



SUSAN INGLETT



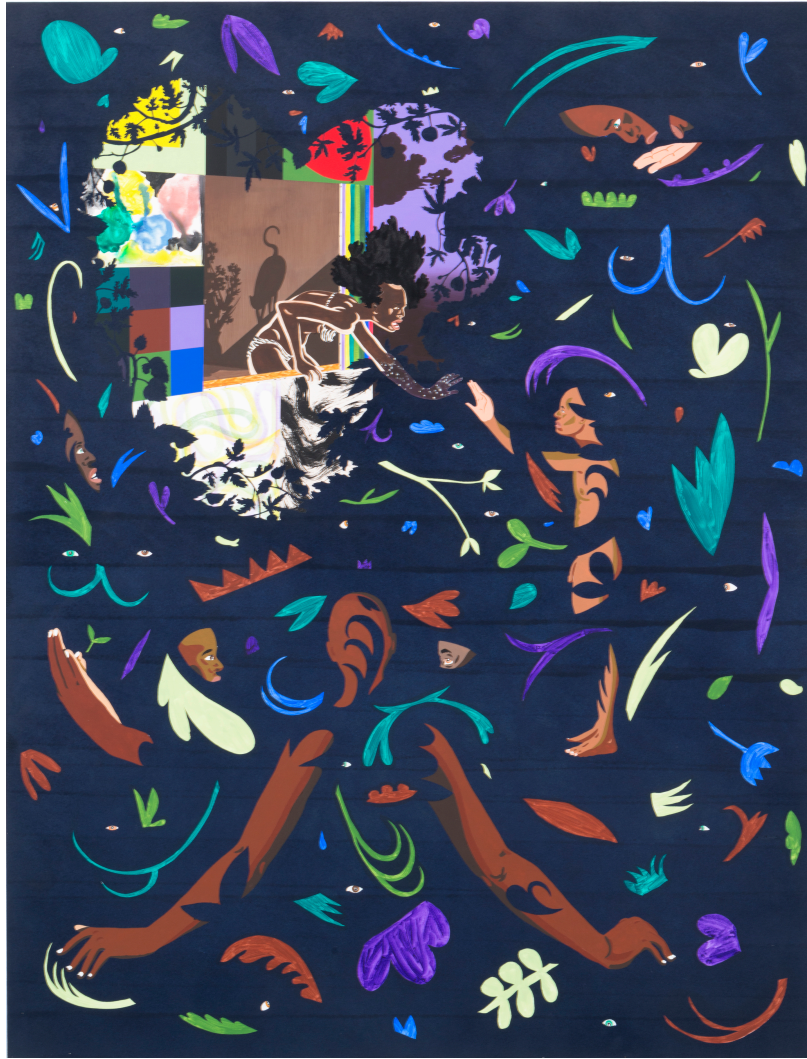


WILLIAM VILLALONGO: *Mind, Body & Soul*

10 September 2015 – 17 October 2015

Susan Inglett Gallery, NYC





*Olympia's Window*, 2015  
Acrylic, paper and velvet flocking  
on wood panel  
60 x 46 in.







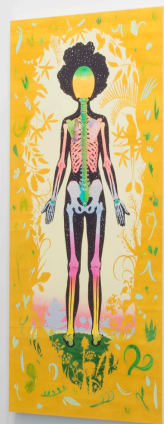
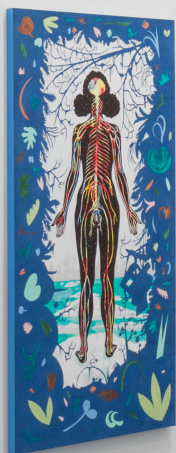
## William Villalongo: Bodies, Histories and Inversions

William Villalongo's recent paintings offer intentionally speculative worlds. As viewers we enter these lush and meticulously rendered environments cautiously, unpacking notional relations between bodies, histories and narratives. In this way, Villalongo's paintings are as much about a critical examination of sexuality, and histories of modern painting, as they are the question of on whose bare backs this "progression" began. Rather than project easy conclusions however, Villalongo allows for spectacle and ritualistic action to guide the viewer toward meaning. What his recent work most clearly reveals is that modernity is a history of carnal, corporeal, irrational and spiritual desires.

