



THE ART NEWSPAPER

Torkwase Dyson wins Studio Museum's annual Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize

She is the fourteenth artist to win the award, joining a roster including Simone Leigh, Leslie Hewitt, and Lorna Simpson.

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The Studio Museum in Harlem has named Torkwase Dyson as the winner of this year's Joyce Alexander Wein Art Prize. The announcement was made last night at the museum's annual gala.

“Torkwase’s work surfaces some of the most urgent questions of our time,” Legacy Russell, an associate curator at the Harlem institution who also served on the award's selections committee, says. “Employing geometric abstraction as both an art historical and cartographic device, her exploration of shape, form, colour surfaces new ways of seeing global patterns, systems, and power dynamics.”



Photo of Torkwase Dyson by Gabe Souza Image courtesy Studio Museum in Harlem

Having painted for nearly two decades, Dyson has honed an abstract idiom for exploring the subtleties of institutional and environmental racism. The Chicago native lives in New York City, where she constructs minimalist geometric visions of improvisation and reflection from inside her studio. The 46-year-old painter is the 14th artist to receive the award, joining a list of celebrated artists including Simone Leigh, Leslie Hewitt, Glenn Ligon, and Lorna Simpson. Last year, the textile artist Diedrick Brackens won the award for their tapestries exploring the complexities of black and queer identities.

“I want to thank George Wein and Joyce Alexander Wein for this special prize,” Dyson says in a statement. “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 2006, the jazz impresario and philanthropist George Wein established the annual award in honour of his late wife, Joyce Alexander, a longtime trustee of the Studio Museum who died a year earlier. The award comes with \$50,000 and is meant to honour the artist achievements of an African-American artist who demonstrates great innovation, promise, and creativity.

Although Dyson has not yet received a solo exhibition at a major institution, she has been included in group shows at institutions like the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum, and the Studio Museum. Currently, she is exhibiting at Columbia University's Arthur Ross Architecture Gallery in New York and at the 2019 Sharjah Biennial in the United Arab Emirates.