

**The View from (T)here**

by

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The View from (T)here  
Alexandra Majerus  
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### **Abstract**

*A View from (T)here* is an interdisciplinary project that examines the interconnections between landscape, colonialism, identity, visual culture, and tourism, primarily in Barbados but also considering the Caribbean as a whole. It challenges the first-world construct of paradise, imposed upon the Caribbean through tourism, rendering the region into a homogenous space disconnected from time. *A View from (T)here* draws upon a thread of subversion found in Caribbean theory, literature and art production in order to contest the dominant construct. This body of artwork re-presents landscape, and its metaphors, through strategies of story-telling, ambiguity and repetition; using photography, sound, video and installation, creating a site at the intersection of identity, landscape, geo-politics and aesthetics. These operations attempt to symbolically reclaim the landscape and re-negotiate subjectivity, while implicating the viewers as participants in the artwork to put into question the power dynamics of north / south.

*The View from (T)here*  
is dedicated to  
Norbert Majerus  
1946 - 2014

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## **Preface**

### **A Walk Through *The View from (T)here***

*Made in \_\_\_\_\_*  
warmer climes, basking in the sun, lying on the beach  
palm trees just like you imagined them on islands dotting the Caribbean sea  
the lure of the blue  
Blue South Sea, code PR 16E30 from Canadian Tire to be exact  
perfect, isn't it?  
sponges like little islands across a horizon, but wait, nuh... theyse does be real different doh...  
different size  
different texture  
different shape

#### **- - open**

enter, my friend, enter into (t)here

#### **- - close**

leftover sea sponges, cut offs, remnants, a paper model palm tree, a cutter, swept into  
the corner  
the construction  
of the construct apparent  
behind the scenes  
you only have to look  
the fantasy is provided for you. One has to work, you know  
but if you look, if you dare, then  
don't you see  
the cracks

#### *Passage from One Place to Another*

a hammock, ahhhhh you could lie there all day  
but, can you?  
deep blue strings interwoven delicately together  
like spun sky or threads of the Barbadian flag  
TTC transfers  
oh yes, work, the daily grind, back and forth, to and from, day in and day out, paying the bills  
I bought my ticket  
later, the credit card bill is for later, for now I am going to concentrate on  
my week in paradise  
but maybe this is not paradise, maybe this is home, maybe one day I can earn enough money to go  
back home, oh how i miss  
home? beach? lying on the beach in the hot sun? no way, my idea of paradise is  
the hustle and bustle, action, I say!  
whose reality is paradise? doesn't that depend on your point of view?

#### *North Point*

figure / sky



ground / land  
 figure / land  
 ground / sky

north? or south?  
 which is which, do you understand?  
 maybe the blue ground you stand on is the dark sky  
 maybe the world is upside down  
 or maybe not  
 cloud comes before cliff comes after sky  
 vibrating boundaries come forward and go back  
 blue sky  
 white clouds that jump out  
 blue ground  
 dark cliffs  
 shade from the sun  
 night sky  
 at the border of the blue cliff

*The View from (T)here*

there are two seasons in Toronto  
 winter and patio  
 or so they say  
 but island time is always island time  
 oh really, is that so?  
 according to who? to you? to those who say  
 those bodies need disciplining that is what they said  
 still today?  
 does yours? as you, I, sit in the hot summer Toronto air  
 but I sit here  
 and there  
 so is my time island time?  
 or patio time?  
 do you judge me? or honey  
 skin that does not fit into those bodies that you imagine  
 confront  
 confront your mind as you face the old repurposed couch  
 riotous green like Carr's Church  
 surrounds us  
 as I,  
 you,  
 they,  
 we lime away

- - **step up**

sound permeates, penetrates, infiltrates, impregnates  
 is it here or there?

- - **stop and listen**

“everything is too much”  
 Jean Rhys you write just so  
 “too much green”  
 but there is no green  
 “too much red”  
 but there is no red  
 this room is full  
 full of sound  
 the green, the red is in the air around  
 frogs engulf, their sound incessant  
 birds call, tweet, chirp, insects respond  
 this is fiction  
*Fiction (the last 50 acres)*  
 50 acres that is all that remains after centuries of the king, king sugar that is  
 does that sound cultivated?  
 “go cut a whip for me”  
 Rhys, Naipal, James and Springer  
 I use their words to evoke  
 you cannot see but you can imagine but  
 what exactly are you imagining?  
 with no beginning, middle nor end, I claim my right to opacity  
 to story-telling that is allowed to grow and evolve, that tells truth but tells nothing at all  
 but nothing is always something when everything has been so carefully categorized  
 with a swift glance, north looks south and claims to understand

*Passage from One Place to Another*  
 transition  
 a room between two others  
 visual  
 aural  
 experiential  
 like the Caribbean Sea  
 that connects the islands one to another  
 like the Caribbean Sea  
 that disconnects the islands one to another  
 the sign is there  
 it marks the spot  
 at Dufferin Station  
 here  
 there

**-- step through**

Ahhh! but wait, ya finally reach  
 a space created  
 rum shop  
 hyperlocal  
 global  
 we drink  
 we lime, a space of belonging, of longing, where all discussions are on the table  
 shite talk, thick accents - politics, economy, religion, sex

around and around it goes  
 but don't fool yourself  
 we meet, we greet

*Welcome to Barbados*  
 (said the spider to the fly)  
 Now you are back on the rock,  
 affectionate, claustrophobic  
 claustrophobic, affectionate  
 paradise is presented, not a care in the world  
 but access to paradise, the beach that is  
 what was window  
 now a narrow passage from here to there  
 hotel then villa then hotel then villa  
 Mighty Gabby said it back then  
 "de beach belong to we"

limestone  
 rockstone  
 the foundation reveals itself  
 on a shelf

*Traverse* the sea  
 but is it from here to there or from there to here?  
 the eye tricks  
 welcomes  
 rocking motions mesmerize, draws you in  
 isolates  
 traverse, inverse, reverse  
 same same but different  
 isn't that always the case

dance, I say, dance!  
 that is what I can do  
 what is that?  
 you don't see me  
 check yourself  
 does my name throw you?  
 or is it the white-  
 ness wukkin' and winin' up  
 just so

**Alexandra Majerus, April 20th, 2017**

Magic Pony Gallery  
 2104 Dundas Street West  
 Toronto, ON

<https://vimeo.com/216200907>

## Introduction

The Caribbean archipelago<sup>1</sup> has been modelled by waves of migrants and patterns of migration to and from its shores that has ultimately resulted in an ever-changing space.<sup>2</sup> However, as this thesis will review, its dynamic composition is reduced to a fixed identity through historical and contemporary approaches from colonialism to corporative capitalism embodied in contemporary tourism. In *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, Édouard Glissant strives to re-read the Caribbean through a lens of obscurities and fissures as opposed to a conventional reduction of Caribbean history.<sup>3</sup> This exhibition and research paper *The View from (T)here* stem from two parallel but intertwined circumstances that relate, at a personal level and at a geo-political level, to Glissant's desire for the region.

The first circumstance is my personal condition of what I will call “finding place”. A lack of place or the need to find place comes from a complex family history of multiple migrations and cultural and linguistic adaptations. My maternal family can be traced through multiple islands<sup>4</sup> in the Anglo-Caribbean dating back to 1740, and my paternal family comes primarily from Luxembourg, though my father lived in Barbados for thirty-

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<sup>1</sup> Archipelago: an expanse of water with many scattered islands. *Merriam Webster*, s.v. "Archipelago," accessed February 10, 2017, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/archipelago>.

<sup>2</sup> Antonio Benitez-Rojo, translated by James Maraniss, *Repeating Island. The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996), 11.

<sup>3</sup> Édouard Glissant, translated by Michael Dash, *Caribbean Discourse. Selected Essays* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989) xi-xii.

<sup>4</sup> Barbados, Trinidad, St. Kitts and Antigua

four years. This history has conditioned my existence to one of a displaced culturally Caribbean creole<sup>5</sup> who was born in Quebec, Canada, after my parents migrated there, returned to Barbados in my youth, lived in Paris, France, and Toronto, Canada, as a young adult, returned to Barbados as an adult, and then returned to Toronto where I currently live. This personal history has led to a complex relation with the Caribbean by culturally identifying with it, yet choosing to live abroad for multiple reasons, including the dominant reason of migration for better economic conditions. This first circumstance is compounded by my position of being a white migrant to Canada, and a white person in the largely black population of Barbados, because of which I become located in an insider/outside position in both regions. While I was born in Canada, I only returned to live here when I was 24 years old. What this has meant for me is that although I visibly fit into the construct of Canadian identity, I did not culturally belong here. However, due to cultural perceptions, I was expected to agree with and fit into the dominant white cultural identity of Canadian. Furthermore, I do not fit into cultural perceptions of what a Caribbean person should look like and I am regularly denied my Caribbean heritage, usually by white Canadians. On the other hand, in Barbados, I am often assumed to be a tourist, and must frequently explain that in fact, I identify as a local. While appearing as a tourist may be thought of as a position of privilege, it means that one is excluded from local society. Furthermore, I have now lived in Toronto over two periods of time for close

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<sup>5</sup> I am drawing upon Joscelyn Gardner's notion of Caribbean creole from her MFA thesis entitled *White Skin, Black Kin: Speaking the Unspeakable*, in particular her text *Re-Presenting Creole Identity: Theorizing a (White) Postcolonial Creole Feminism*, 2004.  
[http://www.joscelyngardner.com/html/texts\\_cat\\_gardner3.htm](http://www.joscelyngardner.com/html/texts_cat_gardner3.htm)

to twenty years and like any migrant have become a different person. All of these life experiences have made me aware of how the cultural construction of identity can affect the preconceptions of who you are and where you come from.

