both as a geographic dividing line and a site for the enslavement and trafficking of Black and brown peoples. In this way, Dyson marries thinking around the history of colonisation, empire and the triangle trade with questions of contemporary life, in particular the ongoing climate crisis. In Dyson’s words, ‘This project acknowledges that we are always the water in the room.’

Conceived as a second iteration of a performance Dyson developed in 2019 in New York as a commission for the gallery's inaugural Pace Live programme, *Liquid a Place* will open with three performances on October 7, 9, 11. Under Dyson's direction, an interplay of music, poetry, dance, sound and written word will be performed within her sculptural installation. Building upon her thinking around Black Spatial Liberation within the context of the United Kingdom, Dyson is collaborating with several London-based performers, Harry Alexander, Maëva Berthelot, Joseph Funnell, Rowdy SS, Malik Nashad Sharpe, and GAIKA. Also contributing to this project will be leading North American figures Dionne Brand, Leronn Brooks, Tyehimba Jess and Christina Sharpe.

Liquid a Place will be accompanied by the release of a limited-edition double A-Side Dubplate by Pace Publishing, featuring Dyson's sound piece remixed by pioneering Chicago-based DJ and producer Ron Trent, as well as music by South London based artist GAIKA. Dubplates—a master record from which vinyl is pressed—have been instrumental in disseminating reggae, jungle, garage and grime across African and Caribbean diasporas in the UK. As such, within Dyson's practice a dubplate functions as a vessel for Black Compositional Thought.

Coinciding with *Liquid a Place*, Dyson is included in the multidisciplinary ecological project *Back to Earth* at the Serpentine Gallery. The artist will also be the subject of a major solo exhibition presented by the Hall Foundation at Schloss Derneburg, Germany, opening September 2021.

Liquid a Place will be the first exhibition in Pace's new London gallery on Hanover Square. The opening programme will also feature *Mark Rothko 1968: Clearing Away*, the first exhibition in the UK solely dedicated to the artist's paper-based practice. Dyson's work will also form a central component of Pace's Frieze London participation, including a dedicated online viewing room of new works on paper.

About the Collaborators

Harry Alexander is a London based Dancer and Movement Director. He has been a member of Michael Clark Company since 2010, started performing with Julie Cunningham & Company in 2016 and has also danced choreography by Lea Anderson, Carlos Pons Guerra and Thick and Tight.

Maëva Berthelot is a choreographer, performer, movement director and teacher whose mode of working unfolds along the threshold between experimental, performative and collaborative approaches.

Dionne Brand is a renowned poet, novelist, and essayist known for formal experimentation and the beauty and urgency of her work. Brand's award-winning poetry books include *Land to Light On*; *thirsty*; *Inventory*; and *Ossuaries* (winner of the prestigious Griffin Poetry Prize).

Dr. Leronn Brooks Ph.D. is the Associate Curator for Modern and Contemporary Collections, specializing in African American art, at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. Dr. Brooks is a specialist in African American art, poetics, performance, and Africana Studies.

Joseph Funnell is an interdisciplinary artist, performer and activist based in London, who works to support migrant rights, the LGBTQIA+ community, the movement for black lives and the anti-racist struggle.

GAIKA is a multi-disciplinary artist from South London. Through an experimental and prolific approach that darkly fuses music, art, technology, literature and film into a catch-all aesthetic, GAIKA has created a unique style he terms 'Ghetto Futurism'.

Tyehimba Jess is the author of two books of poetry, *Leadbelly* and *Olio*. *Olio* won the 2017 Pulitzer Prize, the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, The Midland Society Author's Award in Poetry, and received an Outstanding Contribution to Publishing Citation from the Black Caucus of the American Library Association.

Rowdy SS is a London born and based, multidisciplinary artist. Often working at the intersection/s of sound/music, dance/movement and live performance alongside making videos; working with instigation and/or response. He is currently a Somerset House Studios Resident Artist.

Christina Sharpe is a writer, professor, and Canada Research Chair in Black Studies in the Humanities at York University. She is the author of: *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* and *Monstrous Intimacies: Making Post-Slavery Subjects*. Her third book, *Ordinary Notes*, will be published in 2022 (Knopf/FSG/Daunt).

