

Adams and Ollman

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Ralph Pugay: ShangriLIEF
November 8–December 20, 2025
Opening Reception: Saturday, November 8, 3–5pm

Adams and Ollman is pleased to announce *Ralph Puyay: ShangriLIEF*, a solo exhibition featuring site-specific wall drawings, works on paper, and new large-scale collages. The exhibition opens with a reception with the artist and a special flute performance by Shawn Creeden on Saturday, November 8, from 3–5pm.

Pugay's work emerges from his careful study of the human condition, his engagement with contemporary culture, and his acute awareness of how class, race, gender, queer life, and the digital realm intersect in the background of our lived experiences. His figurative drawings and collages call into focus the absurdities and contradictions of the everyday and the extraordinary with humor, empathy, and curiosity.

The foundation of Pugay's exhibition, his second with the gallery, is a series of large-scale wall drawings referencing memories and myths of the artist's upbringing both in the Philippines and the United States. Bold graphic lines fill the space with details of his former family home (bulldozed shortly after the family immigrated to the U.S.) and imagined temple-like structures that, in part, reflect the body and self as fragile or provisional architecture. Layered against this foundation is a dizzying array of drawings and collages that exist in a state of playful free association. Pugay populates his world with mutant archetypes and spiritual apparitions, shape-shifting dancers, anthropomorphized beings, and sentimental posers. These figures navigate disjointed realms drawn from historical, mythological, and religious imagery; the visual language of video games; viral social media narratives; and clickbait.

The installation itself mirrors the architecture of our online lives: a web-like, nonlinear schematic of information replete with windows, tabs, and layers to be navigated endlessly with no beginning and no end. The title—*ShangriLIEF*—



studio view, Ralph Pugay, Portland, OR, 2025.

evokes the quirky mimicry of off-brand products on Amazon.com while referencing both the fictional utopia from the novel *Lost Horizon* and a popular five-star resort chain. *ShangriLIEF* suggests how people create their own versions of paradise within the noise and strain of contemporary life—small, imaginative spaces of humor, fantasy, and respite that operate as both a coping mechanism and a form of renewal in a fragmented world, a way of adapting to complexity rather than escaping it.

Ralph Pugay (b. 1983, Cavite, Philippines; lives and works in Portland, OR) holds a BA and MFA in Contemporary Art Practice from Portland State University. Pugay has been in residence at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Madison, ME; the Rauschenberg Foundation, Captiva Island, FL; the Joan Mitchell Center, New Orleans, LA; Crow's Shadow Golden Spot Residency Program, Pendleton, OR; Creative Exchange Lab, Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, Portland, OR; and the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha, NE. Awards include a Ford Family Foundation Rauschenberg Fellowship, the 2015 Betty Bowen Award from the Seattle Art Museum, an Oregon Arts Commission Fellowship, and a Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Award. In 2026, Pugay will be the subject of a solo exhibition at the Tacoma Art Museum, Tacoma, WA.