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IN BRIEF

Torkwase Dyson Wins Studio Museum's \$50,000 Wein Prize

“[T]his strengthens my commitment to black spatial justice,” Dyson said of the prize, awarded annually to artists of African descent.

Alissa Guzman November 14, 2019



Torkwase Dyson (photo by Gabe Souza, courtesy of the Studio Museum in Harlem)

In an announcement made at the museum's annual gala last night, the Studio Museum in Harlem named [Torkwase Dyson](#) as this year's winner of the [Joyce Alexander Wein Prize](#), a \$50,000 award given each year to an artist of African descent in recognition of outstanding “innovation, promise, and creativity.” Founded in 2006, the Wein Prize is considered one of the most significant awards given to individual artists working in the United States today. Dyson joins a rich list of previous winners that began with [Lorna Simpson](#) in 2006 and has grown to include a varied list of important African-American artists including Glenn Ligon, Simone Leigh, and last year's winner, 30-year-old textile artist Diedrick Brackens.

With a solo show [1919: Black Water](#) currently on view at Columbia University's Arthur Ross Architecture Gallery, and as a participant of the Whitney Biennial earlier this year, Dyson's interdisciplinary work is a force to be reckoned with. Primarily focusing on painting, sculpture, and performance, she challenges viewers with pieces that have complicated surfaces — often rich and reflective shades of black — that have an intentionally disconcerting spatial presence, addressing notions environmental racism and the way “space is perceived and negotiated particularly by black and brown bodies,” according to the artist's website.

In statement sent to Hyperallergic by the Studio Museum, Dyson says, “I want to thank George Wein and Joyce Alexander Wein for this special prize. And as I go about the world trying to make art work for us, this strengthens my commitment to black spatial justice. I’m so excited for this new sense of belonging.” In addition to the Wein Prize, the Studio Museum in Harlem has played an important role in advancing the work of visual artists of African descent through its artist-in-residence program. Currently constructing a new home at its longtime location on Manhattan’s West 125th Street, the museum plans to expand its programs to better serve a “growing and diverse audience.”