

# Institute of Contemporary University Art of Pennsylvania

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NEWS RELEASE

## ICA Announces Group Exhibition by Four Intergenerational Women Artists Exploring Issues of Geography, the Environment, and Black Female Subjectivities

Featuring Works by Torkwase Dyson, Lorraine O'Grady,  
Jade Montserrat, and Keisha Scarville

March 2, 2018

PHILADELPHIA, PA



Torkwase Dyson, *WATER TABLE 02*, 2017,  
Acrylic on canvas, 36 × 36 inches. Courtesy of  
the artist and Davidson Contemporary, New  
York.

Opening on April 27, 2018, the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania (ICA) will present a group exhibition by four artists investigating how geographical, ideological, and spatial paradigms determine and reproduce uneven social relations. Featuring works by Torkwase Dyson, Lorraine O'Grady, Jade Montserrat, and Keisha Scarville, *The Last Place They Thought Of* considers how histories of racial, sexual, and economic exploitation shape our understanding of geography, habitat, and environment. The exhibition seeks to explore the possibility of different, critical engagements with geography through the lens of black female subjectivities and feminisms. *The Last Place They Thought Of* is curated by ICA Whitney-Lauder Curatorial Fellow Daniella Rose King and will be on view through August 12, 2018.

"Daniella Rose King's tenure is an exemplary iteration of ICA's Whitney-Lauder Fellowship. Her experience with transnational and intergenerational artists' projects with Simone Leigh and Black Women Artists for Black Lives Matter, Naeem Mohaiemen, and Wael Shawky demonstrate an early commitment that mirrors ICA's: critical dialogue, research, and spotlighting artists' imbrication of visual pleasure, social movements, and expanding cultural histories. It is a great pleasure to provide a home base for her to explore a *kunsthal* curatorial practice."



Lorraine O'Grady, *Landscape (Western Hemisphere)*, 2010/2011, Single channel video for projection. Courtesy of Alexander Gray Associates, New York. © 2018 Lorraine O'Grady/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



Keisha Scarville, *The Placelessness of Echoes (and kinship of shadows)*, 2016-18. Courtesy of the artist.

*The Last Place They Thought Of* presents four interdisciplinary projects that span photography, painting, video, and performance, and interrogate the historical and contextual specificities of black women's locations and displacements throughout the diaspora. In Katherine McKittrick's influential publication *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (2006), from which the exhibition title was borrowed, she references the narrative of Harriet Jacobs, who escaped slavery by secreting herself away for seven years in "the last place they thought of"; the crawl space of her grandmother's attic. Literal and rhetorical marginalization, *being in the last place* is an experiential geography of black gendered bodies. Questions of miscegenation, hybridity and the contours of a black female body as landscape deemed, for all intents and purposes as "ungeographic" (after all, where is "black"?) arise in the exhibition alongside cartographies of the auction block, transatlantic slave trade, and Underground Railroad routes. Mythology and alternative narratives of the land similarly emerge through a study of the topographies of imagined landscapes, coupled with an engagement with corporeal, earthly matter – carbon and water – the material that undergirds and sustains it all.

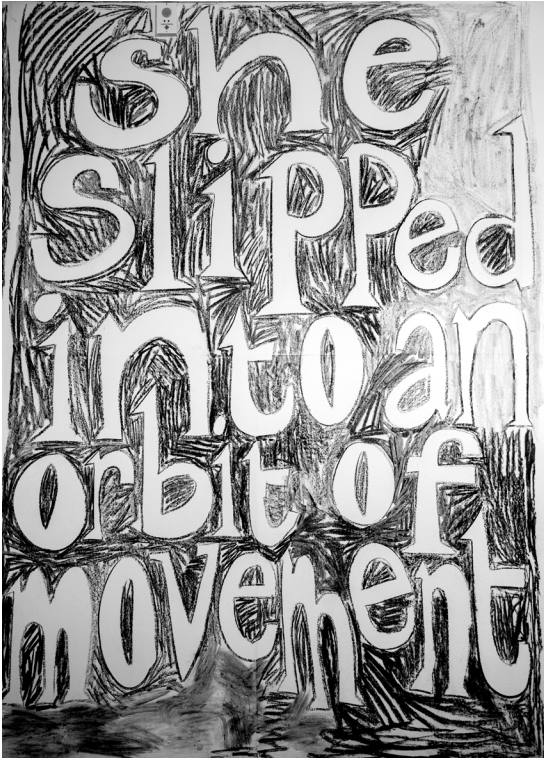
"This has been a unique opportunity for me to explore a thematic curatorial project that will unfold through an exhibition, program, and publication. *The Last Place They Thought Of* constitutes a development of my previous curatorial work, which has been focused on histories of struggle and resistance, and centers marginalized voices, but here with a focus on geography and place. I'm increasingly invested in how interdisciplinary discourses around, and the ideas contained within, visual art practices can speak to the urgency of our environment and changing climate. I feel incredibly fortunate to have the support of the ICA Philadelphia in this endeavor."