Villalongo approaches the question of modern art's social relevancy by reimagining and revising the notion of primitivism. He accomplishes this by empowering his subjects with the ability to dictate the practice of native intelligences that often subvert modern painting in forms of a "knowing" appropriation, beginning with *The Painting Lesson* (2012). According to the artist, "a multifaceted vision [should match] a multifaceted materiality." Made of acrylic, velvet flocking and paper on wood panel, the painting, physically, conveys the literal aspects of this quote. What's more, Villalongo's vision of these women of color as indulging in a moment of unselfconscious joy—while engaged in the act of painting—adds layers of conceptual depth. The painting is a direct challenge to the misogynistic and primitivist images of black and brown women in Western and non-Western histories of art.

In *The Painting Lesson*, and more recently *Olympia's Window* (2015), Villalongo has imagined a uniquely surreal netherworld where women are protagonists. Seemingly the refugees from Cezanne's *Bathers* (1906) Picasso's *Le Femmes d'Alger (O. J.)* (1907), and Manet's *Olympia* (1863), they are inhabitants of a mythical society who thrive in a self-fashioned, alternative modernity. We are allowed only a voyeur's eyeful as they gather in plush landscapes comprised of arabesque flora and traverse wide vistas that push the perspective backward toward minuscule heights. Together, these women govern the deconstruction of modernist painting by incorporating it into secular, down-to-earth practices and non-secular rituals. In *The Painting Lesson* we observe a painting class and their model, an elegant black woman, a performer à la Josephine Baker. She holds her pose joyfully on a brightly colored minimalist platform. Around her waist is a banana belt (which references Baker) and a modernist/post-Cubist painting rests flatly on her face. Two holes are provided for her eyes through this seemingly awkward mask. Posturing fashionably, her right hand bends upward exposing her palm, which signals the end of the show, time for tribute, applause. Her left hand rests flatly on that side's knee, causing the fulsome curve of her right hip to project through an opening in the fruit-belt. Here, Villalongo provides for the conflation of Renaissance contrapposto and the modernist emphasis on dividing the female body into fractals, facets and edges without the suggestion of violence to that body. Thusly, a society of alter-modern, matrilineal afro-futurists, re-imagines part of the history of their own contextualization vis-à-vis the ultramodern black muse of Parisian modernity.

Villalongo's paintings are ultimately visions of modernity's possibilities. His allusions to African masks, and Renaissance perspective, suggests a world of mythological and pedagogical continuities. These continuities between culture-based perceptions of art, pedagogy, vision and ritual, link his characters to the evolution of modern art as both subjects and protagonists. And as with religious texts, Villalongo's paintings bring together themes of love, empathy, and renewal. In this exhibition's *Summer, Winter, Spring and Fall* (2015) the artist moves from an examination of communal interiors to a bodily one. These paintings represent an excavation of the body's psychic forces (as seen in their irreverent color). It is also a way for Villalongo to speculate on the possible connections between these forces and larger cosmic bodies, as well as those possibly between black matter and black bodies. In *Fall* (2015) and *Winter* (2015), the figures that were a vibrant presence in *Summer* are now the personification of the black body as darker matter wandering, haunting the earth through arabesque frames of decaying foliage. But the foliage turns with the laws of terrestrial seasons these dark bodies do not recognize, are not held or subject to. The figures are otherworldly, do not turn away or hide from the viewer and the resulting tension is undeniably present, confrontational, worth considering. They are monolithic personifications standing as unclothed as Eve in their stark visitation from elsewhere. Posed in dominant stances like deities, they are unashamed as the centers of their own mythologies, their own gravities, and the speculative universes they personify. In all, William Villalongo's recent work offers a meaningful inversion of reality as an intervention into the storied and often troublesome histories at the roots of modernism, modern painting, and the race and gender-based assumptions therein.







*Mind, Body & Soul, Installation View 2015*





*We Can't Breath*, 2015  
Silkscreen on velour paper mounted on  
coloring book pages with acrylic wash  
12 x 9 in. each / 60 x 27 in. overall







*Autumn, 2015*  
Acrylic, paper and velvet flocking  
on wood panel  
72 x 36 in.

