



Susan Inglett Gallery is pleased to present WILLIAM VILLALONGO'S *Sticks & Stones*, from 21 January through 6 March 2021. The artist will be present in the Gallery on Saturday, 23 January from 1-6 PM. The artist's sixth solo exhibition with the Gallery, *Sticks & Stones* shines a spotlight on the artist's signature black velvet cut paper work.

In this recent series, Villalongo uses the medium to explore how to best represent the Black subject against the backdrop of race in America. Here, he defines anatomies through collaged images of geologic forms, meteorites, butterflies, drinking gourds, and African sculpture interspersed with leafy cut-outs. These combined images create a portrait from ecological and cultural histories, emphasizing diaspora, deep time, freedom, beauty, and transformation. Drawing parallels to natural metamorphosis, Villalongo suggests 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. He studies and transmutes the Black image, underscoring liminality and transformation through his living motifs.

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. The texture of the artist's characteristic velvet reinforces the experience and sensation of spirits rising from extreme darkness, confronting conditions of their visibility. The resulting scene interrogates the tentative space held by the Black body in contemporary society and throughout history and art, balancing loss and agency over the Black self-image. Keenly aware of the limitations of skin color as a progenitor of meaning around the Black subject, the artist engages with strategic use of imagery and activity to create a context for seeing and understanding. Combining these dynamic components—both corporeal and from another world—Villalongo powerfully conveys the experience of the Black diaspora in the past and present while celebrating Black identity.

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* at the Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA; *Living in America*, curated by Assembly Room, at 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; Princeton University Art Museum; the Studio Museum in Harlem, NYC; the 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.

The exhibition will be on view at the gallery located at 522 West 24 Street Tuesday to Saturday 10 AM to 6 PM. For additional information, please contact Susan Inglett Gallery at 212 647 9111 and [info@inglettgallery.com](mailto:info@inglettgallery.com).

Join in the conversation with Susan Inglett Gallery and William Villalongo on Instagram (@susaninglettgallery), Facebook (@Susan Inglett Gallery), Twitter (@inglettgallery), and via the hashtags #SusanInglettGallery, #WilliamVillalongo, and #SticksandStones.