The second circumstance is the result of my personal experience of being shocked on many occasions at the extent to which tourism plays a role in the physical and conceptual understanding of landscape upon trips to Barbados after longer periods of time away. Also, living in Toronto, Canada, has afforded me many opportunities to hear stereotypical comments about the Caribbean that have been created through tourism.

Land and landscape have become the point of intersection that speak both to my position and to tourism. Édouard Glissant describes “The individual, the community, the land are inextricable in the process of creating history. Landscape is understood as a characteristic in this process” to both personal and regional concerns.<sup>6</sup> In my experience, landscape plays a fundamental role in my own identity; geographical elements, such as the small size of Barbados, the heat, and the sea play directly into identity formation. Landscape also plays an enormous role in the tourist industry; the beauty of the sandy beaches and clear blue water are the basis of tourism marketing. Thus my thesis *The View from (T)here* is multi-layered and examines landscape, and metaphors of landscape, and their interconnections between visual culture, geo-politics, race, landscape aesthetics and tourism, framed through a post-colonial lens and using the interdisciplinary framework of cultural studies. At the same time, it is important to me that my research is art-based and

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<sup>6</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse. Selected Essays*, 105.

my thesis questions and findings remain embedded in my art production. In light of this, my thesis questions have been framed around the art production itself.

- How is it possible to reconsider the visual in the Caribbean, which usually lies within the tourist discourse but is not limited to it?
- What strategies can be employed to engage the viewer to consider the image of the Caribbean more fully instead of experiencing it from the dominant Western constructed point of view?
- How can landscape or metaphors of landscape be reframed in order to present the cultural, historical and visual complexities of the Caribbean?
- How do Caribbean people(s), at home and in the diaspora, negotiate their subjectivity while living within the powerful tourist discourse?

The objectives of my thesis questions are:

- to metaphorically reconsider the land to demonstrate alternative narratives to the one of paradise
- to expose the ways in which personal and national identity, history and geopolitics intertwine with landscape
- to have stereotypical images of the Caribbean re-considered in a more complex manner
- to reclaim ambiguity in Caribbean visual discourse as a tool of contestation, in the face of a history of first-world constructs, stereotypes and classifications

This thesis paper will begin with a Literature Review to examine research that exists in order to set the ground for my production. The first section, entitled *Looking At*,

presents the manner in which the history of European colonial empire is reinforced through vision in the world in general and in the Caribbean. The research presented in *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination* identifies terms such as “viewing”, “classifying”, and “categorizing” and their relation to conquering, owning and collecting. Krista Thompson’s book on visual culture: *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque* is discussed in depth as is Velvet Nelson’s research on geography and Caribbean tourism. The second section, *Looking Back*, goes beyond the gaze to consider how people negotiate living in the idealized landscape of so-called paradise. A range of Caribbean-focused texts are reviewed and discussed, such as scholarly research, contemporary art articles and seminal books like *The Repeating Island* and *Caribbean Discourse*. A thread of subversion and chaos is drawn out to make connections between disciplines and time, and to create an alternative argument to the dominant understanding of the region through tourism. This thread acts as a form of agency for my visual art production. The Literature Review also provides an analysis of the work of two artists, Blue Curry and Deborah Jack, who consider strategies of subversion.

In Methodologies and Methods, my art practice is considered and draws upon a critical visual methodology and an art-based research methodology. A residency at Alice Yard in Trinidad and a self-directed residency in Barbados contextualizes my production. Strategies in my art production are discussed and artworks will be mentioned that have



been crucial to the process of this Master of Fine Arts. Finally, the artwork for my final exhibition is described in detail.

In the conclusion, I present that story-telling and ambiguity have been new tools in my practice, which I have found productive to offering alternative views and ways of thinking about the Caribbean.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Looking At

The expansion of European colonial empire and regimes of vision have an intertwined history.<sup>7</sup> Viewing, looking, classifying, categorizing — these terms have deep ties to colonialism and, thus, to conquering, owning, and collecting. Image-making technology — maps, prints, easel painting, the camera, both still and moving image — were all tools used during and for the expansion of colonial empire. These were tools of control and dominance but were also entangled with desire, ambivalence, and anxiety.<sup>8</sup> Much of contemporary society is familiar with the concept of photography as a tool for surveillance, but since its inception, photography has been used as a “way of seeing”, localising and identifying the world. It was particularly well-suited in the expansion of colonial empire, due to its reproducibility and collectability, its association to documentary understood as fact, and its use in marketing through viewfinders, lantern lectures, postcards, billboards, magazine advertisements.<sup>9 10 11 12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Sumathi Ramaswamy, "Introduction: The Work of Vision in the Age of European Empires," in *Empires of Vision* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 1.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Jay and Sumanthi Ramaswamy, "The Imperial Optic: Introduction," in *Empires of Vision* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 25.

<sup>9</sup> John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (Great Britain: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 1972), 18, 139.

<sup>10</sup> Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, "Introduction: Photography and the Geographical Imagination," in *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, International Library of Human Geography (London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 2009), 3.

<sup>11</sup> Gillian Rose, *Visual methodologies: an introduction to interpreting visual objects* (London: SAGE, 2001), 17.

<sup>12</sup> Amar Wahab, "Rehearsing Caribbean Colonial Landscapes," in *Colonial Inventions: Landscape, Power and Representation in Nineteenth-Century Trinidad* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publ., 2010), 46.

In *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, art historian and geographer Joan Schwartz states that scholarly research has looked at how places, cultural identities and social categories of race, gender and class are produced through different media, but that there has been a focus on the most ubiquitous modern visual media: photography.<sup>13</sup> As an aesthetic category, the landscape<sup>14</sup> has been a way of seeing since the fifteen and sixteenth century, in combination with Renaissance techniques of perspective.<sup>15</sup> But, Schwartz states that it is photography -from tourist to domestic- that has played “a central role in constituting and sustaining individual and collective notions of both landscape and identity”, and has long played a role in making the social imaginary real.<sup>16</sup> <sup>17</sup> Of particular interest to me was Schwartz’s observation that the language around early photography during the nineteenth century was often put forth in geographical terms. This demonstrates to me the deep connections between photography, history and

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<sup>13</sup> Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, 4.

<sup>14</sup> The term landscape here refers to the use of the term in art or literature. Landscape is the definition of nature that organizes material features of the land into a composite whole set into defined spatial relations . Michael Kelly, ed., *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), s.v. "Landscape," accessed March 12, 2017, <http://www.oxfordreference.com.ocadu.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/acref/9780199747108.001.0001/acref-9780199747108-e-446>.

<sup>15</sup> Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, 6.

<sup>17</sup> I am using the social imaginary as understood by Édouard Glissant. Glissant presents “the imaginary is all the ways a culture has of perceiving and conceiving the world. Hence, every human culture will have its own particular imaginary.” Édouard Glissant, translated by Betsy Wing, *Poetics of Relation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan 2010), xxii.

how landscape is culturally constructed and relates to my research on how the history of tourism photography provides the foundation to how the Caribbean is seen today.<sup>18</sup>

While this research material is broad and may be applied to many regions of the world, I can relate it to my lived knowledge of the Caribbean. As one of the key mediums of my art production is photography, knowledge of the history of colonial visual culture has been an important foundation to my practice. It has aided me to critically understand and visually analyze historical photography and the ways in which the colonial ideal of the so-called new world was perpetuated through the photographic lens. It has also allowed me to understand then how tourism photography tropes have come to define the region. It also aids me in my own photographic practice of reclaiming the landscape in order to not simply reiterate the dominant tropes that exist, but rather to problematize them.

As mentioned in the Introduction, my position comes from a desire to counter the stereotypes I hear so frequently about the region and its people. Sources such as Krista Thompson's *An Eye for the Tropics* and Velvet Nelson's scholarship on tourism and geography, which are focused on the visual culture of the Caribbean in relation to tourism, have been invaluable to me for understanding the ideological constructions that have led to common expressions such as, "Oh, it is paradise there!".

In *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque*, Thompson points to the influence of tourism, from colonial times to

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<sup>18</sup> Joan M Schwartz and James Ryan, *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, 2.

contemporary multi-national tourism, on visual culture. Extreme hardship was prevalent in the Caribbean following the Emancipation of Slavery<sup>19</sup> and the introduction of beet sugar in Europe as a competitor to the cane sugar produced throughout the Caribbean,<sup>20</sup> and as a result, beginning in the 1880s, many of the island colonies turned to tourism as a means for survival. They actively began to campaign to change the image of the Caribbean into a “picturesque tropical paradise”<sup>21</sup> by reframing the region to make palatable the predominantly black culture, to reduce fear of disease, to domesticate the landscape and to render the ocean (previously feared due to the believed presence of sea monsters) picturesque, to potential European and North American tourists.<sup>22 23</sup> Thompson reviews early tourist photographic campaigns focusing on Jamaica and the Bahamas from the 1890s to the 1930s and how these can be linked back to eighteenth-century landscape

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<sup>19</sup> The abolition of slavery occurred in Barbados in 1834. It occurred in different years in the Western hemisphere depending on the colonizing country.