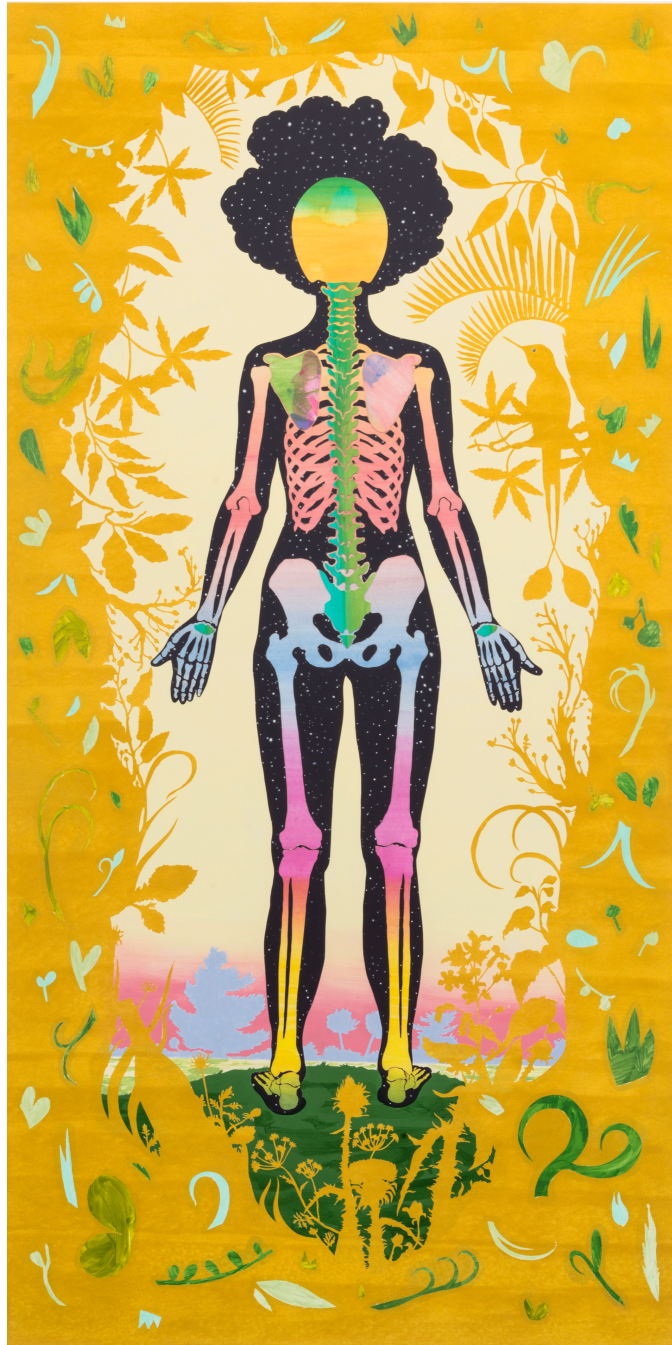






*Winter, 2015*  
Acrylic, paper and velvet flocking  
on wood panel  
72 x 36 in.





*Spring, 2015*  
Acrylic, paper and velvet flocking  
on wood panel  
72 x 36 in.







*Summer, 2015*  
Acrylic, paper and velvet flocking  
on wood panel  
72 x 36 in.













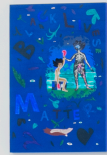
*Keeping Heads Above Water*, 2015  
Acrylic, paper and velvet flocking  
on wood panel  
36 x 24 in.



*Day Into Night*, 2015  
Acrylic, paper and velvet flocking  
on wood panel  
36 x 24 in.

*Black Lives Matter*, 2015  
Acrylic, paper and velvet flocking  
on wood panel  
36 x 24 in.













*You Matter*, 2015  
Silkscreen on velour paper mounted on  
coloring book pages with acrylic wash  
12 x 9 in. each / 36 x 27 in. overall



## WILLIAM VILLALONGO

Born in Hollywood, FL, 1975  
The Cooper Union, NYC, BFA, 1999  
Tyler School of Art at Temple University, Philadelphia, MFA, 2001  
Lives and Works in Brooklyn, NY

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2015 "Mind, Body and Soul," Susan Inglett Gallery, NYC  
2013 "New Mythologies," The Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts and Culture, Charlotte, NC  
"Fierce," Real Art Ways, Hartford, CT  
Scarfone Hartley Gallery, University of Tampa, FL  
2012 "Sista Ancesta," Susan Inglett Gallery, NYC  
2010 "Bathing Nymph," Susan Inglett Gallery, NYC  
2009 "Eden's Remix," Susan Inglett Gallery, NYC  
2007 "Innervisions," Esso Gallery, NYC  
"How The West Was Won," Franklin Art Works, Minneapolis, MN

### GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2015 "Affinity Atlas," Tang Museum, Saratoga Springs, NY  
"Disguise: Masks and Global African Art," Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA; traveling to Fowler Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA;  
Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY  
"Look at Me Now!," curated by Allison Glenn, Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago, IL  
"The Image of the Artists in their Absence: The Self Portrait," National Academy Museum & School, NYC  
2014 "On Paper: Alternate Realities," The Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD  
"Guns in the Hands of Artists," Jonathan Ferrara Gallery, New Orleans, LA; traveling to Aspen Institute, CO  
"If You Build it, They Will Come," No Longer Empty, NYC  
2013 "The Shadows Took Shape," Studio Museum in Harlem, NYC  
"On the Relativity of Distance (and some of its consequences): American and Italian Art, 1963-2013," curated by Filippo Fossati and  
Maurizio Pellegrin, National Academy Museum, NYC  
"The Fourth Dimension," curated by Saya Woolfalk including Trenton Doyle Hancock and Chitra Ganesh, Trestle Gallery, Brooklyn, NY  
"The Emo Show," The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, NYC  
"Hypertrophic Visions," curated by Robin Reisenfeld, NYCAMS, NYC  
"Voces y Visiones: Highlights from the Collection of El Museo del Barrio, New York," Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, NV  
2012 "Art on Paper," Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, NC  
"Inside Out and from the Ground Up," Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, OH  
"...Game On," Peveto, Houston, TX  
2011 "The Bearden Project," Studio Museum in Harlem, NYC  
"Summertime in Paris," Parisian Laundry, Montreal, Canada  
"Collected. Vignettes," Studio Museum in Harlem, NYC  
2010 "Next Wave Art," curated by Dan Cameron, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, NY  
"Desire," Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX  
2009 "Liberty & The Land," Cuchifritos, NYC  
"The Kitchen Block Party," NYC  
"Permanent Collection," Princeton University, Princeton, NJ  
"Back to the Garden," Deutsche Bank, NYC  
"Sixty Minutes," Contemporary Art Museum, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL





- 2008 "The Future Must be Sweet: Lower East Side Printshop Celebrates 40 Years," International Print Center, NYC  
 "The Future As Disruption," The Kitchen, NYC
- 2007 "Welcome to My World," Alexandre Pollazzon Gallery, London, England  
 "MASK," James Cohan Gallery, NYC  
 "The S Files," El Museo del Barrio, NYC  
 "Sirens Song," Arthouse, Austin, TX
- 2006 "Interplay," Exit Art, NYC  
 "Possibly Being," Esso Gallery, NYC
- 2005 "Frequency," Studio Museum in Harlem, NYC  
 "You Are Here," Ballroom Marfa, Marfa, TX  
 "Hanging by a Thread," The Moore Space, Miami, FL  
 "Delicate Demons and Heavenly Delights," Oliver Kamm, NYC  
 "Pulp!," Karyn Lovegrove Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
 "Collection In Context," Studio Museum in Harlem, NYC  
 "Greater New York 2005," P.S.1, Long Island, NY
- 2004 "Figuratively: A.I.R. Exhibition," Studio Museum in Harlem, NYC  
 "Open House," Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY
- 2003 "Group Show: All Together Now," Rush Arts, NYC  
 "Online," Feigen Contemporary, NYC

