

# Grinnell College Museum of Art



WILLIAM VILLALONGO

MYTHS AND MIGRATIONS

A TRAVELING EXHIBITION  
CURATED BY DANIEL STRONG

# Grinnell College Museum of Art

WILLIAM VILLALONGO: *Myths and Migrations*

## Artist Statement

Over the past 20 years, I've worked to express the absurdity, beauty and vulnerability of black presence against the backdrop of race. The works become portals or navigational devices for thinking about the mystery within human experience through the poetics of history, myth and satire.

My earlier work is highly narrative and episodic. Myth and satire became a way to speak about the poles between fiction and reality that accompany perceptions of black people and the relative absence and presence of the black image in the Western historical context. Myths, for better and for worse, allow us to see the unimaginable or the not yet imagined. The history of race fiction is a lesson in how this poetic can be misused. I find myself compelled towards such problematic spaces to turn them into places of invention and inquiry. This is true of many cultures in which myth is a catalyst for healing and connecting to deep time. I feel the treachery of the imagination can also coalesce into images of beauty and resilience.

In recent work, I am transplanting the inherent and persistent fragility that surrounds black life within the symbolic languages of healing, power, metamorphic and geologic transformation. The works are embedded with images of crystals, meteorites, butterflies and African sculpture. I believe this speaks to notions of liberation and remembrance in the afterlives of extraction and migration. These ideas play out across the relationships and gaps between figure and body as subject and object. The cut and collage become methodologies for transferring these ideas into material. To cut and paste over and under, to cut and see through, to cut and back up, to cut and paint in and on is to enact on real material the felt experience of moving through the world in a racialized body with a hope that it conveys something of the precarity of life itself and how we are all implicated in the struggles of others. This is not about pain. It's about love. It's about recognizing that we are more than flesh, that we hold and release time and histories.

In all, my work is concerned with stories and images of time and change in the arch of inhumanity to humanity that has marked the black experience. This is my subject and my study as an artist. I often work in series and I look for frameworks to make these concerns visible. A figure, a still life, a painting, a drawing or a sculpture are vessels for information and sites to produce meaning. My work is informed by humor, urgent emotion, ephemeral visions, current events, black critical theory, western and not-western symbolisms in culture and art. I want to create sites of contemplation and wonder.

- William Villalongo, 2020

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## WILLIAM VILLALONGO

MYTHS AND MIGRATIONS

INQUIRIES

Daniel Strong  
strongdj@grinnell.edu

WORKS

34 pieces in various media

SPACE REQUIRED  
3,500 square feet

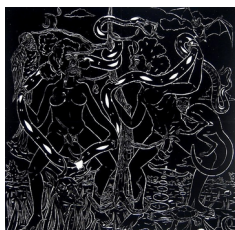
FEE  
\$35,000

AVAILABLE 2022 - 2024

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WILLIAM VILLALONGO: *Myths and Migrations*

## Early Velour Works



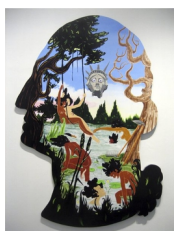
WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*The Last Days of Eden*, 2009  
Velour paper  
81 x 83 x 3 in.



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*The Last Days of Eden #1*, 2008  
Velour paper  
79 x 79 in.  
Collection of the Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, NJ



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*The Wild, Wild, West!*, 2007  
Velour paper  
42 1/2 x 42 1/2 in.  
Collection of the Grinnell College Museum of Art, Grinnell, IA

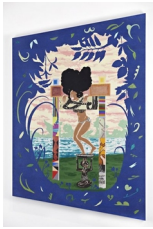


WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*Father I Cannot Tell a Lie*, 2009  
Acrylic, velour flocking, and paper/wood panel  
87 x 62 in.  
Collection of the Studio Museum in Harlem, NYC



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*Rhombus*, 2010  
Acrylic, paper, and velvet flocking on wood panel  
75 x 58 x 2 in.

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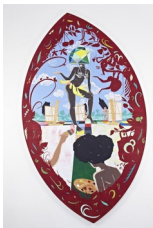
WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*Stocks and Bonds (Blue)*, 2012  
Acrylic and velvet flocking/wood panel  
50 x 32 in.



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*Jubilee*, 2010  
Acrylic, paper and velvet flocking/wood panel  
60 x 141 1/2 x 2 in.



