



Lionel Cruet: Creativity Determines Our Future on Planet Earth

"The ocean is a single, interconnected body of water," says environmental artist Lionel Cruet. "The idea that different parts of it can be isolated from one another is a thing of the past."

To Lionel, the idea that anything on Earth—humans, animal habitats, bodies of water—could be separated from itself or the surrounding environment is a dangerous illusion. "This realization has become increasingly important as we face the threat of pollution, global warming, and other consequences of climate change," he continues, explaining the idea behind *As Far as the Eyes Can See*, a recent photographic series that pinpoints ocean hotspots with thermal technology. "Creating [*As Far as the Eyes Can See*] was an opportunity to explore the origins of the radical weather patterns we're experiencing," Lionel says, "as well as phenomena such as devastating hurricanes, erosion, and species extinction."

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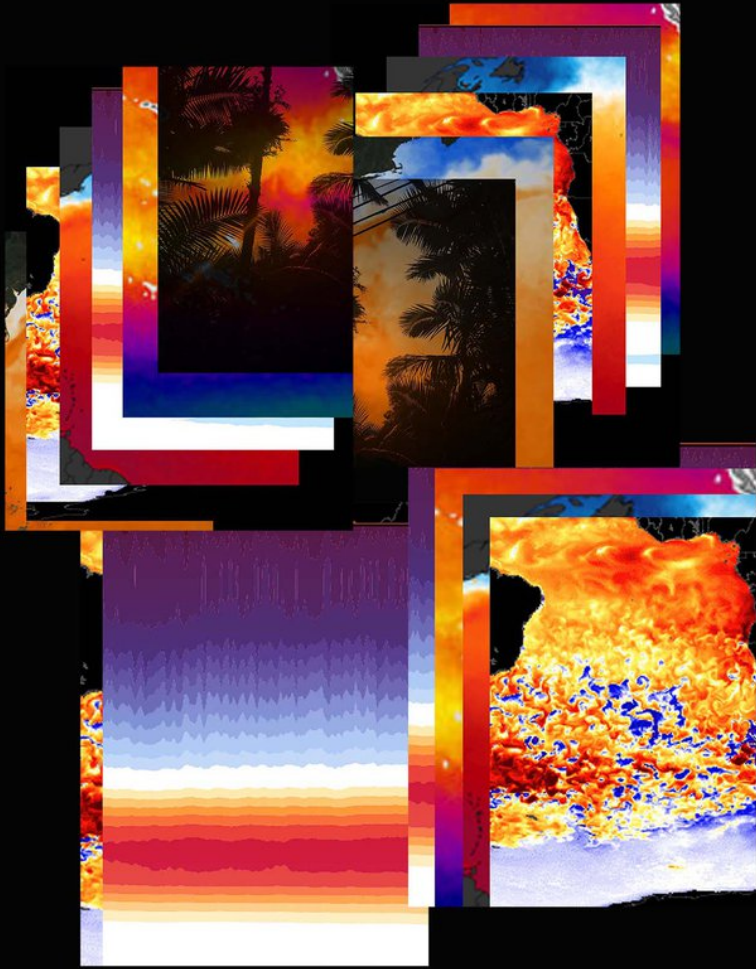


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'As Far as the Eyes Can See' photo: Xavier Ojeda

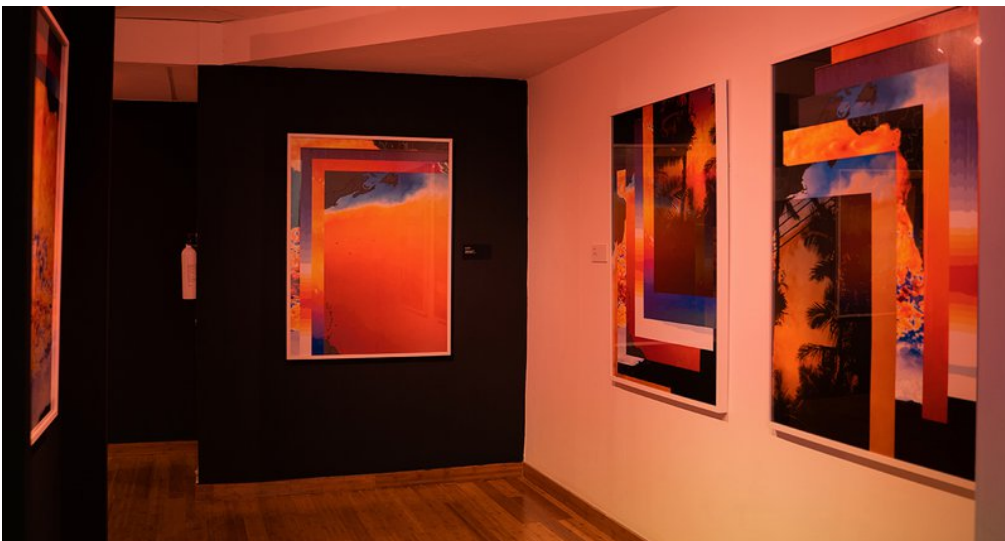


'As Far as the Eyes Can See' (left) and 'Untitled'; photo: Jakob Dahlin and EFA Project Space NYC

