



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Public Art Fund Presents *Torkwase Dyson: Akua* at Brooklyn Bridge Park,
Dyson's First Major Public Installation with Sound in New York City**

Site-Responsive Pavilion Explores Sound and Memory



Torkwase Dyson: Akua

May 6, 2025 - March 8, 2026

Pier 1 Bridgeview Lawn, Brooklyn Bridge Park

March 20, 2025, New York, NY—Public Art Fund will present *Torkwase Dyson: Akua*, the artist's first major public installation in New York City, on view at Pier 1 in Brooklyn Bridge Park from May 6, 2025, through March 8, 2026. *Akua* is a large, open pavilion with an immersive multi-channel soundscape that expands Dyson's ongoing investigations of shape, light, and scale.



Akua explores new sonic encounters between bodies and environments. Using sound recordings, Dyson transforms a 20-foot-high steel-and-aluminum pavilion into what the artist envisions as a spatial drawing. Visitors are invited to enter the pavilion, where they can sit and experience recorded sound moving across eight speakers, including layered conversations from Black archives, nature field recordings, and electronic sounds.

“*Akua* explores how sound operates as geography, shaping our perception of space and time,” **Dyson** says. “The work is not about confinement, but rather about the excess of possibility beyond enclosure. It creates a place of presence, where visitors can engage with sound, light, and form in an intimate, liminal, and immersive way.”

Situated within the landscape of Brooklyn Bridge Park’s surrounding landmarks and waterways, the sculpture’s porosity offers an experience that is both open and grounding. The structure’s repeating matte black vertical slats create a sense of rhythm that echoes the movement of water and air, inviting visitors to wander, listen, and engage at their own pace.

The eight-channel sonic composition explores “breath as geography,” highlighting for listeners how the space between words—subtle breaths, ums, pauses—can carry memories of specific places. Dyson prompts audiences to consider what the space between words and silence can reveal about land, water, infrastructure, and what she refers to as “a Black experience defined by the migration of sound.”

“Torkwase Dyson understands shape and light as fundamental elements guiding our experience of the world,” **Public Art Fund Senior Curator Melanie Kress** says. “With *Akua*, she creates a sculptural and sonic environment that prompts us to consider how we move through space, how we listen, and how we locate ourselves within broader historical and geographical contexts.”

The work’s title, *Akua*, holds deep personal and conceptual resonance for Dyson. Inspired by her wordsmith cousin of the same name, *Akua* means “born on Wednesday” in West African Akan tradition and reflects a philosophy of improvisation, transformation, and boundless connection.

Dyson’s art practice engages with histories of Black migration, architecture, and environmental systems through large-scale outdoor commissions that explore architectural scale across diverse sites. Her repeating geometric language, comprising curves, triangles, and rectangles,



is inspired by architectural spaces used for escape and transformation. With *Akua*, Dyson prompts audiences to consider the space between words and silence, and what it can reveal.

Torkwase Dyson: Akua is curated by **Public Art Fund Senior Curator Melanie Kress** with **Assistant Curator Jenée-Daria Strand**.

@PublicArtFund #TorkwaseDyson

When & Where

Starting on May 6, 2025, *Akua* will be on view at Pier 1 Bridgeview Lawn in Brooklyn Bridge Park. The exhibition can be explored anytime, anywhere, on the free Bloomberg Connects app.

About the Artist

Torkwase Dyson describes herself as a painter working across multiple mediums to explore the continuity between ecology, infrastructure, and architecture. She frequently creates compositions of three “hypershapes”—a rectangular box, a triangle, and a trapezoid. Each form references a historical person who escaped confinement through a space of that shape: for example, Harriet Jacobs, who spent seven years in a trapezoidal attic crawlspace. As representations of spaces used for escape, migration, and transformation, Dyson’s hypershapes embody a Black experience defined by constant shapeshifting and change.

Dyson has been lauded with major outdoor commissions at Desert X, Palm Desert, California (2023); Counterpublic in St Louis, Missouri (2023); and the Whitney Museum of American Art as part of the 2024 Whitney Biennial.

Dyson studied Sociology, Social Work, and Fine Arts at Tougaloo College in Mississippi, and received a BFA from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia, in 1999 and an MFA from the Yale School of Art in New Haven, Connecticut, in 2003. She has held one-artist exhibitions at Graham Foundation, Chicago (2018); The Drawing Center, New York (2018); New Orleans Museum of Art, Louisiana (2020); Serpentine Pavilion, 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, England (2023); 12th Seoul Mediacity Biennale, Seoul Museum of Art (2023); and the 81st Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2024). Dyson will create the



conceptual design for *Superfine: Tailoring Black Style*, the Costume Institute's Spring 2025 exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Dyson's work is held in notable public collections including The Art Institute of Chicago; Hall Art Foundation, Reading, Vermont; Hammer Museum, University of California, Los Angeles; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Long Museum, Shanghai; National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Massachusetts; Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri; and The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, among others.

Related Free Programming

Opening Celebration

May 6, 2025

6pm

Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 1 Bridgeview Lawn

Visiting the Exhibition

Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation, known as Brooklyn Bridge Park (BBP), is the not-for-profit entity responsible for the planning, construction, maintenance and operation of Brooklyn Bridge Park, an 85-acre sustainable waterfront park spanning 1.3 miles along Brooklyn's East River shoreline. As steward of the park, BBP has transformed this previously deteriorated stretch of waterfront into a world-class park where the public can gather, play, relax and enjoy sweeping views of New York Harbor. The self-sustaining park was designed by the award-winning firm of Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc. and features expansive lawns, rolling hills, waterfront promenades, innovative playgrounds, a greenway, sports facilities and the popular Jane's Carousel. BBP serves thousands of people on any given seasonal day, who come to picnic, walk their dog, play soccer, jog, roller skate, and more. Brooklyn Bridge Park is a signature public investment for the 21st Century and will be an enduring legacy for the communities, elected officials and public servants who made it happen.

Subways: A, C to High Street; F to York Street; 2, 3 to Clark Street; R to Court Street; 4, 5 to Borough Hall.

Buses: B25 to Fulton Ferry Landing; B67 to Jay Street & York Street.

Ferry: East River Ferry, New York Water Taxi, or Governors Island Ferry to Brooklyn Bridge Park.



About Public Art Fund

As the leader in its field, Public Art Fund brings dynamic contemporary art to a broad audience in New York City and beyond by mounting ambitious free exhibitions of international scope and impact that offer the public powerful experiences with art and the urban environment.

Supports

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Torkwase Dyson

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Courtesy Pace Gallery