

## The Future of Art: Lionel Cruet

By Rachel

*The Future of Art is an interview series where I speak with artists on the topics of sustainability and climate change in relation to their artistic practices. The series aims to explore a range of viewpoints, not only those of artists working directly with these topics but also how it affects the practices of all artists, no matter their chosen themes or mediums.*

Our next artist is [Lionel Cruet](#). Lionel was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico and lives and works between New York and San Juan. He works across various mediums in order to explore topics related to economics, geopolitics, and technology.

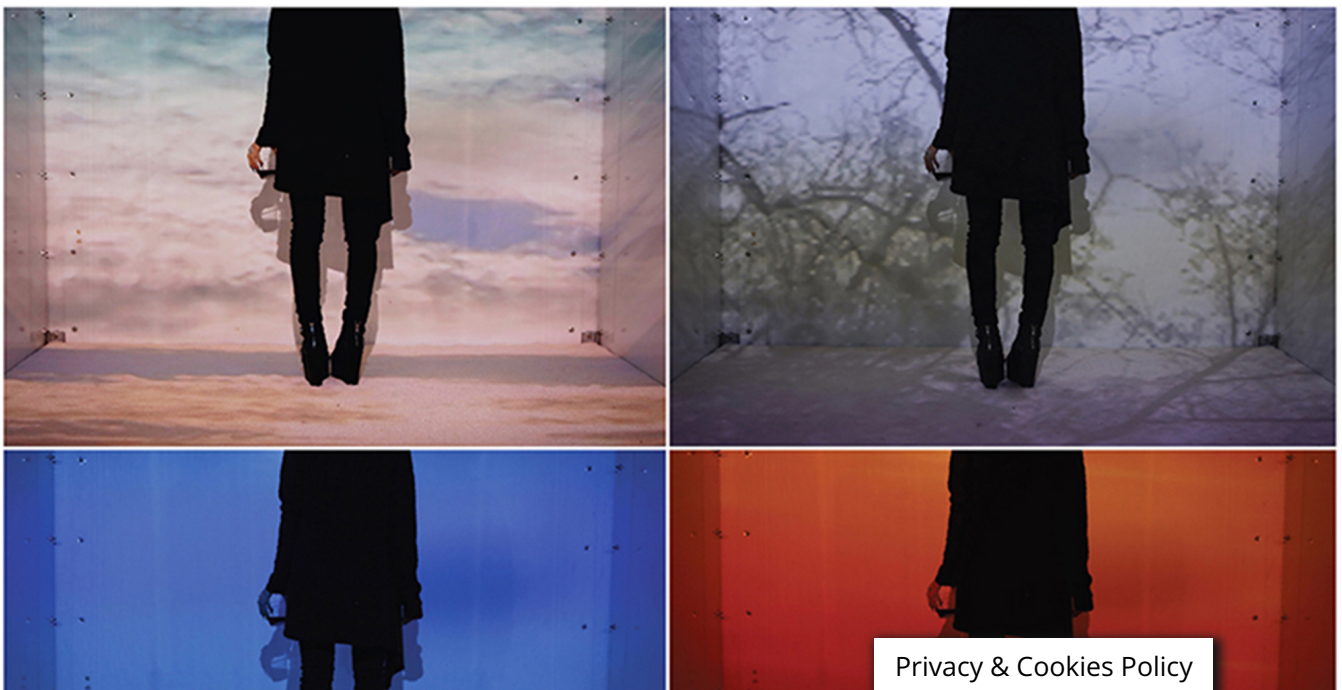


*Espacio Intangible (Intangible Space), 2014. Exterior view. Audiovisual installation in storage container, 7' x 16' x 8'. © Lionel Cruet, 2014. Image by Pablo Corradi*

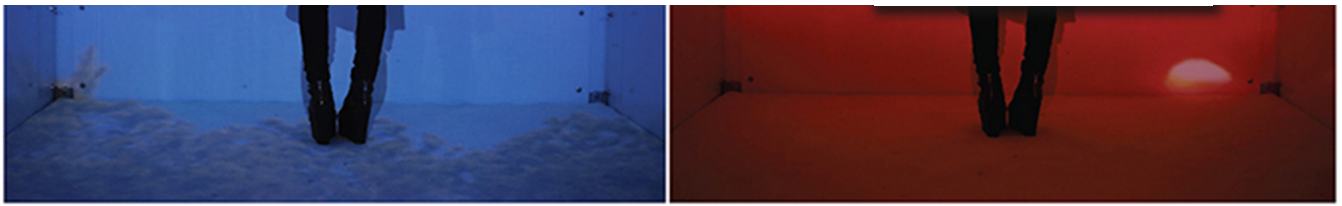
*Tell us about your art. What do you create and why?*

I create large-scale audio and visual installations, experimental digital prints, sound arrangements in space and videos to recreate spaces, memories, and experiences using imagery of natural spaces as a metaphor to understand the complex and interconnected realities we all live in. The sources that serve to create the installations come mostly from a digital form, archival material, thus, the generated artworks are research-based.