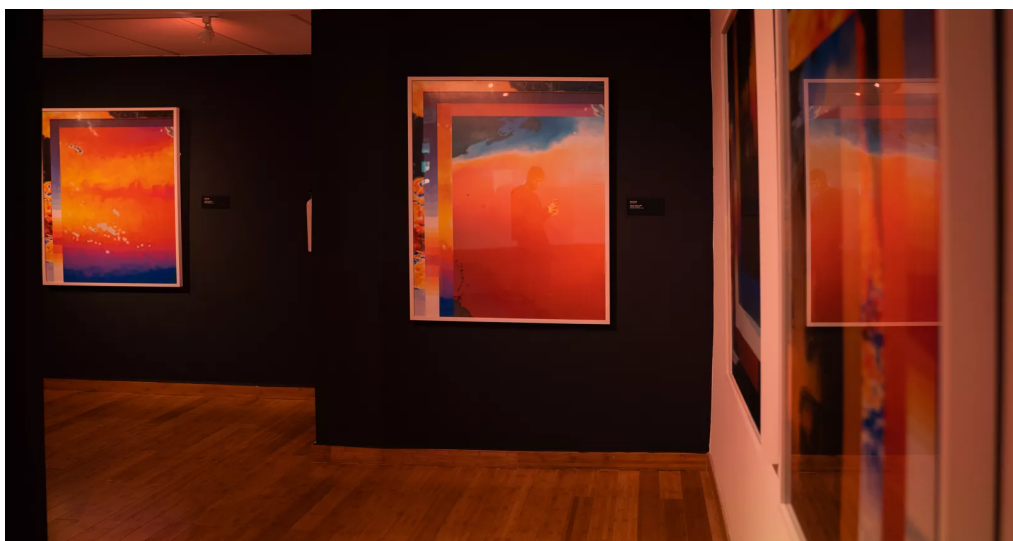
Splitting time between NYC and his home city of San Juan, Puerto Rico, Lionel examines climate change through a geopolitical lens, creating works that educate viewers on the mechanisms behind global warming and pollution. “[My work] interrogates the perception of the Caribbean as a paradise,” he says. “How reproduction, images, and media—in the service of tourism—play a role in a globalization impacting local communities.” Grounded in ecology, technology, and geopolitics, Lionel’s work is a color-saturated cocktail of mediums, equal parts performance art, audiovisual installation, and experimental photo process. Often bathed in warm light, his immersive installations and performance pieces suggest a rapidly warming climate from which there is no escape.

“Climate change has a significant impact on both the environment and the people who are in areas of risk,” says Lionel when asked about his home island of Puerto Rico. Still, the educator and activist has reason to believe that the human spirit will win out in the end: “Resilience is a word that has been used to refer to new adaptations that people and communities have to undertake in order to have a future that is a symbiotic relationship with an ever-changing environment,” he tells NOT REAL ART. “This is the moment where creativity plays a significant role in how we envision our own future.”

“This is the moment where creativity plays a significant role in how we envision our own future.” — Lionel Cruet



'As Far as the Eyes Can See' (installation view); photo: Xavier Ojeda



'As Far as the Eyes Can See' (installation view); photo: Xavier Ojeda



'Exercises to Understand How to Be Together' (video still); photo: Lionel Cruet Studio



'Exercises to Understand How to Be Together' (video still); photo: Lionel Cruet Studio



'Exercises to Understand How to Be Together' (video still); photo: Lionel Cruet Studio



'Exercises to Understand How to Be Together' (installation view); photo: SILENTE S.A.V.



'Exercises to Understand How to Be Together' (installation view); photo: SILENTE S.A.V.



'Sun Simulacrum' (performance still); photo: Lionel Cruet Studio



'Sun Simulacrum' (performance still); photo: Lionel Cruet Studio



'Sun Simulacrum' (performance still); photo: Lionel Cruet Studio

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Posted by Morgan Laurens
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Morgan Laurens

Morgan Laurens (she/her/hers) is NOT REAL ART's editor in chief. Morgan is an arts writer from the Midwest who enjoys saying "excuse me" when no actual pardon is needed. She specializes in grant writing and narrative-based storytelling for mission-driven artists and arts organizations. With a background in printmaking, pop culture, and classic literature, Morgan believes a girl's best friend is the pile of books on her bedside table.