<sup>20</sup> Andrea Stuart. *Sugar in the Blood: a Family's Story of Slavery and Empire*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013) 328.

<sup>21</sup> The idea of the picturesque has changed over the years. Initially tourism to the Caribbean was centred around health. Before the 1920s, tourists would travel there for occasional sea-bathing for health benefits only and restorative breezes protected from the sun under gazebos. This gradually shifted to sea, sand, sun and friendly people as long-haul jet service allowed for mass tourism in the 1960s. See George Gmelch, *Behind the smile: the working lives of Caribbean Tourism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 3-7.

<sup>22</sup> Krista Thompson. *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 4.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 26.

painting and naturalists' representations.<sup>24</sup> <sup>25</sup> The ways in which meaning is attached to images in tourist campaigns through text, captions, oral presentations, photographic retouching, and staging is examined. Up to this present day, the postcards can function locally as visual placebos by presenting “a safe, disciplined, and picturesque locale” in the face of local discontent and post-colonial challenges such as underemployment, poverty and violence.<sup>26</sup> Throughout the book, Thompson uses the term “tropicalization,” a definition worth quoting at length due to its importance within my research:

Tropicalization here describes the complex visual systems through which the islands were imaged for tourist consumption and the social and political implications of these representations on actual physical space on the islands and their inhabitants. More specifically, tropicalization delineates how certain ideals and expectations of the tropics informed the creation of place-images in some Anglophone Caribbean islands. It characterizes how, despite geological diversity within “the tropics” and even in a single Caribbean island, a very particular concept of what a

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>25</sup> Patricia Mohammed also reviews how the domestication of the landscape and Afro-Caribbean people within the landscape did not begin with tourism photography but is part of a longer history of European gaze through sketches, engravings, lithographs, paintings in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Mohammed, Patricia, *Imaging the Caribbean: Cultural and Visual Translation*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 289.

<sup>26</sup> Krista Thompson. *An Eye for the Tropics*, 254.

tropical Caribbean island should look like developed in the visual economies of tourism.<sup>27</sup>

This quote articulates succinctly what I am working through in my own research. Although it may be done innocently on the part of the tourist individual, what is imagined and imaged as the Caribbean is constructed through a system that is built from history and economy. It affects the landscape physically, for example, the construction of beaches, and psychically, that is to say how the landscape is perceived and which landscapes come to mind when the Caribbean is considered. The landscape as a construct has changed over the years according to outside tastes and is limited to the desired image of that moment, ignoring what is present on the ground so to speak. Locals then have to live and work in a landscape that has been socially constructed by outsiders.

While Velvet Nelson approaches her research on the Caribbean through tourism and geography, as opposed to Thompson's approach through visual culture, she also identifies that throughout the history of Caribbean tourism, the islands' reputations were based on a superficial experience of landscape that comes from a sensibility obtained through the aesthetics of landscape paintings and from travellers' accounts and illustrations.<sup>28</sup> Through her analysis of tourism websites, she describes how images of landscapes, frequently devoid of people, account for the majority of photographs,

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 5-6.

<sup>28</sup> Velvet Nelson. "The Landscape Reputation: Tourism and Identity in the Caribbean", *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie* 102, no. 2 (2011), 177, 179.

reinforcing my consideration that landscape is a fruitful site of inquiry.<sup>29</sup> Nelson also proposes that there is a separation between the reputation of the island, based on landscape, and local collective identity, which usually serves internal functions.<sup>30</sup> I find it thought-provoking to consider to what extent the reputation and the collective identity may actually be separated and to what extent one may influence the other, particularly in view of the fact that tourism is the dominant industry in Barbados and many Caribbean islands. According to The World Bank, 69% of men and 89% of women worked in service industries in Barbados in 2013<sup>31</sup>, of which an unknown, but likely significant, percentage would have regular contact with tourists. Therefore, to what extent does the reputation created from an outside perspective become absorbed into local collective consciousness and the performance of culture? While difficult to assess quantitatively, this is a line of thought during my field research.

### **Looking Back**

The powerful discourse of capitalism has shifted from a colonial narrative to one of multi-national corporations, but it still does not speak of the people on the ground and how they live within the idealized landscape that surrounds them. Despite many problems

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 183.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 179.

<sup>31</sup> "The World Factbook: BARBADOS," January 12, 2017, accessed February 19, 2017, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bb.html>.



in the region, principally economic concerns<sup>32</sup>, my continued interest in the Caribbean persists precisely because of what has emerged out of this region of trauma. Caribbean people and lands may have been part of a global colonial experiment, mostly through no choice of their own due to the long history of indentured servitude and slavery; however, as Joan Schwartz states, the “meaning of images [...] is constantly negotiated”.<sup>33</sup> There is a documented history of people resisting the colonial motherland and attempting to own and define the land. This ranges from the revolutions in Haiti and Cuba, to numerous uprisings of the enslaved across the colonies to class conflict between the poor whites, the white middle-class shareholders and the rich plantocracy, due to rising nationalism and the efforts of Barbadian creole society to distinguish itself from English culture.<sup>34</sup> Keywords such as “chaos”, “transgression”, “*alternative*”, “disorientation”, and “subversion” appeared repeatedly during my research of both historical and contemporary Caribbean-focused theory, literature and visual arts. This thread of transgression as a tool to renegotiate points to the fact that there is a need but also the desire to self-define alternative approaches to the Caribbean. Cognizant of the potentially utopic nature of transgression, my research nevertheless draws upon this territory that lies between

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<sup>32</sup> "Barbados Estimates 2016 - 2017: Revenue and Expenditure," , accessed January 27, 2017, <http://www.barbadosparliament.com/uploads/document/473101d57b42b84ef18ab54c4006e510.pdf>.  
 "2016 Budget at a Glance," Loop News Barbados, August 17, 2016, accessed January 27, 2017, <http://www.loopnewsbarbados.com/content/2016-budget-glance>.

<sup>33</sup> Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, 5.

<sup>34</sup> Karl Watson. "Salmagundis vs Pumpkins: White Politis and Creole Consciousness in Barbadian Slave Society, 1800-34." *The White Minority in the Caribbean*, (Princeton, NJ: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1998). 22-25.

idealized paradise and the reality of the region's frank imperfections of first-world dependence, violence, crime, under-employment, racial tensions, drugs, migration, lack of health care and education access.

These disruptive keywords are not new concepts for the Caribbean, but they remain relevant. Chaos is an essential word for Antonio Benítez-Rojo, frequently cited as one of the most important Cuban writers of the end of the twentieth century. He returns to the concept at multiple points in his seminal book *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Post-Modern Perspective*, first published in 1993. Benítez-Rojo discusses chaos and transgression in relation to the author Gabriel García Márquez's trope of the prostitute Eréndira, whose mixed body interacts with men of all races but is never fully possessed nor known, as a metaphor of the Caribbean. Benítez-Rojo also posits chaos in relation to the street markets where Eréndira is found in García Márquez's story. Benítez-Rojo proposes that markets, like Eréndira's body, quintessentially represent the Caribbean; where goods are traded; every shade of human being possible is found there legally, illegally and under duress; and where European and African cultures meet to form something else.<sup>35</sup> Then, again, Benítez-Rojo links chaos to his description of the Caribbean as a "meta-archipelago", through which diverse people have arrived on its shores and then have gone on to emigrate outward, (and through its physical geographical nature of islands and interconnecting passages of sea). Its people and its land thus become

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<sup>35</sup> Antonio Benítez-Rojo, translated by James E. Maraniss. *The Repeating Island: the Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001 2nd ed.). 290-293.

a “continuous flow of paradoxes,”<sup>36</sup> in which processes and rhythms are present in “the marginal, the regional, the incoherent, the heterogeneous or [...] the unpredictable” that co-exist in Caribbean everyday life.<sup>37</sup> This metaphor points to an expanded, multifarious Caribbean rather than the simplified notion of island life that is so prevalent within tourism.

I have found this thread of resistance, spanning disciplines of cultural and knowledge production, such as literature, art writing, and scholarly analysis, profoundly productive in order to consider ways to embrace the complexities of the region in my own visual art production. The Caribbean region has shifted from being of supreme importance to the Western world — as the sugar industry spurred the development of the Industrial Revolution and modernity at the cost of millions of enslaved people from many regions of the African continent<sup>38</sup> — to now being constructed as a so-called pre-modern vacation paradise. Yet at the same time, the region has put forth some of the most influential musicians in the world, has a thriving literature production, as well as a burgeoning visual art scene and, while still decidedly imperfect, is a space of creolization of races, cultures and languages.<sup>39 40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>38</sup> Eric Williams, "Capitalism and Slavery," in *From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean 1492 - 1969* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), 136 - 155.

<sup>39</sup> Stuart Hall explores the Caribbean identity as an “identity in production” at length in his article *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*. Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," *Framework*, no. 36 (1989).

<sup>40</sup> The Caribbean as a space of knowledge production is by no means limited to cultural production and cultural scholarship but for the purposes of this MFA thesis paper I will limit my research to it.

