

# STEVE TURNER

PRESS RELEASE



Shirley Villavicencio Pizango: *Digging a Hole to the Surface*  
September 12–October 10, 2020

Steve Turner is pleased to present, *Digging a Hole to the Surface*, a solo exhibition by Ghent-based Shirley Villavicencio Pizango consisting of an array of portrait paintings, some of sitters in her studio, others based on memory. All the portraits encompass Villavicencio's fascinating history of living her first eighteen years in the crowded tenements of Lima and the last fourteen in the calm comfort of Ghent. The paintings draw deep inspiration from her memories of Peru, and where there might seem to be inspiration from her favorite European artists, these sources get processed through Villavicencio's Peruvian eyes. Sitters appear to resemble Villavicencio or other Peruvians who have Indigenous roots; most of the paintings include lush plants and undulating mountains and a simplicity of line work that is reminiscent of designs from ancient Peru. While she often portrays her sitters in a melancholy or thoughtful manner, she does so with a brush work that is passionate and energetic. She works quickly and leaves visible traces of undercoats that parallel her own multi-layered history. If the narrative of a particular painting is elusive, one can discern much from Villavicencio's choice of titles, the most Belgian aspect of her studio practice. *Companion of Absence*, *Whispers of Nostalgia* and *An Abandoned Song* are three works in the current exhibition.

Shirley Villavicencio Pizango (born 1988, Lima) earned an MA at The Royal Academy of Fine Art (KASK), Ghent (2013) as well as a Laureate Degree at the Higher Institute of Fine Art (HISK), Ghent (2020). She has had solo exhibitions at Geukens & De Vil, Antwerp (2018 & 2020) and Art Lima (2019). This is Villavicencio's first solo exhibition with Steve Turner.