

TITLE OF WORK / POEM:

Beware the crystal ball & the soothsayer

I take more than I need.
I hoard things others need, thus encouraging a scarcity notion.
I consume with abandon; I am decadent until I catch myself.

The crystal ball will not tell me to do otherwise, nor its manipulant.

A wise man once said “*The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear*” (Antonio Gramsci, Prison Notebooks)

This poem started with 'we', but I decided to make it about 'me' ... in this way I can say 'thank you, Mauritius' among other things.

The future may be doomily grim or bright like a spitting volcano—me and we—its teetering balance.

—Todd Lanier Lester

CURATORIAL NOTE:

Beware the crystal ball & the soothsayer attempted a certain serenity. We all knew that the short duration of our beachfront group exhibition could be deterred by rain. So the piece should be both durable and easy to move. Indeed there was rain. We knew that we were invited for the 20th birthday of a local arts association, invited to work together with local artists in a two-week process; therefore we knew to expect collaborations, both official and unofficial. When I positioned the flag in the backdrop beside the boat I was unaware that the boat had been arranged for another sculptural work (on its other side). Some friends I'd made in the workshop. I apologized profusely and at the same time asked if they might consider a flag as a way for our works to touch. In fact, the serenity I mention above is the way in which I wanted the crystal ball to 'take in' all the other works, their hopes and optimisms, their forms. The flag is an old Mauritian flag sewn to a new Mauritian flag, suggesting that we look back on time and tradition as well as outward and forward.

MATERIALS:

2 distressed chairs, rocks, zip ties, red paint, blanket, dead thistle bush, copper tubing, 2 Mauritian flags, assorted found objects, concrete cylinder, plastic light fixture, 2x4 wood plank.

BIO:

Todd Lanier Lester is an artist focused on a few themes--artist safety, the right to the city, HIV & stigma--approaching them in a participatory manner. He works between visual media and

performance methodology, using time periods to investigate and create responses to the aforementioned themes. Todd writes on artist methodology and helps his parents plan the future of their family farm in Tennessee. He became a sticker artist--a.k.a. el mejor karate--whilst living in São Paulo. This ad hoc process clarified the pseudonym-tendency in naming his previous artworks--freeDimensional (artist safety), Lanchonete.org (right to the city), and Luv 'til it Hurts (HIV & stigma)--and frankly encouraged a present struggle with the craft of writing, to make stories moving forward.