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*The Thirsty Laborer (If You Build It)*, 2012  
Acrylic, velvet flocking and paper/wood panel  
96 x 137 5/16 x 2 in.  
Collection of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*The Painting Lesson*, 2012  
Acrylic, velvet flocking and paper/wood panel  
106 x 62 in.

## Early Sculpture



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*Stranger Fruit*, 2006  
Porcelain, velour, rhinestones, Plexiglas, wood  
13.875 x 8 x 8 in.



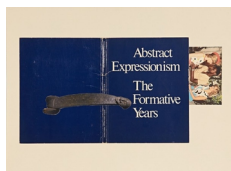
WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*Liberty*, 2008  
Ceramic parts, Plexiglas, velour flocking, rhinestones and rotating base  
21 x 18 x 18 in

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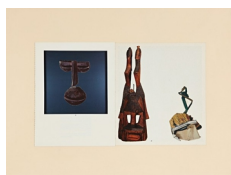
Re: History



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*re: History--Affinities (Bamileke, Pende, Stella, Jensen)*, 2015  
Paper (periodicals) collage on paper  
18 x 23 x 3 in. framed



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*re: History--Affinities (Benin, Abstract Expressionism, Retro Porn)*, 2015  
Paper (periodicals) collage on paper  
18 x 23 x 3 in. framed



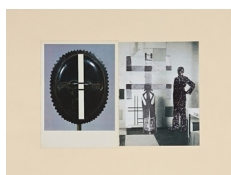
WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*re: History--Affinities (Congo, Reinhardt, Chamberlain)*, 2015  
Paper (periodicals) collage on paper  
18 x 23 x 3 in. framed



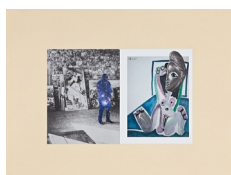
WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*re: History--Affinities (Mami Wata, Triumph of Venus, J.P. Cazas)*, 2015  
Paper (periodicals) collage on paper  
18 x 23 x 3 in. framed



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*re: History--Affinities (Miro, Chokwe)*, 2015  
Paper (periodicals) collage on paper  
18 x 23 x 3 in. framed



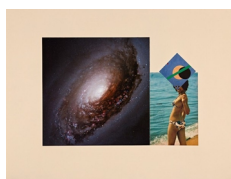
WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*re: History--Affinities (Mondrian, Baule, Dogon)*, 2015  
Paper (periodicals) collage on paper  
18 x 23 x 3 in. framed



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*re: History--Affinities (Picasso, Dan)*, 2015  
Paper (periodicals) collage on paper  
18 x 23 x 3 in. framed



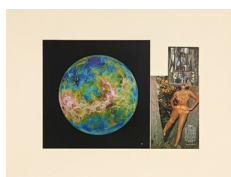
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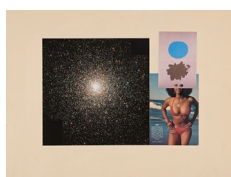
WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*re: History--Jet (Artifact 5)*, 2015  
Paper (periodicals) collage on paper and cleated acrylic display box  
18 x 23 x 3 in. framed



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*re: History--Jet (Artifact 4)*, 2015  
Paper (periodicals) collage on paper  
18 x 23 x 3 in. framed



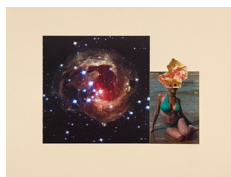
WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*re: History--Jet (Artifact 6)*, 2015  
Paper (periodicals) collage on paper  
18 x 23 x 3 in. framed



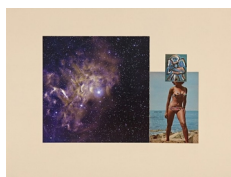
WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*re: History--Jet (Artifact 7)*, 2015  
Paper (periodicals) collage on paper  
18 x 23 x 3 in. framed



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*re: History--Jet (Artifact 8)*, 2015  
Paper (periodicals) collage on paper  
18 x 23 x 3 in. framed



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*re: History--Jet (Artifact 10)*, 2015  
Paper (periodicals) collage on paper  
18 x 23 x 3 in. framed



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*re: History--Jet (Artifact 11)*, 2015  
Paper (periodicals) collage on paper  
18 x 23 x 3 in. framed