Images of obscure natural spaces and elements that define our intimate relationship to spaces, such as storage containers, sounds, voices and songs of proclamations in the void, become the aesthetics of the work. Through my artworks and practice I am constantly confronting geopolitical issues, states de facto, economics, the act of speculation and testimonials about the relations that we create to spaces and natural environments; always underlining a conceptual framework that comes from my experiences as a Caribbean colonial and post-colonial being as it is in dialogue with the rest of the world.







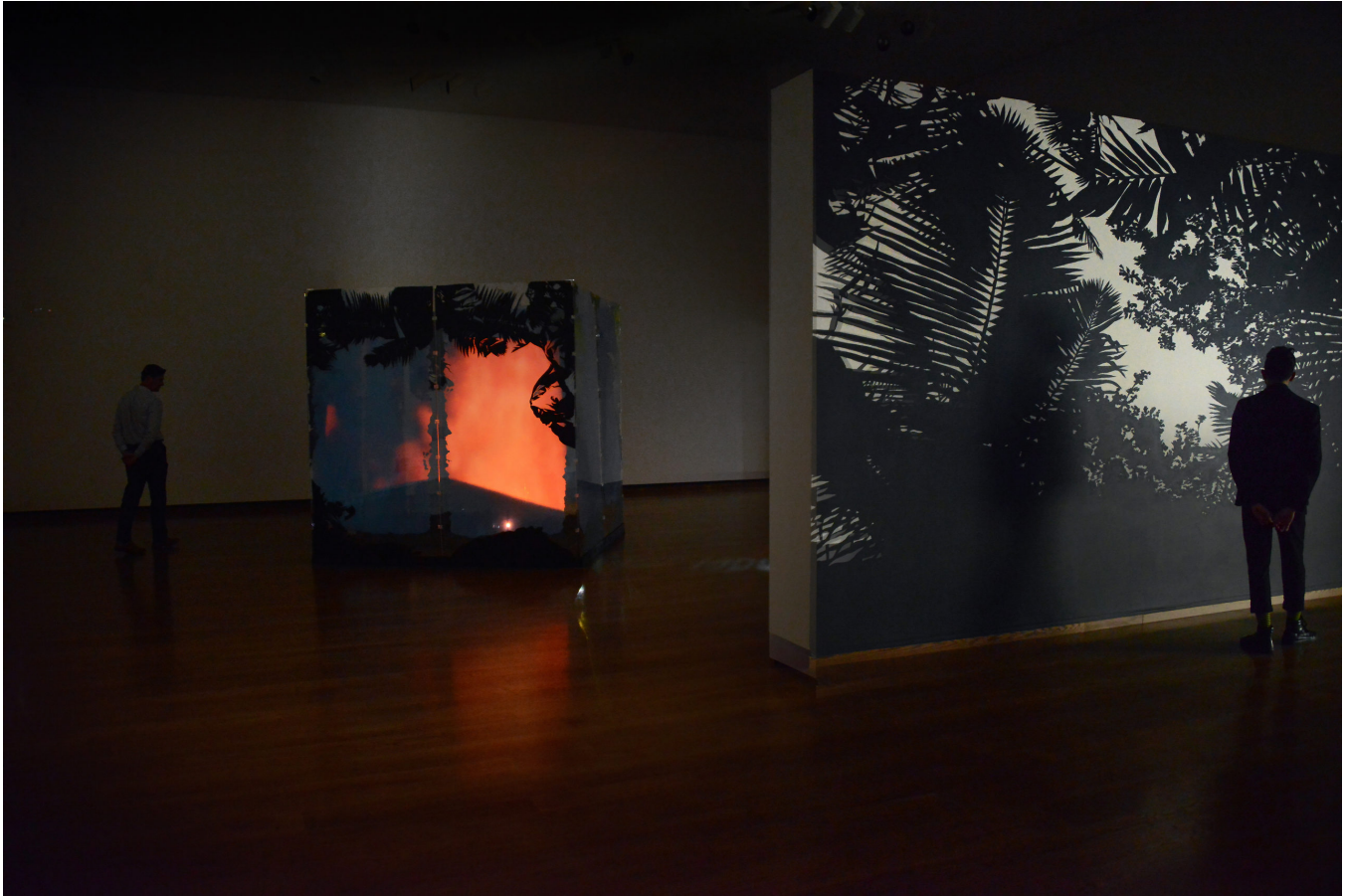
*Espacio Intangible (Intangible Space), 2014. Interior view sequence. Audiovisual installation in storage container, 7' x 16' x 8'. © Lionel Cruet, 2014. Image by Pablo Corradi*