Published thirteen years after *Repeating Islands*, Krista Thompson in *An Eye for the Tropics* reviews how the Caribbean landscape has been constructed through tourism, but she also describes how postcards have been reframed by locals through simple actions. For example, according to Thompson's research, Daisy Forbes, a salesclerk in a Red Cross shop in Nassau, Bahamas in the 1940s, was known to hide what she considered offensive images of locals rather than allowing them to circulate outside the island, particularly the postcard of a black man driving a cart pulled by a donkey. The postcard was frequently given the title of *Two Natives*, equating both the man and the donkey as natives.<sup>41</sup> Thompson also reviews how several artists have taken up the language of postcards or the postcard itself in their artwork to destabilize and highlight the process of production, and expose the manufactured and commodified construct of pre-modern paradise that is so prevalent in the region. For example, she uses David Bailey's photograph *From Britain or Barbados or Both?* (1990), in which the artist can be seen in the image holding up a postcard of a black man in a bikini on the beach in front of a large billboard with a campaign from the Barbados Board of Tourism in London, England.<sup>42</sup> His aim is to complicate the external view, the tourist eye, but also the internal view, as locals themselves see through the "tropical" lens, and can therefore reevaluate their relationship to the land and its history.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Krista Thompson. *An Eye for the Tropics*, 259-260.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 285-287.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 292-293.

Similarly, Sam Vásquez, Associate Professor of English, specializing in 20th- and 21st-century Caribbean literature at Dartmouth University, takes this argument further and highlights the use of humour in the production of postcards as a subversive act. She argues that humorous tropes such as “inversion, absurdity and ambiguity” are used to address images that place Eurocentric hierarchies on racialized bodies and othered landscapes.<sup>44</sup> In her article, she gives a subtle re-reading of historical postcards, using the same postcard as Thompson, entitled “Two Natives”, and another card in which a group of black individuals are dressed to represent different tropes such as “the market woman,” “the sexualized cabaret female and male dancers” and “the beach” (absent of identifying markers). Her aim is to explore the ludicrous nature of the stereotypes.<sup>45</sup> In colloquial terms, Vásquez is subverting existing Caribbean postcards with the idea of “you want stereotype, then are we ever going to give you stereotype,” both in terms of landscape and people within the landscape. While I do feel this reading is valid, it does require the reader / viewer to be aware and to look with sensitivity in order to recognize the irony within the images. The viewer may not be the foreigner who generally consumes the postcards, but the local who recognizes the tongue-in-cheek quality of the exaggerated stereotypical imagery and, therefore, is allowed a path to reclaiming the landscape and their own subjectivity.

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<sup>44</sup> Sam Vasquez, "Travelling Humour Reimagined: The Comedic Unhinging of the European Gaze in Caribbean Postcards," *Caribbean Quarterly* 58, no. 2-3 (2012): 83.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 85.

In a similar manner of looking with sensitivity, Jeannine Murray-Román analyzes a revalorising of smallness. Her analysis of literature in *Rereading the Diminutive: Caribbean Chaos Theory in Antonio Benítez-Rojo, Édouard Glissant, and Wilson Harris* can point to the way in which reframing can also be a valuable tool for visual art. She proposes that the three influential Caribbean writers' use of chaos theory provides them with a way to "leap across differences in scale and to demonstrate the impact of small gestures on large phenomena".<sup>46</sup> Murray-Román states that the question of the diminutive derives from an external gaze, but that when reframed, the diminutive has the potential to impact the political and economic imagination of Caribbean nations.<sup>47</sup> Equally, it is arguable that this reframing can be a valuable tool for visual artists. The diminutive, when placed into chaos theory, as done in Benítez-Rojo's, Glissant's and Harris's work, can create instability in terms of scale, size, repetition, and multiplicity, which may also undo established assumptions.<sup>48</sup> All three writers connect the chaos of the diverse Caribbean landscape to the cultural expression of its diverse people, citing examples of small gestures that are defiant simply due to their repetitive existence, such as the movement of the body while walking, the specificities of the landscape, and the ways in which the

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<sup>46</sup> Murray-Roman, Jeannine. "Rereading the Diminutive: Caribbean Chaos Theory in Antonio Benitez-Rojo, Edouard Glissant, and Wilson Harris." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 19, no. 1 46 (2015): 23.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, 27.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, 29.

insignificant becomes significant.<sup>49</sup> Hence, the diminutive can be used to make connections and consequences between “the hyperlocal and the global”.<sup>50</sup>

This thread of resistance and transgression has also been embraced within the domain of contemporary visual art in the Caribbean, as can be seen in the selection of articles below spanning a number of years. In her interview with Trinidadian artist Christopher Cozier in *Bomb Magazine* in 2003, Jamaican-based curator and critic Annie Paul describes the artist and his practice with the term “*alternative*”.<sup>51</sup> She employs the term to describe artists and art practices that do not comply with a so-called “Caribbean aesthetic or [...] national agenda”, or differ due to “race, class, gender or sexual variables”, “without narratives” or with “unpopular narratives”.<sup>52</sup> Emerging curator and critic Natalie McGuire revisits this term in her article, *Navigating Caribbean Visual Language through Digital Art Mediums*, as a tool to counter the monocultural “Caribbeanness” that has been imposed by the tourist art market and by the expectations of international curators on the idea of what Caribbean art should be or should look like. This imposed “Caribbeanness” can range from colourful painted idyllic landscapes to the necessity of reading the work through the agenda of identity.<sup>53</sup> McGuire presents the

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>51</sup> Paul’s italics.

<sup>52</sup> Annie Paul and Christopher Cozier. "Christopher Cozier." *Bomb Magazine*, no. 82 (Winter 2002/2003), 67.

<sup>53</sup> Natalie McGuire, "Navigating Caribbean Visual Language Through Digital Art Mediums," *Moko Magazine: Caribbean Arts & Letters*, July 2016, accessed January 5, 2017, <http://mokomagazine.org/wordpress/navigating-caribbean-visual-language-through-digital-art-mediums-by-natalie-mcguire/>.

recent digital creative spheres and informal art spaces as alternative spaces to counter preconceptions. She considers notions of fixed identity, the idea of art that does not need to be read solely through the concept of identity, and artists who do not fit into the first-world idea of what a Caribbean person should look like. She discusses artwork that counters the picturesque, which was used as a colonial strategy to domesticate the space, and counters northern expectations of what Caribbean topics in art should be. By taking back the “*alternative*” as a means of analysis, McGuire is working with notions of resistance, chaos, and disorientation of the first world’s powerful gaze upon the region.<sup>54</sup> These notions are also found in the London, England-based emerging artist of Barbadian descent, Adam Patterson’s reflections on his residency at Fresh Milk in Barbados in his essay *Echidna*. He uses the sea urchin as a metaphor in his art practice and his essay. The sea urchin is an aquatic creature of resistance with sharp spines protruding from its shell that protect its soft interior and hurt the aggressor. The sea urchin’s mouth is located on its underside, positioned to the ground, nourishing itself from what the land has to offer. Often found in small colonies, each sea urchin becomes symbolic of an individual island within a collective, fascinatingly beautiful, yet repellent—even dangerous to touch—despite appearances of passivity.<sup>55</sup>

My goal in aligning these writers, researchers and artists together is to underscore how embracing the chaos of the region can resist the homogenous notion of paradise and

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Adam Patterson, “Echidna: An Essay”, Fresh Milk Barbados. October 06, 2016. Accessed February 19, 2017. <https://freshmilkbarbados.com/2016/10/06/echidna-an-essay-by-adam-patterson/>



show the range that is present. Chaos becomes a unifying factor for islands that are separate but together, that are similar but cannot always understand each other because of linguistic and cultural difference. Disorientation becomes a tool to embrace the multifold cultures and languages dotted across the Caribbean Sea, while still leaving space for the youthful nation-states to form, negotiate and acknowledge their changing national and regional identities.

My work attempts to locate itself within the framework described here, while taking into consideration that I am presenting this artwork in Toronto, Canada. Thus *The View from (T)here* looks at Caribbean landscape and metaphors of landscape in order to both symbolically reclaim them and offer alternative perspectives. As I am aware that although I identify as Other, in Toronto, I do not experience life as a racialized Other, therefore as a strategy to produce a body of work to explore the complexities that enrich the region and not be perceived as speaking for the Other, *The View from (T)here* also takes into consideration the view from here. My strategy, therefore, for reclaiming the landscape in some artworks is to take into account the viewer by subverting the (dominant tourist) gaze and complicate the viewer's perception and preconceptions.

