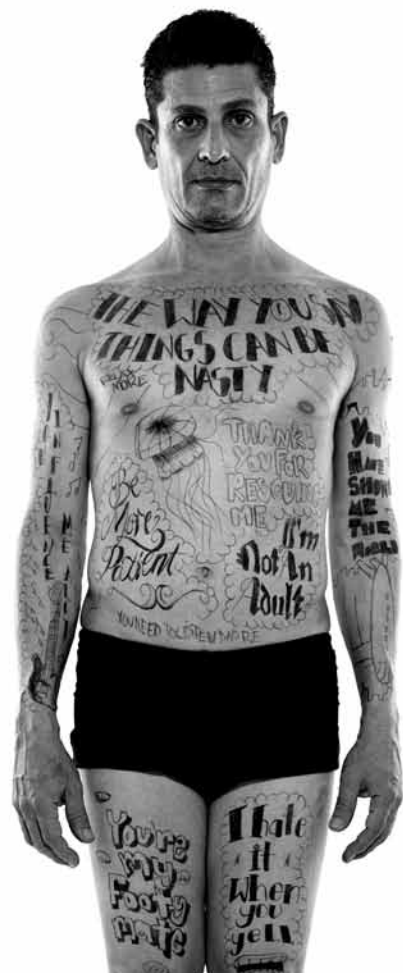


# PROCESS EMERGENT 2

Showcasing the best 2011 Honours graduates from SCA, COFA & NAS | Curated by Peter Johnson





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22 MARCH  
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**Process Emergent 2 Catalogue**

Peter Johnson (ed.)

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# Catalogue Essay

The works selected for Process Emergent 2 represent the best Honours students of 2011 – those artists who dedicated a year to producing not only a body of work, but to intense academic engagement with their practice.

If it is possible to identify a theme running through these works, to perhaps lift the lid on our cultural milieu just a fraction, it seems to be one of loss. Each work, in its own particular way, speaks to what has been lost and, if not mourning its passing, acknowledges the emptiness left in its absence.

The aesthetic strategies employed by the six works differ considerably – from delicate porcelain sculpture to an eight-hour performance piece, from DIY photocopying to environmental installation. However, despite this seeming heterogeneity, each confronts and explores an experience of loss from the personal to the metaphysical.

Park's ceramic sculptures deal directly with the loss experienced in moving to a new country, culture and language. Her domestic recreations are so light and delicate that it seems even the slightest breeze might cause them to crack, that the idea of home is just as fragile.

Shaw's performance also deals with the domestic, with the sense of loss that accompanies watching children grow into adults. He creates a new space for intimacy through his work, an attempt to reconnect and open lost lines of communication with his adolescent son.

*How to Make a Photocopy Transfer* challenges our loss of knowledge about the processes behind so much of the technology that we use every

day. By driving the process back into the analogue, Turner is seeking to re-establish a personal, hands-on relationship with technology – underscored by the irony that paper and photocopying are already heading to the dustbin of obsolescence.

Ellenberger's suspended portraits seem almost like faded film negatives, building up an image to create a sense of the sitter that is at once unrecognisable and somehow much more intimate. Her process – working from 'death masks' – abandons fidelity in an attempt to get at some much more personal truth.

*diffuse* (which Horner kindly reduced in scale for the purposes of this exhibition) invites the participant to quite literally lose their mind – to abandon the razor edge of rational thought and instead drop down into inarticulate, universal consciousness.

Alvarez-Sharkey's installation perhaps speaks most directly to loss. He invokes the cultural forms of the 50s and 60s, transposing them onto strange angles and distorted lenses, found objects scattered in their wake, weathered and worn from the passing of time – acting as a slanted peephole view on the past.

Exactly what has been lost varies from one piece to another – personal, cultural, and even formal – but the longer I considered the works in conversation with each other, the more I was filled with a sense of yearning for that which has gone before and which, by its very nature, can never be returned.

**Peter Johnson**  
**Curator, Process Emergent 2**

# Akira Alvarez-Sharkey

BFA (Hons), National Art School  
*Lonesome Town*, 2011, mixed media

In my practice I hope to raise questions of my relationship as an artist to the studio; what actions as well as works I make in the studio and how the spectator receives them.

Investigating into self and persona; relationships to objects in space and how they are viewed in an installation context; and memory triggers set up through the use of text paintings.

As I already perform as a musician, I hope to start the process of the merging of performer and artist from being a performer on stage to being a performer in the studio, video or gallery.

I have become much more reductive to my arrangement and choice of objects in my installations. I push myself to strip things back to a point where I feel comfortable with the overall look but also feel uncomfortable enough that I may have progressed my art making.

