Climate Change and Hurricanes: An Ecocritical and Decolonial Analysis of the Work of Puerto Rican Visual Artists Frances Gallardo and Lionel Cruet

Bettina Pérez Martínez

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Signed by the final examining committee:

_____ External Examiner
Dr. Frances Negrón-Muntaner

_____ Thesis Supervisor
Dr. Johanne Sloan

Approved by _____
Dr. Nicola Pezolet, Graduate Program Director

_____YYYY _____
Dr. Annie Gerin, Dean, Faculty of Fine Arts

Abstract

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On September 20, 2017 Hurricane María made landfall on the archipelago of Puerto Rico, causing one of the most devastating hurricane-related humanitarian crises since 1928, bringing to light the accelerated impact of climate change in Puerto Rico and throughout the Caribbean region. This thesis explores how the work of contemporary Puerto Rican artists Lionel Cruet and Frances Gallardo addresses hurricanes, climate, and the environment in Puerto Rico, while pointing to the interconnected forces of colonialism and capitalism. The destruction caused by Hurricane María is approached through Puerto Rico's relationship with the United States, and analyzed from a decolonial perspective that is rooted in critical Caribbean studies. This thesis also draws on ecocritical and Anthropocene-related art historical scholarship, to position the critical art practices of Cruet and Gallardo in relation to the climatological, economic and socially-devastating bonds that tie Puerto Rico to the United States.

Key Words

Climate Change, Decolonial Aesthetics, Contemporary Puerto Rican Art, Hurricane Maria, Anthropocene, Ecocriticism.

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Our landscape is its own monument: its meaning can only be traced on the underside. It is all history.
Edouard Glissant, Caribbean Discourse, 1989, (11).

On September 20, 2017 Hurricane María made landfall on the island of Puerto Rico on the Southeastern town of Yabucoa with winds of 155 mph (250 km/h), causing one of the most devastating hurricane-related humanitarian crises since 1928, when the category five hurricane San Felipe Segundo hit the island. The hurricane passed diagonally through the island, leaving thousands of homes destroyed, and the whole region faced a lack of access to basic needs, such as food, water, and electrical power. However, many scholars and public health officials argue this hurricane was a "not-so-natural" disaster. In the journal *Alternautas*' special issue on relief in the post-hurricane Caribbean, the editors touch upon why the Caribbean, specifically, is a region vulnerable to disaster, not just because of its geography but also because of its socio-political conditions and its ongoing history with colonialism.

> Colonialism and human-induced factors are behind the high levels of inequality, climate change and incomplete recoveries in the Caribbean region, which increase the region's vulnerability to disaster (Gahman & Thongs, 2017). ...The responses to this and other natural disasters are generally linked to colonial histories and powers that still dominate the psyche and geopolitical relationships of the region.[1]

A "not-so-natural" disaster was manifested following the inadequate post-recovery response at both the local and federal government levels, exemplified by the limited access to electricity, clean water and health services a year after the passing of Hurricane María in the region. The federal and local governments' lack of resources and emergency plan led to thousands of deaths; this fact surfaced after the *Centro de Periodismo Investigativo*, an independent journalists'

[1] Gibrán Cruz-Martínez, Melissa Fernández Arrigoitia, Janialy Ortiz Camacho, Patria Román-Velázquez, "The Making of Caribbean Not-so-Natural Disasters". *Alternautas*. Vol. 5 (2). P. 5. 2018.

organization, demanded that the local government release the national death count since Hurricane María.[2] The book *Aftershocks of Disaster: Puerto Rico Before and After the Storm*, edited by Puerto Rican scholars Yarimar Bonilla and Marisol Lebrón, states:

> We now know that the great majority of those who lost their lives to María perished not because of the storm but because of the structural failures that followed it: uncleared roads that did not allow ambulances to arrive, lack of water distribution that led residents to contaminated water sources, lack of generators in hospitals, and more than half a year without electricity to power medical equipment, refrigerate lifesaving medications such as insulin, and provide public lighting and traffic lights to prevent deadly accidents. Lives were not lost to the wind and the rain, or even to Trump's disrespect; instead, residents drowned in bureaucracy and institutional neglect.[3]

As stated above, the loss of life following Hurricane María was a result of years of governmental neglect and the colonial relationship that still binds Puerto Rico to the United States; austerity measures have debilitated the country's basic infrastructure while disregarding human life. The storm, aside from being a manifestation of the inevitable progression of climate change in the Caribbean region,[4] hit the country during one of its most severe economic recessions, caused by decades of economic measures aimed at the exploitation of the island, rather than its prosperity. Hurricane María put on display the fraught and opportunistic relationship the United States has had with Puerto Rico since 1898. As stated by writer and filmmaker Frances Negrón-Muntaner, "Hurricane María thus laid bare the rotten pillars upon which contemporary Puerto Rico is built: a

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[2] The official statement the Puerto Rican government released immediately after María was a total of 16 deaths, however this number proved to be inaccurate. Independent Puerto Rican reporters estimated a much higher number both from the initial hurricane impact and for the months leading afterwards. The Centro de Periodismo Investigativo, a local and independent news source, sued the Puerto Rican government for records containing the amount of deaths following a year after the storm. However a 2018 Harvard University study, led by the New England Journal of Medicine estimates that 4,645 deaths can be linked to the hurricane and its immediate aftermath. For more information: https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMsa1803972. The official number recognized by the Puerto Rican government, as it stands today and following the intervention of the CPI, is 2,975 deaths as a consequence of Hurricane María. For more information: https://hurricanemariasdead.com/

[3] Yarimar Bonilla, and Marisol Lebrón "Introduction," in *Aftershocks of Disaster: Puerto Rico Before and After the Storm*. (Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books, 2018), 4.

[4] The 2017 Atlantic Hurricane season was one of the most active and destructive to ever affect the Caribbean region.

political economy catering exclusively to U.S. corporate interests, a tax structure that exempts almost all American economic activity, and a local elite that takes what it can at the expense of the larger community's needs."[5]

Within the Post-María panorama, various cultural and artistic endeavors became a response to the current social discourse, addressing underlying sociopolitical issues exposed to the vast population by the effects of the hurricane. Following the effects of María various visual artists, artist-run spaces and exhibitions suffered damage, loss and a halt in their production. Richard Santiago (TIAGO) and Zilia Sánchez, a Cuban artist based in P.R. for nearly 40 years, were just two of many artists who lost their studio space and various artworks to the damage caused by the hurricane. Sánchez's prolific yet little known work and career, characterized by sculptural forms of painting with erotic undertones, is now receiving international attention following a 70 year retrospective of her work, *Soy Isla*, presented in the Phillips Collection in Washington D.C from February to May 2019. Artists and cultural institutions on the island not only experienced loss of income, and a decrease in their artistic production, but also the loss of their existing archives of artwork.

Despite the adversities presented in this critical period of sociopolitical restructuration and collective trauma, various artists and cultural workers approached this dire state through the lens of community building and creation. On the island, exhibitions were organized as early as two months after the hurricane. Three exhibitions opened in December 2018: *Catarsis: Reconstruyendo después de María*,[6] a group show curated by María Ángela López Vilella and

[5]Frances Negrón-Muntaner, "Blackout: What Darkness Illuminated in Puerto Rico," *Politics/Letters*, March 2, 2018, https://power.buellcenter.columbia.edu/essays/192.

[6] Catársis began as an open call to artists

visual artist Nick Quijano at Museo de las Américas; *Aa-Zz* a show on the work of Manuel Mendoza Sánchez at Hidrante; and *PM*,[7] a group show held at Embajada. The group show *Catarsis* was held after an open call invited visual artists and cultural workers to respond to the aftermath of Hurricane María as a healing process for the country. (fig.1)

However, artists responded to climate change and Puerto Rico's colonial relationship to the United States long before María made landfall on the island. As will be further developed in this text, Puerto Rico was facing a dire socio-political and economic collapse before the hurricane passed through the island, a result of decades of colonial relations and austerity measures enacted on the island for over a century. Following the economic collapse of Puerto Rico and the United States in 2007-2008, many visual artists continued a long-lived legacy of questioning the island's complex relationship with the U.S. Artists such as Karlo Andrei Ibarra[8], Beatriz Santiago Muñoz[9], Allora & Calzadilla have sought to question Puerto Rico through the use of historical and archival materials, creating semiotically-charged, minimalist, and site-specific artworks addressing how the U.S. military intervention severely affected the Puerto Rican ecosystem and population.

As stated above, the loss of life following Hurricane María was a result of years of governmental neglect and the colonial relationship that still binds Puerto Rico to the United States; austerity measures have debilitated the country's basic infrastructure while disregarding human life. The storm, aside from being a manifestation of the inevitable progression of climate change

[7] Held in Embajada from January 27 - March 17, 2018. The list includes almost 100 phrases using the acronym 'PM'.
[8] Karlo Andrei Ibarra's work challenges Puerto Rico's colonial political narrative through a complex analysis of socio-political power play, archival documentation, semiotic object association, and a collective cultural consciousness that captures the viewer through a variety of subjects and grips them onto his narrative.
[9] Some of Santiago Muñoz's work discusses issues of ecology, the political history of Puerto Rico, and its post-military landscape following the establishment of naval bases in Ceiba. For more information on the artist's work: http://fabricainutil.com/.

in the Caribbean region[10], hit the country during one of its most severe economic recessions, caused by decades of economic measures aimed at the exploitation of the island, rather than its prosperity. With its strongest winds reaching 175 mph, Hurricane María put on display the fraught and opportunistic relationship the United States has had with Puerto Rico since 1898. In the wake of Hurricane María, artists have worked to expose how the natural disaster exposes what Negrón-Muntaner refers to as "the rotten pillars upon which contemporary Puerto Rico is built." [11] At a time when international news was misrepresenting the impact of the storm by only treating María as a natural disaster, artists on the island were identifying the intersections of climate change and capitalism that exposed a broken colonial system.

Colonial relations[12] between the United States and Puerto Rico became international news following the path of Hurricane María due to the federal and the local government's indifference towards post-recovery mobilization. However, the hurricane also brought to light the acceleration and impact of climate change in the Caribbean region. Throughout this text, I intend to display the interconnected nature of colonialism and capitalism and address its impact on the Anthropocene in Puerto Rico and by default, on the rest of the Caribbean. I will approach the correlation of the destruction of Hurricane María and Puerto Rico's relationship with the United States from a decolonial perspective, rooted in critical Caribbean studies. I will also analyze the climatological, historical, economic and social devastating effects of the relationship that binds Puerto Rico to the

[10] The 2017 Atlantic Hurricane season was one of the most active and destructive to ever affect the Caribbean region.
[11] Negrón-Muntaner, "Blackout".
[12] "Puerto Rico's colonial relationship with the United States is one of the island's three distinct forms of colonial capitalist modernity (plantation, industrial, and neoliberal) from the fifteenth century to the present. Puerto Rico has been subject to colonialism for its entire modern history, dating back to the Spanish invasion of the fifteenth Century." For more information: https://hemisphericinstitute.org/en/emisferica-14-1-expulsion/14-1-essays/the-emptying-island-puerto-rican-expulsion-in-post-maria-time.html

United States. Decolonial scholar Nelson Maldonado Torres states in the afterward to the book *Aftershocks of Disaster*:

> The Anthropocene is a "new geological epoch [that] is built from slavery and colonialism, enabled by a long distance financial industry." This results not only in "a new profit mode of living," but also in a normalization of catastrophe, evident in the form of continued dehumanization, expropriation, slavery (and its aftermaths), and genocide, otherwise known as coloniality...The story of Puerto Rico cannot be told without reference to Western modern catastrophe and coloniality. Hurricane María was a catastrophic event that, among other things, exposed the vulgarity of Puerto Rico's relationship with the United States.[13]

If the primary manifestations of colonialism in Puerto Rico began with the "exploitation of natural and mineral resources, cultural and natural objects," philosophy and sociology scholar José M. Atiles-Osoria expands on how "the decolonization efforts in Puerto Rico and the movements towards climate justice are inextricably linked and must be studied within the same historical framework."[14] I will explore this ongoing interconnection between Puerto Rico's natural environment and its political identity as I undertake an analysis of the aesthetics of disaster in pre and post-María contemporary Puerto Rican art. I will conduct a politically engaged, decolonial, and ecocritical reading of recent artworks by Puerto Rican artist Frances Gallardo and Lionel Cruet. Through this reading, I aim to bring to the surface the "submerged epistemologies"[15] (to use a concept introduced by Macarena Gomez-Barris in her book *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives*) behind the forms of environmental colonialism that affect the island and to re-evaluate the acceleration of climate change and post-disaster response in Puerto Rico.

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[13] Nelson Maldonado-Torres, "Afterword," in *Aftershocks of Disaster: Puerto Rico Before and After the Storm*. (Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books, 2018), 337.
[14] José M. Atiles-Osoria, "Colonialismo ambiental, criminalización y resistencias: Las movilizaciones puertorriqueñas por la justicia ambiental en el siglo XXI," *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais,* vol.100 (octubre 2013): 4, http://rccs.revues.org/5262.
[15] Macarena Gómez-Barris, *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives.* (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2017), 11.

To understand the severity and importance of what Hurricane María revealed for the Puerto Rican population, one must examine the complicated colonial relationship the island has maintained with the United States since it was incorporated as a colony following the Spanish-American war of 1898, when a debilitated Spain lost the territory to the United States. In 1952, under the rule of the governor Luis Muñoz Marín[16], the island was given the political status of *Estado Libre Asociado,*[17] which literally translates as "free but associated state." This decree created a nebulous political affiliation with the United States, one characterized by a lack of self-determination as well as contradictory politics between local and federal rule. A notable example is that Puerto Rican citizens are drafted to fight and die in American wars yet cannot vote for the presidency unless they migrate to the mainland US, despite the fact that federal law supersedes local law on the island. This is just one example of many forms of colonial inequality, on a political level, enacted by the United States upon the Puerto Rican people.

Puerto Rico is composed of an archipelago of four islands, while the island of Vieques is located on the eastern side of the mainland. Beginning during the Second World War, it was occupied as a military base, training field and experimental grounds for the United States Navy. With the military's installment, local lands were expropriated, and local populations were forced to leave, while being exposed to radiological damage which led to an increase in cases of cancer, asthma, kidney failure, diabetes, and hypertension.[18] The United States military would conduct

[16] Luis Muñoz Marín has been regarded as the first Puerto Rican governor of Puerto Rico that "ended poverty on the Island." A common phrase for poverty-stricken rural populations during the mid-20th Century is that "Muñoz-Marín put shoes on our feet," regarding him as a savior. However, Muñoz-Marín was accomplice to various repressive forms of state control Puerto Ricans faced in the 1940's and 50's, such as the Gag Law, an act enacted by the Puerto Rico legislature of 1948, with the purpose of suppressing the independence movement in Puerto Rico. This act also made displaying the Puerto Rican flag, and any form of "independentist actions" illegal.