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Meier, Allison, "A Magazine Scans the Connective Tissue Between Medicine and Art," HYPERALLERGIC, 6 May 2015.
- Green, Penelope, "Peggy Cooper Cafritz: Everything in a Big Way," THE NEW YORK TIMES, 14 January 2015, p. D1.
- Colucci, Emily, "Placing Guns in the Hands of Artists," VICE.com, 26 November 2014.
- Lewis, George, "The Shadows Took Shape," ARTFORUM, Summer 2014.
- Cotter, Holland, "Museum and Gallery Listings for Jan. 10-16," THE NEW YORK TIMES, 9 January 2014.
- Kartalopoulos, Bill and Kayla E, "Curation: Early Edition 3," NAT.BRUT, Spring 2013.
- Voeller, Megan, "Feminist, Horny Pervert – or Both?," CREATIVE LOAFING TAMPA BAY, 22 March 2013.
- Bennet, Lennie, "Artist William Villalongo collaborated with University of Tampa," TAMPA BAY TIMES, 23 March 2013.
- Robinson, Kenya, "Is That a Rectangle in Your Pocket, or Are You Just Happy to See Me?," HUFFINGTON POST, 10 December 2012.
- Staff, "MOCA Announces 2013 Lineup!," BUZZBIN MAGAZINE, 10 May 2012.
- Dewolf, Stacey, "Art as Ignition," MONTREAL MIRROR, 20 June-6 July, 2011, p. 38.
- Maine, Stephen, "Reviews: Featured Reviews," ARTILLERY MAGAZINE, January-February 2011.
- Staff, "Fresh Ammunition: The Artist William Villalongo," AMMO MAGAZINE, December 2010.
- Allen, Emma, "The New Nymphs," ART + AUCTION, October 2010, pg. 42.
- Faires, Robert, "Depths of 'Desire'," THE AUSTIN CHRONICLE, 19 March 2010, p 34.
- Anania, Katie, "Desire," ARTFORUM.COM.
- van Ryzin, Jeanne Claire, "Desire: Blanton exhibit explores full meaning, effect of word," AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN, 14 February 2010.
- Staff, "Desire," Blanton Museum of Art: ARTICULATE, Winter/Spring 2010, pp. 2-3.
- Cotter, Holland, "Art Currents Flow Two Ways in Pan-American City, U.S.A.," THE NEW YORK TIMES, 15 October 2009.
- Shuster, Robert, "Collected : Propositions on the Permanent Collection, Studio Museum," VILLAGE VOICE, 28 July 2009.
- Bennett, Lennie, "USF Museum Finds a Way to Keep the Shows Going," ST. PETERSBURG TIMES, 7 June 2009.
- Fritchey, Sarah, "What if Obama and Nefertiti had a love child...," IRHINOCEROS.POSTEROUS.COM, 29 April 2009.
- Finch, Charlie, "Another Country," ARTNET, March 2009.
- Staff, "Medium Cool," TIME OUT NEW YORK, 26 March-1 April 2009, p. 45.
- Staff, "Armory 2009: A Fair to Remember," TIME OUT NEW YORK, 5-11 March 2009.
- Staff, "Diverse Duo," STAR TRIBUNE, 29 December 2006.
- Lane, Nancy, "The Collector," O AT HOME, Fall 2006.
- White, Roger, "Possibly Being," THE BROOKLYN RAIL, April 2006, p. 28.



## PUBLICATIONS

Donahue, James and Derek Maus, eds., "Post-Soul Satire: Black Identity after Civil Rights," University Press of Mississippi, 2014.  
Editions 07 catalogue, Lower Eastside Printshop Inc., NYC, 2007.  
The S Files: El Museo's 5th Biennial catalogue, El Museo del Barrio, NYC, 2007.  
Innervisions catalogue, Esso Gallery, NYC, 2007.  
Louis Comfort Tiffany Award catalogue, Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation, 2005.  
Greater NY 2005 catalogue, P.S.1 Contemporary, NYC, 2005.  
Frequency catalogue, Studio Museum In Harlem, NYC, 2005.  
Open House catalogue, Brooklyn Museum, NY, 2005.  
A.I.R catalogue, Studio Museum In Harlem, NYC, 2004.

## AWARDS AND GRANTS

2012	NYFA Artist's Fellowship
2006	Joan Mitchell Foundation Award
2005	Louis Comfort Tiffany Award

## WORKSHOPS/CONFERENCES/LECTURES/PANELS

2014	The 2014 <i>Afro-Latinas Now!</i> , El Museo del Barrio, NYC, 25 October. 4 <i>Painters</i> Lecture Series, SMFA Boston, 17 April.
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## RESIDENCIES

2014	The Hermitage Artist Retreat
2013	Studio-f Visiting Artist Program/University of Tampa
2009	Sixty Minutes, an invitational project with Olaf Breuning, Kate Gilmore, and Luis Gispert
2005	Marie Walsh Sharp Studio Program
2004	Christian A. Johnson A.I.R. Middlebury College
2003-04	Studio Museum in Harlem, Artist in Residence Program
2002	Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture

## SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD  
Deutsche Bank Collection, NYC  
El Museo del Barrio, NYC  
Grinnell College Faulconer Gallery, Grinnell IA  
Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, NJ  
Studio Museum in Harlem, NYC  
Tang Teaching Museum, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY  
Weatherspoon Museum of Art, Greensboro, NC  
Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT





# WILLIAM VILLALONGO

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