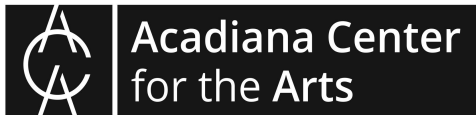


**Acadiana Center for the Arts brings award-winning
choreographer to Lafayette for a nationally significant world
premiere**



Helanius J. Wilkins | *Acadiana Center for the Arts* | **October 26 & 27**

LAFAYETTE, LA - SEPTEMBER 6, 2023 - "The Conversation Series: Stitching the Geopolitical Quilt to Re-Body Belonging" is a contemporary dance performance combining technology, interactive gaming, music, fashion, and design, which will premiere at the Acadiana Center for the Arts on October 26 and 27.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The performance is a project of Helanius J. Wilkins, a national award-winning choreographer and dance artist, who is currently based in Boulder, CO, but is a native of Lafayette, LA.

View the Video Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/638261308?share=copy>

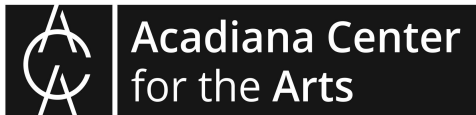
Each of the two nights is a full-length production featuring a pair of dancers Wilkins and his creative partner Brandon Welch, performing in duet. Using pressure sensors and laser technology and experimental techniques from gaming, the performers will extend their performance to engage the stage and their surroundings in an interactive and wholly unique performance. Both nights will include special guest Vocalist Erica Fox, Lafayette native, singer-songwriter.

This work is inspired by a walking practice where Wilkins walked—up to 16 miles a day—to unlearn fear, particularly the fear that separates many people from a true sense of belonging in their own community.

As a collaborative, immersive performance by two men with different racial and cultural backgrounds, this project explores the value of bodies of different appearances and experiences coexisting—sharing weight and responsibility, dancing to become better ancestors.

“The Conversation Series: Stitching the Geopolitical Quilt to Re-Body Belonging” is a performance project that aims to confront and celebrate heritage, resilience, justice, and hope. This performance was developed during a two-week community engagement residency in 2022 hosted by Acadiana Center for the Arts and Basin Arts. An earlier iteration of the project was named “Best of Denver 2022.”

The development of this performance has received support from several national foundations including New England Foundation for the Arts’ National Dance Project, National Performance Network, the Boulder Office of Arts & Culture Public Arts Program, D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as the Acadiana Center for the Arts, which is hosting its world premiere.



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Each performance will be followed by a Q & A with the artist moderated by Clare Cook, Lafayette native and founder of Basin Arts. For more information about the work, visit <https://www.helaniusj.com/the-conversation-series>

Performances will feature a section inspired by conversations with Lafayette, LA, residents during the summer of 2022 which included community programs and workshops with Acadiana Center for the Arts, Cité des Arts, Basin Arts, PARC Village, the McComb Veazey Community House, Move the Mindset, and Acadiana Queer Collective.

Helanius J. Wilkins, a native of Lafayette, Louisiana, is an award-winning choreographer, performance artist, innovator, and educator. He lived in Washington, D.C. for eighteen (18) years and founded EDGEWORKS Dance Theater, an all-male dance company of predominantly African American men that existed for thirteen (13) years (2001 – 2014).

To date, Wilkins has choreographed and directed more than 60 works, which includes two critically-acclaimed musical productions for Washington, DC's Studio Theater – "Passing Strange" (2010) and "POP!" (2011).

Tickets for Thursday, October 26:

acadianacenterforthearts.org/events/conversation-series-1

Tickets for Friday, October 27:

acadianacenterforthearts.org/events/conversation-series-2

Performances at the Acadiana Center for the Arts are made possible in part by:



The Conversation Series: Stitching the Geopolitical Quilt to Re-Body Belonging is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation & Development Fund Project co-commissioned by Redline Contemporary Art Center in partnership with CSPS Legion Arts, Dance Place, The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center and NPN/VAN. The Creation & Development Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation,



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and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency). For more information, visit www.npnweb.org.

The Conversation Series: Stitching the Geopolitical Quilt to Re-Body Belonging and this touring engagement is made possible through a Grant for Arts Projects from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Funding for this work and performance engagement is made possible in part through awards from the University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) including the Center for Humanities & the Arts (CHA) Small Grant award and a \$50,000 FY2022 Research & Innovation Seed Grant.

About AcA

As the community leader in arts and culture, the Acadiana Center for the Arts (AcA) serves to bring elevating arts experiences to the people of Acadiana through many approaches including holding public concerts, presenting art exhibitions, providing grants to artists and cultural organizations, and bringing artists into schools across the region.

AcA brings equitable access to the arts through year-round education and outreach activities and aims to build a more sustainable cultural ecosystem for future generations in Acadiana.