

Tulane University

A Studio in the Woods awarded grant from the National Endowment for the Arts

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"RIP African Pompano" is an example of the artwork that biologist and artist Brandon Ballengée created as part of his inquiry into species impacted and potentially lost from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. He made the image and others by chemically clearing and staining species collected in the Gulf of Mexico after the disaster. (Photo courtesy of A Studio in the Woods)

The National Endowment for the Arts has awarded [A Studio in the Woods](#) one of 63 grants designed to integrate arts and culture into activities that strengthen communities economically, physically and socially.

A Studio in the Woods, a program of Tulane University's [ByWater Institute](#), will use the \$75,000 Our Town grant to support [Search for the Ghosts of the Gulf](#), a collaborative project with artist, biologist and environmental activist [Brandon Ballengée](#) and Plaquemines Parish.

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The project will bring Ballengée to A Studio in the Woods for a community-based residency with at-risk coastal communities in Plaquemines Parish. Through interactive art and science, participants, including community members, youth and fishermen, will explore missing and endangered Gulf of Mexico fish species. The project will culminate in 2023 with Fishstock, a festival dedicated to species not seen since the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

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Ama Rogan, managing director of A Studio in the Woods

“We are thrilled to be partnering with Brandon Ballengée and the Plaquemines Parish government to bring dynamic, accessible and fun programming about environmental change to our neighbors in Plaquemines Parish,” said Ama Rogan, managing director of A Studio in the Woods. “We hope this project sparks new understandings, conversations and bonds in our communities.”

Ballengée, who creates artwork inspired from his ecological field and laboratory research, said he is looking forward to the collaboration. “Together we will build resilience for coastal populations using citizen driven art/science research while taking collaborative actions towards a collective future survival,” said Ballengée, who lives in Arnaudville, Louisiana.

A Studio in the Woods, one of the leading artistic and academic residency programs in the Gulf South, is located along the West Bank of the Mississippi River near Plaquemines Parish. It is part of the Tulane ByWater Institute, a research department dedicated to advancing applied, interdisciplinary research and community engagement initiatives around coastal resilience and the urban environment.

“It is always exciting when Plaquemines Parish can partner with outside organizations to bring grant money into our parish,” said Plaquemines Parish President Kirk M. Lepine. “This project in particular will help us to expand our coastal resilience, which as we know is one of the most important and pressing issues we face.”