For immediate release
October 13, 2026

Days Well Spent: Works on Paper
a solo exhibition by **Emilio Villalba**
at **Norco College Art Gallery**, 2001 Third St., ST-111, Norco, CA 92860
Exhibition Dates: **November 2 - December 4, 2026**

Opening Reception & Virtual Artist Talk: **November 5, 2026, 12:30pm - 2pm**

All exhibition events are free and open to the public. More details at www.norcocollege.edu/art.

Artist Biography:

Emilio Villalba is a painter based in San Francisco. Since his first solo show in 2016, his oil paintings have moved through several distinct bodies of work — from early portraiture to his current paintings, shaped by the Bay Area Figurative tradition and German Expressionism. Across that evolution, the work returns again and again to the human experience — love, intimacy, and introspection. He is represented by Dolby Chadwick Gallery and serves as Assistant Professor in the Art Department at Cañada College.

He holds an MFA in Painting from the Academy of Art University. His work is held in permanent collections including the Crocker Art Museum, the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Colección SOLO in Madrid, and the University of Texas at Austin Art Galleries at Black Studies. He has had a solo exhibition at the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art and participated in the De Young Museum's "Our Peaceable Kingdom" exhibition.

Artist Statement:

These works on paper began as a way to have fun. My oil paintings had become demanding and exhausting, so I started painting in acrylic on paper, mostly as studies, with no attachment to how they turned out. I love the way acrylic settles into paper and layers on it. It also dries fast, so I could improvise without fighting the paint. The materials are affordable, which took the pressure off making anything precious. I could finish one, stack it, and start another. I could take them camping or up to the river, which is where I first started making several in a day.

At the start they were light and loosely representational. Over the years they've become more serious and more resolved, but they still begin the same way. Most end up as portraits, but every one starts very abstract, with no plan or agenda. I paint and repaint the subject, occasionally turn the paper to change its orientation, change the color, and keep going until something holds. Nearly all of them are painted from memory, without photo reference. The images come from what I know: domestic scenes, working at the computer, self-portraits with my palette or in the mirror, and portraits of my wife, Michelle, alone or together with me in a scene. Each one becomes a slightly surreal version of the life around me.

What surprised me is that this way of working has crossed over into my oil paintings. Whether I paint them quickly or slowly, they now carry some of the improvisation and danger of the works on paper, the not knowing what I'm going to paint.

The Bay Area Figurative painters David Park, Joan Brown, and Richard Diebenkorn are constant inspirations. My friend Jennifer Pochinski, who paints improvisationally in oil and Flashe on paper, is a big reason I started working this way

Image: Emilio Villalba, *The Lonely*, 24x18in., Acrylic on paper, 2026 (courtesy of Ivester Contemporary).

Image: Emilio Villalba, *Sleep*, 24x18in., Acrylic on paper, 2026 (courtesy of Ivester Contemporary).