*Espacio Intangible (Intangible Space), 2014. Exterior view. Audiovisual installation in storage container, 7' x 16' x 8'. © Lionel Cruet, 2014. Image by Pablo Corradi*

*How long have you been practicing as an artist?*

I have been working as an artist from a very early age, but the point that marks a professional exposure happened 6 years ago. Since then I have perfected the mediums I work with, as well as the intentions on how my art production happens.



*At the End of Daybreak, 2017, vegetation mural and audiovisual installation on translucent cube, variable dimensions © Lionel Cruet 2017. Image by Everson Museum of Art*

*How have the topics of climate change and/or sustainability affected your artistic practice either directly or indirectly?*

Climate change and sustainability are two different areas for me, related, but they are distinct. The awareness around these subjects started to formalize in a seminar I took while in college at La Escuela de Artes Plasticas in San Juan, Puerto Rico. During the seminar we observed multiple approaches that artists and designers have taken to create sustainable practices. We observed



adjustments in living spaces, approaches to use of renewable materials, use of energy and such. I truly believe that helped me to think and envision a practice for myself as an artist.



*At the End of Daybreak, 2017, photo installation and audiovisual installation on translucent cube, variable dimensions © Lionel Cruet 2017. Image by Everson Museum of Art*

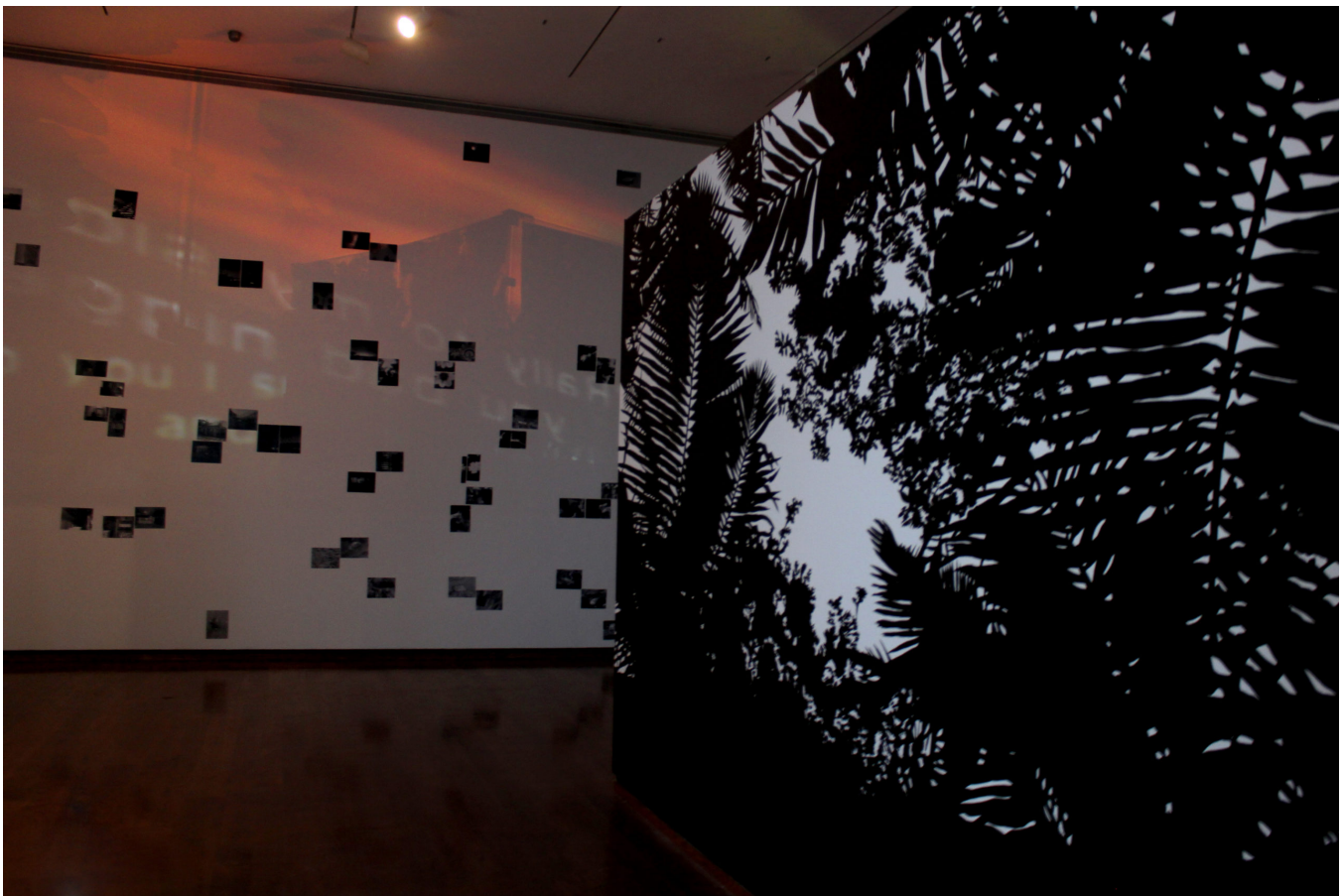
*Was there a certain point in time that you became more aware/self-conscious of climate change/sustainability issues?*

