

*Limbo*

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May 2013

Lucas Davidson's installation of videos and still images collectively and serially constitute a self-portrait. Together, the fragments provide an introspective experience of the whole body, his body, a human body, that irrational, illogical thing as a metaphor of the self in a state of constant transformation, motion and impermanence, caught between being and nothingness, in a meditation on time.

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Immersed in liquid, water, the photograph, portrait of the self, sheds its skin, like a snake, the emulsion separates, peels away and floats transcending the photographic representation of the mortal, corporeal body into a state of formlessness. The liminal edge of the body, the skin, that veneer of the self that suggests the outer limit of the body. Skin is the boundary that divides and separates the internal from the external worlds, that provides the body with appearance, that contains the body is set adrift, released into a spaceless void beyond itself in search of self.

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Visceral, transparent and tenuous the skin tissue, the emulsion performs endless permutations, dancing, folding, dissolving, fragmenting between intangible possibilities that exist between two different states of being, between memory and appearance, between logic and irrationality, and between the real and its eventual disappearance. Davidson's subjects both the corporeal body and its representation to intense scrutiny, somehow almost with medical and analytical precision he abstracts the body from itself, as he strives to comprehend and explain the unexplainable of his being and his spiritual self to himself, whilst not reducing or redeeming that knowledge to predetermined meanings and interpretation, instead preferring transcendence of the unconscious, and the infinity of the unknown, and that that cannot be contained by the materiality of being or the everyday.

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Davidson's photomedia installation offers a poetic meditation on authorial erasure, as his body, his mortal body is dematerialised into cellular and electrical neuronal representations, and a compositional instability that suggests a disequilibrium, that shakes our very perceptions of everyday life, and point to a fragility of being and of human mortality where everything sooner or later is transformed or consigned to a certain past, to memory and to history and perhaps to total disappearance.

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Strangely however, his dematerialised cellular skin forms slide into water, as if metaphorically given birth in water by the unfixed photographic image on paper. The image is separated from the photograph, and in this separation it disengages and assumes a life on its own beyond the stilling capacity of the photograph which fixes the image as a statement of permanent representation of the subject in this instance the artist himself. The water plays a vital part in assuming the liquid life the liberated image or skin. The use of water as an instrumental medium is intrinsic to Davidson's photomedia installation, as it is to the medium of moving image and video. In, Window, Water,

Baby a 12 minute film, by Stan Brakhage (1959), water is presented as a holy place for the birth of life. While in Bill Viola's works, water is consistently symbolised as a vital means towards our understanding and experience of the cycle of life. In his extraordinary visceral video installation, *The Messenger*, Viola presents the viewer with the conscious perception of one's being, in a totaling engagement of the senses in a cosmos that comes close to allowing us to recognise the nature of ourselves. Davidson similarly uses water to evoke the unconscious mind from the conscious body.

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In his essay *The Return of the Real*, Hal Foster, suggests that the abject is what I must get rid of in order to be an I, and in this way the abject touches on the fragility of our boundaries, the fragility of our spacial distinction between our insides and our outsides, and where both spatially and temporally abjection is a condition in which subjecthood is troubled, where meaning collapses. He goes on to question if the abject can be represented (in art) and if it is unconscious can it indeed be made conscious and remain abject. To Abject, he suggests, using Kristeva's definition is to separate, as opposed to be abject is to be stuck. The role of the artist, she suggests, is no longer to sublimate the abject, but to plumb the abject, to fathom the bottomless primacy constituted by primal repression. Davidson's work exploits the disruptive effects of its material and metaphorical reminders. By breaking the symbolic order implicit in the material body, by allowing the translucent skin to separate from the body and then to fragment, fracture, degenerate and eventually to disintegrate into cellular and subatomic particles whether they be skin tissue or blood cells, Davidson is suggesting new possibilities that can exist outside the limits and confines of the mortal body, possibilities that are not restricted or contained by the body but exceed its capacities and symbolic orders whether they be hope, infinite or spiritual.

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Perhaps it is in these moments where Davidson presents a dissolution of the mortal body, albeit throughout the various compositional photomedia and video fragments included in the exhibition or through the continuous fracturing process of disintegration, in continuous discontinuities we experience critical moments of sustained ecstasy where we extend our capacities and reason beyond the formal and rational limits of the corporeal body into the possibilities inherent in the infinite luminescence, and a reality that exceeds both your breath and the photomedia/video installation itself. Gilles Deleuze, in the zone publication, *Pure Immanence - Essays on Life* (2001), suggests it is a plane of immanence, and that this intense, indefinite state of immanence is in fact what life is. A life, he argues, is everywhere, in all moments, that a given living subject grows through, moments that together form multi coloured patterns and non-totalizable fragments. In this sense Davidson's exhibition can represent how he sees and lives life, and how it manifestly materialises into constructed images that become abstract and seemingly impersonal, in a life constituted in a reality of images and video. In the process of revealing himself, he separates himself from himself and from his own story in order to abjectly release its possibilities and potential experiences to the world to be experienced by others.