### Artistic Practices

In order to contextualize my visual art practice within a set of contemporaries who are reflecting on the Caribbean, my research looks at the artwork of Blue Curry and Deborah Jack. Blue Curry's practice falls under the two lines of inquiry: the gaze engendered through tourism and the line of the subversive, which have been presented in both sections of this paper's Literature Review. Blue Curry is a Bahamian artist living between London, England, and Nassau, Bahamas. We both participated in the 10th anniversary of *Transforming Spaces* in Nassau in 2014, which a number of artists from across the region attended. A conversation with Curry around tourism and the experience of returning into our respective tourist-dominated spaces is central to my locating his practice in relation to mine. Curry related his experience of living in England as informative to understanding tourism in the Bahamas from a new perspective.<sup>56</sup> In an interview about his work in the exhibition *SITELines: Unsettled Landscapes* at SITE Santa Fe in 2014, he further elaborates on growing up in an environment in which all cultural production is created for consumption by tourists. His installation *S.S.s.* consisted of two components: a live-stream video of Nassau's harbour where viewers were able to watch cruise ships as they dock and a flag pole installation. Curry likens the ships to massive sculpture-like cities from which thousands of people pour out to see and engage with the small city of Nassau in a predetermined way, but states that critical engagement

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<sup>56</sup> "Blue Curry," interview by author, April 06, 2014.

becomes possible by live-streaming the cruise ships into another location.<sup>57</sup> A flagpole installed at SITE Santa Fe referenced a now defunct mast at the Nassau Harbour that signalled the arrival and departure of ships. Forty brightly coloured customized beach towel-flags, corresponding to the cruise ships that dock at Nassau, are raised and lowered on the flag posts.<sup>58</sup> Curry describes beach towels as objects which “claim space for one day [...] as an object of conquest”. He also critically engages with tourism with pieces such as *PARADISE.jpg*, a billboard installation at the Jamaica Biennial in 2014 and *Untitled* from 2010, an installation consisting of a customized iridescent blue rotating cement mixer filled with sunscreen, impregnating the gallery with its smell.<sup>59</sup>

Frequently using material and images from the Caribbean, he is nevertheless often evasive in the description of his visual art practice. Much like Natalie McGuire, who recognizes a defiance to the categorization of “Caribbeanness” amongst the artists she writes about, Blue Curry also discusses resisting the label of Caribbean artist or “international artist”, which he implies is a euphemism for marginalized artists.<sup>60</sup> Both his work and strategy then remain deliberately oblique. Curry differs somewhat in his medium to my practice; however, he fully embraces the notions of subversion and

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<sup>57</sup> Ellen Berkovitch, “Blue Curry on Tourism - and Sitelines.” Adobe Airstream - Art Music and Film from the West. October 2014. Accessed February 19, 2017. <http://adobeairstream.com/a2radio/blue-curry-tourism-sitelines/>

<sup>58</sup> “Blue Curry.” Unsettled Landscapes. July 2014. Accessed February 19, 2017. <https://sitesantafe.org/unsettled-landscapes/blue-curry/>.

<sup>59</sup> Blue Curry “Blue Curry.” Accessed February 19, 2017. <http://www.bluecurry.com>.

<sup>60</sup> Melanie Archer. “Stranger than Paradise.” The Caribbean Review of Books. November 2010. Accessed February 19, 2017. <http://caribbeanreviewofbooks.com/crb-archive/24-november-2010/stranger-than-paradise/>.

ambiguity. His readymade sculptures are frequently created using a combination of inorganic found objects and organic objects (or reproductions of organic objects) that reference the landscape or are overloaded Caribbean symbols: *Untitled* (2011) pairs together a slide projector carousel, an ashtray and a decorative ceramic planter in the shape of a conch shell, and *Untitled* (2012) pairs a table, tinted perspex, a fan cover and a sea urchin. He unmoors the seemingly fixed nature of the exotic, so closely aligned with the Caribbean, to create disorienting subversive sculptures, which have a stillness that belies the collision of spaces and chaos that underlies the work.<sup>61</sup>



Untitled (2011), Blue Curry



Untitled (2012), Blue Curry

While I use the image as the basis of my work and Curry uses the readymade and sculpture, I am interested in his artwork for his contemporary treatment of the subject of landscape. I can also relate to the shifts in his artwork between directly addressing issues around tourism and/or completely evading them through ambiguous operations that avoid fixed understandings.

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<sup>61</sup> Erica M James. Blue Curry: Art, Image and Objecthood, ARC Magazine, September 2012. 34

Deborah Jack works primarily in photography, painting, video/sound installation, and text. Her artwork deals with “trans-cultural existence, memory, re-memory and nature”.<sup>62</sup> She says that what has intrigued her is the notion of unsettled landscapes or unresolved spaces and unresolved memories.<sup>63</sup> Jack was born in Rotterdam, her family returned to St Maarten in the Dutch Caribbean where she grew up; she now lives in the USA and travels frequently to St Maarten. I can thus relate to her cross-cultural lived experience and how she connects to landscape through memory to go beyond the superficiality of tourism of St Maarten.<sup>64</sup> *Axum* was a café / art-space in St Maarten that she co-owned for a number of years which held exhibitions, poetry readings and live music. She states that one of the conditions to presenting work there was that it could not relate to the visual culture of tourism, such as paintings of beaches, palm trees and market scenes or music that was heard played in hotels.<sup>65</sup>

In her own art practice, Deborah Jack connects memory to landscape and landscape to memory. She subverts still and moving images of contemporary landscape to evoke the history of colonialism and slavery. When she moved to the USA to complete her MFA, she became interested in her recollection of experiencing a hurricane in St

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<sup>62</sup> Deborah Jack, "Deborah Jack," accessed March 04, 2017, <http://www.deborahjack.com>

<sup>63</sup> Tiana Reid, "In Conversation with Deborah Jack for SITelines: Unsettled Landscapes," *ARC Magazine Contemporary Caribbean Visual Art Culture*, September 1, 2014, , accessed February 04, 2017, <http://arcthemagazine.com/arc/2014/09/in-conversation-with-deborah-jack-for-sitelines-unsettled-landscapes/>.

<sup>64</sup> “Artist Talk - Deborah Jack." *Uniarte*. November 30, 2015. Accessed March 04, 2017. <https://soundcloud.com/uniarteorg/uniarte-artists-talk-deborahjack-30nov2015mp3>.

<sup>65</sup> Jacqueline Bishop, "Unearthing Memories: A Conversation with St. Martin Artist Deborah Jack," *Calabash A Journal of Caribbean Arts and Letters* 2, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 90, <https://www.nyu.edu/calabash/vol2no2/0202087.pdf>.

Maarten and began using salt as a metaphor for nature and its potential for preservation and destruction. She makes the connection of the salt from a hurricane to the Salt Pond in St Maarten, which, while no longer functioning, is the reason the island was colonized.<sup>66</sup> In her video installation *a/salting #1* and *a/salting #2* (2006), Jack projects video recordings of the ocean in which she inverts, desaturates and slows the images so the moving sea no longer fits into the idyllic construct of the Caribbean Sea and its beaches. The sound component of the recording is kept at real-time thus connecting to and disconnecting from the images to create a disorientating effect in which time and space do not always coordinate.<sup>67</sup> *Bounty* (2006) is a grid-like installation of thirty small-scale light boxes holding video stills of salt piles in the Caribbean island of Bonaire, a special municipality of the Netherlands. Unlike the typical representation of coral-coloured beaches with blue skies and sea, the video stills in *bounty* appear like piles of ploughed snow with cold grey skies above.<sup>68</sup> The salt becomes something that is seen and not seen, something that is present in contemporary life through its visuality and its smell but is deeply connected to the history of slavery.

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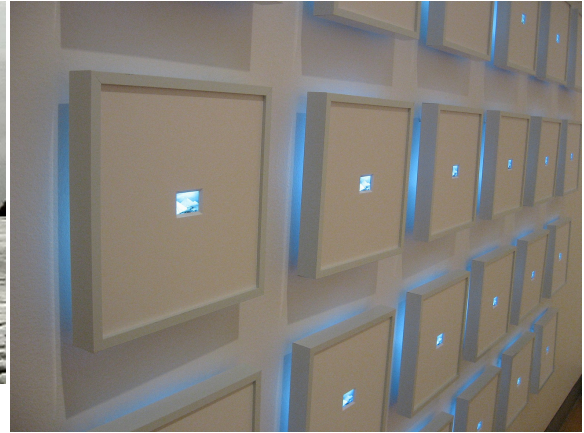
<sup>66</sup> Sasha Dees, "Deborah Jack," AFRICANAH.ORG Arena for Contemporary African, African-American and Caribbean Art, July 05, 2014, , accessed March 18, 2017, <http://africanah.org/deborah-jack/>.

<sup>67</sup> "Artist Talk - Deborah Jack." *Uniarte*. November 30, 2015, accessed March 04, 2017.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*.



bounty (2006), Deborah Jack



Installation view at the Brooklyn Museum, bounty (2006), Deborah Jack

Her series of still photographs *evidence* (2006), images of lush, colourful landscapes are presented. From intensely green vistas to the rich orange-red of flamboyant flowers, the images present more than a single frame/view. Jack altered her analogue camera to be able to take more than one image per frame.<sup>69</sup> In one image, a countryside scene can be seen with the ghost of a stone structure, recalling the colonial past when stone plantation buildings and windmills were used in sugar cane production. In another image, flamboyant flowers are both in focus and blurred and layered to create an eerie scene with no clear foreground or background. The results are photographs that are both beautiful and troubling. The beauty of the Caribbean landscape, usually understood through the constructed tourist gaze, is layered with its history, present but not always clearly seen. Jack states that she intentionally works with beautiful landscapes - the viewer is drawn in to the beauty then discovers the story behind the beauty and

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

become uneasy.<sup>70</sup> As Jack states, her work then serves as a memorial, the land as witness becomes a site of trauma and a site of healing.<sup>71</sup>

While Deborah Jack works more pointedly with the history and trauma of slavery, like myself, she is subverting the landscape as understood through the dominant tourist gaze to re-consider it as a site of intersection of identity and meaning that has been layered with history, colonialism and tourism. She also uses photography as a tool to question the very same medium that has been used to define the region. On a personal level, Jack's process of working between two countries, going back to the Caribbean to record and produce, then returning to the USA to edit and work on post-production, thus working the pieces through her own memory, is comparable to my own process.<sup>72</sup> The use of personal memory becomes a tool to speak and embody memory on a larger scale, equating her artistic process with the personal and the socio-political construction of memory and landscape.



evidence (2006), Deborah Jack



evidence (2006), Deborah Jack

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Jack, Deborah. "Deborah Jack." Accessed March 04, 2017. <http://www.deborahjack.com>.