[17] Translating to 'Free but associated state' by the Estado Libre Asociado or ELA.

[18] Sherrie Baver. "Environmental Struggles in Paradise: Puerto Rican Cases, Caribbean Lessons." *Caribbean Studies* 40, no. 1 (2012): 15-35. Accessed July 12, 2019. www.jstor.org/stable/41759288.

onsite training that included the launching of missiles and bombs on the surrounding waters and lands of Vieques. This would have grave ecological consequences for the land, while damaging coral reefs in the area. Thus the US military was responsible for the contamination of both the land and surrounding bodies of water.

During the 1990s tension built up between the local population of Vieques and the U.S. Navy, culminating in 2001 when David Sanes, a civilian employee of the U.S. Navy and a Vieques local was struck and killed when two bombs were set off near the observation post he worked at. This incident incited a series of protests to remove the U.S. Navy from Vieques and resulted in a historic victory against U.S. imperialism in Puerto Rico with the official removal of the military in May 2003. The protests leading up to the removal of the Navy also gave rise to significant politically engaged artistic production around Puerto Rican sovereignty on the island.

Cuban-American artist duo Allora & Calzadilla created a series of artworks during this movement to free Vieques from the Navy: *Land Mark* (1999/2003/2006), *Land Mark (Footprints)* (2001–02), *Returning a Sound* (2004), *Under Discussion* (2005) and *Half Mast\Full Mast* (2010). Their Vieques artworks tackle issues surrounding Puerto Rico's ongoing relation with the United States, specifically the military occupation in the region of Vieques, characterized by the seizing of local terrains, the degradation of Puerto Rico's ecology, and the consequences of radiological exposure on the health of the local population. Another notable and more recent example is *Black Beach/Horse/Camp/TheDead/Forces* (2016) by Puerto Rican filmmaker Beatriz Santiago-Muñoz, which touches on post-military landscapes through the documentation of the abandoned structures left in Vieques by the U.S. Navy. (fig. 2), (fig. 3)

Allora & Calzadilla have also created works that directly confront and question specific ecocritical realities, ones mostly enacted by loose ended environmental laws on the island that often favor a tourist economy within Puerto Rico, which will be later discussed in full detail. Their work *The Great Silence* (2014), a collaboration with writer Ted Chiang, shows a monologue delivered by a Puerto Rican parrot, a species native to the region and on the verge of extinction on the island. In the twentieth century, following the invasion of the United States in 1898, there was a rise in large-scale mono-culture agricultural projects propelled by U.S. private companies. These companies destroyed much of the forests for agricultural repurposing, eliminating the habitat and decimating the Puerto Rican parrot population; by the 1940's the Puerto Rican parrot was declared extinct[19]. The parrot in the artwork questions the significance of the Arecibo Observatory, a radio telescope made to hear the Universe to try to find non-human life forms in the galaxy. Titled after "The Great Silence," also known as the Fermi Paradox, which suggests that because of the vastness of the Universe, there must be a cacophony of sound with other non-human life forms, but paradoxically only a lonely silence can be heard. The parrot questions why humans are trying to find non-human life forms to communicate with outside their planet when here on earth they have non-human life forms trying to communicate the dangers of deforestation and climate change to them in their immediate ecosystem. This communication is obstructed by the dualism of modernity, with the commodification of nonhuman life and nature. (Fig. 4)

To further comprehend the effects of this complicated political relationship, I will present a few specific examples of economic and environmental colonial subjugation imposed by the United States in Puerto Rico. Much like the rest of the Caribbean, Puerto Rico's economy is reliant

[19]"Puerto Rican Parrot" Endangered Species Coalition, accessed 18 July 2020, https://www.endangered.org/animal/puerto-rican-parrot/.

on tourism and, like the rest of the region, this economic interest is one that sustains the colonial relationship to North American and European nations. Tourism reinforces power dynamics between the foreign visitors and the local communities that, in reality, see little prosperity from this economic structure as the money generated from tourism is not reinvested and integrated in the local community. Rather, large hotel corporations, all-inclusive resorts, cruise ship companies, all which are owned by external corporations see the largest amount of economic prosperity from the current tourism structure in Puerto Rico. From the lens of political ecology it can be said that the tourism industry relies on the commodification and exploitation of Caribbean nature. In the article "Environmental Struggles in Paradise: Puerto Rican Cases, Caribbean Lessons," Sherrie Baver addresses how tourism creates a narrative of "paradise" that leads to various environmental impacts on the Caribbean.

> These environmental realities involve unsafe drinking water, excessive pesticide use, rapid and unplanned urbanization, inadequate garbage removal and disposal, unregulated industrial emission, and unrestricted coastal development. While most governments in the region have adopted modern environmental laws and regulations, they lack the capacity to enforce them. And so, the major question for Caribbean residents increasingly is, "who controls the stunning landscape, local citizens or outside tourism developers?"[20]

The author focuses on the environmental realities the local population faces at the expense of large-scale tourism projects. Puerto Rico is no exception to this.

Following the 2007 Puerto Rican economic crisis, *La Crisis Boricua*,[21] opportunities for visual artists and cultural workers on the island both on the public and private sectors became

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[20] Baver. "Environmental Struggles in Paradise," 15-35.

[21] The word *Boricua* is the word for the Island used by the Taíno population. 'La Crisis Boricua' or 'The Boricua Crisis' is resumed in Population, Migration, and Socioeconomic Outcomes Among Island and Mainland Puerto Ricans: La Crisis Boricua by Marie T. Mora, Alberto Dávila and Havidán Rodríguez. The authors sum up La Crisis Boricua in the following statement: "In particular, 2006 witnessed the imposition of the island's first sales tax on an increasingly economically disenfranchised population group, the beginning of a decade's significant loss of public sector jobs, and the complete expiration of corporate income tax breaks, which continued an already significant loss in manufacturing jobs. High and escalating energy prices, a collapsing housing market, the loss of banking assets, and the deteriorating infrastructure (including both in education and health care) further contributed to the island's crisis" 33.

scarce due to the massive amount of funding cuts, austerity measures and loss of investment imposed on the arts sector. With little support from museums, such as el Museo de Arte Contemporáneo and the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico[22] or governmental institutions, as el Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, visual artists began creating self-led projects such as artist-led collectives and galleries[23], cultural spaces[24], and independent biennales.[25] In more recent years, the DIY approach of artists in creating such spaces and events continues as the socio-economic conditions of the archipelago have gotten worse over the years, following a major hurricane. Community focused cultural institutions, developed by visual artists, such as El Lobi, Km. 02, and El Cuadrado Gris, are still the principal venues showing Puerto Rican contemporary artists' work. Following Hurricane María it became increasingly difficult for art spaces to remain open considering the damage many spaces faced, as well as the lack of circulation of art-centered economies.

In the past decade, Puerto Rico has been facing a dire fiscal and economic recession that has added to the devastating destruction wrought by Hurricane María. In 2016, then Governor Alejandro García Padilla declared the island's $72 billion[26] national debt to be unpayable but,

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[22]Marina Reyes-Franco's text "Poscolonialidad en el arte contemporáneo en Puerto Rico" criticizes the nepotism, lack of autonomy due to its economic connections to political parties on the island in the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico. In the same text, Reyes Franco mentions the 2008 controversy involving the Museum of Contemporary Art of Puerto Rico and its lack of initiative to provide a platform to emerging contemporary artists in Puerto Rico. For more information: Reyes-Franco, Marina, "Poscolonialidad en el arte contemporáneo en Puerto Rico," *Instituto de Altos Estudios Sociales, UNSAM*, 2015.
https://www.academia.edu/4841596/Poscolonialidad_en_el_arte_contempor%C3%A1neo_en_Puerto_Rico

[23] Such as Candela Gallery, founded by Abdiel Segarra; = Desto, founded by Raquel Quijano, Omar Obdulio and Jason Mena.

[24] Beta-Local started in 2008 by visual artists in Old San Juan. For more information: https://betalocal.org/

[25]A notable example of independently organized biennales include La Gran Bienal Tropical,a. project began by visual artist Radamés 'Juni' Figueroa and curator Pablo de la Torre.

[26] To this day, the $72 billion debt (before Hurricane María) was never audited, despite various calls by local activist groups demanding the government do so. Most of this money was not used for a better quality of life on the island for the population, but rather, as Muntaner-Negrón states: "The debt was incurred by successive administrations to cover the loss of income resulting from American capital flight after the United States began to phase out lavish tax breaks to balance the federal budget and fund an increase in the U.S. minimum wage in 1996." The debt was also propelled by "selling bonds issued by the island's main public utilities and municipalities, which are exempt from local, state,

because Puerto Rico is neither a U.S. state nor an independent country, it cannot declare bankruptcy. As decolonial scholar Carlos Rivera-Santana states, this nebulous political status has created:

> a volatile economic and social environment in an already weak Puerto Rican economy. As a consequence, economic and social displacement or migration (yet Puerto Ricans are US citizens) to the US mainland is contributing to a steady reduction of population on the island. This "recipe for disaster" has created the conditions for almost any "natural disaster" to be even more catastrophic.[27]

Following Puerto Rico's defaulting on the $72 billion debt, the United States appointed the Puerto Rico Oversight Management Board or PROMESA, which literally translates to "promise." PROMESA is a board of 7 members[28], appointed by U.S. Congress, to oversee all economic decisions taken on the island, and holds complete power over the elected local government. PROMESA is an extension of the U.S. colonial rule over Puerto Rico and an overt display of the lack of sovereignty Puerto Rico faces. Following Hurricane María, because of the island's poverty and the lack of federal or local level assistance, PROMESA's colonial nature was made evident:

> Not only does the law usurp the island's local democratic process, it also underscores the deep complicity of Congress and all U.S. presidents—regardless of party affiliation—in maintaining Puerto Rico's political and economic subordination. Instead of acknowledging the U.S.'s responsibility in the debt crisis and drafting a relief plan like it did for the banks in 2008, the American political priority has been to make the island pay.[29]

The U.S. maintains control over Puerto Rico by ensuring economic dependency and an endless cycle of debt. The U.S. military's occupation of the island, and the tourism industry's exploitation

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and federal taxes. Mostly these are held by American financial investment firms and "vulture" hedge funds who focus on "risky assets".(Negrón-Muntaner, Blackout: What Darkness Illuminated in Puerto Rico).

[27] Carlos Rivera-Santana, "Aesthetics of Disaster as Decolonial Aesthetics: Making Sense of the Effects of Hurricane María through Puerto Rican Contemporary Art," *Cultural Studies* Vol. 34, issue 3, (March 2019):1-22, https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2019.1607519).

[28] Six of these seven board members have previous relations to profitable private industries on the island, which could explain all the cuts to public programs and the move towards privatization in Puerto Rico since 2016.

[29] Frances Negrón-Muntaner. "Puerto Rico Was Undergoing a Humanitarian Crisis Long Before Hurricane Maria," *Pacific Standard*, last modified October 1, 2020, https://psmag.com/social-justice/puerto-rico-was-undergoing-a-humanitarian-crisis-long-before-hurricane-maria.

of local infrastructure have jointly operated as expressions of contemporary colonialism, neocolonialism[30] and imperialism. Before Hurricane María even touched down on the island, the ongoing ecological damage from tourism and militarized occupation could be characterized as a not-so-natural disaster.

Before addressing the work of Frances Gallardo and Lionel Cruet, I would like to provide a brief examination of the history of storm and landscape depiction at it exists within an art historical canon. Next, I will zero in on the Puerto Rican art historical canon, focusing on artists who directly confront ecocritical and decolonial topics particular to the island's socio-politics, ecological reality and geographic location. The following section turns to the discourse surrounding landscape depiction, taking into consideration both the impact of colonialism, neocolonialism, and climate change, in that they exist simultaneously within the Caribbean and in Puerto Rico. Most Western depictions of Puerto Rican history fail to account for the devastation and effect colonialism has had upon climate change; in order to decolonize the landscape, it is necessary to bring to surface, as stated by Gómez-Barris, the submerged perspectives that lie within, so as to engage with convoluted epistemological narratives.

There is a vast amount of literary and artistic creation that engages specifically with landscape themes, that touch upon the depiction of extreme weather. Depictions of extreme

[30] Here I include the terms colonial, neocolonial and imperialism based on the different transformations of the "coloniality of power" (Quijano, 2000), one which did not end with colonialism, but rather, transformed itself into different structures of power molded by modern capitalist world-systems aimed at the exploitation of those living under colonial, neocolonial imperial or re-colonized power structures. Throughout this text I will use terms such as colonialism, neocolonialism, recolonization and imperialism as a way to try to capture the expansive and diverse histories and forms of colonialism that have been and are currently enacted across the Caribbean. However, I do not intend to collapse the meaning of these terms, but rather create a larger scope when speaking about the Caribbean region, in an attempt to recognize the diverse histories that exist in the region. I also will be focusing more on the use of decolonial methodology, rather than a postcolonial methodology, as a way to situate myself in the argument against colonialism in the Caribbean, one specifically arising from dissatisfaction with Puerto Rico's current relationship of recolonization with the United States. I believe to use an exclusive postcolonial methodology is to not acknowledge the continuation of the coloniality of power in the region, but rather believe it is a society that has moved past colonialism.

weather patterns, within art history, have served as a way to evoke the sublime and to attempt to capture and comprehend the astonishing force of evanescent natural patterns. During the 18th and 19th century, European Romantic landscape painters became fascinated with attempting to recreate vast landscapes as naturalistically as possible. Writing about the visual artist Jocelyne Alloucherie, art historian Johanne Sloan traces the history of storm depictions back to landscape art of the 18th and 19th Century when artists attempted to recreate the feeling of being within extreme climate formations. Sloan states,

> Landscape was the genre that historically gave artists a model for representing natural forms, sites, forces, phenomena. Certainly the desire to recreate the experience of extreme weather conditions can be traced back in time and across many movements and artistic affiliation, from romance to neo-classical, and from academic to avant-garde.[31]

Observing climatological patterns in the landscape, artists thus began to attempt to recreate the formation of storms, and other atmospheric disturbances, within the landscape genre of painting. As Sloan describes, it is speculated that both J.M.W. Turner and Claude-Joseph Vernet (one English and another French romantic landscape painter) tied themselves to the masts of ships that encountered storms at sea to comprehend the power and winds of these weather formations and to depict this as realistically as possible in their work. In a review for the *Boston Evening Transcript*, English painter and art critic John Ruskin described the painting as a depiction of death and horror: "Turner's Slave Ship is a picture of moans and tears and groans and shrieks. Every tint and shade and line throb with death and terror and blood. It is the embodiment of a giant protest, a mighty voice crying out against human oppression"[32]

[31]Johanne Sloan, "Long-Term Forecast," in *Jocelyne Alloucherie: Climats (Climates).* (Ottawa: Carleton University Art Gallery, 2012), 36.
[32] John Ruskin, *Boston Evening Transcript*, March 1877.

