

Azim, Dahila, "William Villalongo", Greater New York 2005 Exhibition Catalogue, P.S.1, 2005.

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## William Villalongo

### William Villalongo

Born in Hollywood, Florida, 1975. Lives and works in Brooklyn.

Making incisions in black velour to reveal white paper beneath, William Villalongo uses a subtractive process to expose worlds run amok. Each work is populated by an array of fantastical creatures, crowding one another in a densely described setting. The works look like negatives, vast expanses of black interrupted by white where the cuts are made. The overall darkness only heightens the sense that, in looking at Villalongo's pieces, we find ourselves in a territory of nightmares, a fearsome kind of hell.

Villalongo's velour-and-paper pieces reside somewhere between etching, drawing, and the cutting of silhouettes. To make an etching, the artist uses a needle to scratch lines through the acid resistant coating on a metal plate, exposing the metal underneath. When the plate is placed in an acid bath, the acid eats into these exposed lines, creating incisions that fill with pigment when the plate is inked. Like an etched plate, a Villalongo piece has a quality of relief: the white lines or incisions reflect varying degrees of thickness, and the quality of each line is different, carefully describing the edges of creatures and the physical aspects of their mythical worlds. But these works can also be understood as drawings, since, unlike the metal plate in the etching process, the cut-up surfaces are the final products.

In both Villalongo's velour-and-paper works and his paintings/collages in acrylic and paper on velvet, perspective is disorientingly tweaked. This is part of the reason why something in his compositions always feels awry. Because of the descriptive density inherent to each piece, one has to work hard to find all the edges that describe the physical totality of any of Villalongo's characters. Their outlines merge with and disappear among those of other characters, or among the sprigs of white that look like both blades of grass and the flames of a fire. The intense concentration of white lines, along with the blunt contrast of black against white, makes each creature seem to be simultaneously emerging and disappearing.

*Dalia Azim*

#### Selected Exhibitions:

- 2004 *Figuratively*. The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York.  
*Open House: Working in Brooklyn*. Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, New York.  
2003 *All Together Now*. RushArts, New York.  
*Online*. Feigen Contemporary, New York.

#### Selected Publications:

- 2004 *Open House: Working in Brooklyn*. Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum of Art.