# Grinnell College Museum of Art

## Recent Works



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*Obertura de la Espora (Time Dancer)*, 2017  
Acrylic, paper collage and cut velour paper  
80 1/4 x 39 1/2 in. 2 Sheets, 40 1/8 x 39 1/2 in. each  
85 1/4 x 44 5/8 in. Framed  
Collection of the Grinnell College Museum of Art, Grinnell, IA



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*Black Metamorphosis 1452*, 2020  
Acrylic, cut velour paper and pigment print collage  
80 x 40 in. Sheet  
84 x 44 1/2 in. Frame



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*Odalisque was a Slave*, 2017  
Acrylic, paper collage and cut velour paper  
39 1/2 x 80 in. Sheet  
45 1/2 x 84 1/2 in. Frame



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*Power Lawd!*, 2019  
Acrylic, cut velour paper and pigment print collage  
70 x 39 7/8 in. Sheet  
75 1/4 x 45 1/8 x 2 1/4 in. Framed



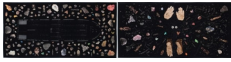
WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*Speak No Evil*, 2016  
Acrylic, paper collage and cut velour paper  
39 x 40 in. Sheet  
44 x 45 in. Framed



WILLIAM VILLALONGO  
*Zero Gravity 1*, 2018  
Acrylic, paper collage and cut velour paper  
39 7/8 x 109 5/16 in. Sheet  
45 1/2 x 114 3/4 x 2 1/2 in. Frame



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WILLIAM VILLALONGO

*The Mothership Connection (diptych)*, 2020

Acrylic, glitter spray paint on yupo, cut velour paper, pigment print  
collage, watercolor paper

39 1/2 x 80 in. Each Sheet

40.5 x 81 x 2 1/4 in. Each Frame

39 1/2 in. x 160 in. Unframed

## Video



WILLIAM VILLALONGO

*Water Root*, 2012

HD BlueRay

Running Time 6.53 min

Edition of 5

## Performance



WILLIAM VILLALONGO

*Arsenal*, 2004

Performance at the Studio Museum in Harlem, NYC

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## ABOUT THE ARTIST

### WILLIAM VILLALONGO



WILLIAM VILLALONGO (b. 1975, Hollywood, FL) was raised Bridgeton, NJ and now lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. He received his B.F.A. from The Cooper Union School of Art, NYC and his M.F.A. from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University, Philadelphia. Recent exhibitions include *Yesterday's Tomorrow: Selections from the Rose Collection, 1933-2018*, the Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA; *Living in America*, curated by Assembly Room, the International Print Center, NYC; *Afrocsmologies: American Reflections*, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT; *Young, Gifted, and Black: The Lumpkin-Bocuzzi Family Collection of Contemporary Art*, OSilas Gallery, Concordia College, Bronxville, NY, travelling to Lehman College Art Gallery, Lehman College, Bronx, NY; *New Mythologies: William Villalongo*, The Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts and Culture, Charlotte, NC; Greater New York, MoMA PS1, Long Island City, NY; and the online exhibition, *Life During Wartime*, curated by Christian Viveros-Fauné, University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum, Tampa, FL, among others. In 2023, Villalongo will have a solo museum exhibition originating at

the Grinnell College Museum of Art, Grinnell, IA. He is the recipient of the Louis Comfort Tiffany Award and the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptor's Grant. His work is included in the permanent collections of the Baltimore Museum of Art; Denver Art Museum; Grinnell College Museum of Art, Grinnell, IA; Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA; Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, NJ; Studio Museum in Harlem, NYC; Weatherspoon Museum of Art, Greensboro, NC; Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC; and the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT, among others. Villalongo is an Associate Professor at The Cooper Union School of Art, NYC.

## ABOUT THE CURATOR

### DANIEL STRONG

DANIEL STRONG has been the Associate Director and Curator of Exhibitions at the Grinnell College Museum of Art since 1999. He holds a master's degrees from Williams College in collaboration with the Clark Art Institute and from the Department of Art & Archaeology, Princeton University. He acquired his first piece by William Villalongo, *The Wild, Wild West*, for the Grinnell College Museum of Art Collection in 2009, and the second, *Obertura de la Espora (Time Dancer)* in 2018. The exhibition is presented in collaboration with the artist and Susan Inglett Gallery, New York.