

Advanced Studio VI – S19

Afro Imaginaries

The Space of Water



OTHERWISE (WATER TABLE), 2018
Acrylic on canvas, 96 × 144 in (243.8 × 365.8 cm)
Torkwase Dyson

Item 1 (Architecture)

The studio will be informed by the history of radical thinking about architecture in the 20th century yet look beyond to the Afro-Imaginary to present an experimental curriculum deploying techniques culled from the visual arts as well as design theories of geography, infrastructure, engineering, and architecture to initiate dialogue about geography and spatiality in an era of global crisis due to human-induced climate change. More specifically, the studio will investigate the cultural topographies of water informed by the African Diaspora in the confrontation of environmental and spatial justice.

Item 2 (Art + Performance)

Artist Torkwase Dyson will conduct two in-studio workshops on Architecture and Liquidity. Dyson is a painter, sculptor, and performance artist whose work interrogates questions regarding spatial, environmental, and social justice. Dyson's *Wynter-Wells Drawing School for Environmental Liberation* is a roving school and conceptual project in environmental pedagogy

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that explicates the artist’s own formal concept of “Black Compositional Thought” to initiate a conversation on symbolic geographies and fallow with terms such as improvisation, nomadcity, and re-orientation to be applied to techniques within abstract drawing that confront issues of environmental liberation and the path towards a more equitable future.

Item 3 (Bodies+ Event + Site)

Human bodies have an existential yet paradoxical relationship to water. After all the human body is up to 60% water yet water poses an existential conundrum. On the one hand are the rising sea levels that threaten human settlements; severe water events — hurricanes, typhoons, extreme storms, tsunamis and atmospheres destructive of life and property and on the other hand are ironic conditions of the lack of water --- extreme droughts and also the lack of access to healthy and clean water.

Furthermore, for the black body water is a space of existential and forced migration from the human trafficking of the trans-Atlantic slave trade to the migration of black bodies from northern Africa across the Mediterranean to Southern Italy. Yet water is also a site for *other*-bodily liberation --- *Wade in Water, God’s Gonna Trouble the Water; Roll Jordan Roll; I Got One More River to Cross*.

Hence, the studio will consider “water” as both an event and as site.

Each student will conduct preliminary research into water as “abundance” and “paucity” ---the result of global climate change. Then each student shall select one of two possible sites among the islands of Cape Verde to consider the design of a project for environmental liberation. The project will consist of the design of an architecture / infrastructure and the production of a short film for the final presentation.

Travel

The studio will travel to Cape Verde to visit the Cape Verde Ocean Observatory, meet with local architects and cultural makers, and to conduct site research. The studio will also travel to Lisbon Portugal to consider water as one of the earliest sites of colonial “in-justice.”

Dates

January 23, 2019	Studio Lottery
March 1	Mid-term Review
March 9 - 17	Kinne Travel Week
March 18 – 24	Spring Break
May 3	Final Review