Turner's renditions of storms at sea evoke the sublime[33] and attempt to capture the chaotic movement of climatological formations. Created when anti-slavery efforts were being enacted in England,[34] Turner's *Slave Ship* (*Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying - Typhon coming on)* (1840) is based on the 1781 journey of the slave ship Zong during which 142 slaves were killed by being thrown overboard. The use of shades of crimson red, glowing yellow and orange skies above the tumultuous body of water depict the feelings of turbulent chaos and deathly effects of this brutal episode in colonial history. The painting speaks to the horrors of colonialism and also depicts the approach of the slave ship, as a colonial space and a place of migration; it has been studied by numerous decolonial scholars and cultural theorists, such as W.E.B. Du Bois[35] and Frantz Fanon[36], as a symptom of the bloodied passageway between the Americas and the displacement of millions of African slaves. I believe that Turner's painting combines a critical reading of colonialism and the depiction of natural storms in art, presented in the European art historical canon. (Fig. 5)

I cannot describe the entire history of climatological depictions, but for the purpose of this investigation I will focus more closely on the Puerto Rican and Caribbean context. In Taíno[37] religious belief, Guabancex is the goddess of the winds and the deity of chaos and disorder, who

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[33] Based on Edmund Burke's definition of the sublime as a heightened sensation through terror, especially in the face of nature. An overpowering of the senses.

[34] Despite the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 passing in England and its colonies, British activists aimed to eradicate the slave trade worldwide. In June 1840, the World Anti-Slavery Convention took place in London, England. Turner exhibited the work simultaneous to the convention and aimed for *The Slave Ship* to be seen by Prince Albert, becoming one of the earlier works of explicitly associated with political art. Alongside the painting, Turner presented an excerpt from his uncompleted long poem *Fallacies of Hope* (1812) where he denounced the abuse and exploitation behind the slave trade market.

[35] W.E.B. DuBois, *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America, 1638-1870 (Minneola, New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1897),* among other works.

[36] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks (1952),* Frantz Fanon*, The Wretched of the Earth (1961),* among other works.

[37] Taínos are the indigenous population of Puerto Rico and of other parts of the Caribbean. They are part of the Arawak people that extended throughout South America and the Caribbean.

would create 'Juracánes[38]' as a form of atmospheric disturbance. The earliest representations of hurricanes in Caribbean culture come from illustrations by Taíno people, depicting the figure of 'Guabancex' characterized by two extended arms in rotation and with a face in the center – uncannily reproducing what modern technology recognizes as the "eye of the storm." These depictions of hurricanes, developed by Taínos, resemble the satellite images modern technology uses to document the rotation of the winds during a storm. (fig. 6)

The European genre of landscape painting, which typically involves the template of horizon line, a vantage point, and stretches of natural terrain devoid of human intervention, was brought to the Americas through colonization. Landscape paintings, during the period of colonial expansion, became ways of providing visual references and information about the colonized landscape. Forms of landscape and climatological depictions in Caribbean and Puerto Rican arts[39] would emerge later, but during a distinctively active period in the 19th and 20th century, artists depicted romantic representations of the landscape through political ecology and its correlation to the region's violent colonial history. Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert comments that,

> Romanticism was linked -especially in Haiti and the Hispanic Caribbean- to processes of national definition in islands that had already gained their independence in the early nineteenth century and were, literally, postcolonial (such as Haiti and Dominican Republic) or were engaged in protracted ideological battles against colonial control and functioned as pre-independent political spaces (such as Cuba and Puerto Rico).[40]

Puerto Rican painter Francisco Oller is an example of a historical artist who, while not focusing on hurricanes, did produce political representations of both Puerto Rico's natural and cultural environment during the last years of Spanish occupation and the subsequent invasion of

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[38] Phonetic name given by Spaniards to the taíno word for hurricanes.

[39] By arts I refer to all forms of cultural creation, but with a special focus on visual arts and literature of the Caribbean.

[40] Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, "Deforestation and the Yearning for Lost Landscapes in Caribbean Literatures," in *Postcolonial Ecologies: Literatures of the Environment*, ed. Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George H. Handley, 108. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

the United States in 1898. In the late 1800's he would introduce the island to Impressionism, based on the knowledge he received while studying in Spain and France; he was also the only Latin American painter to have played a role in the development of the international Impressionist movement. His work also drew on schools of Realism and Naturalism, to depict Puerto Rican rural landscapes such as *Hacienda La Fortuna* (1885); still life images with typical fruits and vegetables in *Bodegón con guanábanas* (1891); and the conservation and rendition of Puerto Rican traditions in *El velorio* (1893). The latter is one of his most well-known paintings and a staple of Puerto Rican art history, due to its monumental size and cultural significance, where Oller portrays the death of a child and their vigil in rural Puerto Rico. Oller was also a politically active artist in his time. Like Turner, he was also an abolitionist and created paintings to criticize slavery in Puerto Rico, such as *El negro flagelado* (1872). Oller also experienced difficulties following the Spanish-American War of 1898 when the U.S. military rule on the island made it nearly impossible for the well-known painter to open his own museum and pedagogical institution in Puerto Rico, something that the island lacked and that he took as his calling to create.[41] (fig. 7), (fig. 8), (fig. 9), (fig. 10)

A notable example of hurricane depictions as a way of showing ecological and political issues appears in the mid-twentieth century, in the work of Puerto Rican printmaker Carlos Raquel Rivera (1923-1999). *Huracán del Norte* (1955) presents a post-apocalyptic reading of the U.S. imperial project in Puerto Rico embodied by a hurricane coming from the north. The print shows a hurricane composed of various cultural references alluding to U.S. imperialism as an invasive and destructive force upon the Puerto Rican landscape. A skeletal figure is seen sweeping the

[41] Luz Elena Badía Rivera, "Un museo de arte en Puerto Rico, 1898-1902. Iniciativa de Oller en tiempos de borrasca política," *Quiroga: Revista de Patrimonio Iberoamericano,* No. 13 (January-June 2018), Issue 13: 13, https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6474141.

Puerto Rican landscape with money bags, running over the Puerto Rican population, trampled by winds from the north. Raquel Rivera's work combines socio-political issues particular to the region during the mid-twentieth century, such as colonialism, imperialism, poverty, and working-class exploitation, to then combine these issues with surrealist and symbolic imagery. (fig. 11)

Another print by Raquel Rivera, *Marea Alta* (1954), portrays wooden structures being swept along by rising waters, the structures being the wooden homes typical of rural working-class families in Puerto Rico during the early and mid-twentieth century. The work shows three wooden homes and their inhabitants, one of whom is holding a paddle, possibly to try to sail and navigate their home to safety despite the chaotic circumstances. In their text "Sociedad, Arte y Literatura," Núbila and Rodríguez Cortés[42]note that this woodcut shows the strength and dignity of Puerto Rican people living in poverty. Their observations echo narratives of resiliency that were commonly spread through Puerto Rican media after Hurricane María. The narrative associated with resiliency is commonly used as a way to designate individual responsibility following a disaster, rather than having the population question the lack of assistance from the same government that allowed the catastrophe to be so destructive. In Kristina Diprose's text, "Resilience is Futile" the author describes the discourse of resilience as a tool used to divert responsibility away from governments and other systems of power,

> "Resilience is a way of encouraging people to live with insecurity because the status quo is deemed insurmountable. Thus conversations about climate adaptation and economic adjustment are dominated by discovering how storms are to be withstood, for they are presumed inevitable. An ingenious disregard for living within limits is how people change the world; but energy diverted to resilience leaves little time for dissent and asking difficult questions. Resilience is reactive and distracts from legitimate indignation. It fixes people to the present, hiding the history that fashioned beggars and kings and proves all imaginable change possible."

[42] Carlos Di Núbila, Carmen N. Rodriguez-Cortes, "Sociedad, Arte y Literatura" from Puerto Rico: sociedad, cultura y educación: antología de lecturas. Isla Negra Editores, 1997. P. 67.

By presenting rising water and its consequence for low-income families, I want to suggest that Raquel Rivera registered the ecological impact of flooding and landslides, showing that those most deeply affected are the most marginalized sectors of the population. Raquel Rivera's work shows that past hurricanes called forth representation in the arts, even if not to the extent that we have seen with Hurricane María's disaster. (fig. 12)

As I have demonstrated through this brief account of storm depictions in Puerto Rican art history, modern Puerto Rican visual art, from its beginnings, has had a socio-political dimension. These historical works remind us that our present-day understanding of Hurricane María's disaster must go beyond the natural. Moving towards contemporary Puerto Rican art, I will conduct a visual analysis of the work of two contemporary Puerto Rican artists, Frances Gallardo and Lionel Cruet, and speak to how, through their work, they are commenting on climate change and the Caribbean landscape as inherently connected to colonialism, neocolonialism and imperialism, just as previous Puerto Rican artists have done. Despite working in different mediums, both artists have been reflecting on the impacts of hurricanes, floods and other natural disasters in the Caribbean region and how the region's colonial history and reality create disastrous socio-political outcomes during these events.

Frances Gallardo and the Anthropocene Discourse

The term "Anthropocene" arose in the academic and scientific community in 2002 due to Dutch chemist Paul J. Crutzen's intervention, after which "references to the Anthropocene began to appear within scientific publications regarding hydrospheric, biospheric, and pedospheric

research"[43], and have since then gained traction in scientific studies, social sciences, humanities, and the arts. Heather Davis and Etienne Turpin mention in their introductory chapter to the book *Art and the Anthropocene* that this geological epoch is still in the making, as we still do not know the extent of the damage human intervention has triggered on the planet. Moreover, it is still highly contested whether or not this is the proper term for environmental devastation, geological transformation, species extinction, and climate change. However, as it has been generally defined, the Anthropocene is a term used to describe the current climatological epoch where landscapes, bodies of water, climate, the atmosphere, etc. have been altered due to human intervention. It also points to the exploitation of nature as a resource, dating back to industrial modernity, and to policies of extracting wealth centuries before.[44]

Because the Anthropocene is still in development, we cannot know the extent of human impact upon the planet. Most studies asking when the Anthropocene began and how it will take place are "produced through a process of speculative geology, operating according to an intensive physical intertext of geohistories, present concerns, and future imaginaries."[45] Discourses problematizing the term Anthropocene are also emerging, as multiple scholars, such as TJ Demos, Zoe Todd, Heather Davis, and Donna Haraway, examine patterns of climate change from decolonial, Indigenous and feminist frameworks.

Climate change and the new geological epoch known as the Anthropocene have been a subject widely integrated in the visual arts over the past 20 years, since these terms' popularity increased. Puerto Rican artist Frances Gallardo interrogates anthropocentric discourse through the

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[43] Heather Davis and Etienne Turpin, "Art & death: Lives between the fifth assessment & the sixth extinction." *Art in the Anthropocene: Encounters among aesthetics, politics, environments and epistemologies* (2015): 3-29. https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/retreat/files/davis-turpin_intro_2015_art-in-the-anthropocene.pdf.

[44] TJ Demos, *Decolonizing Nature: Contemporary Art and the Politics of Ecology*. (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016).

[45] Davis and Turpin, "Art & Death".

figure of the hurricane. In a Caribbean context, Gallardo's artwork embodies the intersection of political discourse surrounding colonialism and climate change.[46] The hurricane, for thousands of years, has shaped and transformed the Caribbean landscape and has played an important role in creating narratives and identities within the region. During the first stages of colonization in the Caribbean, because hurricanes are particular atmospheric forces created in tropical regions, European settlers had no form of preparation or knowledge to survive and face these storms. In 1788, Fray Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra, a Spanish Benedictine monk who documented the island's history, culture and nationality during the 18th century, described the hurricane as a catastrophic entity that brings almost apocalyptic renderings of destruction:

> ... the most horrific phenomenon of those observed on the Island, and I still believe that in all of America. It is a furious wind accompanied by rain, lightning, thunder, and the most frequent earth tremors; the most terrible and devastating circumstances that can ruin a country in a few hours; the whirlwinds of the air and torrents of the waters, floods the towns and the countryside with a deluge of fire, they seem to herald the last convulsions of the universe.[47]

Through Abbad y Lasierra's depiction of the hurricane, one can estimate how colonizers in the Caribbean were ill-equipped to face these climatological formations. Returning to the Anthropocene discourse and its relation to colonialism, Simon L. Lewis and Mark A. Maslin, in their text "Defining the Anthropocene", approximate a date to mark the beginning of the Anthropocene. The effects of colonization upon the natural composition of the land begin to take hold in 1610, leaving the largest human-induced impact on the Earth's geology; in their research they consider this the Orbis Spike[48]:

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[46] This position is based on a personal interview I conducted with the artist in July 2018, during my research for this thesis in New York City.

[47] Abbad and Lasierra, Fray Iñigo. *Historia geográfica, civil y natural de la isla de San Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico*. Puerto Rico: Impr. y librería de Acosta, 1866.

[48] The Orbis Spike hypothesis dates the Anthropocene to 1610 and considers deeply rooted socio-political and global consequences to colonial intervention dating back to 1492. For the purpose of my investigation, I believe Lewis and

> The Orbis spike implies that colonialism, global trade and coal brought about the Anthropocene. Broadly, this highlights social concerns, particularly the unequal power relationships between different groups of people, economic growth, the impacts of globalized trade, and our current reliance on fossil fuels.[49]

In 2011, Gallardo began her *Hurricane Series* (2011-ongoing); a group of sculptural paper works depicting intricately woven patterns to illustrate the wind rotations that constitute the image of the hurricane. As a reference point, the artist uses satellite-generated imagery posted on the NOAA[50] archives and website, a culturally well-known form of satellite imagery of the powerful force of constantly moving energy that constitute a hurricane, creating an approachable reference point for the viewer. As previously stated, Gallardo approaches meterological formations and their effects on the region as a way to create a dialogue with historical, political and ecological epistemologies specific to the Caribbean and other island nations. Gallardo's use of satellite imagery in her *Hurricane Series* puts into practice the theory of art historian TJ Demos in his book *Against the Anthropocene*, which focuses on the depoliticization of visual culture and representation of the Anthropocene. Specifically, Demos states that satellite imagery used to capture the earth and the environment fails to engage with the geopolitics behind these images. More specifically, images that favor Western divisions of territory provide a flawed idea that humans can control and capture the natural environment through this techno-utopian imagery. Demos persuasively states, "Anthropocene visuality tends to reinforce the techno-utopian position

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Maslin's theory presents a decolonization of the Anthropocene, one that considers Western colonialism, genocide and expansionism as the main contributor of our current geological epoch.

[49] Simon L. Lewis and Mark A. Maslin, "Defining the Anthropocene." *Nature* 519, no. 7542 (March 11, 2015): 171–80. doi:10.1038/nature14258.

