

Relational Undercurrents: Contemporary Art of the Caribbean Archipelago

September 17, 2017 – February 25, 2018

ACTIVITY GUIDE



Nadia Fuggins (Trinidad and Tobago, b. 1984) *No. 4 Circa No Future*, 2014, Digital Photograph. Courtesy of the artist.

Relational Undercurrents: Contemporary Art of the Caribbean Archipelago is part of Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA, a far-reaching and ambitious exploration of Latin American and Latino art in dialogue with Los Angeles. *Relational Undercurrents* presents over 100 works of art by artists from fifteen Caribbean island nations and territories. Use this guide to explore the photographs, video art pieces, sculptures, paintings, and installation works featured in our galleries!



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THE CARIBBEAN

United under the waves

The **Caribbean** is an area southeast of the United States. It is made up of over 7,000 **islands** and is home to about thirty **island** nations. **Islands** may appear to be isolated, but going beneath the surface reveals underwater landforms that connect them to each other and to larger bodies of land.

This map shows the islands represented in Relational Undercurrents.



DID YOU KNOW?

Islands are created by volcanic eruptions and shifting landmasses. Floods can fill areas with sea water over long periods of time, leaving only the tops of a mountain range exposed.

THE ARCHIPELAGO

No man is an island

A chain of **islands** is called an **archipelago**. *Relational Undercurrents* references the archipelago through artworks that highlight how **Caribbean islands** are connected to each other through **landscape** and geography, the area's history, and the everyday activities of those who live there.



Fermin Ceballos (Dominican Republic, b. 1978) *Aislamiento / Isolation*, 2005. Photographs. Courtesy of the artist

In this 24 hour performance by Fermín Ceballos he addresses the isolation of the islands by swimming to a small rock and building a brick shelter, while people watch from the shore. At sunrise he knocks through the walls and swims back. Ceballos may have been momentarily secluded but he remained in the thoughts of those who waited for him.

Do you know someone who lives far away?

Me

What do you do to stay connected?

CONCEPTUAL MAPPINGS

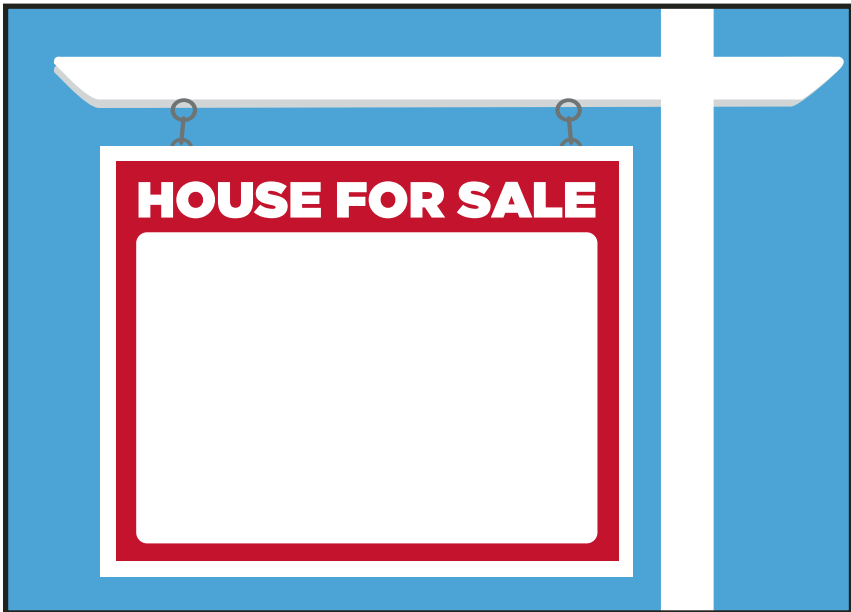
Making our own maps



Nyugen Smith (United States, b. 1976)
Bundlehouse: Borderlines no.3, 2017. Pen & ink, thread, watercolor, Zambian soil on paper.
Courtesy of the artist

Maps help us find our way around places by organizing landmarks in a way that is easy to read. Artists like Nyugen Smith create works that adjust geography or challenge the way we think about **migration**. They rearrange locations based on personal experiences or knowledge that is not taught through books or official documents.

Smith's *Bundlehouse* series reimagines the world as a place with fragmented borders where people must constantly **migrate** to remain safe. He populates his maps with small portable houses.



