

*To people in dire economic circumstances,
even a 50-50 chance of surviving an ocean
voyage and finding work seems better
than the odds of surviving at home.*

by political, social, or natural disasters. The institute hosted artists from New York City after September 11 and from the Gulf Coast region after Hurricane Katrina.

FreeDimensional is known primarily for its Creative Safe Haven and Critical Placement programs, which help human-rights defenders who work as artists or journalists. Sara Heitlinger and Franc Purg, two visual artists involved in Critical Placement, are currently in residence at SFAI.

The second phase of freeDimensional's development is to work with vulnerable people in their own communities, Lester said. "In the beginning it made sense for our whole work to be about creative safety, but then we understood that there are a whole bunch of ways that artistic communities engage in social justice and we'd better listen to what they were already doing so that we didn't become obsolete."

The Santa Fe workshop, Lester said, will focus on the design and production of a pamphlet in French, English, and Wolof, a language spoken in Senegal. The pamphlet will be distributed at Dak'Art: The Biennale of Contemporary African Art in Dakar in May. It will mimic the Spanish government's propaganda aimed at deterring Senegalese migration, but its message is about the dangers involved in ocean crossings and navigating U.S. immigration politics. "By the time we arrive in Santa Fe for the workshop, we'll already have the content, including the translation into French and Wolof," Lester predicted.

Economic migration has been a hot topic at major art events like Documenta and the 2007 Venice Biennale, he said, but "we felt it incumbent, organizationally, to make an action during an art-world event, such as Dak'Art, that is also proximal to the boat launches."

Lester hopes freeDimensional's intervention will raise awareness in Senegal, in the art world, and in the mainstream press "so that there is pressure on policy-makers to address this number of people disappearing at sea. We think that that's the only way that policy changes. Once we get to Senegal, we'll be hitting the marketplace and public spaces at a time when we know we'll have international press during the first week of the biennale." ◀

details

- ▼ Lecture by Todd Lester and Stefan Barbic of freeDimensional; part of Santa Fe Art Institute's OUTSIDER: Tourism, Migration, and Exile program
6 p.m. Monday, April 21
Tipton Hall, College of Santa Fe,
1600 St. Michael's Drive
\$5, \$2.50 students & seniors
- ▼ Workshop with Todd Lester and Stefan Barbic
10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, April 22-24
Santa Fe Art Institute, 1600 St. Michael's Drive
\$100 per day, scholarships available
- ▼ Information for both events: 424-5050

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