



Susan Inglett Gallery will present William Villalongo in the Focus Section at the 2021 Armory Show. The Focus Section, curated by Wassan Al-Khudhairy (Chief Curator, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis), will "investigate the artist's role in shaping the future and imagining realities beyond our current condition. future as spectrum examines how artists have used the challenges and monumental changes experienced in 2020 as a catalyst to explore future imaginations, communities, governments, economies, and environments."

William Villalongo deploys his signature cut-paper technique to explore the history and possible futures of race in America. Materializing from Villalongo's black velvet cut-outs, Black and Brown skin, eyes, and appendages intermittently appear, swirling alongside turbulent incisions and collaged elements to form the disembodied figure. By defining anatomies through images of geologic forms, meteorites, butterflies, drinking gourds, African sculpture and visual tropes interspersed with leafy extractions, the artist creates a portrait

of the Black experience from ecological and cultural histories.

Emphasizing diaspora, deep time, freedom, beauty, and transformation, he draws parallels to natural metamorphosis to suggest an evolution of Black identity—a caterpillar enters a chrysalis, emerging later as a butterfly or rocks, compressed over millennia, transforming into stunning crystals. By collapsing time and space through earthly and cosmic imagery, the artist calls attention to the fluctuating role of the Black figure through the centuries while projecting possibilities for the future. Villalongo studies and transmutes the Black image, underscoring liminality and transformation through his living motifs, reminding us that with transformation comes renewal and with renewal, hope.

*In a sense I can only wrap my head around it in terms of nature or environment, because nature is the only thing that I can think of that rips itself apart most violently in order to persist and renew. I want to draw on the hopefulness of that.*

- William Villalongo in conversation with Torkwase Dyson.

WILLIAM VILLALONGO (b. 1975) represents the Black subject against the backdrop of race in America. The artist is known for his use of black velvet cut paper, in which excision and collage are utilized to underscore historical erasure and overturn canonical narratives. The results of his approach are dynamic portraits that reference cultural histories, emphasizing diaspora, deep time, freedom, beauty, and metamorphosis. Villalongo is a 2021 recipient of the American Academy of Arts and Letters Purchase Prize. His work is included in the permanent collections of the Baltimore Museum of Art; the Denver Art Museum; the Princeton University Art Museum; the Studio Museum in Harlem, NYC; the Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC; and the Yale University Art Gallery, among others.