[50] The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

that 'we' have indeed mastered nature, just as we have mastered its imaging—and in fact the two, the dual colonization of nature and representation, appear inextricably intertwined."[51] (fig. 13)

Satellite images reinforce the techno-scientific imperialist approach to the Anthropocene that has brought about climate change in the first place, and they are used in geoengineering as a way to combat climate change. *Against the Anthropocene* engages with the visual culture behind satellite images, and the biases that exist within visual culture and the representation of supposed 'objective' images depicting the Anthropocene. This form of satellite imagery used in the Anthropocene discourse, as Demos argues, serves to further support claims of geoengineering as humanity's solution to climate change, while on the other side of this argument of people who seek to work in unison with Gaia's process. However, I would argue that Frances Gallardo's use of NOAA satellite images goes against Demos' argument of the depoliticization of satellite imagery. The artist consciously adopts this techno-utopian language and politicises it to communicate broader discourses surrounding climate change and colonialism in the Caribbean, rather than using it to reinforce humanity's mastery over nature through digital satellite photography and data visualizations. (fig. 14)

Frances Gallardo's work uses abstract patterns and repetitions extending outwards, creating illustrative shapes of the natural world, such as hurricanes, landscapes/cityscapes and dust clouds. Another significant contribution to the Anthropocene discourse, feminist scholar Donna Haraway, in her book *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, searches for different terms to evoke the current climatological era. She uses the term Capitalocene to describe

[51] T.J. Demos, *Against the Anthropocene: Visual Culture and the Environment Today.* Berlin, Germany: Steinberg Press, 2017, 28.

the current epoch, to call attention to the forms of resource and population extraction and exploitation enacted and perpetuated by capitalist systems. She also argues that this economic system is exploitative and cannot recognize all the forms of systemic relations that encompass Gaia nor the symbiotic relations both humans and non-humans hold in this ecological system. Haraway, after determining that Anthropocene and Capitolocene are too heavily centered around human intervention on the Earth, arrives at the term Chthulucene. (fig. 15a)

I argue that the visual interwoven language of Gallardo's work, specifically how smaller shapes connect and create larger natural bodies, insinuates that these natural elements are all connected, relating back to Haraway's definition of the Chthulucene, characterized by the interconnected nature of all living things. The Chthulucene encompasses the interconnected relation amongst all human and non-human life forms, characterized by what Haraway calls tentacularity,[52] a form of relating and interweaving all living forms. The Chthulucene breaks with individualist and neoliberal narratives that currently dominate a capitalist and human-centric system of relations with Nature. Artist and writer Shannon Lee, in an interview with Haraway describes the difference between Chthulucene, Anthropocene and Capitalocene as:

> Unlike the dominant dramas of Anthropocene and Capitalocene discourse, human beings are not the only important actors in the Chthulucene, with all other beings able simply to react. The order is reknitted: human beings are with and of the Earth, and the biotic and abiotic powers of this Earth are the main story.[53]

(fig. 15b)

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[52] "Tentacularity is symchthonic, wound with abyssal and dreadful graspings, frayings, and weavings, passing relays again and again, in the generative recursions that make up living and dying." Haraway, Donna, 2016, Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene. North Carolina, United States: Duke University Press, 33.

[53] Shannon Lee. "Who On Earth Is Donna Haraway? Why the Art World Can't Get Enough of the Ecofeminist Cyborg Enthusiast" *Artspace. 6 Oct 2018.* Access: https://www.artspace.com/magazine/art_101/in_depth/who-on-earth-is-donna-haraway-why-the-art-world-cant-get-enough-of-the-posthuman-ecofeminist-and-55676.

The universalist approach often associated with the Anthropocene places all human beings as equal contributors to the advancement of climate change and this, as geologist Kathryn Yusoff states in *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, is a form of erasing the power relations of Western and imperialist countries. Yusoff expands on this concept saying,

> To be included in the "we" of the Anthropocene is to be silenced by a claim to universalism that fails to notice its subjugations, taking part in a planetary condition in which no part was accorded in terms of subjectivity. The supposed "we" further legitimates and justifies the racialized inequalities that are bound up in social geologies.

In this text, Yusoff also explains that during the conquest of the Caribbean, colonizers "began to use the islands as an experimental archipelago in terms of both the social organization of categories of human *and* the ecological arrangements of flora and fauna,"[54] thus thingifying the colonized population and landscape. Considering colonized people's placement as another resource to extract do we question then which populations have caused a greater impact to environmental change?

Decolonial Métis geographer Zoe Todd and writer Heather Davis follow on Lewis and Maslin's theory of dating the beginning of the Anthropocene to the Orbis Spike of 1610 and extend it to include how colonization is intrinsically related to contemporary ecological exploitation and the disenfranchisement of colonized populations. In Todd and Davis' text "On the Importance of a Date, Or, Decolonizing the Anthropocene" they emphasize the relation between colonization and the Anthropocene. They state,

> the Anthropocene, if explicitly linked to the beginnings of colonization, would at least assert it as a critical project that understands that the ecocidal logistics that now govern our world are not inevitable or 'human nature', but are the result of a series of decisions that have their origins and reverberations in colonization.[55]

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[54] Kathryn Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*. (Minnesota, United States: The University of Minnesota Press, 2018), 41.

[55] Heather Davis and Zoe Todd, "On the Importance of a Date, Or, Decolonizing the Anthropocene". *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 16 (4), 2017 761-80. https://acme-journal.org/index.php/acme/article/view/1539.

In one of Gallardo's most recent works, *Murmuration (Mosquito Cloud)* (2017), presented in 516 Arts' seminal Post-María exhibition, *Puerto Rico: Defying Darkness*, the artist interacts more explicitly with the intersection of climate change and colonialism in the Caribbean, calling back to Todd and Davis. The work, named after a formation of starlings, an invasive bird species introduced to the Americas following colonial expansion in the 15th century, is composed of small paper-cut sculptures of mosquitos, attached to the gallery wall using dressmaker pins. Colonialism is a key topic in *Murmuration* as the work speaks of the expansive consequences it has brought upon the region and has continued to affect Puerto Rico and the Caribbean until today. *Murmuration* resonates with the socio-political mismanagement that accompanies natural disasters, and evokes the aftermath of such disasters, and the natural ripple-effects that immediately follow a storm, such as the swarms of mosquitoes that arise and carry diseases.[56] Just as the natural disasters affect the region, colonialism, neocolonialism, recolonization, and imperialism has arguably been the most disastrous intervention in the Caribbean; one that creates ruptures and dislocations that still plague the region today. This sculpture with its 6-foot diameter visual representation of a hurricane, is one of the artist's largest pieces, and creates an overwhelming experience for the viewer who is directly confronted with the effects of climate change and the aftermath of the storm. (fig. 16a), (fig. 16b), (fig. 16c)

In "On the Importance of a Date, or Decolonizing the Anthropocene," the authors argue against holding all of humanity responsible for the current climate crisis. They view the Anthropocene as "the extension and enactment of colonial logic [which] systematically erases difference, by way of genocide and forced integration and through projects of climate change that

[56]Following the effects of a hurricane, collected rainwater produces an ideal environment for mosquitos to breed.

imply the radical transformation of the biosphere"[57]. Decolonial theorist and cultural researcher, Macarena Gómez-Barris in her book *The Extractive Zone* also criticizes who the 'we' in the narrative surrounding the Anthropocene includes. The author calls for a more critical examination of histories of oppression, systems of power and colonization when discussing which populations have more responsibility for ecological damage to the planet:

> The broad adoption of the term "Anthropocene" is a key shift in our willingness to acknowledge the impact the human has had on the planet. Yet we use the term too generally, addressing "humanity" as a whole without understanding histories of racial thought and settler colonialism that are imposed upon categorizations of biodiversity, spaces where the biotechnologies of capitalism accelerate.[58]

In her article "Indigenizing the Anthropocene," Todd calls for the need to examine "the complex and paradoxical experiences of diverse people as humans-in-the world, including the ongoing damage of colonial and imperialist agendas,"[59] as a way to visualize the main drivers behind the effects of climate change and those at the center of the Anthropocentric discourse. Indigenous peoples have been advocating for a more symbiotic relationship between people and nature, seeing no hierarchy between these categories. In "Indigenizing the Anthropocene," Todd mentions how the term 'Anthropocene' does not acknowledge or engage with colonial narratives and systems of oppression, instead creating a "universalizing species paradigm."[60] As did Yusoff, Todd invites the viewer to take into consideration which populations have contributed to the advancement of environmental change:

> With the prevalence of the Anthropocene as a conceptual "building" within which stories are being told, it is important to query which humans or human systems are driving the environmental change the Anthropocene is meant to describe.

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[57] Davis and Todd. "On the Importance of a Date, Or, Decolonizing the Anthropocene."

[58] Gómez-Barris. The Extractive Zone, 4.

[59] Todd, Zoe. 'Indigenizing the Anthropocene' in *Art and the Anthropocene: Encounters Among Aesthetics, Politics, Environments and Epistemologies*, edited by Heather Davis and Etienne Turpin. London, England: Open Humanities Press, 2015, 241-254.

[60] Todd. "Indigenizing the Anthropocene."

Todd also draws on her experience as a Métis woman to critique how the term has gained traction in 'white public space'—space in which Indigenous ideas and experiences are appropriated, or obscured, by non-Indigenous practitioners."[61] She insists on the need to "decolonize and Indigenize the non-Indigenous intellectual contexts that currently shape public intellectual discourse, including that of the Anthropocene"[62].

Ecocriticism studies the environment from an interdisciplinary perspective that can involve examining how ecology is completely interconnected to socio-political and economic realities. As George Handley and Elizabeth Deloughrey state in their introduction to *Postcolonial Ecologies*, to adopt a narrative of ecocriticism that does not directly engage with social and historical narratives on relations of power is to ignore an extensive amount of research and work by "indigenous, ecofeminist, ecosocialist, and environmental justice scholars and activists... for many decades."[63] This is to say that a decolonizing methodology must be brought to bear on themes of ecology and climate change. In *Decolonizing Nature,* Demos provides a definition of the term "political ecology" by linking the environment directly to social, political and economic forces, and addressing the political and colonial forms that have shaped environmental change:

> Since environmental stresses can be both a driver and consequence of injustice and inequality -including poverty, racism, and neocolonial violence- political ecology recognizes that the ways we regard nature carry deep implications and often unacknowledged ramifications for how we organize society, assign responsibility for environmental change, and assess social impact.[64]

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[61] Todd. "Indigenizing the Anthropocene."
[62] Todd. "Indigenizing the Anthropocene."
[63] Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George Handley, "Introduction: Towards an Aesthetics of the Earth," in *Postcolonial Ecologies: Literatures of the Environment*, (New York: Oxford University Press), 9.
[64] Demos. Decolonizing Nature, 7.

The material complexity of Frances Gallardo's intricate and delicate papercuts invites the viewer to appreciate the artist's meticulous and repetitive form of artmaking, which is in sharp contrast to the imagery being depicted, that of a brisk and chaotic force of energy. In a sense, giving so much attention to detail and to the aesthetic quality of her work is a way of highlighting the beauty of this powerful and destructive force. The artist's constant return to depictions of the hurricane, a figure rooted for many in fear and natural disaster, can perhaps be considered a way of coping with trauma through the repetitive action of constantly confronting the imagery and what it represents. The artist's depiction of a superstorm is placed in an elegant contrast with the delicate constitution of the materiality of the paper used, as well as the intricate allusion to lacework of the medium used. The use of paper is also extremely important in the work of Gallardo as it provides another set of seeming contradictions. Each hurricane depicted in this series is given names of people in the artist's life, just as NOAA provides storms with human names. Except that in Frances Gallardo's case, this process of naming places the work in conversation with those who have lived through the destructive force of Puerto Rico's colonial relations and the effects of climate change in the Caribbean. (fig. 17)

When speaking about the Anthropocene, Gómez-Barris says that decolonial action requires a rethinking of "submerged" perspectives, the ecocritical perspectives that have been obscured by falling outside of Western imperialist thought. She states, "...submerged perspectives pierce through the entanglements of power to differently organize the meanings of social and political life. In other words, the possibility of decolonization moves within the landscape of multiplicity that is submerged perspectives."[65] Expanding on the concept of double consciousness, Todd quotes

[65] Gómez-Barris. *The Extractive Zone*, 11.

the work of feminist geographer Juanita Sundberg, on how posthumanist theories and scholarship tend to "erase both location and Indigenous epistemologies" and urges researchers to "to enact the "pluriverse" as a decolonial tool, ...as one locus of thought and praxis to decolonize posthumanist scholarship and geographies."[66]

I argue that Gallardo exposes the island's political framework by illustrating the lack of sovereignty the island holds through its colonial relationship with the United States. Puerto Rico's political system is the true destructive force, rather than the hurricane. By bringing in an eco-critical framework to the interpretation of her artwork, it is possible to address themes of colonial environmentalism and political ecology, focusing on the rise of extreme weather patterns in the Caribbean. As previously stated, the increase in frequency and power of storms propelled by rising sea levels and temperatures are affecting countries with little infrastructure or resources to respond to these weather formations, thus maintaining the separation of wealth and resources between these and wealthier nations.

Following the disastrous effects of Hurricane María there has been an increase in the representation of hurricanes and natural disasters in contemporary Puerto Rican art, but Frances Gallardo has been working with meteorological themes since 2009. Her artwork reflects on the fragility of humans in the face of storms and atmospheric interference, as well as depictions of the Caribbean landscape, in a variety of mediums, such as paper-sculptures, book art and printmaking, installation and performance art. Aerial and surface landscapes are a recurring theme in her work, which, I believe is attributed to the artist's constant flux between Puerto Rico and the United States, exposing her to different migratory paths and fragmentations between the "here and there." My

[66] Todd, Indigenizing the Anthropocene, 15.

analysis frames Frances Gallardo's work in relation to climate change, a fraught political infrastructure, Caribbean subjectivities of temporality.

In 2017, Gallardo was included in the exhibition *Relational Undercurrents*, curated by art historian, curator and Latinx scholar Tatiana Flores, a significant exhibition of twenty-first century art of the Caribbean that toured the United States[67]. The exhibition used the archipelago as a central framework to locate thematic similarities amongst contemporary Caribbean artists and place the works of Hispanophone artists in conversation with those from Anglophone, Francophone, Dutch, and Danish backgrounds. As a way of resisting the idea that the Caribbean space is shaped by discontinuous and isolated populations, the exhibition was divided into four thematic concepts (Conceptual Mappings, Perpetual Horizons, Landscape Ecologies and Representational Acts) as a way of contesting the historical colonial divisions established in the area, instead aiming to create a unified Caribbean identity.

