

Torkwase Dyson: Seeing in Blue

September 11 – October 24, 2026
540 West 25th Street
New York



Torkwase Dyson, *Interbeing Blue*, 2026 © Torkwase Dyson, courtesy Pace Gallery.

New York — Pace will present *Seeing in Blue*, an exhibition of new paintings by Torkwase Dyson, at its 540 West 25th Street gallery from September 11 through October 24. Offering personal reflections on what the artist calls the “boundless state change of water,” the works on view strive toward the mindful presence needed to witness its beauty and devastation.

Seeing in Blue spotlights a new series of paintings inspired by Dyson’s expeditions and sensory experiences as a deep-sea diver, exploring questions of distance, light, perception, symbiosis, and planetary transformation. The distilled works are informed by a culmination of haptic memories, diagrammatic drawings, engineering notes, photo journal entries, and process poems written by the artist during these explorations. Dyson brings her ongoing interest in the transhistorical implications of ecology, black geography, and built environments to an intimate scale, offering detailed expressions from her embodied research practices of oceanic infrastructure. Water is a central force of ancestral knowledge and global politics for the artist, and she offers a poetic look into the liminal space between its atmospheric phenomena and the complex infrastructures humanity has built that traverse above and below sea level.

Dyson begins her painting process on the floor, priming the canvas with atmospheric washes of translucent colors that pool and layer in accordance with their inherent “discursive harmony.” From there, she moves toward detailed geometric constructions, building her signature curvilinear forms both in gestures of drawing and in shaped wooden panels (sanded and painted over as she navigates the composition), strings, and hardware fixtures. The quiet tension that arises between the two modes of mark-making—images that emerge by chance and by delicate construction—gives depth and luminosity to space. The canvas edges, often telling of this layered process, are considered just as live as the other compositional and material elements of her paintings.

Whereas a darker palette typically prevails in Dyson’s past works—producing a stark contrast between the colorful bleeds across the edge and the painting’s reductive, meditative front—aquatic tones come to the fore in *Seeing in Blue*. In *Interbeing Blue* (2026), the mixture of titanium white renders the painting’s prominent blue hues almost incandescent, which are then countervailed and animated by flickers of dark green and passages of rust-red. As much as these paintings evoke a real sense of vision and sights underwater, Dyson considers them apertures that enable us to experience not what she sees but *how* she sees.

Dyson's new cycle of paintings is informed by more than ten years of swimming and diving across the globe and foregrounds a desire to bring her "witnessing" as a diver to bear on the medium of painting. Although water is completely colorless, it mediates phenomena and contains embodied perception. The sensory experiences of its pressure and buoyancy are closely linked to our own breath, density, and navigational movements. For the artist, the awe commanded by this "beauty of the below" is deeply physical, political, and infrastructural: over time, man-made objects, seafloor drill factories, artificial reefs, military posts, and acoustic surveillance—alongside the destruction of the built world—meld into the ocean's natural spheres. What is evoked here is not a simple "vacation beautiful" aesthetic, but a sense of beauty that feels prehistoric, consequential, terrifying, and vulnerable all at once.

In her animation debut for the 2026 Carnegie International, *Tomorrow was Yesterday*, the unique screening structure of a planetarium dome allows Dyson to deliberately position her viewers on the seabed, looking up toward majestic and troubled waters. This very superposition also reminds us, as we navigate her paintings in *Seeing in Blue*, that the oceanic torrents might also be a cosmic storm.

Dyson's work remains on view at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, through January 3, 2027. *Tougaloo* (2026)—her large-scale multimedia installation created for *In Minor Keys*, the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia—is on view in the Arsenale through November 22, 2026, while *Akua* (2025)—her open pavilion with an immersive multichannel soundscape first exhibited in 2025 with Public Art Fund in Brooklyn Bridge Park—will be installed later this year in San Francisco's Civic Center Plaza. Dyson will have solo exhibitions at The Joan and Martin Goldfarb Gallery of York University in Toronto from September 10, 2026, through March 20, 2027, and at Kunsthau Bregenz in Bregenz, Austria, from October 17, 2026, through January 24, 2027. Her work will also feature in the group exhibition *Hard Art* at MoMA PS1 in New York, opening November 5, 2026.

