

**AcA aims to stir conversation and public engagement with important ideas through exhibitions like “Brandon Ballengée: The Age of Loneliness.”**



*Love Motel for Insects: Saint Francis Satyr Variation. 2015. Brightwalk, Charlotte, NC. Outdoor light sculpture shaped after the endemic and endangered Saint Francis Satyr butterfly (Neonympha mitchelli francisci) of North Carolina. Black Ultra-violet lights, steel, aluminum, fabric, native plants, invited insects. 10 x 12 x 17 feet. Photograph by Matt Steele.*

**LAFAYETTE, LA** - Brandon Ballengée: The Age of Loneliness is a large-scale exhibition, showcasing 10 years of work by the artist, biologist, and 2021 Guggenheim Fellowship award-winner. Three large projects by Ballengée will span the first floor of the AcA, inside and out, when the exhibition opens on Saturday, October 9, 2021.

AcA aims to stir conversation and public engagement with important ideas through exhibitions like “Brandon Ballengée: The Age of Loneliness.” The exhibition schedule includes regular field trips, public events, and opportunities to meet and engage with the artist.

Visitors will first interact with the artist’s playful “Love Motel for Insects” which will feature large-scale outdoor sculptures lit by UV light and a specially planted pollinator garden that attracts butterflies. Ballengée invites visitors to engage directly with the insect life, and he supplies survey tools and an iPhone app for visitors to catalog the species that they encounter. Viewers become hands-on participants and have an opportunity to learn more about the insect life that surrounds us every day.



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Further into the exhibition, Ballengée explores more deeply mankind's checkered relationship to the natural world. The centerpiece of that work is an unconventional sculpture titled "Collapse," which is the artist's response to the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. "Collapse" features a pyramid of 26,162 specimens in jars, all collected by Ballengée during research trips in the Gulf of Mexico. The jars depict the enormous biodiversity of species that are unique to the Gulf, and various empty jars represent species that are now extinct. Through interacting with this colossal sculpture, viewers receive a visceral reminder of the vast number of species affected by mankind's activities.

"Here, many familiar species, like frogs, turtles, butterflies, bumblebees are disappearing... and rapidly," explains Ballengée. "We have lost over forty percent of amphibians and more than half the planet's overall wildlife since I have been alive."

Renowned scientist and environmental philosopher Edward O. Wilson has described this era as the Eremozoic, which translates to "the Age of Loneliness," from which Ballengée derived the name of the exhibition at AcA.

Brandon Ballengée (American, b.1974) is a visual artist, biologist and environmental activist based in Lafayette, Louisiana. He has received numerous awards and fellowships, including a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship (2017), Awards from the National Academies Keck Futures Initiative (2015, 2016), Creative Capital Award (2019), a Guggenheim Fellowship (2021) and was included in the 2020 Grist 50 Emerging Environmental Leaders.

### **About AcA**

Founded in 1975, the Acadiana Center for the Arts ("AcA") is a community-supported regional arts council that fosters art and culture in South Louisiana.

Rooted in a cultural community that has made its mark on the world through food, music, and art, AcA aims to ensure that this living culture flourishes for generations to come.

AcA aims to bring equitable access to the arts through intensive residency work in schools and supports fair compensation of artists. On average, AcA serves over 300,000 people annually and provides fair compensation to 2,700 artists.

AcA supports the creation of new works of art, exhibits, festivals, performances, and public art across an eight-parish region that includes Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, and Vermilion Parishes.

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[\*\*Brandon Ballengée: The Age of Loneliness\*\*](#)