> We delineate an idea of Caribbean space shaped by experiences of "disjuncture, connection and entanglement between and among islands, and an insular imaginary focused less on romantic ideas of island interchangeability -the timeless repeating "island in the sun"- and more on interchanges that occur between island, mainland, and sea in a "world of islands [that] might be experienced in terms of networks, assemblages, filaments, connective tissue, mobilities and municipalities.[68] (fig. 18)

Frances Gallardo's work is presented in this exhibition under the theme of "Landscape Ecologies" because of its profound dialogue with the Caribbean landscape—its ecology and the effects of climate change upon it. Gallardo's project aligns with Brathwaite's comment that "the

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[67] *Relational Undercurrents* began in the Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach, California, as part of The Getty Foundation's *Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA,* however it has been shown in Colombia University's Wallach Art Gallery in Manhattan, New York, in Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum in Miami, Florida.

[68] Tatiana Flores and Michelle A. Stephens*,* "Toward an Archipelagic Model of Insular Caribbean Art,*"* in *Relational Undercurrents: Contemporary Art of the Caribbean Archipelago. (*California: Museum of Latin American Art, 2017), 16.

history of catastrophe … requires a literature of catastrophe, identifying "natural disaster as a discursive mode through which to address global historical catastrophes and to illustrate a much wider cycle of destiny of which, he argues, the Caribbean 'region was/is the matrix (axle)."[69] Through her depiction of the hurricane and the Caribbean landscape, the artist responds to a regional and climatological history outside of colonial narratives imposed after the European expansion to the Antilles. The hurricane and the population's survival following its effects alludes to the centuries of resilience of Caribbean populations in the face of natural disaster, one that has always existed in the region. In *Catauro,* an anthropology publication*,* Cuban anthropologist Miguel Barnet states, "The hurricane is a meteorological phenomena of our Caribbean area that directly affects the development of a culture of disaster and resistance"[70]

After the devastation of Hurricane María and the disastrous response of both the Puerto Rican and the Federal government, the resistance and resilience narrative was enacted by the diverse forms of community and grass-roots organizations[71] that provided assistance in repairing homes and providing basic necessities to the most affected populations on the island. Frances Gallardo's meteorologically engaged works comment on how the true destructive force in this scenario is the fraught political infrastructure imposed by Puerto Rico's colonial relations with the United States; and the resulting damage to the island's people and the environment, rather than the hurricane itself. In an interview, [72] Gallardo states that the hurricane is not the agent of destruction,

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[69] Tatiana Flores, *"Inscribing into Consciousness: The Work of Caribbean Art,"* in *Relational Undercurrents: Contemporary Art of the Caribbean Archipelago.* ed. Tatiana Flores and Michelle A. Stephens (California: Museum of Latin American Art, 2017), 68.

[70] Miguel Barnet. "Editorial." *Catauro: Revista cubana de antropología* (Fundación Fernando Ortiz) Año 11, no. 22 (julio - diciembre 2010): 4.

[71] Some grass-root organizations that assisted community rebuilding efforts include ArigArte,

[72] This is based on a phone interview I conducted with the artist in July 2018.

as they have existed in the region for thousands of years, but rather the human component behind climate is the true cataclysmic and destructive force. (fig.19), (fig. 19B)

Gabriel (2013) is one of the artist's few more explicitly sculptural works from her *Hurricane Series*. Of a bright coral hue, its intricately cut paper reminiscent of lacework, the work is presented on its own with no framing device, creating a free-floating effect that depends on the usage of light in the space presented. Light shining on *Gabriel* in the gallery creates an elaborate shadow behind the work, suggesting different volumes and angles. In the video *Proceso de "Unicornio en la Isla" de Frances Gallardo*[73], the artist is shown creating light tests with another work, *Unicornio en la Isla* (2014), similar in execution to *Gabriel* because of its free-floating sculptural paper component. In this documentation of process, the viewer can see the specific placement of light around the sculpture, creating shadows that suggest distorted versions of the original artwork. *Gabriel*, like other works in the Hurricane Series, creates forms that weave and intertwine onto each other and extend from one another, similar to depictions of Guabancex, the storm deity in Taíno cosmology, that depicts a face with arms flailing outwards and in circular formation, emulating the rotation of winds. Using this interconnected but extending outwards portrayal, Gallardo's work engages with depictions of storms rooted in a longer tradition of topographical imaging that has existed long before satellite imagery.

Frances Gallardo's work creates an evident dialogue with shifting climatological patterns in the Caribbean and the social and political consequences of said atmospheric manifestations in the archipelago. Gallardo's *The Unnamed* (2014 and 2018) shows the clear transit path of hurricanes in the Caribbean region, presenting the unnamed and unknown storms future

[73]Programas de Exhibiciones del ICP. *Proceso de "Unicornio en la Isla" de Frances Gallardo. 13 October 2015. Source:* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vhrp3ZUI7DI.

documentation of storm paths in the region simultaneously, thus clearly depicting as well as the frequency of these hurricanes. *The Unnamed*, by placing handstitched embroidered paths, also presents a dualism through the use of embroidery, evocative of delicate and decorative practices, to evoke sublime and monumental strength of a hurricane. This work, along with the previously discussed Hurricane Series and *Murmuration (Mosquito Cloud)* evoke the unified and archipelagic connection of the current climatological crisis the Caribbean is currently experiencing. Through her multi-layered work, Gallardo presents commentary on both the present and future of the Anthropocene and how it directly affects and will continue to affect the region. Her work, despite its explicit figurative depictions, presents a multilayered reading that analyzes how weather formations, such as hurricanes, uproot the deep social, economic and political inequalities that already lied below the surface of a specific region, in this case Puerto Rico and the rest of the Caribbean. (fig. 20)

Lionel Cruet's work through the lens of decolonial geopolitics

In the past decade, Puerto Rico has been facing a dire fiscal and economic recession that has added to the devastating destruction wrought by Hurricane María. Contemporary Puerto Rican visual artist Lionel Cruet has been creating work that engages with how colonial and geopolitical frameworks play a role in the natural environments of the Caribbean landscape. The artist, through his interdisciplinary approach to digital media, addresses the complexities of technology's transformation of reality. He experiments with the notion of space-making, attempting to re-create complex renditions of landscape in enclosed, unnatural spaces, such as bare and enclosed gallery walls or storage containers. His work often visually alludes to the touristic trope of the paradisal Caribbean landscape—the beach's shoreline, sunsets and palm trees—and intersects this with

relevant socio-political issues affecting the region, such as climate change, coastal erosion and migrants lost at sea. Cruet creates metaphoric landscapes that link nature to underlying colonial issues and realities that affect the Caribbean.

The decolonial turn[74], as defined by scholar Nelson Maldonado-Torres and arising from decolonial studies, views colonialism as "a fundamental problem in the modern (as well as postmodern and information) age, and of decolonization or decoloniality as a necessary task that remains unfinished."[75] American writer and thinker W.E.B. Dubois theorized double consciousness, the idea that the colonial subject is always aware of themself appearing in the eyes of the colonizer, creating a complex and disparate "two-ness" rooted in self-contempt, a concept that later gets picked up by Martinican decolonial philosopher Frantz Fanon and challenged by feminist latinx writers Chela Sandoval and Emma Pérez. More recently Gómez-Barris expands on the notion of double consciousness by speaking about submerged perspectives, which are those perspectives overshadowed by Western colonial structures.

Maori decolonial theorist Linda Tuhiwai Smith, in her seminal text *Decolonizing Methodologies*, focuses on what it means to undertake decolonizing research, when certain histories were marginalized and excluded from Western academic discourse and narrative. Tuhiwai Smith describes the efforts of Indigenous peoples and other colonial subjects to decolonize as a long-term project involving the dismantling of cultural, political and psychological

[74] W.E.B. Du Bois is credited with being one of the first scholars to engage with what would become the decolonial turn and decolonial praxis in the early 20th century. Later on, scholars such as Aimeé Cesar, Frantz Fanon, Sylvia Wynter, Enrique Dussel, and others would continue to critically engage with histories and epistemologies as they expanded the scope of in decolonial studies.

[75] Nelson Maldonado-Torres, "Thinking through the Decolonial Turn: Post-continental Interventions in Theory, Philosophy, and Critique: An introduction," *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World,* 1(2), 1-15.

structures that perpetuate forms of colonial subjugation. Specifically focusing on decolonial efforts within academia, she states,

> Decolonization is a process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels. For researchers, one of those levels is concerned with having a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations, and values which inform research practices.[76]

For this section of my thesis, I believe that Indigenous decolonial efforts are relevant, because colonization functions by imposing a colonial matrix of power, as Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano has defined coloniality, making it a common thread between diverse populations that have been affected by colonialism, neocolonialism, imperialism, and recolonization. As Tuhiwai Smith remarks: "colonized peoples share a language of colonization, share knowledge about their colonizers, and, in terms of a political project, share the same struggle for decolonization."[77] In Lionel Cruet's work, the artist uses decolonial imagery as a form to contest colonial legacies imposed on the Caribbean, but more specifically as a way to produce a decolonial aesthetic, one that actively confronts the viewer with the indignation, sadness and critical thinking that engage in various realities in the Caribbean as a consequence of colonialism.

While Tuhiwai Smith speaks of a "decolonizing methodology," queer Chicana writer Emma Pérez introduces the concept of the "decolonial imaginary" as a "rupturing space, the alternative to that which is written in history"[78] where the author contests common forms of knowledge creation within a Western narrative, which has used colonial systems of power to render opaque and erase certain historical trajectories. Gómez-Barris uses Pérez's text:

> Pérez turns to the poetics of seeing, where the decolonial imaginary "acts much like a shadow in the dark. The figure between the subject and the object on which it is cast." The

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[76] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, "Imperialism, History, Writing and Theory" in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. (*Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press, 1999), 20.
[77] Tuhiwai Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies, 45.
[78] Emma Pérez, The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History. (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999), 6.

> shadow is a space in which the visible and invisible mix together, where potential exists in a decolonial imaginary that is not rendered through transparent language or representations.[79]

An Anthropocentric discourse that takes into consideration a decolonial imagery—one that brings to surface the epistemologies and histories often overshadowed by Western expansionism—provides a more politically and historically informed rendering of the discussion surrounding our current epoch of climate change.

In *Making Windows on Walls* (2015), a large-scale audio and visual installation, a video-loop of a hurricane hitting palm trees over a shining sun is projected onto an arrangement of objects, such as an alarm-clock, that also functions as an analog radio, a photography timer alongside images printed on translucent film, and buckets of water. *Making Windows on Walls* (2015) recreates the feeling of entrapment within the hurricane, yet, through the projection of the hurricane hitting the palm trees, it creates an opening of a second space in the gallery where the viewer could participate in an imagined space curated by the artist. A voice-over coming from the analog radio, narrates the threatening weather conditions striking the region, as well as news of people being lost to the Caribbean ocean. In an interview with online publication *Unframe*, Cruet describes the viewer experience behind *Making Windows on Walls* (2015) as presenting "something seductive positioned in the middle of chaos."[80] (fig. 22)

Chaos has been a concept raised by various scholars and academics to encompass the Caribbean condition in relation to its history of colonization and violence. Chaos theory, a branch in behavioral mathematics, proposes that small actions in the present are related to grand-scale

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[79] Gómez-Barris, Macarena. *The Extractive Zone,* 10.
[80] Despoina Tzanou, "In Conversation with Lionel Cruet," *Unframe* (2 June 2016): http://lionelcruet.com/doc/lionel_cruet_unframe_2016.pdf.

phenomena in the future as well as that nature's apparent randomness functions under a different definition of order that privileges the continued dynamism of differential repetition.[81] Postmodern writers and theorists from the Caribbean region, such as previously mentioned Édouard Glissant and Antonio Benítez-Rojo adapt chaos theory to develop a unified identity for the Caribbean region, one that prioritizes smallness and pays attention to places that lie in the shadows of a dominant power, destabilizes colonial knowledge systems and finds order within disorder:

> In the context of the Caribbean region, rendered incoherent by differences in histories, languages, and political realities, chaos theory offers a narrative for thinking about the region as a whole….Chaos theory offers these writers a wedge with which to destabilize received knowledge and therefore makes possible a radical rereading of Caribbean space.[82]

The importance of Chaos theory and Caribbean archipelagic narratives in Lionel Cruet's work opens the possibility of creating new perspectives falling outside Western canons and perceptions of the Caribbean region, bringing to the surface submerged perspectives to compensate for the disregard for the potentiality of small countries and communities. Murray-Román argues that chaos theory provides "a wedge with which to destabilize received knowledge and therefore makes possible a radical rereading of Caribbean space."[83] Cruet's work can thus be considered through chaos theory as it "connect the chaos in the specificities of the natural Caribbean landscapes to cultural expression."[84] Chaos theory in *Making Windows on Walls* as well as other

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[81] "While stressing similarity also reaffirms the distinction between multiple iterations and the generation of momentum through repetition." Murray-Roman argues differential repetition is the method that Benitez-Rojo, Glissant and Harris extract from chaos theory in order to fulfill their aims to radically reread diminutives and the Caribbean region. Differential repetition describes a specific mode of thinking that particularly resonates with Caribbean phenomena.

[82] Jeannine Murray-Román, "Rereading the Diminutive: Caribbean Chaos Theory in Antonio Benítez-Rojo, Edouard Glissant, and Wilson Harris," *Small Axe,* Vol.19, no.1 (March 2015): 20-36, https://doi.org/10.1215/07990537-2873323.

[83] Murray-Román, "Rereading the Diminutive," 24.

[84] Murray-Román, "Rereading the Diminutive," 30.

works by Lionel Cruet, offers a narrative that connects the Caribbean landscape to the region's socio-political reality and its cultural expression. (fig. 23)

In *Entre Nosotros (Between Us)* (2017) Lionel Cruet recreates an audio-visual and interactive Caribbean ecotone, an encounter of two diverse ecological systems, condensed in space and time through its presentation in a gallery setting. The work is an installation that recreates a beach landscape by drawing sand on the floor of the gallery setting, placing two wooden boats on top of the sand-filled floors, and projecting an idyllic sunset alongside an oceanic horizon onto a blank gallery wall. This work creates an inviting representation of two diverse Caribbean habitats and their points of encounter: the beach as an encounter between two different ecosystems (the ocean and the coastline); the viewer and their encounter with the transformed white cube setting of the gallery. *Entre Nosotros* presents the viewer with a set of encounters and relations, related to ecological questions, the the title of the work (Between us) and the relationality of the landscape, as theorized by Glissant. (fig. 24)

Relationality bases itself in the encounter with the Other[85] and it is visualized through hybridity and variance within a space. Glissant relates this theory to the Caribbean as a historical site of colonial convergence where such diverse populations were forced to cohabit the same landscape. This form of relation-making developed by Glissant is influenced by the concept of the rhizome, developed by philosophers Gilles Deluze and Félix Guattari in their 1980 text *A Thousand Plateaus*. The figure of the rhizome, a stem of a plant that grows horizontally, according

[85] Based on postcolonial Edward Said's concept of the Other. Edward W. Said, 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.

to Deluze & Guattari, provides an allegory for non-hierarchical, underground and horizontal form relation-making amongst human and non-human entities.

