

BENNINGTON COLLEGE

Suzanne Lemberg Usdan Gallery



Torkwase Dyson working in Usdan Gallery, August 2018

Scalar, a solo exhibition by Torkwase Dyson

Sept. 18–Dec. 15, 2018

Suzanne Lemberg Usdan Gallery
Bennington College, Bennington, VT
Tuesday—Saturday, 1:00-5:00 pm

Opening Reception

The opening reception includes a conversation between the artist and Horace Ballard, Assistant Curator at the Williams College Museum of Art.

Tuesday, September 18

6:00-8:30 pm

“Scalar” features new paintings, drawings, and sculptures by artist Torkwase Dyson, known for her use of abstraction and modes of inquiry from art, architecture, and geography to explore the production of form within contemporary economic and political climates. With works created in response to the Bennington context, Dyson takes inspiration from the geometric and mathematic formations of the late artist and architectural designer Tony Smith, whose tenure as an instructor at the College, from 1958 to 1961, proved significant in his development as a sculptor. In turn, Dyson approaches her time at Bennington as an opportunity for deep reflection on the properties of scale, dimension, and geometry. Of particular interest is the progressive growth of multifaceted forms and systems into structures whose scope or complexity can defy comprehension.

Artworks on view in Usdan Gallery, including a 12-by-20-foot diptych painted on site, demonstrate the artist's ongoing development of a vocabulary of forms and gestures that speaks to the history of environmental and spatial politics leading to the Anthropocene era of global crisis. With its breadth of concerns and consideration of Smith's legacy, Dyson's exhibition extends the history of formal abstraction at Bennington, finding new urgency for modernist traditions rooted in the College.

About the Artist

Though working in multiple mediums, **Torkwase Dyson** (b. Chicago) describes herself as a painter who uses distilled geometric abstraction to create an idiosyncratic language both expressive and diagrammatic. Her developmental years moving between North Carolina and Mississippi influenced Dyson's conception of a fundamental dialectic of architecture, infrastructure, geography, and black spatial liberation. Her ongoing projects include Studio South Zero, a solar-powered nomadic workspace that supports multidisciplinary art making about the environment; and the Wynter-Wells Drawing School for Environmental Liberation (named for Jamaican writer and cultural theorist Sylvia Wynter and American Civil Rights leader Ida B. Wells), a pedagogical platform for investigating and reimagining forms and uses of space in natural and designed landscapes.

Recent solo exhibitions of Dyson's work have been presented at the Graham Foundation, Chicago; the Drawing Center, New York City; Landmark Gallery, Texas Tech University, Lubbock; Eyebeam, Brooklyn; and the Meat Market Gallery, Washington, DC. Her work has been included in exhibitions in New York at the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Studio Museum in Harlem, Martos Gallery, Postmasters Gallery, and We Buy Gold, Brooklyn; as well as at the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, Philadelphia, and the National Museum of African Art, Washington DC. Her work has been supported by the Graham Foundation; Joan Mitchell Foundation; Nancy Graves Foundation; Nicholas School of the Environment, Duke University; and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Center. She is on the board of the Architectural League of New York, and is represented by Davidson Contemporary, New York; and Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago.

A Look Ahead for Usdan Gallery

February 26 through April 2019: Keiko Narahashi and Sarah Peters

Narahashi and Peters, working respectively in ceramics, and bronze and plaster, exhibit works resulting from their conversations about current uses for ancient classical forms. Co-curated by **Josh Blackwell** and **Anne Thompson**.

April-May 2019: Marie Lorenz

Videos and sculptures from the artist's ongoing boat explorations of waterways as forgotten public spaces. During her exhibition, Lorenz, known for her **Tide and Current Taxi** in New York City, will occupy Usdan Gallery as a research lab for a new expedition in Bennington and the Berkshires.

About Usdan Gallery

The gallery is a hub for exhibitions of contemporary artists and ideas, engaging and advancing the College's history of innovation within the arts. The 3,200-square-foot space is located on the main level of the Helen Frankenthaler Visual Arts Center. The College was the site of the first retrospective exhibitions of Jackson Pollock and Robert Motherwell, and co-hosted the first U.S. exhibition of the Japanese Gutai group. Usdan Gallery continues that forward-looking tradition with programming that engages the College community and beyond. Anne Thompson is the Director and Curator.

Driving directions

The College is close to other notable art and culture destinations, including [The Bennington Museum](#) (10 minutes); [The Clark](#) (30 minutes); [The Williams College Museum of Art](#) (30 minutes); and [MASS MoCA](#) (40 minutes).

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Helen Frankenthaler Visual Arts Center
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[Website](#) | [Instagram](#)