In my current work, I'm drawing on my interests outside of art making and current situation as a father, son, performer, singer, songwriter etc.

I decided on making a work that incorporates my research into post WW2 sub-culture, counter-culture and low culture, along with themes of machismo.

B-grade cinema and lowbrow ways of thinking add to an almost nihilistic attitude towards my work. I'm trying to become less precious and romantic about the personal affection I often place upon the objects I find, trying to remember that they were once discarded.

While referencing 50s/60s pop-culture iconography post-humorous, one of my major aims is not make something that's totally kitsch or cliché.

Rather than using the Pop Art elements that are synonymous with the period I'm interested in, I use a more reductive approach to the themes I transpose onto an object or an action I make.



# George Shaw

BFA (Hons), College of Fine Arts

*Why do you act like it will always be this way?*, 2011, SD video & Giclee prints

From the day he was born, my sixteen-year old son Roman has been one of my most enduring and fascinating photographic subjects. In the tradition we have established in this time we have often worked with a sense of humour, without direction, in close proximity, during times of sickness, and even while being at odds with each other. Regardless of the circumstances, the aim has always been to gain a greater understanding of my son through observation, artistic collaboration, documentation, and imagination.

The idea behind the series *Why do you act like it will always be this way?* took shape when Roman grew more distant and detached in adolescence and I was unable to manage the change; the frustration compounded by relating to him in the same way as when he was younger. The inevitable conflicts led me to reflect on new ways to communicate with him. The central question was and remains, "How can I improve the relationship with my son?" – an enquiry that I believe is an ongoing, universal parental conundrum.

The series *Why do you act like it will always be this way?* comprises an eponymous, split-screen, five-hour performance-for-video; *Untitled (Close)* which is a forty-five minute edited version; and *Tomorrow is another day*, a photographic suite showing the words and designs drawn on my body as the ink fades from day to day.

In the performance-for-video works, Roman used my skin as a canvas on which to inscribe his thoughts about our relationship in a way that allowed his voice to be heard without censure or interruption, thus transforming my fleshy body into a body of knowledge. The act of surrendering my body to his vision was intended as an acknowledgement that the balance of power between us now shifts every day towards a more reciprocal and equal relationship.

In *Tomorrow is another day*, the fading of the ink describes the way our relationship takes on different expressions from one day to the other. It reminds us that conflict is often temporary and that there's always an opportunity to start again.



*Why do you act like it will always be this way?* is a work about loss, memory, time, and love. It is about catharsis, connection and the potential for transformation both individual and collective. It

is an attempt to create a bridge between a father and son in an imaginative and long-lasting way.

# Jesse Horner

BDM (Hons), College of Fine Arts  
*diffuse*, 2011, mixed media

“Talking about different art-forms is like counting raindrops: there are rivers and streams and oceans, but it’s all the same substance.”<sup>{1}</sup>

Stating that diversity is greatly important is an understatement. Without diversity, life would become stale, stall and over time stop. Diversity is a complicated system, yet when observed seems simple. Attempting to introduce diversity is a complex task and usually fails because it cannot be forced. Diversity needs to evolve.

In his book *The muse in the machine*, David Gelernter theorises a ‘Folk Philosophy’ in which he outlines three states of ‘mental focus’; high, low and medium. Gelernter explains that mental focus “changes throughout the day, not because the thinker consciously changes it ... but in subliminal response to his physiological state...”<sup>{2}</sup>, in other words these different states of mental focus are triggered/linked to the state of our body {tired, alert , etc.}

The three states represent the different ends of the cognitive spectrum. “High Focus puts the thinker at the high end of the cognitive spectrum, ... At the high end, thought is analytic and

penetrating. It deals in abstractions and displays a “demythologized intelligence”<sup>{3}</sup> “As we set off down-spectrum, thinking becomes less penetrating and more diffuse, consciousness gradually “spreads out” and ... emotion starts gradually to replace logical problem-solving as the glue of thought.”<sup>{4}</sup>

Each state provides a different approach to thinking. At the high end, individual thoughts are clearer and allows for greater focus on specific trains of thought. High levels of focus are great for ‘getting things done’. At the low end, thoughts are ‘blurry’. Rather than focusing on specific thoughts, as “consciousness gradually spreads out”<sup>{5}</sup> thoughts become a collective. Low levels of focus are “consistently singled out as the mental state that gives rise to creativity or inspiration.”<sup>{6}</sup>

Learning to use the higher levels of focus is already taught extensively, the low end of the spectrum is where I am most interested. At the low end we lose control over our thoughts. In this diffused state, where our mind becomes adrift nourishes a great potential for diverse thinking. We lose the ability to prejudge our



thoughts. Streams of consciousness flow unrestricted. A healthy diverse source of material is all that is needed to utilise the low end of the spectrum. Low-level focus takes no notice of intent. Attempting to construct the outcome is senseless. The best response is to take the role of passenger.

