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## **The Dallas Morning News**

### **How Dallas author Kendra Allen found the perfect cover art for her searing memoir**

By [Tim Dioivanni](#)

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The art by William Villalongo is from a series on the four seasons.



A detail of artist William Villalongo's 'Spring, 2015' which was featured on the cover of Dallas native author Kendra Allen's new memoir, 'Fruit Punch.'(William Villalongo)

When [Dallas author Kendra Allen](#) was asked for cover ideas for her searing memoir, *Fruit Punch*, she suggested artwork by the Brooklyn-based [William Villalongo](#). Sometime before, she found a work she liked by Villalongo on Twitter and took a screenshot of it on her phone. "Just find something that he does," Allen told her publisher, Ecco, an imprint of HarperCollins.

Ecco then reached out to Villalongo and secured permission to print two paintings, *Spring* and *Autumn*, side by side on the cover. Part of a 2015 series on the four seasons, the six by three foot works are made of acrylic, paper and flocked velvet on wood panels. They depict a woman standing naked outdoors, framed by a border of flora and fauna. A bird sits on a branch in *Spring* and a squirrel climbs up an incline in *Autumn*.



Artist William Villalongo, whose 'Spring' and 'Autumn' from his four seasons collection, is featured on the cover of memoir 'Fruit Punch' by native Dallas author Kendra Allen. (argenisphoto.com 2017 Argenis Apolinario argenisphoto@me.com / Susan Inglett Gallery)

The woman's bones are visible in *Spring* and show traces of the season's bright colors. In *Autumn*, her brain, heart and intestines are visible. Her silhouette is dotted with stars in both. Trying to understand another person's feelings, Villalongo says, can seem like looking into the night sky. "I really wanted the painting to be a door into another reality." When Allen saw the works in a cover mock-up, they immediately appealed to her. She liked the contrast of the colorful settings against the darkness of the woman's body. She also saw a connection between the internal and external conflicts in her book, and the portrayal of the figure in the paintings. "When I saw them side by side," she said, "it just made sense."