The exhibition and accompanying catalog create a discursive space to reconsider geography; as it pertains to the environment and our changing climate, as well as how it regulates the production and performance of identities, and continues to uphold material and metaphorical borders and boundaries.

#### ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

Torkwase Dyson (b. 1973; Chicago, IL) studied at Tougaloo College where she majored in Sociology and double minored in Social Work and Fine Art, earned her Bachelors in Fine Arts in Painting from Virginia Commonwealth University and her Masters in Fine Arts in Painting from Yale School of Art. Dyson describes herself as a painter who uses distilled geometric abstraction to create an idiosyncratic language that is both diagrammatic and expressive. The works are deconstructions of natural and built environments that consider how individuals negotiate and negate various types of systems and spatial order.

Dyson's work has been exhibited at the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Corcoran College of Art and Design, the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, and the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art. Dyson is the recipient of Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors award, Nancy Graves Grant for Visual Artists, Visiting Artist grant to the Nicholas School of the Environment at Duke University, the Culture Push Fellowship for Utopian Practices, Eyebeam Art and Technology Center Fellowship, and the FSP/Jerome Fellowship. Dyson's work has also been supported



Jade Montserrat, *No Need for Clothing* (detail), 2017, drawing installation at Cooper Gallery/DJCAD, Dundee. Photo by Jacquetta Clark. Courtesy of the artist.

by The Drawing Center, Lower Manhattan Cultural Center, The Laundromat Projects, the Green Festival of New York, the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, the Mural Arts Program of Philadelphia, The Kitchen, and the Rebuild Foundation. In 2016 Dyson was elected to the board of the Architecture League of New York as Vice President of Visual Arts. Torkwase is now based in Brooklyn, New York and is a visiting critic at Yale School of Art.

Lorraine O'Grady's (b. 1934; Boston, MA) oeuvre as an artist draws inspiration from the ordinary to produce works that reveal the complexities and conflicts inherent to the human experience. Since the early 1980s, O'Grady has challenged racial and sexist ideologies in performance and photo installations that combine opposition to philosophies of division and exclusion as well as humanist studies of women throughout history.

O'Grady's work has been recently exhibited at Crystal Bridges, AR (2018); Tate Modern, London and the Brooklyn Museum, NY (2017), Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, Sevilla, Spain (2016); Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (2015); the Studio Museum in Harlem, NY (2015, 2013 and 2012); MoMA PS1, NY (2014); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN (2014); la Biall Internacional de Arte Contemporáneo, Cartagena, Colombia (2014); the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2012); the Whitney Biennial, NY (2012 and 2010); Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha, Qatar (2012); La Triennale Paris, France (2012); ICA, Boston, MA (2012).

Her work is represented in the collections of MoMA, NY; Art Institute of Chicago, IL; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Brooklyn Museum, NY; Rose Art Museum, Waltham, MA; Walter Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; and Fogg Art Museum at Harvard, Cambridge, MA. O'Grady has been a resident artist at Artpace San Antonio, TX, and has received numerous other awards, including the CAA Distinguished Feminist Award, a Lifetime Achievement Award from Howard University, the Art Matters grant, Anonymous Was A Woman, the United States Artists Rockefeller Fellowship and, most recently, is a Creative Capital Awardee in Visual Art.