> Relation links diversities and perceives and names differences and works persistently on our consciousnesses and revives our intuitions. Throughout this time which is ours and which passes for us, Relation points to and realizes this quantity (of differences), which comes into existence and provides movement and gives life to the endless and the unexpected. Most conceptions of difference have seen it just as that which separates, the gap, and which invites, rapport or alliance, and perhaps that which also links and relays and relates, i.e., Relation.[86]

Grounding relationality in an ecocritical dialogue that is similar to the one Cruet presents in *Entre Nosotros,* Glissant refers to our relation with the land as one of giving on-and-with rather than of extraction, in relation to those that cohabitate it. "Relation does not think of a land as territory from which to project toward other territories but as a place where one gives-on-and-with rather than grasps."[87] Both Chthulucene and Relational theory base themselves on the fact that all life forms are interconnected and operate in relation to one another, rather than being isolated and individually functioning elements. The allegory of the rhizome provides a further understanding of the networks of connections and relations that compose and affect the planet's climate and ecology, a concept already mentioned previously when discussing Haraway's Chthulucene.

> Relation links diversities and perceives and names differences and works persistently on our consciousnesses and revives our intuitions. Throughout this time which is ours and which passes for us, Relation points to and realizes this quantity (of differences), which comes into existence and provides movement and gives life to the endless and the unexpected. Most conceptions of difference have seen it just as that which separates, the gap, and which invites, rapport or alliance, and perhaps that which also links and relays and relates, i.e., Relation.[88]

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[86] Édouard Glissant and Celia Britton. "In Praise of the Different and of Difference." *Callaloo* 36, no. 4 (2013): 856-862. doi:10.1353/cal.2013.0203.

[87] Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation,* trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 144.

[88] Glissant and Britton. "In Praise of the Different and of Difference," 861.

Glissant, in *Poetics of Relation*, constructs a definition of the politics of ecology that implies different forms of relation among diverse territories, "...far from consenting to sacred intolerance, it is a driving force for the relational interdependence of all lands, of the whole Earth."[89] Glissant explains that, within the Caribbean context, because of the region's violent colonial history, "Antillean soil could not become a territory but, rather, a rhizomed land."[90] (fig. 25)

Recreating the oceanic setting of the Caribbean points to the physical waterways that connects the Caribbean as a whole. Throughout the 20th century and today, contemporary artists have been aiming to provide a more unified archipelagic definition of the Caribbean, in direct opposition of the region being divided and defined by its colonial history. In curators Tatiana Flores and Michelle Stephens' text "Contemporary Art of the Hispanophone Caribbean Islands in an Archipelagic Framework," published for the publication *Small Axe*, the authors expand on the idea of an archipelagic vision of the Caribbean and how visual art serves as a starting point to observe the patterns in Caribbean production:

> An archipelagic vision of the Caribbean, therefore, holds in tension, and in relation, the points of fracture and fragmentation as well as connectivity and shared histories that organize the region. This view is ruled less by the visual logic of difference—one thing is not like the other and is therefore unique—and more by a logic of analogy, whereby the very strategies, themes, and mediums engaged by contemporary Caribbean visual artists encourage a recognition of unexpected mirrorings and inevitable unities across Caribbean spaces and bodies.[91]

To examine the political structures of colonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialism in the Caribbean is to also examine how the ecology of the region is inherently tied to this history. When

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[89] Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, 146.

[90] Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, 146.

[91] Tatiana Flores and Michelle Stephens, "Contemporary Art of the Hispanophone Caribbean Islands in an Archipelagic Framework," *Small Axe* vol.20 (3 (51))(November 2016): 80–99: https://doi.org/10.1215/07990537-3726878.

studying Puerto Rico's ecosystem and that of the Caribbean more broadly, it is important to think about ecology in historical and political terms. Coming from a specifically Caribbean perspective, Handley and DeLoughrey engage with a eco-critical theory that, quoting Guyanese writer Wilson Harris, seeks to create a "profound dialogue with the landscape."[92] DeLoughrey and Handley follow Harris' idea by creating a historical narrative that takes into consideration the epistemology of space and time in relation to the specific locations' ecology and history. The authors expand on the idea that "the decoupling of nature and history has helped to mystify colonialism's histories of forced migration, suffering, and human violence."[93] This separation between nature and history has allowed for the continuation of extractive views, with landscapes and populations being seen as commodities under a capitalist system, the colonial machine in the Caribbean, in other words.

> In order to engage a historical model of ecology and an epistemology of space and time, (Wilson) Harris suggests that we must enter a "profound dialogue with the landscape". This historical dialogue is necessary because the decoupling of nature and history has helped to mystify colonialism's histories of forced migration, suffering, and human violence. Following Harris' model, we foreground the landscape (and seascape) as a participant in this historical process rather than a bystander to human experience. Engaging nonhuman agency creates and additional challenge because nature's own processes of regeneration and change often contribute to the burial of postcolonial histories.[94]

Guyanese poet and writer Wilson Harris speaks about the "language of the landscape" specifically within a Caribbean rhetoric. A landscape so heavily marked by colonialism cannot be examined from a purely anthropocentric representation, he insists, but rather, "the 'natural' environment is constituted and constructive of human history"[95] Harris' literary works present characters as intrinsically connected to their natural surroundings and, because of their connection

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[92] DeLoughrey and Handley, *Postcolonial Ecologies*, 4.
[93] DeLoughrey and Handley, *Postcolonial Ecologies*, 4.
[94] DeLoughrey and Handley, *Postcolonial Ecologies*, 4.
[95] Elizabeth DeLoughrey, "Ecocriticism: The Politics of Place," in *Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature*, ed. Alison Donnell and Michael A. Bucknor (England: Routledge, 2011), 265-275.

to the tropical landscape, Harris' work resonates within a Caribbean cultural context, one focused on how the past, present and future local populations are embedded in the Caribbean landscape, thus creating a unified identity of the region connected by the language of the landscape. In *Caribbean Discourse*, Glissant focuses on what he calls the "poetics of landscape" in which he points to the inextricable relationship Caribbean communities have with their landscape: "the individual, the community and the land are inextricable in the process of creating history. Landscape is a character in this process. Its deepest meanings need to be understood."[96]

The landscape image being projected in *Entre Nosotros*, at first glance, suggests a picturesque rendition of beaches commonly associated with the Edenic representation of the Caribbean, perpetuated by tourism. However upon deeper reflection, the work becomes a recreation of the fleeting image of the Caribbean landscape and how, through the effects of climate change, these diverse ecosystems so vital to Caribbean identity and relationalism will be swallowed by rising sea levels. Landscape, in a Caribbean setting, is connected to the formation of a regional memory and identity both on a local and global level. The liminal space between land and sea on the Caribbean's fractal shorelines evoke histories of slavery, colonization, and genocide. Cruet recognizes the importance of the Caribbean landscape through his recurrent use of it in his installations, engaging with the geopolitics particular to the region. (fig. 26)

As the site of one of the first instances of European colonial invasion and desire for expansion, the Caribbean was first and foremost meant for resource extraction, exploitation and capitalist gain. But the Caribbean was also mythologized as an Edenic paradise—something which persists in the present-day tourist economy. Following European contact in the Americas, the

[96] Édouard Glissant, "Cross-Cultural Poetics" in *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays, trans.* J. Michael Dash (Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1989), 105-106.

Native populations, as well as the local flora and fauna were irreparably transformed by the systematic workings of colonial systems of oppression; this intervention radically altered the natural environment of the Caribbean landscape. This landscape is extremely important to the constitution of local epistemologies, culture and creation as stated by Elizabeth DeLoughrey: "...the (Caribbean) landscape is not reducible to anthropocentric representation; the 'natural' environment is constituted and constructive to human history. As a process rather than a passive template, it thus reflects the dialectic between the land and its residents"[97].

In Lionel Cruet's work *Entre Nosotros (Between Us)* the viewer is placed in a built environment that depicts an imagined reality in a completely different context – a recreation of a Caribbean ecotone in the middle of a gallery in North America.[98] However, besides the work's allusion to notions of relation and diverse ecosystems in the Caribbean, the work also takes a critical lens towards specific forms of landscape depiction and image representation aimed towards tourist consumption. In Krista Thompson's introduction text for her book An *Eye for the Tropics*, the author defines the notion of tropicalization as:

> …the complex visual systems through which the islands were imaged for tourist consumption and the social and political implications of these representations on actual physical space on the islands and their inhabitants. More specifically, tropicalization delineates how certain ideals and expectations of the tropics informed the creation of place-images in some Anglophone Caribbean islands. It characterizes how, despite the geological diversity within ''the tropics'' and even in a single Caribbean island, a very particular concept of what a tropical Caribbean island should look like developed in the visual economies of tourism.[99]

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[97] Elizabeth DeLoughrey, "Island Ecologies and Caribbean Literatures," *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, Vol. 95, No. 3, (July 2004): 298–310.

[98] Entre Nosotros (Between Us) has been presented in the Masseur Museum of Art in Monroe, Los Ángeles, USA and at the Spring Brake Art Show BKLYN Immersive in New York, NY, USA.

[99] Krista Thompson. "Tropicalization: The Aesthetics and Politics of Space in Jamaica and the Bahamas" in *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque*. (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2007), 6.

Thompson specifically refers to the tropicalization of the Anglophone Caribbean, a site that, unlike Hispanophone Caribbean, has been participating in tourism economies since the 1890's. However, I do believe the commodification and the "body of intention"[100] behind tourism's visual economy can be applied to the tropicalization Puerto Rico, and other Caribbean islands since the mid-20th Century. The oceanic landscape projected in *Entre Nosotros* calls to mind the Edenic and heightened tropicalization of a seascape, presenting a sunset over the ocean's horizon, an image commonly captured through advertisements, travel photography, etc. to depict the recurrent commodification of Caribbean nature in extractive tourism economies. I believe Cruet cleverly uses this visual language to engage in a critical dialogue with the geopolitics of the Caribbean and how it related to an extractive tourism industry. As Thompson states in her text, this form of "tropicalization then appropriately draws attention to light in the geography of the Caribbean and, by extension, vision and visual representation in the imaginative geography of the islands."[101]

In Cruet's 2015 work, *Floods Aftermath and Other Hurricane Stories*, the artist creates a series of two-dimensional paintings on blue tarps showing the effects of hurricanes and heavy floods through abandoned houses in the middle of a body of water. Cruet also uses the palm tree, a trope used in tourism to identify tropical regions, as part of the post-disaster landscape. *Floods Aftermath and Other Hurricane Stories* (2015) forms part of a series where Cruet's explores a non-digital and two-dimensional medium and representation, unlike most of his current body of work. The final piece from this series of studies is 8ft x 6ft, creating a gripping and overwhelming viewer experience and evoking the destructive aftermath of extreme climatological activities upon people's households and livelihoods. (fig. 27)

[100]Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 125.
[101] Thompson, *An Eye for the Tropics,* 6.

Following Hurricane María, blue tarps or the blue 'roofs', made from plastic sheeting and handed out by FEMA, became a well-known national imagery that identified and still today encompasses the Puerto Rican landscape and scenery. These tarps are meant to be used for a maximum of thirty days but still, two and a half years after the natural disaster, many homes affected by the hurricane have received little funding for recovery and still have FEMA's blue tarps roofing their homes. *Floods Aftermath and Other Hurricane Stories* comments on the looming reality of climate change upon the region and how in the face of disaster, the indifference of the state will leave a chokehold on its most vulnerable populations and how the remnants of disaster also transform the Caribbean landscape. The artist, in an interview with *Artefuse* mentions he created the work "with the intention of comment[sic.] on the material of the blue tarps itself and the relationship that exist after the catastrophes, a temporary solution and an architectural alternative that becomes part of the new disastrous landscape."[102]

Puerto Rico's new disastrous landscape, highlighted both on a physical and on a collective cultural level, has become the norm and complicit to the uncertainty that still thousands of Puerto Ricans face following the 'veil' Hurricane María revealed.[103] The new disastrous landscape, physically, reflects itself in the fact that still today, two and a half years after María, structures, powerlines and homes are still destroyed, however as opposed to immediately after the storm, fauna has reclaimed these human-made structures. The new disastrous landscape involves, in psychological terms, the declining mental health of Puerto Rico's population, the augmentation of

[102] Jaime Martínez. "Interview with Artist Lionel Cruet" *Artefuse*, November 27, 2017. https://artefuse.com/2017/11/27/interview-with-artist-lionel-cruet-125270/
[103] Frances Negrón-Muntaner, "Blackout: What Darkness Illuminated in Puerto Rico."

murder and feminicide in the region, the realization that our colonial relationship with the United States is one of disregard, and the persistence of governmental neglect and abuse. (fig. 28)

Cruet' series explores the post-disaster landscape and the use of temporary resources as a permanent solution, attesting to the island's abandonment by both local and federal governments, when people lost their homes to the natural disaster. Following Hurricane María, flooding and landslides in rural and coastal regions increased the loss of homes and lives. Despite its creation two years before Hurricane María, *Floods Aftermath and Other Hurricane Stories* (2015) is extremely relevant, for the collective consciousness and symbolism regarding the blue FEMA tarps increased after Hurricane María. This work points to how artists in the region have been thinking about the dangers of climate change in the Caribbean expressing a wide-spread disillusionment with Puerto Rico's government's emergency response, even before Hurricane María. (fig. 29) (fig. 30)

Lionel Cruet's work engages with a decolonial aesthetic through the artist's continuous critical interventions on geopolitical and colonial realities affecting the Caribbean region. The artist's recurrent use of different ecological and socio-political forms of colonial critique places a continuous relationality of colonial legacies and the effects climate change most Caribbean islands face Decolonial aesthetics. To quote Gina Badger in the introduction for FUSE Magazine's issue on decolonial aesthetics, "States of ~~Post~~ Coloniality/ Decolonial Aesthetics", she defines decolonial aesthetics as a practice that "acknowledges and subverts the presence of colonial power and control in the realm of the senses. A decolonial approach refers to a theoretical, practical or methodological choice geared toward delinking aesthetics, at the epistemic level, from the

discourse of colonialism that is embedded in modernity itself.[104] Cruet's work, through its use of tropical visual aesthetics as well as its engagement with the socio-economic and political inequalities that surface following the devastation of a natural disaster in the Caribbean, engages with a decolonial aesthetic.

