



We Got Chemistry Baby

A Chemistry Based Photography

December 4th - 15th 2019

Klari Agar
Kay Armstrong
Emma Armstrong-Porter
Angela Cornish
Lou Corrie
Stephanie Garner
Kate Hodgetts
Keira Hudson
Denise M. Lawry
Xander Linger
Alex Meagher

Andy Messersmith
Kody O'Neill
Juliet Phraser
Camille Perry
Jessica Schwientek
Fiona Shewan
Milli Young
Keely Varmalis
Santana Velo
Peter Vincent

A word from the curators:

We Got Chemistry Baby is a love affair with photography. It is driven by passion, instinct, and desire.

Comprised of artists working across Australia this group exhibition showcases photography as a diverse medium with endless outcomes. Focussed on chemistry-based processes such as silver gelatin, cyanotype, van dyke brown and wet plate collodion. *We Got Chemistry Baby* is a survey of photographic history.

This relationship with photography is not strictly monogamous either; as artists mingle with other media, fusing the analogue with digital, the chemical process with painting and printmaking as well as pushing traditional silver gelatin processes to new limits.

Jessica Schwientek - NOIR Darkroom Director

We Got Chemistry Baby is a unique addition to the NOIR calendar because it's not only about the artists work. It's also about what this space inspires.

In an age where we have Infinity at our fingertips NOIR Darkroom celebrates the tangible processes of the photographic medium. It is also a place that truly welcomes freedom in the creative practice. The collection of work exhibited in this exhibition is a testament to that. Some works have created with a painstaking methodology while others are 'a happy accident.' *We Got Chemistry Baby* pays homage to the craft of analogue photography concurrently with the beauty that arises through spontaneity, trial and error.

Angela Cornish - NOIR Darkroom Gallery Assistant

KLARI AGAR



A Living Room, 2019
Mixed media from 35mm,
dimensions variable
\$200

This is queer bodies forming families, creating their own culture, language and narratives. This is a dialogue we hold to each other tightly.

This work represents young queer or specifically trans relationships and the immediate intimacy implied with finding another who shares your experience and the development of determining of what intimacy lies within that relationship. These two people hadn't known each other for very long when this picture was taken but the care they fostered for each other is evident through their motion. It a depiction of expression, youth and finding balance with another.

My identity and experience is highly relevant to my photographs and I use my work as a platform to speak for my community, my experience, my love. I use the vitality in voice to engage audiences with expression and experience. I am constantly nurturing and grappling my burning curiosity and personal development on how one translates a narrative into an engaging work.



Through the marsh I go, 2019

Photogram

41 x 32cm (framed)

\$300

KAY ARMSTRONG

I can't remember when it was that I learned darkroom techniques, but I recall hiring a little darkroom in Sydney in the Juanita Neilsen Centre Woolloomooloo in the early 1990s. It was \$2 for an afternoon. I remember printing some black and white images. That was the last time I had been inside a darkroom.

Jumpcut 30 years and I enrolled in a short course in experimental darkroom practices. This image came from the reinvigoration of my interest in darkroom techniques and investigations into mark-making within the medium of a photogram. 'Through the marsh i go' represents the murky landscape I find myself in as an aging female artist and the huge shift in my artistic identity as I traverse new creative terrains.

I am a Western Sydney interdisciplinary artist who is currently investing in expanding my practice from performance and dance to include other visual art mediums. Photography has been an important part of this new direction. Considering my 30-year career as a solo contemporary dance artist, it has made complete sense that my current practice uses self-portraiture as a conduit for meaning as well as a vehicle to determine form. There is something highly choreographic and theatrical about the composition of a still image within the frame, and the play with light a kind of dance.

@kay_arm_strong

EMMA ARMSTRONG-PORTER



Hot Box Boys, 2019
Inkjet Print on Velvet
70 x 100cm
NFS

I actually take rubbish photos. I use the camera to connect with, and the photo to communicate the stories of suburban ephemera. Using primarily analogue photography processes to tell visual narratives. Stories embedded in silver.

Emma Armstrong-Porter is an artist and educator currently living and creating in Narm/Melbourne. Her work most probably employs the graphical yet organic nature of printmaking. She also takes photographs of the often unseen. Her art is influenced by the language of tattoos, living with mental illness, institutionalisation, consumerism and the changes and decay of this filthy world we live in, usually resulting in visual narratives.



*Falling Apart, Slowly Putting Myself
Back Together, 2019*
Silver gelatin
8 x 10"
POA

ANGELA CORNISH

My works in *We Got Chemistry Baby* are not connected in concept. Each represent pure experimentation and an expansion of my own photographic practice. It's said that 'you have to know the rules before you break them.' And I think that may be true. With knowledge, I have the power to distort, but it takes courage to disregard the process. For that I thank this space - NOIR Darkroom. After years of taking the darkroom very seriously, breaking the rules has been liberating.