Allow yourself unmediated thoughts. Forget about counting raindrops; give in to your thoughts. Allow each drop to flow into the rivers, streams and oceans. Allow for new rivers and streams to form. Be a passenger. Just be ready. Ready to act.

<sup>{1}</sup> Don Van Vliet (Bill Lowe Gallery: Don Van Vliet: The automatic method. <http://www.lowegallery.com/artists/don-van-vliet/editorial.htm>, Paragraph 7).

<sup>{2}</sup> David Gelernter, *The Muse in the Machine: Computerizing the Poetry of Human Thought* (1994), 4.

<sup>{3}</sup> Ibid.

<sup>{4}</sup> Ibid 5.

<sup>{5}</sup> Ibid 5.

<sup>{6}</sup> Ibid 16.



# Laura Ellenberger

BFA (Hons), National Art School

*Portrait Suspended (series)*, 2011, pigment and mulberry paper

## *presence / absence*

## *absence / presence*

The term Absent/Present refers to two states which are binary opposites. The two can be seen as interrelated however, as absence relies on presence for meaning and the condition of being totally present incorporates a complete lack of absence.

My enquiry is the exploration of the presence and absence of the sitter in portraiture.

Exploring the present/absent paradox through the act of drawing, the focus of my research is the dual effect of the submerging presence of the sitter, and the emerging presence of the portrait on paper. From the outset, my goal has been an attempt to create a 'living' work of art, a portrait which has life and 'breathes' in the mind of the viewer, as well as attempting the complex demands of portraiture as a particular challenge of artistic ingenuity and empathetic insight. The end result, through drawing-as-process, is the transformation of this intent into something else.

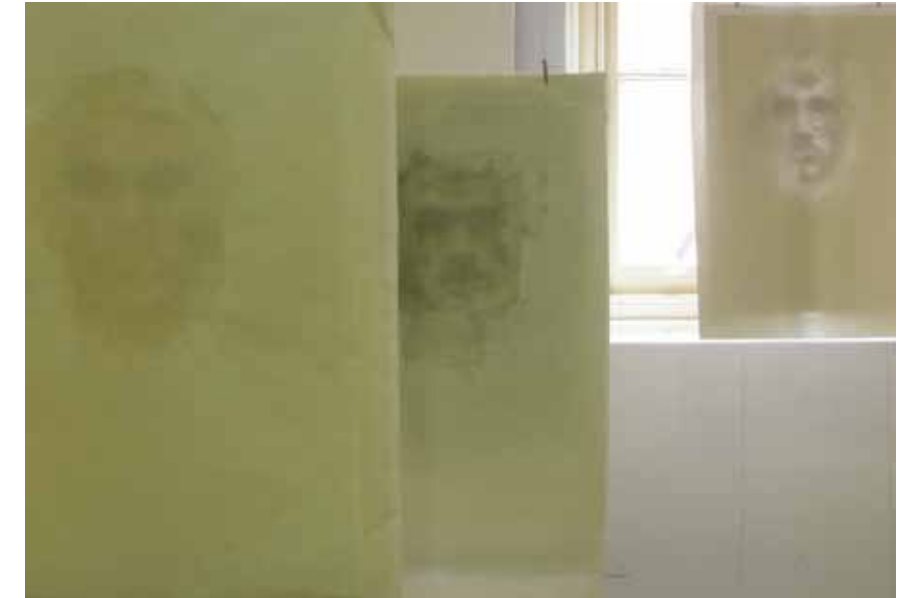
I dedicated my drawing practice during my Honours year largely to drawing a plaster cast of my sitter. The plaster cast was made from a direct imprint taken from the sitter's face, and so bears a direct relationship with the sitter's body. My motivation stemmed from an interest in life- and death-masks, and it seemed like a logical procedure to draw from the cast, as it provided a static and ever present sitter through which I could draw directly from life, exploring various drawing mediums and paper surfaces focusing on form and structure. My lighting revealed the structure and I remained true to the cast whilst drawing it. The second series of drawings incorporated the medium of wax and heat resulting in formless wax drawings on mulberry paper. By layering the observational drawings and the wax formless drawings, and suspending these 'veiled' drawings, the more traditional drawings of the plaster cast are transformed.

