



Interview of the artist Brandon Ballengée, artists, biologist, and environmental activist

Art of change 21 – What is new with you ?

Brandon Ballengée – **The Atelier de la Nature** project is still new and ongoing. Three years ago we began to transform heavily farmed land in rural Louisiana into a nature reserve and eco-campus. By sculpting the lands with specialized native species, and are working to reestablish 'Cajun' prairie, planted over 1000 regional native trees, and created pollinator habitats (to aid declining butterflies, like the Monarch which is in on the verge of endangered) and traditionally grow food without pesticides using permaculture, Creole and other indigenous methods.

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AOC21 – How did you come up with the thematic of ecological issues ?

B.B. – I just see myself as a human being existing in a time of socio-environmental crisis, which we are now calling the anthropocene. In ecological terms, our global home is on fire and the poetry of living beings is rapidly being extinguished. All of us are endangered species.

Through my art, science and activism I try to do something about this, by any means available to me. The Atelier de la Nature project has already yielded results in the ecological sense with many species of birds and mammals, amphibians, reptiles, insects, all coming back to once barren land. In the human communal sense we hundreds of youth have helped with restoration of the lands or participated in our programs. As the world burns, some of us, many of us will slow down and even halt this through creative solutions. Life will persist if we let it. Life will thrive if we give it a means.

AOC21 – What are your next projects ?

B.B. – There are many many projects ongoing...At the Atelier de la Nature we have started a major wetland habitat creation project for declining amphibians, rare fishes, turtles and water birds. Also I am working in coastal Gulf of Mexico states with communities at risk of extinction to search for species that have disappeared for the project **Searching for Ghosts of the Gulf**. This summer too I am working on new **Love Motel** for Insects and insect habitats at the TICKON Natur Sculpture Park in Tranekjær, Denmark and others in the United States.

More information about Brandon Ballengée [here](#)

More information about the eco-actions by Brandon Ballengée [here](#)

Interview led by Alice Audouin, May 2019

Crédit : Portrait de Brandon Ballengée, 2012, photo : Gerry Ellis /

Searching for the gost of the Gulf (tears of Ochun) by Brandon Ballengée, 2012

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