Angela is an Australian photographer based in Melbourne. She explores culture, feminism and identity through a contemporary documentary method. Her work has been exhibited locally and Internationally. Her first solo show 'Beat' in 2018 presented three of her previous documentary stories which by nature are at odds with hegemonic norms. They acknowledge the infinite realities of the human experience.

LOU CORRY



My work engages with with abstraction of the female form by creating imagery that both expresses and explores sensuousness, power, vulnerability and perception of the human body.

I create works based on feeling, and create from the heart.

In photography I mainly choose to work with people. I am constantly inspired by experiences and connections, both old and new. Exploring light and shadow, organic shapes, self expression and capturing what I otherwise struggle to articulate.

Body I, 2019
Silver gelatin
8 x 10"
\$255

@loucorryphotography

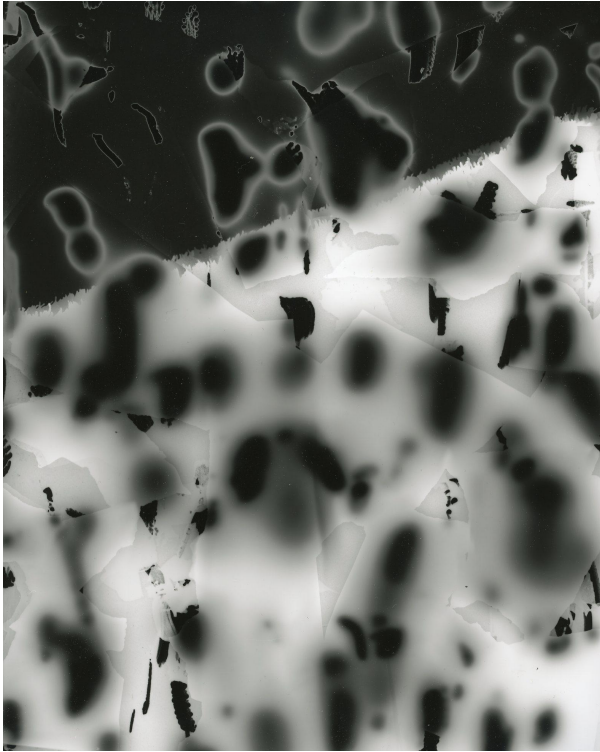


Edith, 2019
Tintype
15.5 x 20.5cm, framed
\$200

STEPHANIE GARNER

The photographs are an experimentation of wet plate analogue photographic process which aims to discuss the concept of inherited trauma through spiritualist photography. By utilising this bygone symbolic language the works asks us to acknowledge the ghosts of our past and to make peace with them.

Stephanie Garner is a visual artist working primarily in drawing, painting, collage and photography. She received her BCA Honours in 2016 at Deakin University and is currently undertaking her MCA at the Victorian College of the Arts. Her work utilises a symbolic language to discuss issues of environmentalism, feminist aesthetics and occult practices.



Untitled
Photogram
25 x 20 cm
\$250

KATE HODGETTS

My practice explores experimental photographic processes, including both the manipulation of the photographic negative and experimentation with light and chemistry in the darkroom. I am guided by a mix of experience and intuition, and my work (while abstract) is shaped by what is happening in my life outside of the darkroom.

Kate Hodgetts was born in Tasmania and lives and works in Melbourne. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in photography from the Victorian College of the Arts and a Master of Cultural Material Conservation from the University of Melbourne. My current practice spans video, sound, and photography.

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Flesh / Bone Study I, II, III, 2019

Tintype

25 x 20cm

\$350

KEIRA HUDSON

Flesh / Bone Study I, II, and III are part of a series that explores our relationship with death, and what remains after our corporeal existence has ended. It celebrates the beauty of human life and existence, whilst acknowledging our return to earth after death. The three works were captured using a large format camera and the wet plate collodion process. Each side of the plate was captured using a half frame dark slide. It required precise registration on the back of the camera to align the subject's arm, leg and pelvis with the floral counterpart, all within a timely manner before the plate dried. Each photograph is completely unique, as the collodion/developer pour, state of the silver nitrate bath, temperature/humidity, lighting conditions, and age of the chemistry all affect the wet plate process in different ways.

Keira Hudson is a Melbourne-based artist who specialises in alternative photographic processes, primarily wet plate photography. She is fascinated by the visceral, and her work is a jumble of mystery, sexuality, romanticism and melancholy. She enjoys pushing the boundaries of her medium both in camera (multi-exposures, long exposures, half frame exposures) and with physical manipulations (drilling holes, applying encaustic wax, scratching into the emulsion).

She has been exhibiting for over 10 years, and her works are included in national and international collections.

@keirahudsonartist

DENISE M. LAWRY

The gnarled and twisted branches of this ancient wisteria were illuminated in the afternoon light, reminiscent of the tortured figures seen in paintings of hell and damnation by the Dutch masters of the 15th Century. This image has been printed using the Van Dyke Brown process.