Throughout this section I have explored the socio-political circumstances and geopolitical relations that connect Puerto Rico to the Caribbean, by examining the artwork of Lionel Cruet. The artist engages with topics of ecocriticism and climate change in Puerto Rico and the rest of the Caribbean in works such as *Making Windows on Walls* and *Floods Aftermath and Other Hurricane Stories.* Cruet eloquently uses poetic visual language in his alluring landscapes, as a way to draw viewers in, yet introduces thought-provoking dialogue around catastrophic climate devastation in the Caribbean. In works such as *Entre Nosotros (Between Us)* the artist uses Glissantian informed narratives to demonstrate the relationality that exists between converging ecosystems as well as the unifying relationality, through intertwined colonial histories and similar ecologies between different Caribbean islands. Cruet also provides a critical approach to tourism's visual tropes and the intentional tropicalization of the Caribbean seascape. By analyzing how his works correlate with ideas of relationality, poetics of landscape, colonial relation, and ecocritical examinations of environmental impacts in the Caribbean I have aimed to contextualize Lionel Cruet's artistic practice as informed by the interrelations of colonialism and climate change in the Caribbean region, one that has been demonstrated again and again before the destructive path of Hurricane María.

[104] Gina Badger, "States of ~~Post~~ Coloniality/ Decolonial Aesthetics" FUSE Magazine 36 (4) (Fall 2013). Access: https://e-artexte.ca/id/eprint/25209/1/FUSE_36-4.pdf.

Conclusion

Following the effects of the 2017 hurricane season, there has been more international emphasis and critical examination of the realities of climate change, although Caribbean locals already saw this change progressing through yearly drought, receding coastlines, and rises in temperature. Alongside the evident transformation of the Caribbean landscape through climate change, the devastation following Hurricane María and the negligence of the federal and local governments brought more international awareness of Puerto Rico's colonial relationship to the United States. It must be emphasized, though, that both the colonial relation with the United States and the evident effects of climate change have been an oppressive reality for those who lived in Puerto Rico for many years before Hurricane María and some may argue, this moment of international awareness could be a fleeting media trend that will bring little to no improvements in the long-term.

As Puerto Ricans, moving forward almost three years after the storm, we must remember the longstanding socio-political and economic disaster that surfaced and was made evident to the greater population as a result of the storm. As Caribbean people, living in a precarious geography, we must prepare, through ecologically conscious forms of living and social development, to face the continued effects of climate change, that will drastically affect our region. As Muntaner-Negrón, states, in reference to the long-standing humanitarian crisis Puerto Rico faced before the storm:

> To address the political and economic disaster that was there before María and break the very cycle of catastrophe—enduring poverty, political subjugation, mass migration—action needs to be aimed at not simply "rebuilding" the old structure, but also on rethinking

> the entire edifice. Otherwise, Puerto Rico will likely go back to being yet another invisible disaster set up to repeat itself.[105]

Indeed, by witnessing the vast political and economic disaster that took place following the path of Hurricane María, the only way to move forward from this storm is to question and dismantle the existing structures of inequality that allowed for the vast amount of loss, death and governmental negligence to take place in Puerto Rico after September 16, 2017 and still plagues the island to this day.

Both artists featured in this thesis address dominant media images as forge a visual language and bridge a connection with the spectators of their work. In Frances Gallardo's work, the artist uses satellite imagery, used by NOAA, to present a visual language of hurricanes that is legible on a global scale, but she subverts it to present a regional dialogue relating to the Caribbean's ecological and political vulnerabilities, as reinforced by different agents and evolutions of colonialism. Lionel Cruet, through his use of dominant media images and landscape depictions associated with tourism and renditions of paradise, also uses a readily available visual culture and subverts it to address regional catastrophes in the Caribbean created and perpetuated by colonialism, neocolonialism, re-colonization, imperialism, and climate change. Both artists, while using different mediums and approaches, persuasively present past, current and future socio-political and ecological disasters in the Caribbean region, before and after Hurricane María, in other words. Their work directly challenges and confronts popular visual culture by adding various multi-layered signifiers to address pressing catastrophic issues currently affecting Puerto Rico and the Caribbean.

[105] Negrón-Muntaner. "Puerto Rico was Undergoing a Humanitarian Crisis Long Before Hurricane María."

Visual culture and arts have historically had a profound connection and impact to activism.[106] Generally visual language associated with activism is quite didactic and straightforward, however I argue Puerto Rican artists Frances Gallardo and Lionel Cruet use decolonial aesthetics and ecocritical approaches to create a multi-layered visual narrative and a complex web of readings that can encompass various socio-political and ecological issues that have been affecting Puerto Rico before and after Hurricane María. Taking into consideration the social, political and environmental realities of colonialism and climate change in the Caribbean region, both Frances Gallardo and Lionel Cruet respond both to Puerto Rico's colonial relationship with the United States as well as to the rise of hurricanes and other natural disasters in the Caribbean archipelago.

[106] Some examples include the memorable Silence = Death's collective poster used during AIDS activism in 1987 or Christi Belcourt and Isaac Murdoch's Water is Life (2016) print used during the Standing Rock demonstrations and others to address environmental activism through indigenous knowledge systems.

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FIGURES

PM, 2018, installation view

Figure 1.
PM Installation View.
Works depicted: Yiyo Tirado, *Sin fin*, 2018 and Gabriela Torres Ferrer, *Valora tu mentira Americana,* 2018. Image courtesy of Embajada Gallery (embajadada.com/PM).

Figure 2.
Allora & Calzadilla. *Under Discussion*, video still, 2005. Single channel video with sound, 6 minutes 14 seconds. © Allora & Calzadilla

Figure 3.
Allora & Calzadilla. *Returning a Sound*, video still, 2004. Single-channel colour video projection with sound, 5 minutes 42 seconds © Allora & Calzadilla.

Figure 4.
Allora & Calzadilla (in collaboration with Ted Chiang). *The Great Silence*, video still, 2014. 3-channel HD video, 16 minutes 22 seconds. Image Source: E-Flux. © Allora & Calzadilla.

Figure 5.
J.M.W. Turner, The Slave Ship (Slavers throwing overboard the Dead and Dying — Typhoon coming on), 1840. Oil on canvas, 90.8 cm (35.7 in) x 122.6 cm (48.2 in).

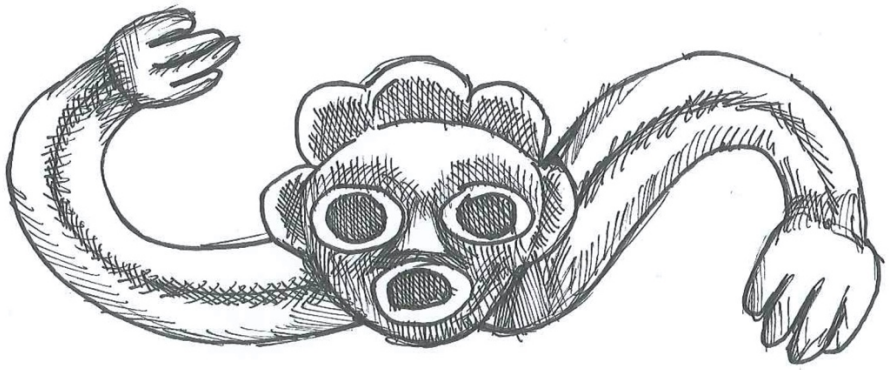

Figure 6.
"Hurricane." A depiction of the swirling-armed Taíno storm goddess, Guabancex, who commanded hurricanes. Ink on paper. Sketch by @andrescalo. Image source: https://mashedradish.com/2015/09/01/hurricane/

Figure 7.
Francisco Oller, Hacienda La Fortuna, 1885. Oil on linen, 26 x 40 in. Photo: Brooklyn Museum.

Figure 8.
Francisco Oller, Bodegón con Guanábanas, 1891. Oil on Linen, 20.5 x 31.5 in. Image source: Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico

Figure 9.
Francisco Oller, *El Velorio (The Wake),* 1893. Oil on linen. 8ft x 13ft. Image source: Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico.

Figure 10.
Francisco Oller, *El negro flagelado o Un boca arriba*, 1872. Reproduction of a photo from the Archives Photographiques Bibliothéque Nationale, Pris, France, Dimensions unavailable.
Lost painting by abolitionist painter Francisco Oller. For more information : https://repeatingislands.com/2019/06/17/the-lost-work-of-abolitionist-francisco-oller/.

Figure 11.
Carlos Raquel Rivera, *Huracán del Norte*, 1955. Linocut, 12 ¼ x 16 in. Image Source: Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico.

Figure 12.
Carlos Raquel Rivera, *Marea Alta*, 1954. Linoleum, 12 x 16 in. Collection Museum of History, Anthropology and Art, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus.

Figure 13.
Frances Gallardo, *Carmela* from *Hurricane Series*, 2012. 27.5 in x 39.5 in., cut paper, collage.
© Frances Gallardo.

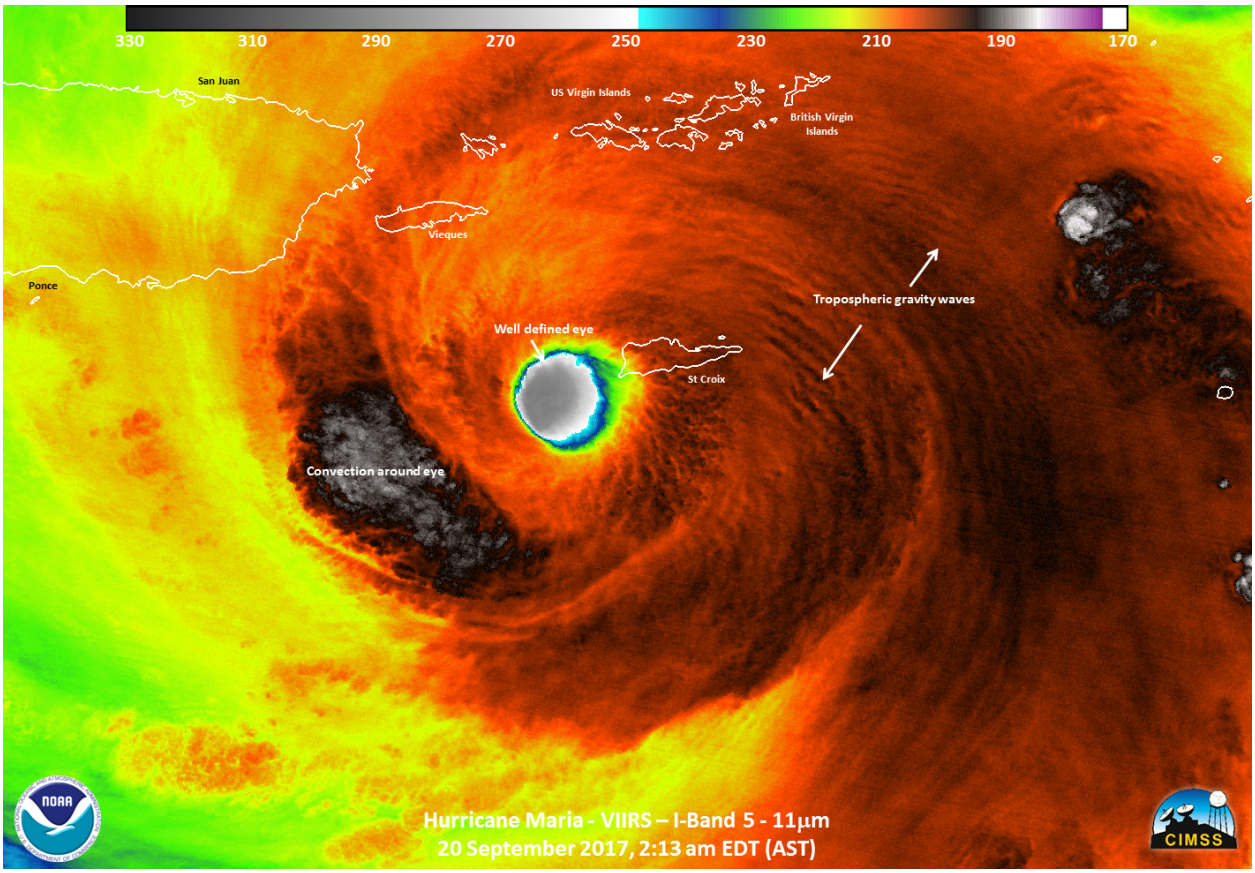

Figure 14.
NOAA Infrared Satellite Image of Hurricane María, September 20, 2017. Image source: https://www.nesdis.noaa.gov/content/noaa-satellite-imagery-hurricane-jose-and-maria.

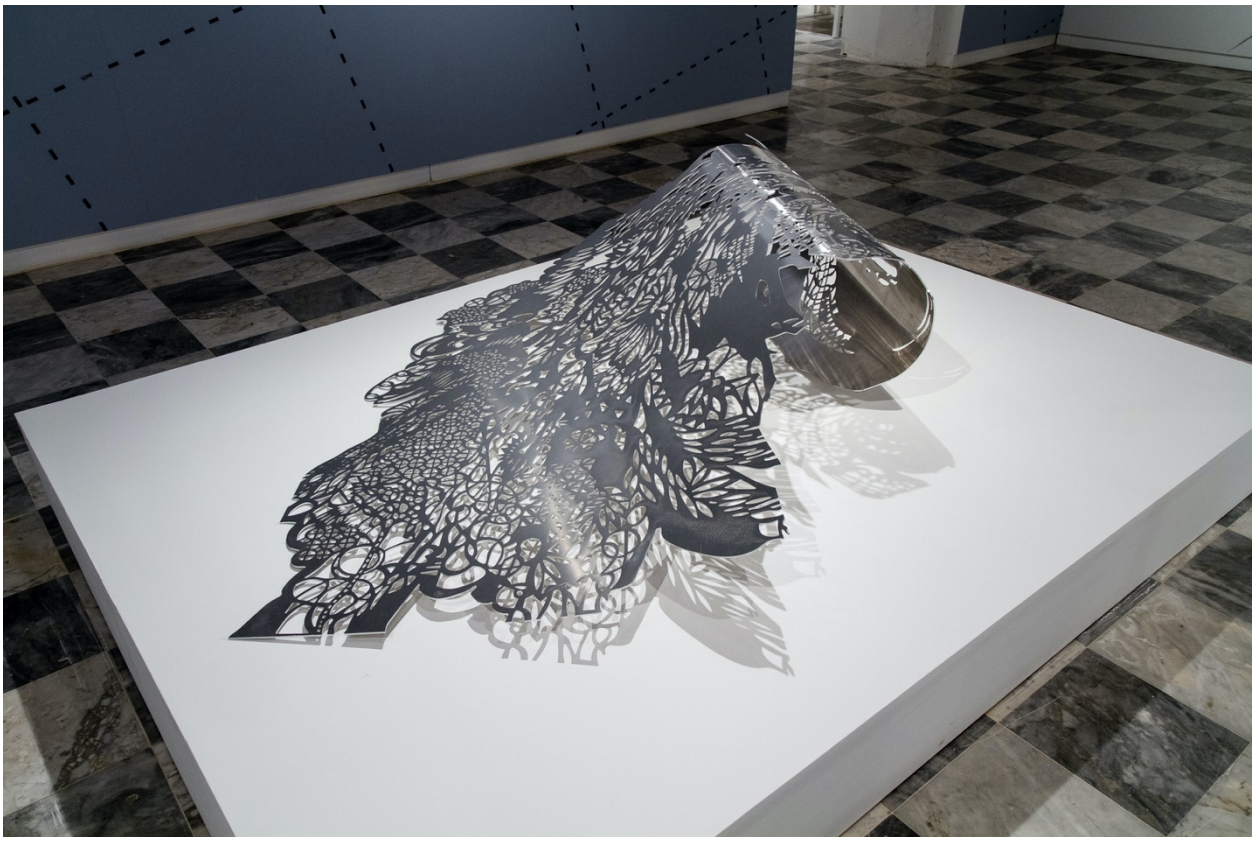

Figure 15a.
Frances Gallardo, *Marejada (Surge),* 2012. 65 in x 52 in x 15 in. Aluminum sculpture.

