

## The Self-Portrait, Reconsidered: An Artist Turns the Lens on Himself



*Body Emulsion Detachment, (Detail) 2014*

The self-portrait has always been a fertile topic for artists to explore. From Rembrandt dressing himself in elaborate costumes to Frida Kahlo's flights of fantasy, artists have long turned their artistic investigations onto themselves. In the new exhibition "Agitations," on view at Miami's Zadok Gallery, Australian artist Lucas Davidson adds to this tradition in an entirely new way.

The multimedia artist creates his work by manipulating photographic materials, filming photographic emulsion separated from its paper backing and creating transparencies that turn inward on themselves as they float through their chemical baths. He begins with still images of the body as his source material, ultimately extracting the filmy photographic remnants in order to highlight the vulnerabilities and transience of human flesh.

In Davidson's latest body of work, he turns this signature technique on himself. In his gauzy creations, the artist's face and features take on the appearance of subtle graphite drawings that elegantly unfurl, fold, and contract. At times, his portrait is immediately perceptible to the eye, while at others it begins to fade into an abstract collection of sketchy lines.

The videos Davidson creates from these images interact with the body in other ways, too. Thinking of his video works almost as sculptures, he installs them throughout the gallery in untraditional ways—on the floors or in corners—that urge viewers to contemplate them within the context of their own bodies, in terms of both form and scale. In this way the image, this time Davidson's own self-portrait, confronts viewers, who must consider their own fragility, as what once appeared to be human forms disintegrate before their very eyes.

—Heather Corcoran

*"Lucas Davidson: Agitations" is on view at Zadok Gallery, Miami, Sept. 13 – Oct. 31, 2014.*