Yes, I have always been aware in my innate consciousness about this issues; But more specific to the impact of humans activities in Earth and with other species. Sustainable issues are about the adjustments that we can make as individuals and as a society to over turn and sustain without causing long term impact. Since I was young I could see it and I was aware of it

language to describe it. Also in my living environment and with my family I was limited in making significant changes toward a sustainable living. I was not a decision maker within my household with the ability to change living patterns that affect 'climate change' in the long run.

With my artist studio and my home environment I keep making sustainable adjustments and adapting.

With time I understood that Climate Change is increasing but that it is caused by the levels of industrial and mass production that extends from a demand for international commerce.



*At the End of Daybreak, 2017, vegetation mural and photo installation, variable dimensions © Lionel Cruet 2017. Image by Everson Museum of Art*

*Have you reduced your carbon footprint in your professional practice in any way over the last few years. If so, how?*



As an artist and with my studio practice I have made significant changes to support the sustainable production of artworks and the methods for how things are done. For instance, my studio has a sensor for the lights so they turn off when there's no activity. In my studio we have changed the ways for how framed artworks are packed and shipped. We no longer use paper, tape or bubble wrap, instead, we use fabrics and belt systems that are reusable. Elements like this help advance a sustainable framework and the studio functions. When it comes to the artworks, most of them are in materials that have minimal impact on the environment. Digital forms and archives of videos, sounds, and images are some of the mediums and materials I work with.

There are some artworks that take on physical form and all of those are created with materials that are sorted out by local or regional providers, which make less impact on the environment.



*Entre Nosotros I (Between Us), 2017, full view, audiovisual installation row boat, floor of sand, variable dimension © Lionel Cruet 2017. Image by Lionel Cruet*

*Do you think artists have a responsibility to respond to these issues?  
Why/Why not?*

Absolutely, artists can change or create systems of consciousness and create new visual languages through their art to address these issues.



*Entre Nosotros I (Between Us), 2017, full view, audiovisual installation row boat, floor of sand, variable dimension © Lionel Cruet 2017. Image by Samuel Morgan Photography*

*Is there anything else you would like to add on this topic?*

I think what would solve the climate impact is education. Education is the key to awareness: an education that is explicit, and experiential, where these issues are not transferred through lecturing but through a lived experience.



Website: [www.lionelcruet.com](http://www.lionelcruet.com)

Instagram: <https://instagram.com/lionelcruet/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/lcruet?lang=en>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/lionelcruetstudio/>



*Interference, 2019, hand-painted mural, installation of digital photo collages, variable dimensions © Lionel Cruet 2019. Image by Bronx River Art Center*





*Interference, 2019, hand-painted mural, installation of digital photo collages, variable dimensions © Lionel Cruet 2019. Image by Bronx River Art Center*

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