Figure 15b.
Frances Gallardo, Detail of *Marejada (Surge),* 2012. 65 in x 52 in x 15 in. Aluminum sculpture.

Figure 16a.
Frances Gallardo, *Murmuration, (Mosquito cloud),* 2017. 6 ft diameter, installation of laser cut paper pinned on wall. © Frances Gallardo.

Figure 16b.
Frances Gallardo, Detail of *Murmuration, (Mosquito cloud),* 2017. 6 ft diameter, installation of laser cut paper pinned on wall. © Frances Gallardo.

Figure 16c.
Frances Gallardo, *Murmuration, (Mosquito cloud*), 2017. 6 ft diameter, installation of laser cut paper pinned on wall. © Frances Gallardo.

Figure 17.
Frances Gallardo, *Cynthia*, 2012. 19.5 in x 25.5 in, cut paper, collage. © Frances Gallardo.

Figure 18.
Installation view of "Relational Undercurrents: Contemporary Art of the Caribbean Archipelago", at the Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA), Long Beach, California, 2017. Photo courtesy of MOLAA.

Figure 19a.
Frances Gallardo, *Gabriel*, 2013. 28 in x 15 in, cut paper, collage. © Frances Gallardo.

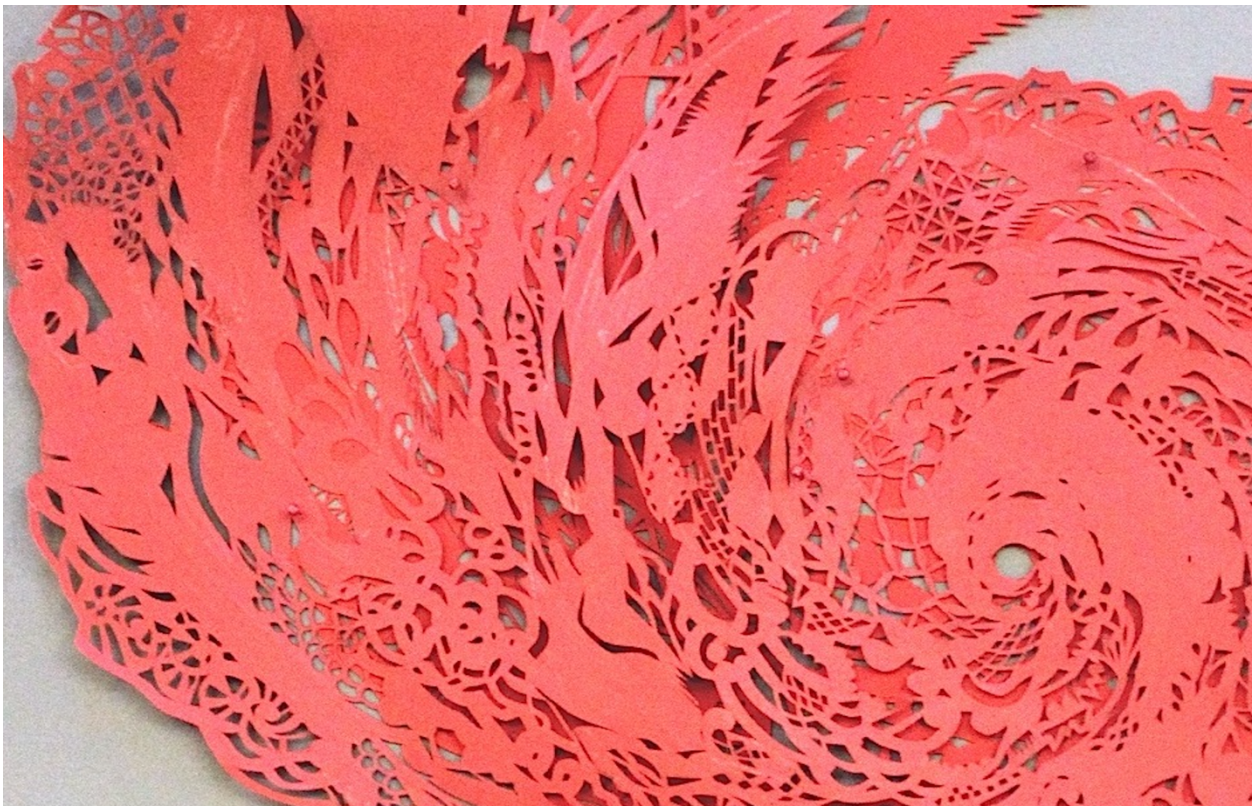

Figure 19b.
Frances Gallardo, Detail of *Gabriel*, 2013. 28 in x 15 in, cut paper, collage. © Frances Gallardo.

Figure 20.
Stills from “Proceso de "Unicornio en la isla" de Frances Gallardo” October 13, 2015, posted by Programa de Exhibiciones ICP.

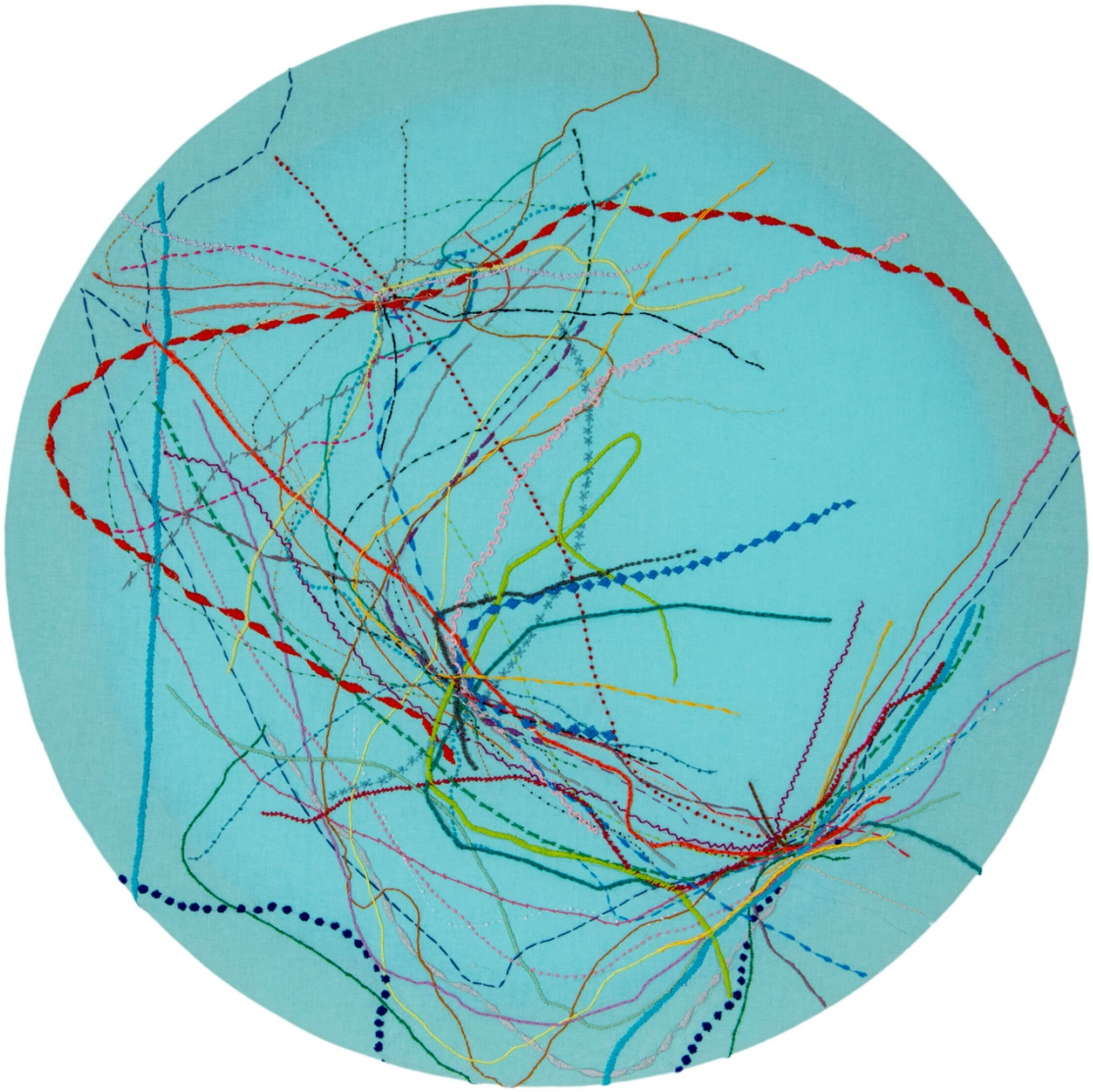

Figure 21.
Frances Gallardo, *The Unnamed (hurricane tracks),* 2018. 30 in diameter, embroidery.

Potentiality of future hurricanes. Marking the path of past ones and projecting onto the future. Deliniates how many pass by illustrating them

Figure 22.
Lionel Cruet, *Making Windows on Walls, 2015*. Audiovisual installation, © Lionel Cruet.

Figure 23.
Lionel Cruet, Detail of *Making Windows on Walls, 2015*. Audiovisual installation, © Lionel Cruet.

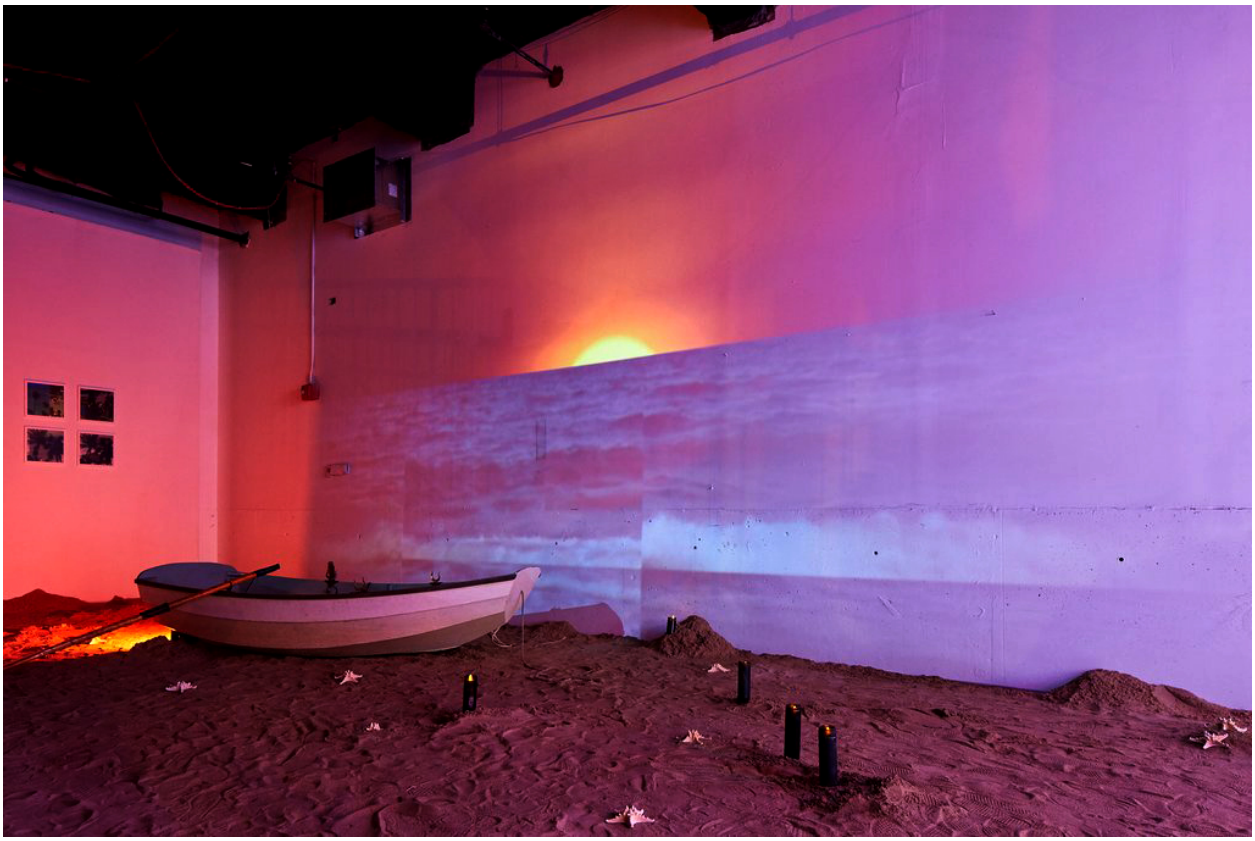

Figure 24.
Lionel Cruet, *Entre Nosotros (Between Us), 2017*. Full view, audiovisual installation row boat, floor of sand, variable dimension © Lionel Cruet 2017. Image by Samuel Morgan Photography.

Figure 25.
Lionel Cruet, *Entre Nosotros (Between Us), 2017*. Full view, audiovisual installation row boat, floor of sand, variable dimension © Lionel Cruet 2017. Image by Samuel Morgan Photography.

Figure 26.
Lionel Cruet, *Entre Nosotros (Between Us) Variation* II (Video Still), 2015. Audiovisual installation, © Lionel Cruet. Video source: https://vimeo.com/218945194.

Figure 27.
Lionel Cruet, *Floods Aftermath and Other Hurricane Stories,* 2015. Acrylic and house paint on polyethylene blue tarp, 96 × 72 in; 243.8 × 182.9 cm, © Lionel Cruet, 2017. Image by RUBBER FACTORY, Lionel Cruet Studio, Et al.

Figure 28.
Lionel Cruet, *Floods Aftermath and Other Hurricane Stories,* 2015, acrylic and house paint on polyethylene blue tarp, 96 × 72 in; 243.8 × 182.9 cm, © Lionel Cruet, 2017. Image by RUBBER FACTORY, Lionel Cruet Studio, Et al.

Figure 29.
Plastic tarps cover damaged roofs in Puerto Rico. Photo by Carlos Barria. Source: https://www.insider.com/hurricane-maria-recovery-photos-years-later-2019-8

Figure 30.
A blue tarp covering the roof in the home of Don Feliberto in Utuado, Puerto Rico. Image source: https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2018/2/10/1740263/-About-those-temporary-blue-roofs-in-Puerto-Rico