By suspending the life-size drawings at head height, not only did they refer to the human form, but the air movement created by any physical movement of people, amongst other things, activated the drawing as an object, resulting in a fluctuating image which engaged



in a dialogue associated with the 'fiato' or breath, a reference to Leonardo's Mona Lisa, animating a sense of life. The ethereal quality of my work is embraced through layering and texture.

The wax-impregnated paper veils have a mediating function, transforming the portrait beneath the veil from a drawn image of the cast into something else, opening up avenues for introspection. Any



suggestion of movement activates the air surrounding the suspended weightless paper drawing, making the mind keener to grasp what it can of the memory of the fluctuating image. The interfacing of the two pieces of paper creates a luminal space between the veils which functions as a metaphor for the primordial matter out of which consciousness arises. The materials emphasize the fragility of existence, and juxtapose the power of presence, through light.

# Luke Turner

BVA (Hons), Sydney College of the Arts

*How To Make a Photocopy Transfer*, 2011, photocopy transfer, stop motion, projection

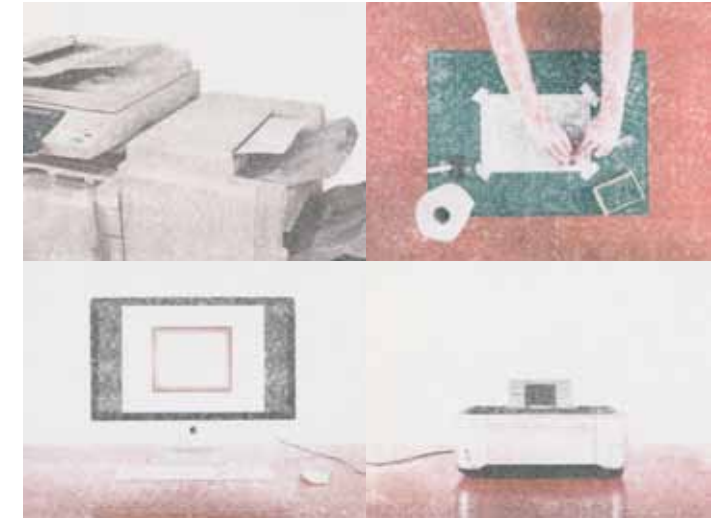
## Between Analogue and Digital

Photocopy transfer imagery exist on the very edge of consciousness as both an artistic and a commercial medium. Its aesthetic has the power to induce feelings of nostalgia despite not having a large presence in our society's constructed visual history.

I am astounded at how the aesthetic of old technology, even through new media, can seemingly make any image 'look good' regardless of its subject or conceptual merits. Viewing and creating these types of images simultaneously gives me feelings of instant gratification and disappointment, two equal and opposite feelings that leave the images numb. I see these images on the surface, I do not see outside, in front or behind the image. I do not feel the influence of the photographer or sense their creativity. If photographers can only operate their equipment on a surface level, then the possibility of creating and understanding something beyond the limitation of the medium becomes more unlikely.

Having grown up during the transitional phase between analogue and digital, my knowledge, understanding and education in photography has been formulated in a space of limbo. My exposure to analogue processes has allowed me to understand them; however I seldom practice analogue film processing and developing, and consequently I have not totally mastered its 'art'. With regards to digital, there are more complex codes and circuitries beyond the screen than I can comprehend - leaving me in an uncomfortable position of an Artist who doesn't fully understand their chosen medium. I navigate my photographic practice on a surface level, through an interface provided by a software designer.

*How To Make a Photocopy Transfer* is about exploring a space in photography that oscillates between analogue processors and digital technologies. It presents itself in a DIY YouTube tutorial format, juxtaposing the analogue creation process via a digital display. The work resonates from Walter Benjamin's essay *The Work of Art*



*In The Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. I liken Benjamin's ideas about traditional art forms' 'loss of aura' to photography with a tension similarly present between the traditional 'analogue' and contemporary 'digital' methods of photographic imagery. There is a perceived understanding of aura as something that obtains a certain level of authenticity. For instance, traditional analogue processes are often seen as more romantic, particularly in light of modern smart phone applications such as Instagram and Hipstamatic, which attempt to mimic their aesthetic. The rise of user-friendly

automation in photography has in many respects reduced the necessity of its mastery as a craft, which in my opinion only allocates more time to be spent on imagination. My work puts forth a notion that aura is not so much about the authenticity of the medium and or the materials being used, but rather, the idea that the process is the aura, conceptually, physically and expressively.