<sup>72</sup> Reid, Tiana. "In Conversation with Deborah Jack for SITElines: Unsettled Landscapes." *ARC Magazine Contemporary Caribbean Visual Art Culture*.



## **METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

### **Methodology**

In my practice, research and art-making intertwine and the source of inspiration can be difficult to tease out. My production methodology usually extends outwards. Information is gathered through reading, observing socio-political conditions, experiencing everyday life, drawing from a range of sources such as visual culture, visual archives, literature and textual analysis to form the conceptual idea, and then gathers in to the studio and art production to critically create. However, my art practice can also begin from studio-based research —appropriating an object, finding a particular site or viewpoint to photograph, performing for the video camera with no initial clear intention — and then expand out to analyze the underlying connections that exist in the work. Learning to trust this shifting process in order for the artwork to develop without judgement while under the time pressure of an MFA has been an important facet of my research. It also allowed me to recognize unexpected connections between apparently unrelated pieces or ideas in order to mirror the eclectic range of sources that I draw upon in my practice. Some of the artworks in the final exhibition have developed directly out of the knowledge gained through preceding artworks; others were produced more intuitively.

Photography is my practice's starting point. My research methodology draws upon Gillian Rose's critical visual methodology, in which she lays out three steps to critically analyzing photography: to analyze images themselves closely, to consider the social

conditions and effects of visual objects, and to consider one's way of looking at images.<sup>73</sup> This methodology has been productive for analyzing images of the Caribbean, such as the similarities in images that appear when the names of Caribbean islands are input into search engines on the internet. (See Appendix 1). Rose's critical visual methodology has also been useful for critically analyzing my own photography in order to consider what has been photographed and how it might be interpreted by different audiences, familiar or unfamiliar with the topic, or if displayed in another location.

My practice branches out into installation, sound, video installation and performance, and the reframing of objects, text, and expressions. In light of the fact that photography only constitutes a part of my art practice, a broader methodology of art-based research has been useful to encompass the various parts of my production. Particularly appealing is the "methodological map of reflection" described in Graeme Sullivan's chapter "Practice and Beyond" in *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in Visual Art*. The methodological map of reflection allows for a defined direction but remains open-ended in its trajectory in order to produce a "practice that is particular, content-driven, self-critical, self-reflexive and contextualized".<sup>74</sup> Within this map, artists may have an end goal, a particular point they may want to make, but have the room to remain flexible in their process.

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<sup>73</sup> Gillian Rose. *Visual Methodologies: an Introduction to Interpreting Visual Objects*. London: SAGE, 2001, 15-16.

<sup>74</sup> Graeme Sullivan. "Practice and Beyond." In *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in Visual Art*. 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc, 2010), 85.

**BACK IN THE LAND - I gone to come back**

Working with these methodologies, I use the Anglo-Caribbean expression “back in the land” as an umbrella term for the field research that has been essential part of my research methods. This expression refers to the act of returning home. Home may be literal or metaphorical and returning may be from a trip abroad, a trip back on vacation or returning indefinitely. For my purposes, the use of the word “land” within the expression is contemplated critically. When one lives on only 430 km<sup>2</sup>, (170 sq mi) or 34 km x 24 km, surrounded by the sea, as is the case for the island of Barbados, it has always been my experience that the land, or the lack of it, paradoxically plays an important role in the social imaginary. At the same time, due to the relative youthfulness of many of these post-colonial countries, land comes to represent the nation. As Ben Heller articulates in *Landscape, Femininity and Caribbean Discourse*, “the attempt to connect landscape and humankind is an attempt to create an autochthonous culture and, thus, found both a nation and a sense of community of being a people”.<sup>75</sup> I correlate my own personal experience of landscape to Heller’s emphasis on the land as the grounding upon which these newly independent post-colonial Caribbean countries build their identities.

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<sup>75</sup> Ben A. Heller, "Landscape, Femininity, and Caribbean Discourse," *MLN* 111, no. 2 (1996): 403, doi: 10.1353/mln.1996.0024.

## **BACK IN THE LAND - Same Same but Different**

From May 24 to June 14, 2016, I participated in a three-week residency at Alice Yard in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.<sup>76</sup> Trinidad has many connections to Barbados. They both were British colonies at the time of independence, Barbados in 1966 and Trinidad in 1962. It is not unusual to find “Bajans” or “Trinis” with roots in each other’s country. My own family history lies within this case; my mother, maternal grandmother, and maternal great-grandparents were all born in Trinidad. More importantly, as my research looks to open up the homogenous understanding of the Caribbean landscape as “beach,” and to convey the actual multiplicity present from island to island, Trinidad was a key island to research, as its economy is largely based on petrochemicals.<sup>77</sup> First-hand experience of an island that is not reliant upon tourism was thus vital.

During the residency, walking around the city, visiting the countryside, meeting with local artists, doing studio visits with two emerging artists, attending an artist panel as well as presenting an artist talk at Alice Yard and doing a studio visit with Christopher Cozier, an internationally acclaimed Trinidadian contemporary artist and curator and co-founder of Alice Yard, were all important aspects of my field research. Discussing the ideas of landscape running through my body of work in the Caribbean context was productive and enriching. Maintaining a blog as a form of field notes was helpful in

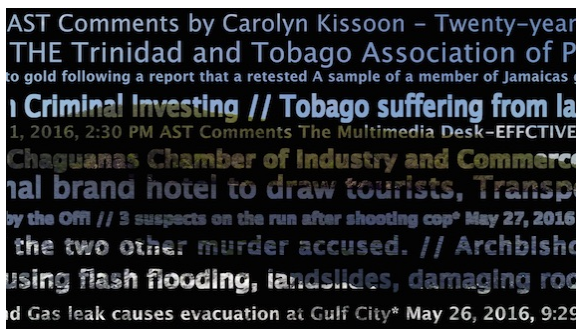
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<sup>76</sup> Alice Yard, accessed January 12, 2017, <http://www.aliceyard.blogspot.com>

<sup>77</sup> "Trinidad and Tobago Overview." September 16, 2016. Accessed February 19, 2017. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/trinidadandtobago/overview>.

processing the experience and information that I encountered and for posting images that were of interest to me.<sup>78</sup>

*Down the Islands*, a looped video, and *Untitled*, a large-scale photograph, were produced and exhibited at Alice Yard. They were developed in response to conversations with locals about how they viewed, both literally and metaphorically, the landscape. In these conversations, the two issues of an economy based largely on petrochemical production and societal violence were repeatedly brought up. Although they do not appear in the final thesis exhibition, these works were important for my process as they allowed me to reflect on the similarities and differences between the two nations. The residency and the development of the two artworks also required me to be open and attentive to what Trinidadians were saying, as I could not rely on previous knowledge of the landscape — an openness I drew upon in my self-directed residency later in Barbados.



Video Still, *Down the Islands* (2016), Alexandra Majerus



Untitled (2016), Alexandra Majerus

<sup>78</sup> Moves in Limbo, accessed January 12, 2017, <http://www.moves-in-limbo.blogspot.ca>

## **BACK IN THE LAND - The Rock**

Despite my ongoing connection to Barbados, returning to live there for close to two years in 2005 to 2006, visiting family annually and sustaining contacts in the art community, most of my adult life has been in Toronto. A self-directed residency in July 2016 was essential for conducting field research. This took the form of photography, videography, sketches, sound recordings and observations. My field research also took the form of immersive embodied knowledge to include swimming, walking, driving around,<sup>79</sup> and *liming*.<sup>80</sup> In order for me to be critically self-reflexive in my practice and not fall into creating representations of landscape that could be overly nostalgic or idealized, talking with family, friends and other locals was important for gathering and understanding various points of view in relation to the landscape.<sup>81</sup> These points of view ranged from agreeing with and participating in the construct of the island as paradise, to experiencing the landscape through living in a densely populated urban space or to living in a much more isolated landscape with a different intimacy to the land. Other perspectives varied from a relationship to the land and landscape that viewed it as claustrophobic or nurturing.

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<sup>79</sup> Driving is very much part of life in the Caribbean. It may be thought of as a disembodied experience but it is not disembodied there. It is a sweaty, stick to your car seat, sunburn your right arm out the window, hair-raising, eye-closing experience as large buses hurtle towards you on exceedingly narrow roads with tiny safety rails at the edge of gullies.

<sup>80</sup> Caribbean expression that means hanging out

<sup>81</sup> Nancy Duncan & James Duncan. "Doing Landscape Interpretation." In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography*, edited by Dydia DeLyser. (London: SAGE, 2009), 236-237.

While in Barbados, I recorded photos, videos and sound both in a deliberate manner with specific pieces in mind and randomly without a clear intention, as a means to open up to new ideas. Several days were spent in the countryside viewing and experiencing the variety of landscapes that exist in Barbados. In order to get a complete cross-section of landscapes, hours were spent walking around densely populated Bridgetown. Time was also spent on the coast, on the beach, swimming and on a boat, because while images of the beach have become representative of the entire region,<sup>82</sup> local daily life still takes place on the beach. One site that has become important to my work is Turner Hall Woods. The artwork *Fiction (the last 50 acres)* speaks to the only remaining fifty-acre area (0.2 km<sup>2</sup>) in Barbados that has original vegetation. Visiting Turner Hall Woods in July 2016 allowed the piece to develop further. Walking, and therefore looking, listening and smelling, was a form of embodied, heuristic research that allowed for deliberation on the historical and cultural meaning of that site.

