

Next Level  
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### Blue Curry: Like Taking Sand to the Beach

The Bahamas is the kind of place where you can lose your way. The landscape is shifting and changing so quickly that it is no longer wise to provide directions based on landmarks and one's recollection of a street, neighborhood or beach. A fugitive signifier, it is constantly slipping away from the native, into the postcard, into the brochure, into that commercial that always plays on the snowiest, coldest days in northern countries, into the perfection of a sun that never burns, a sky from which rain will not fall, a pristine sea that never tells its true stories, and sand that is so clean it seems as if it has been waiting for centuries just for your footprint. How can one infiltrate this mythology: Intervene in a consumerable imagination? Not to replace it, but undress it as neo-colonial drag?

In Blue Curry's *Like Taking Sand to the Beach* the artist's use of archeological documentation and retrieval processes to transport sand in The Bahamas to a gallery in Germany, allows for the interpolation of the physical, social, and economic narratives of space in The Bahamas with the re-imagined discourse of mass tourism that has been crafted around them and communicated over and over again through print and electronic media. A perceptual understanding of The Bahamas lies within this somewhere nowhere of the global tourist imaginary.

With clinical precision Curry mapped and excavated a portion of beach on the eastern part of the main island of New Providence. The process of collecting, packaging, weighing and shipping the bags of sand to Germany and the installation of the sand in the gallery (in the exact order it was gathered and covering the exact same amount of ground space in the Gallery as it did on the beach), while documenting every step, mimics the actions of early European explorers and 'scientists' who came to the Caribbean and gathered flora, fauna and cultural artifacts for further study. However when the exhibition period has ended in Germany, the sand will once again be mapped, packaged, weighed and returned to the beach from where it was removed, bringing an ethical dimension to Curry's process absent in the historical one he quotes.

While Curry's photographic records of the sand at the beach and in the gallery alludes to visual paradoxes found in the work of Chema Madoz, his conscious desire to penetrate the imagined world of the tourist brochure with socio-economic narratives of the Bahamian beach and sand links his project's conceptual energy to the work of Belgian artist Francis Alÿs.

Like Alÿs' *When Faith Moves Mountains*, which occurred in the sand dunes surrounding Lima, Peru in 2002, Curry's excavation of paradise offers its own translation of social complexities into narrative form.

His retrieval site is an infamous point of early morning entry for illegal immigrants to The Bahamas. The evidence of their hurried arrival and equally swift disappearance into the population is usually found in the collection of personal items left behind in the sand: single pairs of shoes, Haitian Creole bibles, soiled clothing. Later in the day many Bahamians will come to the same beach (one of the few left to public access, but now slated for development) to picnic, play in the sand and swim in the water. Still later, immigrants and residents will encounter this beach or one quite similar in a magazine ad or commercial.

Drained of the native, they will completely be unable to locate any reference of their presence in that space. As if nature itself aided and abetted this fantasy, during his excavation and retrieval, Curry unearthed only one picnic fork. There was no other evidence of occupation.

Like *Taking Sand to the Beach* is a deconstruction of a marketable Eden from the inside out. Curry has dissected the tourist brochure to its basic components, separated the element of sand physically and metaphorically from a system of relations that has given it meaning and exported it, duty free, to a market that has been taught to desire it and know it always from a distance.

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