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The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA) Presents *William Villalongo: Myths and Migrations*

***Exhibition features two decades of work exploring Black presence
and invisibility, through time and cultures
May 15 – August 31, 2025***

PHILADELPHIA, PA – May 12, 2025 – The **Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA)** is pleased to announce the upcoming exhibition, ***William Villalongo: Myths and Migrations***, showcasing a compelling mid-career survey of work by New York-based artist William Villalongo. Curated by Daniel Strong, Associate Director and Curator at the Grinnell College Museum of Art, and organized for PAFA by Leah Triplett, Curator of Contemporary Art, the exhibition will be on view from **May 15 to August 31, 2025**, in the Fisher Brooks Gallery of Samuel M.V. Hamilton Building, 128 N. Broad Street, Philadelphia 19102.

Spanning twenty years of Villalongo's artistic practice, *Myths and Migrations* features a diverse range of figural and narrative paintings, works on paper, and sculptures. Villalongo dynamically incorporates materials such as flocking, cut paper, and collage into his pieces. His work delves into profound, timely themes of visibility and invisibility of Black presence, set against the complex backdrop of race. Informed by rigorous research across natural and social sciences, mythologies, folklore, popular culture, and art history – particularly the study of African objects and their appropriation in Euro-American art – Villalongo's creations navigate the nuances of seeing and being seen. His bodies, objects, and the spaces between them serve as conduits, connecting contemporary understandings of presence and erasure to historical and cross-cultural antecedents.

"William Villalongo's work offers a powerful and nuanced exploration of identity, history, and representation," says Leah Triplett. "We are honored to have his work represented in the collection, and to be able to present the fuller story of his work at PAFA, offering our audiences an opportunity for engagement with Villalongo's entrancing visual language and important conversations it generates."

William Villalongo is an Assistant Professor at the Cooper Union School of Art in New York. His significant contributions to the art world include co-curating the acclaimed traveling exhibition *Black Pulp!* in 2016 with Philadelphia-based artist Mark Thomas Gibson. In 2021, he was recognized with the prestigious Rome Prize in visual arts from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His artwork is held in numerous prominent permanent collections in addition to PAFA including the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Denver Art Museum, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the Princeton University Art

Museum, the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Yale University Art Gallery, among others.

Villalongo holds a B.F.A. from The Cooper Union School of Art and an M.F.A. from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University in Philadelphia.

William Villalongo: Myths and Migrations is generously supported at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts by the William Penn Foundation. Additional generous support provided by Kristin and Jamie Biddle, Aliya and Reginald Browne, Susan Inglett, Susan and Leonard Klehr, Robert Kohler, and Conrad Woody.

Special Exhibitions at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 2024-25 are generously supported by Emily and Mike Cavanagh, Ro and Martin King, Jannie Lau and Todd Longworth, J. Brien and Maggie Murphy, Vesna Todorovic Sacks and Howard J. Sacks, Aliya and Reginald Browne, Linda Seyda and Robert Boris, and an anonymous donor. Additional support provided by Linda Aversa-Caldwell and Donald R. Caldwell, Kristin and Jamie Biddle, Aliya and Reginald Browne, Susan Inglett, Susan and Leonard Klehr, Robert Kohler, and Conrad Woody.

Related Program:

F L O C K June 7, 2:00 – 3:30 PM.

"F L O C K" invites visitors to delve into the complex web of thoughts, memories, sensations, hopes, and frustrations evoked by select pieces in William Villalongo's exhibition, *Myths and Migrations*. Hear how others have responded to Villalongo's artworks and chart your own path through his exploration of deep time, the present moment, and future possibilities.

Organized by William Villalongo and Sasha-Mae Eccleston, featuring Mark Thomas Gibson, Lyra Monteiro, Marques Redd, and Saya Woolfalk.

Visitor Information:

Alongside *William Villalongo: Myths and Migrations* is PAFA's celebrated **Annual Student Exhibition (ASE)**, a capstone event showcasing the diverse talents of PAFA students. A cherished PAFA tradition, the ASE provides a unique platform for emerging artists to curate, install, and even sell their own artwork within the museum's prestigious galleries. ASE is open now through June 1, 2025

PAFA is open Thursday and Friday from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, and Saturday and Sunday from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM. For ticket reservations and further information about visiting the museum, please visit <https://www.pafa.org/museum/visit>.

About PAFA:

Founded in 1805, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA) is America's first school of fine arts and museum. A world-renowned institution, PAFA fosters the study of American art and the training of artists while offering a diverse collection of American painting, sculpture, and works on paper from the 18th century to the present day. PAFA's museum and school provide an environment for learning, critical inquiry, and making art.

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