### **Back in the Studio - Work Work Work**

In tandem with the field research, theoretical and literary research is crucial to me as a studio process. It provides a critical framework for analysis<sup>83</sup> and a solid grounding

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<sup>82</sup> Krista Thompson, *An Eye for the Tropics*, 281

<sup>83</sup> Questions of landscape within the Caribbean are multi-layered and cannot be considered without knowledge of the colonial history of the region, the sugar industry with its history of indentured servitude and slavery, the development of the tourist industry post-emancipation and the creation of post-colonial states.

for my conceptual approach to my artwork. Over and above the critical framework, the act of reading itself is a primary source of inspiration for my studio process and practice.

In the Caribbean, photographs have been produced primarily to be viewed and consumed by outsiders in the development of tourism since the late nineteenth century.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>85</sup> With the proliferation of mass tourism by the 1950s, images of beaches have become the primary signifier of the tropics.<sup>86</sup> As an artist, I am interested in what photography has meant historically and culturally and who decides upon this meanings. Fundamentally, my studio practice has been to question photography in order to reclaim the contents of the images. Strategies to counter the touristic gaze omnipresent in photographs of the Caribbean have ranged from altering print sizes, activating the space in order to implicate the viewer, denial of the visual by removing of the image entirely to rely on sound, inverting the image, using slow tempo in moving images, layering the image with text, and repetition.

Story-telling has been a studio strategy to reclaim the stereotypical images of the region. Across the Caribbean, regardless of language and culture, there is a history of playful use of written and oral language. Édouard Glissant ascribes the play in creole languages of the Caribbean as an act of “diversion” to transcend its colonial French origins. Characteristics of creole syntax, such as simplification, repetition, ambiguity, and the use of puns are cited as camouflage and trickery to take possession of the languages

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<sup>84</sup> Krista Thompson, *An Eye for the Tropics*, 4.

<sup>85</sup> Velvet Nelson, “The Landscape Reputation: Tourism and Identity in the Caribbean”, 176.

<sup>86</sup> Krista Thompson, *An Eye for the Tropics*, 281



imposed by colonial masters.<sup>87</sup> Examples of this can be found in many formats, such as call-and-response, and in everyday life, with playful and seemingly pointless use of language, for example the video seen on YouTube in which George Griffith recites all the words he can think of, and possibly making up a few, starting with the letter “a” until James Taitt calls out the next letter of the alphabet.<sup>88</sup> It can also be found in literature, music and theatre, such as, calypso tents in the southern Caribbean, where calypsonians compete with clever politically and socially-minded lyrics and *décima* competitions in the Spanish-Caribbean, in which the competitors challenge each other through improvisation using only eight-syllable phrases in ten-line stanzas. In my opinion, story-telling in its various formats has a greater audience than contemporary art and stories can be re-contextualized to broaden understanding and change our perception of the visual. The performativity of narrated text can also be used as a metaphor for cultural performativity. Thus, in appreciation of these varied uses of language, story-telling is used in my practice to activate new meanings in visual art.

While story-telling is not explicitly present in each of the final artworks present in *The View from (T)here*, it was an important development in my process. Over the course of my studio research, story-telling has been an important conceptual development in my process, allowing me to think through the touristic constructs to other understandings of

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<sup>87</sup> Glissant is looking specifically at French Creole but is relating it to the colonial languages of the Caribbean in broad terms. Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, 20-21.

<sup>88</sup> Hurley, Troy. “George Griffith & James Taitt”. September 28, 2010. Accessed February 19, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLN-lBxEuYo&t=6s>.

the land and landscape. Several artworks produced have used story-telling in a number of formats and, while not appearing in the final show, have been vital to my process. In my photo installation *Beach*, memories of Accra Beach, Barbados, are recorded onto the multiple copies of the same image of Accra. The stories were collected from a number of people in order to inscribe lived experience, from the mundane to the playful onto the beach over the privileged concept of paradise.



Detail, *Beach* (2015), Alexandra Majerus



Installation view, *Beach* (2015), Alexandra Majerus

In my video *El Dorado* (2016), short excerpts from *The Palace of the Peacock* by post-colonial author, Wilson Harris, are narrated over a repeating sequence of a paper boat floating across choppy water. Both the original text and the narrated, reconfigured text speak to repeated stories of power and colonialism with sentences such as, “You’ve got to earn your fortune, lad. Sometimes it is the saddest labour in the world”,<sup>89</sup> “They

<sup>89</sup> Wilson Harris, *Palace of the Peacock*, (London & Boston: Faber and Faber 1968), 87.

saw the naked unequivocal flowing of peril and beauty and soul of the pursued and pursuer altogether, and they knew they would perish if they dreamed to turn back”.<sup>90</sup>

As the impact of tourism plays a large role in my art practice, analysis of my work has on occasion reduced it to being about tourism itself. In fact, my work is as, or more, concerned with the problematics around tourism and looks to subvert the stereotypes of idyllic paradise to insert how locals understand landscape and transgress the disconnect between what is imagined to be and what is experienced. This reductive analysis is used as a catalyst to push my work further and I draw upon the literary genre “quantum reality”, as used by Wilson Harris in *Palace of the Peacock* in which time, space, life and death become ambiguous.<sup>91</sup> I also take up ambiguity in the sense of Glissant’s discussion on cross-cultural poetics, in which he argues that one strategy in cross-cultural conflict is opacity.<sup>92</sup> In other words, to make something opaque, or incomprehensible, is used in defiance of universalizing homogeneity. In its first stage of development, my artwork *Fiction (the last 50 acres)* was a still image accompanied by sound that I had intended to develop into a video installation upon my return to Barbados to record the footage. Instead, the artwork developed into a 5.1 stereo sound installation without a visual component, in order to fully embrace ambiguity through multiple shifting voices in an immersive sonic space. (This work is discussed in further detail on page 48). The removal

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 73.

<sup>91</sup> Michael Gilkes Interviews Sir Wilson Harris, *Kaieteur News*, July 18, 2010  
<http://www.kaieteurnewsonline.com/2010/07/18/michael-gilkes-interviews-sir-wilson-harris-2/>

<sup>92</sup> Édouard Glissant, translated by J. Michael Dash, *Caribbean Discourse Selected Essays*. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989), 133.

of the visual element not only denies the viewer the ability to look (and therefore judge and categorize), but also to bring in a feeling of disorientation. The movement of the voices and ambient sounds from speaker to speaker can stand in for the chaos of the Caribbean, much like Antonio Benítez-Rojo's description of the region as a "continuous flow of paradoxes", in which unpredictable flows and rhythms are part of the everyday.<sup>93</sup> *Fiction (the last 50 acres)* draws upon Edouard Glissant's demand for the right to obscurity in defiance of the homogenizing touristic gaze.

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<sup>93</sup> Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island*. 11.

### ***The View from (T)here* Thesis Exhibition**

The final artwork selected for *A View from (T)here* engages with photography as the departure point; however, the pieces incorporate a varied range of mediums, including multiple forms of installation composed of photography, video, objects and sound environment. Furthermore, curatorial strategies of staging are used to intervene and create a subversive site at the intersection of identity, landscape, tourism and aesthetics. Importantly, photography is used in the exhibition is not simply to consider this medium as a way to document, but rather as a means to creolize vision, contesting its original function. Photography is not used to merely witness, which would reiterate the history of the colonial / tourist gaze in the Caribbean, but rather to redefine the rules of representation created by and through global networks.<sup>94</sup> The exhibition attempts to redefine the rules by shifting the responsibility of the viewer from observation to participation.

### **The View from (T)here**

During my residency in Barbados, I began documenting several local liming spots with no initial intent. These documented spaces are where young people, in particular young men, frequently black, but not exclusively, would spend time, alone or together,

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<sup>94</sup> Isaac Julian, "Creolizing Vision," in *Créolité and Creolization: Documenta 11\_Platform 3* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2003), 150.

talking, playing dominos or just relaxing.<sup>95</sup> Photographing these sites made me think about different notions of down time and the cultural implications and pre-conceptions behind these. Having experienced many moments in Toronto, Canada, in which people would comment that people live on “island time” in the Caribbean, I reflect upon the latent racist presumptions behind those comments and how laziness was built into the rhetoric of slavery.<sup>96</sup> In Toronto, I would argue that spending time on a patio or in friends’ backyards is considered a privileged right and does not have the underlying layer of laziness. The photographs created a desire to put into question this dynamic. Why is “hanging out” in one country read differently than another? How can the North American viewer who frequently has the position of power within global geo-politics be put into a position to become aware of their positionality? Could “liming” in fact be a form of resistance to the Western cultural and capitalist necessity to always be busy? In order to consider these questions, an image of an old indoor couch frame repurposed to an impromptu outdoor sitting area on top of gabion weir (rocks encaged with wire) was enlarged to life size and placed low on the wall to be level with actual seats placed in the gallery. Two used monobloc<sup>97</sup> chairs and a side table are placed directly opposite the used

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<sup>95</sup> As per the CIA World Fact book, the demographics of Barbados are black 92.4%, white 2.7%, mixed 3.1%, East Indian 1.3%, other 0.2%, unspecified 0.2% (2010 est.), hence “liming” spots are predominantly black because the population is predominantly black.  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bb.html>

<sup>96</sup> Krista Thompson, *An Eye for the Tropics*, 50.