Malik Nashad Sharpe is an artist working with choreography. They create performances that are formally experimental and engaged with the construction of atmosphere, affect, and dramaturgy.

Torkwase Dyson (b. 1973, Chicago, Illinois) describes herself as a painter working across multiple mediums to explore the continuity between ecology, infrastructure, and architecture. Examining ideas of distance and scale as well as the history and future of black spatial liberation strategies, Dyson's abstract works grapple with the ways in which space is perceived and negotiated, particularly by Black and Brown bodies. In 2019, Dyson's solo exhibition *I Can Drink the Distance* was on view at The Cooper Union, New York, and her work was also presented at the Sharjah Biennial. In 2021, Dyson installed a sound piece in the Serpentine Gallery's Pavilion as part of the multidisciplinary ecological project *Back to Earth*. A major solo exhibition of Dyson's work opened in September 2021 at Schloss Derneburg, Germany presented by the Hall Foundation.

Dyson has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions and installations at institutions, including Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, Chicago; Bennington College VAPA Usdan Gallery, Vermont; Colby College Museum of Art, Franconia Sculpture Park, Maine; Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, Philadelphia, and Davidson Contemporary, New York. Her work has been exhibited in group shows internationally, including *Between the Waters* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2018) and *Plumb Line: Charles White and the Contemporary* at California African American Museum, Los Angeles (2019). Her work was also included in the 2010 Whitney Biennial. In addition to many fellowships and residencies, she has been the recipient of a The Joan Mitchell Painters and Sculptors Grant, Nancy Graves Grant for Visual Artists, and a Brooklyn Arts Council grant.

First launched in 2019, **Pace Live** encompasses performance, music, dance, film, conversation, and new live art commissions to examine the intersection of art forms and provide opportunity to connect with the public in new ways. Pace Live is helmed by Mark Beasley, Curatorial Director at Pace and former Curator of Media and Performance Art at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C. Liquid a Place epitomises this multidisciplinary focus.

Pace is a leading international art gallery representing some of the most influential contemporary artists and estates from the past century, holding decades-long relationships with Alexander Calder, Jean Dubuffet, Barbara Hepworth, Agnes Martin, Louise Nevelson, and Mark Rothko. Pace enjoys a unique U.S. heritage spanning East and West coasts through its early support of artists central to the Abstract Expressionist and Light and Space movements.

Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy as an artist-first gallery that mounts seminal historical and contemporary exhibitions. Under the current leadership of President and CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace continues to support its artists and share their visionary work with audiences worldwide by remaining at the forefront of innovation. Now in its seventh decade, the gallery advances its mission through a robust global program—comprising exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, performances, and interdisciplinary projects. Pace has a legacy in art bookmaking and has published over five hundred titles in close collaboration with artists, with a focus on original scholarship and on introducing new voices to the art historical canon. The gallery has also spearheaded exploration into the intersection of art and technology through new business models, exhibition interpretation tools, and representation of artists engaging with technology.

Today, Pace has nine locations worldwide including London, Geneva, a strong foothold in Palo Alto, and two galleries in New York—its headquarters at 540 West 25th Street, which welcomed almost 120,000 visitors and programmed 20 shows in its first six months and an adjacent 8,000 sq. ft. exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street. Pace was one of the first international galleries to establish outposts in Asia, where it operates permanent gallery spaces in Hong Kong and Seoul, as well as an office and viewing room in Beijing. In 2020, Pace opened temporary exhibition spaces in East Hampton and Palm Beach, with continued programming on a seasonal basis. In fall 2021, Pace will continue to expand its European presence with the opening of a larger gallery space in London.

PACE

For immediate release

Press Inquiries

Europe

Rebecca Riegelhaupt
Communications Director
rriegelhaupt@pacegallery.com
+44 7917 909779

Sam Talbot

sam@sam-talbot.com
+44 7725 184630

United States

Amelia Redgrift
Chief Communications & Marketing Officer
aredgrift@pacegallery.com
+1 646 236 5241


Adriana Elgarresta


Director of Public Relations
aelgarresta@pacegallery.com
+1 305 498 1649


Sales Inquiries

Pace Gallery
londoninfo@pacegallery.com

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