Jade Montserrat (b. 1981; London, UK) works at the intersections of art and activism, progressing through performance and live art, works on paper and interdisciplinary projects. The artist interrogates these mediums with the aim to expose gaps in our visual and linguistic habits. She studied at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London and the Norwich School of Art and Design, and is the Stuart Hall Foundation practice-based PhD fellow at The Institute for Black Atlantic Research at The University of Central Lancashire, UK, her research project is titled "Race and Representation in Northern Britain in the context of the Black Atlantic: A Creative Practice Project".

Her work has been shown in solo and group presentations at SPACE (2017), Alison Jacques Gallery (2017); Galerie Norbert Arns, Cologne (2017); Spike Island, Bristol (2017); Arnolfini – Centre for Contemporary Art, Bristol (2017); The Showroom, London (2016); Cooper Gallery, University of Dundee, Scotland (2016); Institute of International Visual Art, London (2014); and has been included in programs and talks at Princeton University, NJ (2016); The Kitchen, NY (2016); the Royal College of Art, London (2017), Tate Modern, London (2017), and in 2017 was a recipient of the Jerwood Drawing Prize.



## MEDIA CONTACTS

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

ICA IS LOCATED AT:  
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## MUSEUM HOURS

WEDNESDAY, 11AM–8PM  
THURSDAY AND FRIDAY, 11AM–6PM  
SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, 11AM–5PM

ICA IS ALWAYS FREE. FOR ALL.

FREE ADMISSION IS COURTESY OF  
AMANDA AND GLENN FUHRMAN.

Keisha Scarville (b. 1975; Brooklyn, NY) weaves together themes dealing with transformation, place, and the unknown. She studied at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and Parsons/The New School. Her work has shown at the Studio Museum of Harlem, Rush Arts Gallery, BRIC Arts Media House, Lesley Heller Gallery, Contact Gallery in Toronto, Aljira Center for Contemporary Art, Center for Photography at Woodstock, the Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute, Museum of Contemporary Diasporan Arts, and The Brooklyn Museum of Art. Scarville has taken part in residencies at Vermont Studio Center, Skowhegan, LMCC, BRIC Workspace Residency Program, and Light Work. She has presented lectures at the International Center of Photography (ICP) and at New York University (NYU), both NY. Reviews of her work have appeared in *the New York Times*, *Vice*, *Transition*, *Nueva Luz*, *Small Axe*, *The Village Voice*, and *Hyperallergic*. Her work is in the collection of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC. Currently, Scarville is a faculty member at the ICP in New York.

## ABOUT DANIELLA ROSE KING

Daniella Rose King is a London-born writer, curator, and producer concerned with the social history of art, particularly when it brings to light forgotten, oppressed, or difficult histories, moments of struggle, and spaces of resistance. Prior to joining the Institute of Contemporary Art she was based in New York where she worked with Naeem Mohaiemen on the documenta 14 commissions, *Two Meetings and a Funeral* and *Tripoli Cancelled*, and Simone Leigh as curatorial researcher for her New Museum exhibition and residency “The Waiting Room,” and Tate Modern project “Psychic Friends Network.” In 2017 she curated “On Visibility and Camouflage: Black Women Artists for BLM” at We Buy Gold in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, and King was the 2015-16 Whitney Independent Study Program Helena Rubinstein Curatorial Fellow.

She has contributed to exhibition catalogues, magazines, journals and online platforms. Her writing has appeared in the Studio Museum in Harlem 2017 Artist in Residence Brochure, Ocula Magazine, Frieze, Art-Agenda, Art Monthly, Ibraaz, Harpers Bazaar Art, New African Magazine, Contemporary And, Portal 9 Journal, and Nafas Art Magazine.

King was Assistant Curator at Nottingham Contemporary; Program Curator at MASS Alexandria, Egypt; Exhibitions and Events Manager at Iniva, London; visiting curator at Cornerhouse (now HOME) in Manchester and deputy curator of the Cyprus Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale, and is co-founder of the curatorial collective, DAM Projects.