Nari Ward reveals the potential energy of unlikely objects and places, acting as an alchemist to infuse discarded artifacts and otherwise overlooked geographies with resonance and meaning. Ward has always been drawn to that which has been forgotten. For example, in his project *The Great American Revival* he collected items from yard sales outside Philadelphia and created a display that was part religious revival tent and part car showroom. Other projects like *Rites of Way* and *Diamond Gym* used dense assemblies of quotidian objects like plastic beads and fitness equipment to create surprisingly beautiful community hubs for gathering and storytelling. In focusing our attention on the discarded, he reveals complex emotional registers inherent within everyday objects, and nearly forgotten histories.

For *Sub Mirage Lignum* Ward continues to mine left-behind materials and places. The title represents the three main themes in the exhibition: sub, in the dual sense of “underneath” and “substitute for another (space)”; mirage, a false, fleeting image produced by the refraction of light, desire, and interpretation; and lignum, derived from *Lignum Vitae* (“wood of life”), a tree whose bloom is the national flower of Jamaica. Here, he focuses on two seemingly oppositional locations, the tropics of Jamaica and the postindustrial factory town of North Adams, the former as his own place of birth and the latter as the birthplace of this, his newest exhibition. In the end, *Sub Mirage Lignum* merges place and material to create a new hybrid zone where the real and the imaginary are intermingled, where electronic capacitors and old fabric swatches found at MASS MoCA (remnants of the site’s former industrial tenants) are woven together with the material culture of Jamaica, mango seeds and lignum vitae tourist trinkets, market shanties and fish traps.

*Sub Mirage Lignum* is made up of five distinct works:

Though a relatively poor country, Jamaica is home to a vital fishing trade as well as a booming tourist business, both of which are referenced in *Stall* whose ad hoc structures recall both temporary fishing encampments and rudimentary marketplace shacks found in Jamaica. For *Stall*, Ward recorded sellers in a Jamaican market calling to him to buy their tourist wares (just as the artist seems to be inviting visitors to see his show). On the outside of the stalls are fabric patterns derived from those printed at Arnold Print Works (which occupied this space from
Nari Ward (b. St. Andrews, Jamaica) lives and works in New York. He received a BA from Hunter College, where he teaches, and an MFA from Brooklyn College. Ward’s work was included in Prospect 1: New Orleans Biennial (2008); The Whitney Biennial, New York (2006); and Documenta XI, Kassel, Germany (2003). He has exhibited at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit. Solo exhibitions include LIVESupport, Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York; Episodes, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston; The Refinery, X: A small twist of fate, Palazzo delle Papesse Centro Arte Contemporanea, Siena, Italy; and Rites of Way, Walker Art Center. Ward has received commissions from the United Nations and the World Health Organization, and awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the National Endowment for the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts, John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, and the Pollock-Krasner Foundation.

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