# Mee-Sun Kim Park

BVA (Hons), Sydney College of the Arts  
*Around The Corner*, 2011, porcelain, black stain, ceramic ink

## Around The Corner

This project, 'Around the Corner', is a study of the interplay of the positive and negative spaces and the actual and virtual images of my memory. While carrying out this project, as a cross-cultural person, I re-discovered my roots in Eastern (i.e. Korean) heritages as well as finding new perspectives on Western contemporary culture. As a result, the Eastern heritage has been juxtaposed in my mind with Western contemporary form.

In the early stages of this study, I was influenced by Gayatri Spivak's *The Critique of Post-Colonial Reason*[1]. In this book, Spivak introduces the essence of deconstruction and Post-structuralism, helped me reflect on my Korean heritage. My attention was drawn to the structure of *The Critique of Post-Colonial Reason* partly because of the concept of binary oppositions: negative and positive ideas in one space. One of the reasons I am interested in Spivak's binary oppositions is that while her binary concept is not much different from the binary concept in Eastern philosophy such as the theory of Yin and Yang, there are distinctively different approaches between the two. Spivak positions her power in

one side of the two forces of binary opposition in one space and makes the space turn into a battlefield to kill the dominant or ruling opposition, whereas in Korean and Eastern philosophy, human beings are positioned between the two forces of binary oppositions, such as Yin and Yang (or positive and negative forces) and use that binary opposition as an arbitrator of harmony. I placed myself in the position of arbitrator of harmony between the two forces in this project.

I started to explore the interwoven dual existence of the world of myself in the concept of a space. This space contained binary oppositions such as Yin and Yang, life and death, presence and absence, beginning and end, space and time, heaven and earth, faith and realism, black and white, mind and body and perception and form.

I was brought up in a family with a strong Buddhist background. Thinking about mind and body prompted me to speculate about Buddhism concepts and how they apply to me. As a starting point, I analysed the paradoxical hypothesis of binary opposition from the Heart Sutra of Buddhism; "form is emptiness and emptiness is form". This concept of emptiness in Buddhism is too big for me to comprehend for



it goes beyond death and the unknown world. So I tried to translate this idea of emptiness in the actual and the virtual images in my project.

Metaphors play with the transcendental and immanence. As poems abbreviate time and space into a short narrative through the use of

metaphors, I have experimented with playing with the abbreviated time and space of my memory in my object. Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* and Stewart's *On Longing* have been major inspirations for this idea.

[1] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'A Critique of Postcolonial Reason', *Toward a Vanishing Point of the Vanishing Present*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.

## At The Vanishing Point - Contemporary Art Inc. Est. 2007

With five years of program delivery and community building, At the Vanishing Point (ATVP) strives to deliver a dynamic arts environment at the epicentre of the burgeoning artist-run-initiative scene in the Marrickville area in Sydney's inner west.

ATVP coordinates an ongoing program of exhibitions, public programs and creative projects engaging in contemporary art, ideas and issues, providing unique opportunities and experiences, especially for early-mid career artists/curators and audiences alike.

Nurturing artistic and curatorial development in a professional, experimental and accessible manner, ATVP celebrates the cultural and artistic merit of contemporary and experimental artistic and curatorial practices.

ATVP is driven to provide a platform for contemporary art and contemporary issues to be exhibited, conversed upon and engaged with on meaningful and accessible levels.

Coordinated by a dedicated volunteer team of local artists and art lovers, ATVP encourages engagement and critical discussion - by

artists, curators and audiences - in social discourse in-around-and-between; art, culture, environment, community, ecology, philosophy and politics.

ATVP has a sustained focus on building community and nurturing the professional development of artists and curators through program initiatives; that are dynamic, innovative, interactive, thought provoking and engaging.

### *Process Emergent*

*Process Emergent* is a show initiated by ATVP and executed for the first time in 2011. The exhibition curator selects an equal number of artists from each of Sydney's major visual arts institutions who have just completed their degree with Honours.

The Honours year provides artists with an opportunity to produce a work or body of works with sustained aesthetic, conceptual and intellectual rigour. ATVP is proud to exhibit these works to a wider audience, providing emerging artists with greater exposure whilst as nurturing and developing their creative practice.

**Brendan Penzer**  
Managing Director  
At the Vanishing Point - Contemporary Art Inc.



Akira Alvarez-Sharkey

George Shaw

Jesse Horner

Laura Ellenberger

Luke Turner

Mee-Sun Kim Park

Cover: George  
Shaw, *Tomorrow  
is Another Day*,  
2011



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ATVP is supported by: The Visual Arts and Craft Strategy and the NSW Government through Arts NSW

**Gallery Hours:**  
**Thursday - Sunday**  
**10.00am - 6.00pm**  
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