

Dionne Benjamin-Smith

Graphic Designer, Printmaker



- Born in 1970 in Nassau, The Bahamas
- Received an AA in Fine Art in from the College of The Bahamas in 1986 and a BFA in Graphic Design from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1991
- She and her husband own and operate Smith & Benjamin Art & Design, a graphic design firm located in Nassau, The Bahamas
- She has been featured in exhibitions and texts both locally and internationally

Artist Statement

“The crack that broke this church in half was indicative to me of the state of affairs of “The Church” as a whole in The Bahamas. Between some men of God being exposed as adulterers and paedophiles, to church-folk back-biting and tearing each other down, to pastors leading their flock into all kinds of questionable dogma and situations, there was very little Christianity being demonstrated anywhere. (The) article and photo represented the state of affairs as I saw it. The words of the article are showcased (in the work), and certain words are highlighted for added meaning. As relayed in the Bible, a house that is built on sand does not stand. The actual event of this little church breaking open from its foundation is almost prophetic and is representative of this scripture – the church falls apart when its teachings and true purpose are cracked and warped.”

From the collection: *Built on Sand* (2003) by Dionne Benjamin-Smith

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by Natalie Willis



Built on Sand (2003) by Dionne Benjamin-Smith, is in some ways the sister work to “Bishops, bishops everywhere and not a drop to drink,” (2003). Both works are of the same dimensions, which instantly makes us as viewers try to compare them and view them in the same plane when they are placed near each other, but, it is the critique and use of religion as their subject that makes them read like chapters in a book, feeding into each other and helping to inform a greater whole. Also, acquired in 2003 at the inception of the NAGB, *Built on Sand* is a testament, if you’ll forgive the

pun, to Benjamin-Smith's work in regards to her criticality of Bahamian social conditions. She is a creative practitioner, who works as both a visual artist and a graphic artist, and who proudly identifies as Christian as so many Bahamians do. She presents accessibility in her spirit and life, as well as her practice, and communication is, of course, key.

The piece started out of ruminations on an article that Benjamin-Smith read in the paper featuring a photo of an Eleutheran church that “developed a large and devastating crack” that extended from the foundation to the roof. How could something so symbolic not call for artistic interpretation and metaphor?



Installation view of *Built on Sand* (2003). Part of the National Collection.

[Click here to read more: From the Collection: Built on Sand by Dionne Benjamin-Smith](#)