

## Defining Myself for Myself: The Work of Shirley Villavicencio Pizango

The work of Belgium-based Peruvian artist, Shirley Villavicencio Pizango is inspired by titans of modernism such as Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso, the artist co-opts their broad visual language as a system with which to interrogate the representation of non-white figures within Western European portraiture. Where people of colour have historically been essentialized within Western European painting - portrayed as exotic, primitive, subservient, and as accessories to a larger white narrative - Villavicencio Pizango portrays wholeness. Working continuously to shift power into her own hands and the hands of the other brown-skinned figures that populate her canvases, the artist creates paintings that are themselves a practice of self-definition and refusal.

Born in Lima in 1988, Villavicencio Pizango grew up in Santiago de Borja, a remote village in the Peruvian Amazon. After moving to Ghent, Belgium at the age of thirteen, the artist was thrust into a new relationship with her homeland. Seeing Latin American and indigenous Peruvian people, culture and landscapes for the first time through a European lens, Villavicencio Pizango became increasingly aware of stereotypes surrounding people of colour, and notions of otherness and belonging. Moving between Belgium, Lima and Santiago de Borja over the last decade, the artist's work has come to be greatly impacted by the ebb and flow of her memories; the clarity or haziness of a particular colour or texture demonstrating how memories can either be enshrined, or take on new forms and meaning over time.

Kate Wong  
London, October, 2021.

SHIRLEY VILLAVICENCIO PIZANGO

Lima, Peru. 1988

Lives and works in Ghent, Belgium

**Education**

2013 Master of Arts, KASK, Ghent

2015 Teacher Certification in the Arts, KASK, Ghent

2019-2020: HISK Laureate

**Solo exhibitions**

2021 Under this brown earth you'll find the gold of my past, Ginsberg Gallery, Lima, Peru

2021 BBS #23, Painting as Far as your Eyes Can See, Ghent, Belgium.

2021 Lima Vitae, Geukens & De Vil, Antwerp - Belgium

2021 Marionettes Play-Rest-Work, 2020-2021, Performance, Sonsbeek, Netherlands 2020

Under the Same Moon with the Stars as Shelter in a Land of Sand, Geukens & De

Vil Antwerp, Belgium

Digging a hole to the surface, Steve Turner Gallery, L.A.

2018 Salty Rain, This is Not a Déjà-Vu, Geukens & De Vil, Antwerp, Belgium

2017 I Need You Out, Floors, Ghent, Belgium

Trefpunt Festival, Gentse Feesten 2017, Ghent, Belgium

2016 Nature Of Sign, NVT Galerie, Ghent, Belgium

**Group exhibitions**

2020 In a Long Blink of an Eye, HISK Graduates, Gosset site, Brussels, Belgium

Artivirals, Maaltebruggekasteel, Ghent, Belgium

Portraits, Cultural Center Marchin, Belgium

No Touching, Kunst 100, Berlin, Germany

2019 CHAIN, Studio Koen van den Broek Antwerp, Belgium

Ofte Vojaĝantoj, curated by Benedicte Goesaert, 360° Kunst, Wilford X, Temse,

Belgium En Piste! Museum La Boverie, Luik, Belgium

2018 Group Exhibition with Orlando Gruwez & Quinten De Bruyn, In de Ruimte, Ghent, Belgium Filet Pur

– Lofzang voor de Man, BLANCO, Ghent, Belgium

Salon BL, Begijnhof ter Hoye Ghent, Belgium

IT'S IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN TOUCH, In de Ruimte, Ghent, Belgium

2017 ECCE HOMO, Antwerp, Belgium

DRKPSTRET#6, DOK, Ghent, Belgium

2015 Picturale, Ronse, Belgium

2014 Heart Thinkers, Logroño, Spain

2013 The Big Draw Festival, Ghent, Belgium

2010 Ex-libris Competition, FISAE, Istanbul, Turkey

**Residences**

Paradise Air, Matsudo, Japan