Imagine that you need a portable house. What amenities or materials are important to you? Write or draw them in the 'house for sale' sign above.

PERPETUAL HORIZONS

An island view



Janine Antoni (Bahamas, b. 1964) *Touch*, 2002. Video projection, ed. 5 + 2 AP. Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York

The visual language of **Caribbean** artists often includes the familiar image of the **horizon**. It can represent both a barrier and gateway to the rest of the world. The **horizon**, with its endless waves, seems both permanent and ever-changing.

Janine Antoni's video projection, *Touch*, shows the artist walking on a tightrope stretched across the horizon. She seems to walk on water over the vast, constantly shifting sea.

Are you frightened or excited by the possibility of the unknown? Below, draw or write about what the horizon means to you.

<i>The Horizon</i>

LANDSCAPE ECOLOGIES

Tracing our influence on island ecology



Marc Latamie (Martinique, b. 1952)
MALDOROR 1 Chant, 2014–16. Plastic cups, coffee grounds, string, framed painting, gold chain and empty coffee packages.
Courtesy of the artist

Islands are often the first places to feel the impact of **environmental** damage. In *Relational Undercurrents* artists explore how trade and tourism in the **Caribbean** has transformed the ocean and the land. In *MALDOROR*, Marc Latamie uses bags of coffee to trace how the distribution of consumer goods affects the **environment**. For example, coffee was brought to the **island** of Martinique by Europeans who then established plantations throughout Latin America—exploiting both human and natural resources. Today, people worldwide drink coffee, as represented by the disposable blue cups used by the artist.

UPCYCLE DISCARDED OBJECTS INTO ART!

You will need: empty clear plastic bottles, dirt or sand, colorful paper scraps, old toys, marbles or anything else you can find!

Cut a hole in the bottle. You can add a layer of dirt or sand or just fill it with brightly colored objects. Create your own mini **landscape**!



REPRESENTATIONAL ACTS

Defining Who We Are



Marlon Griffith (Trinidad and Tobago, b. 1976)
No Black in the Union Jack, Tate Modern,
London 2014, Video. Courtesy of the artist.

Art is often used as a platform to share stories. Some artists choose to connect with individuals outside of their community who don't have a way of expressing their identities or making

their voices heard worldwide. Marlon Griffith connects with groups to find and call attention to issues that they feel are being ignored. Through processions based on Carnival, participants are able to define and declare what's important to them. *No Black in the Union Jack* highlighted police brutality toward black men in London, a concern important both in the United Kingdom and beyond.

MY COMMUNITY

My community is _____ . In my community you
(place)

will find _____ and _____ .
(noun) (noun)

We pride ourselves on our _____ . We have
(attitude, state of mind, point of pride)

the best _____ . If I could change one thing
(noun)

about my community, it would be _____ .
(noun)

We really need _____ . If I had to define my
(noun)

community in one word, it would be _____ .
(adjective)

KEY TERMS

Archipelago: A group or chain of **islands** that are relatively close together, such as the group of islands that make up The Caribbean.

The **Caribbean** is located between the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean and is made up of various smaller archipelagos: Greater Antilles (Cuba, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Dominican Republic and Cayman Islands), Lesser Antilles (Leeward Islands and Windward Islands), Lucayan Archipelago (Bahamas and Turks and Caicos) and the ABC Islands (Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao).

Ecology: An area of study that examines how organisms interact with one another in their environment. **Ecology** can also refer to a political movement concerned with protecting the **environment**.

Environment: The natural world or surroundings where a person, animal, or organism exists.

Horizon: The line at which the earth meets the sky when the sun rises or sets. **Horizons** can also limit our field of vision and can be interpreted to limit knowledge, experience, or interest. Artists use the **horizon** line to indicate a point of view.

Identity: The set of characteristics (physical, cultural, etc.) that belongs to a person. A person may have more than one **identity**, depending on the time or place in which they find themselves and also on how they see themselves.

Island: An area of land completely surrounded by water.

Landscape: Scenery of a given area, usually of land; Some are rural and others are urban.

Migration: Moving from one place to another, often involving a group of people or animals.

Representation: The description or portrayal of someone or something in visual or written form, or the action of speaking for or acting for oneself or for another person.

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