Alex Da Corte, *As Long As the Sun Lasts*, 2021



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1 Close Looking and Principles of Design

- What do you see as you approach and walk around the sculpture?
- What do you think the artist was trying to communicate about movement or space?
- What do you wovnder about the choice of material or the way it's placed in the landscape?

*Consider using terms like **line, form, scale, balance,** and **negative space.***

2 Learn More About the Artist:

- Alex Da Corte is a Venezuelan American artist born in Camden, New Jersey, in 1980. During his childhood he lived in Caracas, Venezuela and today, he lives and works in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- In his work, Da Corte uses ideas from literature, film, music, television - everything from children's shows to important moments in art history. He often dresses up as the characters he's inspired by, using costumes and special makeup. He has performed as both real and made-up people, like Mister Rogers, Jim Henson, Eminem, the Pink Panther, and Marcel Duchamp.
- He studied film, animation, and fine arts at the School of Visual Arts in New York City in 2001. He got his bachelor's degree in printmaking and fine arts from The University of the Arts in Philadelphia in 2004. Then, he earned his master's degree from Yale University in 2010.

About the Artwork:

- The sculpture is 26 feet tall and is a **kinetic** sculpture, which means it's an artwork that moves.
- The artist made it in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many people were staying at home. He was feeling lonely, anxious, and unsure about the future. The sculpture encourages people to think about their own memories and how they connect to images and ideas we see every day.
- The sculpture includes the following references:
  - *As Long as the Sun Lasts* takes its name from an Italo Calvino story in *Cosmicomics* (1965) about an aging couple facing the sun's eventual burnout. Big Bird's aluminum ladder references another Cosmicomics story, *'The Distance of the Moon.'*
  - The Blue Big Bird is made of about 6,000 aluminum feathers attached to a fiberglass body. Its face, head and tail feathers, hands, legs, and feet are made using 3D-printed nylon.
  - The crescent moon was inspired by Donna Summer's album cover for *Four Seasons of Love* (1976).
  - The metallic orbs that balance Big Bird are a direct reference to artist Alexander Calder's famous moving mobiles. This side of the sculpture weighs 380 lbs. while the Big Bird side weighs 250 lbs.
  - The base has Da Corte's initials and the number "69," which was the year (1969) Sesame Street
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Glenstone Connection:

- Da Corte often creates immersive installations that surround the viewer. He personally chose this site so visitors could see the sky while looking up at Big Bird, and so the sculpture aligns with the Alexander Calder works inside the Gallery.
- When installing the sculpture in 2023, the Grounds team moved pine trees, leveled the land, added soil to form a raised **plateau**, and poured a concrete base to support the sculpture.



Alex Da Corte, born 1980. Dressed as Mister Rogers.



Detail view.



Detail rear view.

3 Reflect

Worldview and Social Impact

- How does the work invite you to see from the figure's perspective?
- How might the artist's background or cultural context shape the work?
- What connections do you notice between the artwork and popular culture, childhood, or memory?

This invites discussion of empathy, interpretation, and perception.

Details and Material

Examine a section of the sculpture closely.

- What colors, or marks do you notice?
- How to the materials interact with light, space, or the environment?
- How does the surrounding landscape affect how you see the sculpture? How might it be in a different setting?
- How do the different parts work together to create meaning or tell a story?

*Introduce words like **nostalgia, kinectic, plateau, surface,** and **contrast**.*

Personal Reflection

After moving through the sculpture, reflect:

- I feel... (emotion or reaction)
- I think... (insight or idea sparked)
- I am... (state of being or identity)

Connect art to personal meaning, mindfulness, and self.

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Photo: Glenstone Museum

Accessibility Note: Visitors may step on cut grass. Some wheelchairs may not be effective on the grass.