<sup>97</sup> Over my years in Toronto, monobloc plastic chairs have become emblematic of spending time in downtown backyards.

couch in the image. Viewers are invited to sit in the chairs in order to create a dialogue between the global north and the global south.

The landscape within the image is decidedly tropical with a large mango tree directly behind the couch frame. Both beautiful and excessively green, this artwork considers the passage in *Wide Sargasso Sea* in which the protagonist Rochester states “Everything is too much, [...] Too much blue, too much purple, too much green. The flowers too red, the mountains too high, the hills too near”.<sup>98</sup> Taming the landscape was a constant desire in colonial thinking and then in tourism promotion. However, the landscape has been so over-exploited and tamed that there is need for gabion weirs to prevent landslides. The green is not excessive: it is not a tropical paradisiacal luxury, but a necessity.

### **Passage from One Place to Another**

Hammocks are not unusual visual tropes in tourism photography. They speak to the idea of relaxing and being catered to. *Passage from One Place to Another*, an installation of a hammock, hand-made out of TTC transfers and blue thread, and an image of a plaque from the Dufferin Subway Station eastbound platform, draws upon the tenuous idea of vacation. Vacation involves the fantasy of being rich for the defined duration of a trip, frequently taken on credit. The TTC transit transfers speak to the work that is involved in having the opportunity to go on vacation and the fragile blue strings,

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<sup>98</sup> Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (England: Penguin Books, 1968), 59.

the colour of the sea or the Barbadian flag, delicately hold this fantasy together. Equally, the hammock may represent nostalgia. I live near a Caribbean neighbourhood in Toronto and take transit to my job at 6:00 a.m. on the weekends. I usually find myself in transit with shift workers, often other immigrants and often visible minorities. The hammock may represent a longing to return home to warmer climates; or, the hammock may represent the fantasy of the first world in reverse. Growing up in what is normally considered paradise, I grew up with the opposite fantasy, that not of going to the beach but rather going to the city and having the opportunities that are available in the North.

**Made in \_\_\_\_\_ (working title)**

*Made in \_\_\_\_\_* takes up a theme of subtle resistance in which natural sea sponges are shaped into stylized souvenirs and put on display for sale. Purchased in Cuba, the sponges' original uneven sizes, textures and shapes reference real nature, but also function as metaphors for individual islands. The region is in fact much more visually diverse in its topography than is evidenced in visual culture. The Caribbean countries range from island to part of a landmass, from flat to mountainous, from arid to rainy to swampy, from volcanic to limestone, from small to large. However, the islands in particular have been homogenized into similar images of the beach ringed by coconut trees. However, people have to make do and if their means for survival is to create an environment of desire then this in itself becomes an act of resistance. The perfectly shaped sponges, available for sale during the course of the exhibition constitute an act of



subversion. Should the sponges sell during the course of the exhibition, new ones will be carved on site to replenish the product, thus metaphorically reclaiming the land by actively manipulating the notion of paradise and pointing out that what is desired is not real. This can be connected back to Vásquez's subversion of the postcards described in *Looking Back*. The sponges become a subtle mocking of the consumer by producing and charging for what is idealized but also constructed.

### **Welcome to Barbados / Back on the Rock**

*Welcome to Barbados / Back on the Rock* is a wall installation of eleven images of tourism posters. It reuses a common poster header from the 1980s that is a recognizable reference to the tourism industry but also was very much part of my visual culture as a young person and has a certain nostalgia for me. Inserted below the header is an image of the beach on the west coast of Barbados, frequently labeled the gold coast. On the leeward side of the island, the west coast beaches are long and flat and the sea is typically calm, hence perfect for hotels. While beaches in Barbados remain legally public, public access has become more difficult as the coast becomes increasingly built up. This is demonstrated in Barbadian artist Annalee Davis's video performance, *Public Beach Access* (2010), in which she measures all the public access points along the west coast, concluding that access has now been limited to 142 feet or 0.027 miles along the seven mile stretch.<sup>99</sup> Sequentially through the eleven posters, the image of the beach gradually

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<sup>99</sup> Annalee Davis, "Public Beach Access," *Annalee Davis*, 2010, accessed February 15, 2017, <http://www.annaleedavis.com/>.

becomes replaced with an image of the surface of a chunk of limestone picked up from a landslide site in White Hill, Barbados, an area prone to landslides due heavy rainfalls combined with deforestation and unsound agricultural practices.<sup>100</sup> The image suggests environmental concerns created through historical and contemporary global practices, but also plays with the local nickname of Barbados, “the rock”, which is used colloquially with affection and frustration. For the duration of the exhibition, the food and drink table will be placed adjacent or in front of the posters re-creating a corner or environment reminiscent of the walls of a rum shop, the most popular form of local bars on the island.

### **Traverse**

The Caribbean Sea divides but also connects the various nations. Historically, it acted as a point of rupture and trauma as enslaved persons were transported across the Atlantic into the Caribbean. That trauma has endured to contemporary times as an unknown number of people have died at open sea between Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, Haiti and Cuba, Jamaican and Cuba, Cuba and Florida. The sea also provides a tempo to life on an island. It can provide nourishment. Some people swim daily, some people fish, some dive and surf. Others do not know how to swim at all. And, it is ever present in the fantasy of paradise. *Traverse* is a three-minute looped video of the Caribbean Sea. Rear-projected onto the window, *Traverse* evokes a passage from outside

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<sup>100</sup> Kareem J. Sabir and Robin Mahom. "Selecting priority areas in the Scotland District for reforestation under the Sustainable Land Management Project of the NCC/OAS." 2010. Accessed January 01, 2017. [http://www.cavehill.uwi.edu/cermes/docs/technical\\_reports/sabir\\_2010\\_reforestation\\_priority\\_areas\\_scotland\\_d.aspx](http://www.cavehill.uwi.edu/cermes/docs/technical_reports/sabir_2010_reforestation_priority_areas_scotland_d.aspx), 37.

the gallery to inside the gallery, from here to there. The moving water is compelling to watch but the projection is inverted vertically to create a subtly disorienting effect. Water connects and is welcoming but can also erase, overwhelm and subsume.

### **Fiction (the last 50 acres)**

As discussed, the dominance of the tourist industry in the Caribbean has engendered ways of seeing that have led to homogenizing, stereotypical images and constructs of the region. As a 5.1 sound installation, *Fiction (the last fifty acres)* looks to contest and complicate the image by denying the visual aspect. The viewer must create the image in their mind and reconsider tropes of representation within the framework of capitalism. Field recordings of ambient sound in Turner Hall Woods, which as previously mentioned, is the only remaining area fifty acres of the island (0.02%) with original vegetation. The small area begs the question of what happened to the rest of the land and underscores the fact that the island was cleared for sugar cane plantations. The remaining forest has an underlying history of violence, unspoken but inherent in it. The ambient sounds are layered with field recordings of the sound of walking through nearby sugar cane fields. It also takes up subjectivity and agency through the expression of culture by further layering the soundtrack with three voices narrating short excerpts from two contemporary and two post-colonial Caribbean novels: *Miguel Street* by V.S Naipaul (1959), *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys (1966), *Pearl* by Melanie Springer (2009) and *A Brief History of Seven Killings* by Marlon James (2014). The selected excerpts speak of

and to the landscape and the history of colonialism and violence upon it. The narrated text is remixed to create a new equally ambiguous narrative with no beginning, middle or end, remaining open to interpretation. Its theatrical quality nods to the history of literature and theatre in the region. Although the meaning is inconclusive, familiarity with narrative makes it accessible. The voices present belong to my cousin, Douglas Stewart, my cousin-in-law, Rachel Gibbs-Stewart and myself. Each voice comes with a different cadence and level of Barbadian accent, proposing that there could be different readings and perspectives to one scene. *Fiction (the last fifty acres)* uses the imagination, memory and language to open up the construct of the image and evokes the hybrid nature of Caribbean identity.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Marika Preziuso, "Mapping the Lived–Imagined Caribbean: Postcolonial Geographies in the Literature of the ‘Diasporic’ Caribbean," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 31, no. 2 (2010): 146-147, doi: 10.1080/07256861003606374.

## Conclusion

It is unlikely that tourism will stop being the dominant industry in Barbados in the near future. Nor are all aspects of tourism negative. However, with this thesis, I work towards that strategies that counter the construct of paradise imposed upon Barbados and many Caribbean islands through a history of colonialism and now corporate tourism. The reflections upon which this thesis is based respond to my personal desire to find ways to tell stories of experiences of the land and the landscape in the Caribbean region that do not fit into the contemporary global conception of it. This research is to offer stories that are more reflective of there, but that also complicate the understanding from here. It is also to point to how, on a larger scale, alternative ways of viewing and understanding offer a broader and more complex understanding of the world than the Eurocentric, capitalistic consensus.

Through this process, I have come to recognize story-telling and ambiguity as new tools (that have existed before me) in my studio practice that I will continue to embrace. It is my objective to continue this conversation of an alternative reading to the contemporary artistic and theoretical analysis of the Caribbean.

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# Appendix A

Screen Shots captured March 20, 2017