Torkwase Dyson (b. 1973, Chicago) describes herself as a painter working across multiple mediums to explore the continuity between ecology, infrastructure, and architecture. Examining 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. The artist has distilled a vocabulary of poetic forms to address the spaciousness of freedom and question what type of climates are born out of world building.

Dyson studied sociology, social work, and fine arts at Tougaloo College in Mississippi (1996), received a BFA from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia (1999), and an MFA from the Yale School of Art in New Haven, Connecticut (2003). She has held solo exhibitions at the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, Chicago (2018); The Drawing Center, New York (2018); New Orleans Museum of Art, Louisiana (2020); Serpentine Galleries, London (2021); Hall Art Foundation, Schloss Derneburg, Germany (2021); Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri (2023); and 'T' Space, Rhinebeck, New York (2023), among others. Dyson was also part of the 13th Shanghai Biennale (2021); 12th Liverpool Biennial, United Kingdom (2023); 12th Seoul Mediacity Biennale, Seoul Museum of Art (2023); and the 81st Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2024). In May 2025, the artist debuted *Akua*, her first major installation with sound in New York City, at Brooklyn Bridge Park, commissioned by the Public Art Fund. Dyson also created the conceptual design for *Superfine: Tailoring Black Style*, the Costume Institute's Spring 2025 exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, which traced the cultural and historical significance of the Black Dandy from the 18th century to the present day. In 2026, Dyson participated in the 59th Carnegie International at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (on view through January 3, 2027), debuted a new installation at the 61st International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale (on view through November 22, 2026), and will present a solo exhibition at the Kunsthau Bregenz, Austria (opening October 17).

Dyson's work is held in notable public collections worldwide, including The Art Institute of Chicago; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Long Museum, Shanghai; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among others.

Pace is a global art gallery of and for the future, modeled on a set of core values established during its founding in 1960 and designed to serve its artists, estates, and collectors in a way that is focused, responsive, and aligned with its enduring mission.

Working with a roster of around 80 artists, the gallery sets a unique approach for the individual development and trajectory of each artist and estate, the majority of whom it has partnered with for decades. This intergenerational mix of new, established, and legacy artists is centered on shared lineages, pairing contemporary figures with their forebears. Pace's robust global exhibition program further foregrounds this connection and dialogue between contemporary art and 20th-century masterworks.

Pace's artist-first ethos prioritizes human relationships above systems and focuses resources strategically, with a responsive and nimble program that extends to public installations, philanthropic projects, performances, and other interdisciplinary initiatives. Rooted in its historic context and decades-long relationships with artists, Pace has played a key role in shaping and building major public and private collections across the US and around the globe. It also advances legacy and scholarship through its imprint, Pace Publishing, which has published more than 1,000 titles, including monographs and special-edition artist's books.

Today, Pace has a presence in nine cities worldwide, with an approach driven by the character of the local collecting community and resonating with the history of each region. This commitment to place and community is grounded by two galleries in New York—its eight-story headquarters at 540 West 25th Street and an adjacent 8,000-square-foot exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street in Chelsea—and 125 Newbury, an experimental project space in Tribeca. Through an exhibition program spearheaded by Arne Glimcher, 125 Newbury mounts innovative shows by emerging artists as well as curated presentations focusing on revealing new dimensions of historical artists' practices.

Pace has also been active in California for 60 years and opened its West Coast flagship in Los Angeles in 2022, and has galleries in London, Seoul, Berlin, and Tokyo. It was one of the first international galleries to have a major presence in China, where it has been active since 2008, the year it first opened in Beijing's vibrant 798 Art District. It now operates offices in Beijing and Hong Kong, as well as Geneva.

A reputation for innovation and collaboration is woven through Pace's history, noticeable in the very first decision to name the gallery after something other than its founder, and evident in its pioneering of many of the practices that have defined the gallery landscape. This extends from Arne Glimcher, who built the first large-scale, market-defining international gallery, to Marc Glimcher, who has introduced new strategies and innovations that have expanded the purview of gallery initiatives, and to Samanthe Rubell, whose commitment to fostering collaborative partnerships has further strengthened the program. In 2025, Pace initiated and became a partner in Pace Di Donna Schrader Galleries, a boutique model devoted to secondary market sales operating on a global scale, which is charting a new path for the sale and stewardship of historic artworks.



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