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## Painting the town

Art



**FREEZE FRAME**  
Tavares Strachan strikes cold in Alaska.

### Ice breaker

During one of the hottest weeks in July, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts in Soho and Pierogi in Williamsburg were anxiously awaiting the delivery of a four-and-a-half-ton block of Alaskan ice—part of *The Distance Between What We Have and What We Want*, by 26-year-old artist Tavares Strachan. But although the galleries are cosponsoring the project, the gargantuan ice cube was not bound for New York. Its final destination was Strachan's hometown of Nassau, Bahamas, where it will be displayed at Aubrey Sayle Primary School, the artist's alma mater (he also holds an M.F.A. from Yale).

TONY reached Strachan in Fairbanks, Alaska, where he harvested the ice block (with professional help) and was preparing to ship it to the Caribbean in time for the Friday 27 opening. Over a choppy cell-phone connection, he outlined his plan for uniting two contrasting climates: A solar-driven unit will harness tropical light to power a glass freezer housing the ice.

Strachan's work draws equally from technology and nature; he once amplified the sound of a living ant's

footsteps in real time. "I've always been interested in revealing an invisible thing," he explains, adding, "A lot of artists have exploited science over the years, but my main focus is the human experience of scientific phenomena."

In recent months, Strachan has been visiting grade schools in Nassau, lecturing children on environmental and cultural issues related to his expedition. Strachan laughingly recalls one teaching experience: "I had just been talking about the freezing properties of water and I showed the kids photos of me standing on the ice. One of them said, 'You're walking on water!'"

Though not quite a miracle worker, Strachan does have a knack for conjuring spectacles: He's planning an elaborate flag-waving ceremony for the opening, complete with costume-wearing guards. Once *The Distance Between What We Have and What We Want* closes at the end of August, it will be stored until December, when it will become part of another kind of spectacle, Art Basel Miami.—Emily Weiner

For more information visit [distancebetween.org](http://distancebetween.org).