

Protected: As Far As the Eyes Can See

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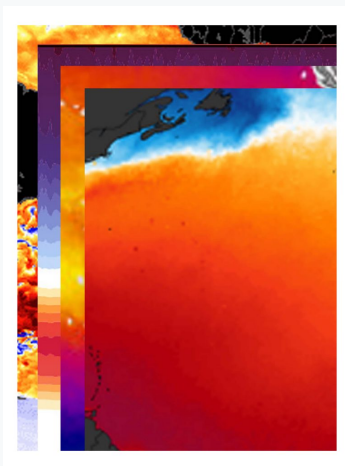
Lionel Cruet



Lionel Cruet, *As Far As the Eyes Can See*, 2022, Installation view

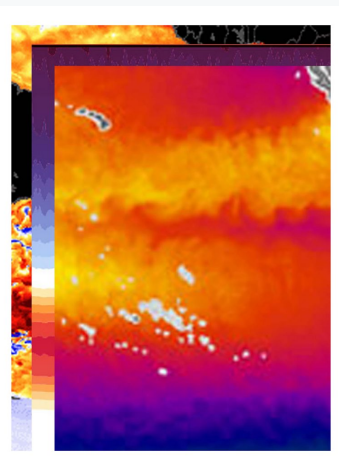
In his most recent series of experimental photographic prints, *As Far As the Eyes Can See*, Puerto Rican artist Lionel Cruet explores oceans in light of ecological interconnectivity and climate change. With a vision and visual vocabulary firmly rooted in tropical island coastlines, Cruet has been searching for the line where the sky meets the sea—as far as the eyes can see—and has located something that reaches beyond small island realities.

Specialists have been studying the effects of human intervention on the environment for decades and the Caribbean has emerged as particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of global warming. Hurricanes have become more intense and frequent, sea levels continue to rise, and coastal erosion is displacing people from locales settled for generations. The effects of climate change are now a global reality as we white-knuckle our way through, searching for ways to stop or reverse the process.



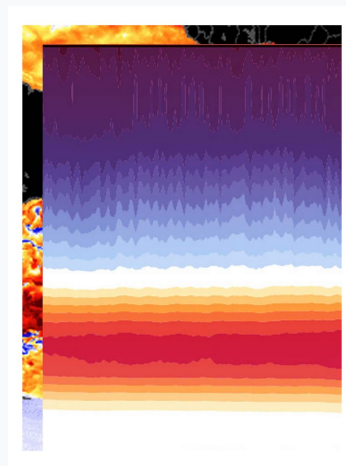
Lionel Cruet, *Atlantic Detail*, 2022, Photographic print, 48" x 36"

Lionel Cruet, *Stack 1*, 2022, Photographic print, 48" x 36"



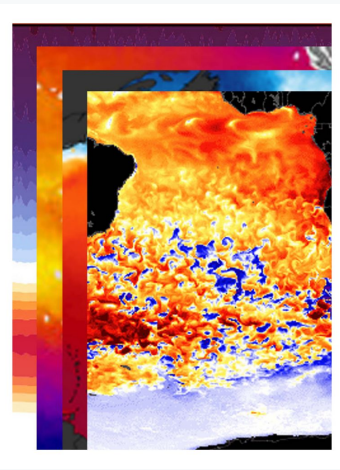
Lionel Cruet, *Pacific Detail*, 2022, Photographic print, 48" x 36"

Lionel Cruet, *Stack 2*, 2022, Photographic print, 48" x 36"



Lionel Cruet, *Global Average*, 2022, Photographic print, 48" x 36"

Lionel Cruet, *South Atlantic Detail*, 2022, Photographic print, 48" x 36"



Cruet's use of aerial and low-angle views reflect a relationship between the local and the global: the sky seen from the ground in Puerto Rico, the oceans seen from far above—a meeting point between scientific technology and his artistic use of projectors, screens, and software. The images nestle on top of one another in layers like too many windows opened on your computer, or the climate studies that continue to pile up. His compositions, created from layers of aerial thermal images of the ocean, juxtapose warm and cold colors that signify changes in ocean temperatures. Each image challenges the idea of divided oceans, conceptualizing them instead as a single body of water threatened by the catastrophic effects of climate change—pollution, global warming, extreme weather events, widespread erosion, population displacement, and ultimately, species extinction. Some elements are abstract, while others are easily recognizable: silhouettes of mangroves, backlit palm trees, sand, sea, someone looking up at the sky at sunset.

The prints incorporate Cruet's imagery with infrared technology and satellite imaging, anchoring his aesthetic in empirically derived data. They disrupt traditional visualizations of the ocean, displacing blue for bright reds, oranges, and yellows to reference the increases in water temperature documented by researchers and demonstrated through scientific data—an alarming development that transcends geographical and political borders. For instance, *Pacific Detail* (2022) depicts global sea surface temperatures taken on August 27, 2003 by Japan National Space Development Agency's (NASDA) AMSR-E instrument aboard NASA's Aqua spacecraft. The original image depicts in false colors the surface water temperatures, which range from -2°C (28°F) in the darkest sections to 35°C (95°F) in the brightest yellow-white regions. Sea ice is depicted in white, while land is depicted in dark gray. Intermingling scientific imaging techniques with graphic design and other artistic sleights of hand, Cruet invites us to confront the emergency we have ignored and the catastrophes our denial has catalyzed, presenting us with a Caribbean that is not localized nor isolated, but part of an ecological crisis that is expansive, interconnected, and global.

— JG



Lionel Cruet

Lionel Cruet (b. San Juan, Puerto Rico) uses experimental digital printing processes, performance, and audiovisual installations to confront intersections of ecology, technology, and geopolitics. His solo exhibitions have been held at Bronx River Art Center and El Lobi, San Juan, and his work has been included in group exhibitions at Bronx Museum of the Arts and Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse. Cruet received the Juan Downey Audiovisual Award from the 11th Media Arts Biennale, National Museum of Fine Arts, Santiago, Chile. He has been an artist in residence at Elizabeth Foundation of the Arts, Socrates Sculpture Park, and the Laundromat Project (NY).

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