Melbourne based photographer with an interest in fine art photography including botanical images, street and travel photography and more recently, alternative processes. inspired by the aesthetic potential of the contact printing process, particularly Van Dyke Brown and cyanotype. Carbon transfer is another area of interest, and used this for my botanical images.



Twisted, 2019
Van Dyke Brown process
50cm x 40cm
\$500



chemical cosmos - eridanus, 2019

Inkjet print on twill fabric

100 x 54cm

\$60

XANDER LINGER

This work is an example of a much larger body of work that is created from a vast collection of remnants, off-cuts, and discards from the darkroom bin. These forgotten pieces of photographic paper – forever torn, stained, and crinkled – are saved from the scrap heap and scanned to reveal extremely intricate, subtle, and beautiful cosmic landscapes.

Xander is an emerging photographic artist currently based in Melbourne. After becoming disillusioned with the parochial and unimaginative nature of academic philosophy, he initially turned to analogue photography as a way to retain some vague sense of sanity while writing his thesis.

He almost exclusively experiments within the analogue and 'slow' photographic traditions, seeking to push the boundaries of what a photograph is and can be in the post-digital age, by letting his mind run wild jumping from one idea to the next.

www.xanderlinger.com.au



I've been called a sinner, 2018
Large format positive in lightbox
16x14cm
NFS

ALEX MEAGHER

This project originally started out simply as a means to create truly one off original photographic works (as opposed to being able to endlessly reproduce prints) by damaging the original film and displaying it within a lightbox. Since then the idea behind these damaged portraits has morphed into an attempt to show direct correlation with memory loss and the idea of forgetting a face.

From Rotorua NZ, living in Melbourne Aus. No formal training, completely self taught and interested in working outside of the rules and expectations

ANDY MESSERSMITH



Jayden 3, 2019
Silver gelatin
8 x 10"
\$50

My recent work is mostly the result of professional participation. I draw on my own experiences and interests often looking at fellow workers and their work cultures ie. Alaskan fisherman, Rodeo workers, scaffolders. A history of blue collar occupations have taken me to some interesting places in the world and I believe that by documenting some of these individuals it reflects a shared human experience. It's a simple notion that two people with two different cultural backgrounds yet the same occupation will often find a kindredness. I know most people in labor don't think to consider themselves as sharing in a greater human experience. But when you consider the day to day life style of two workers 1 from India one from Melbourne, both working 60 hour weeks, both supporting family, both wearing away their shoulders, both knowing their doing a job most people wouldn't do in their right mind, both feeling underpaid both feeling marginalised and yet both feeling defined by their work. I want to take the viewer in through the back door and to facilitate this conversation of shared experiences through labor and subculture in the hope that inspiring a deeper appreciation and compassion for one another.

Andy Messersmith aka. Andy Martin Messersmith born California 1979. Studied photography whilst in high school and later university before finishing a degree in film production. He grew up in rural California his mother is a school teacher and father a lawyer. He has often gone between creative and blue collar occupations. He has worked as a teacher, a commercial fisherman, a film lighting technician, a stage builder and scaffolder.



Montenegro, 2019
Silver gelatin
8 x 10"
POA

KODY O'NEILL

Started taking photographs in 2017 when I picked up an old 35mm film camera for five dollars at a garage sale. After taking the camera on a trip to Japan I began to take photography seriously in an attempt to move beyond making simple snapshots. I soon realised that making images in black and white suited my style of photography. Once I was able to get into the darkroom and complete the full circle, from negative to print I was hooked. Whilst still only in the early stages of exploring this medium I am incredibly thankful to have found it

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@kodyoneillnm



Glasshouse, 2019
Liquid emulsion on glass
30 x 50cm
\$200

CAMILLE PERRY

The 'Glasshouse' series is a physical manifestation of the fragility of geology and the pressure mankind has placed on organisms such as plants. The work is intentionally not fixed and changes when exposed to light, heat and humidity. It is in a constant state of flux much like the environment as we know it today, heavily induced by human activity.

My practise is largely responsive to the Anthropocene, adopting alternative printing methods such as printing on glass to highlight the fragility of said subject. This is a fundamental way for me to create a sentimentality for my subject that is often disregarded in ones day to day.



I'm Rich, 2019
Cyanotype and acrylic paint on MDF
45 x 30cm
NFS

JULIET FRASER

The cyanotype and acrylic work 'I'm Rich', developed from a desire to find experimental ways to combine both the photographic and painting elements of my art practice through a cohesive visual lens. The fast paced immediacy I take towards my painting has drawn me to start using polaroids to explore direct expressions of emotion. The image in this work is a cyanotype transparency of a chair that I painted, with my friend Kathy Sapri's painting sitting on top which says 'I'm Rich'. These layers of removal and distance from an original moment in time are of interest to my process, finding their way back through the layers of materials I often experiment with.

Juliet Fraser has a multi-disciplinary practice experimenting with the tactility of Analogue based Film-making materials, Photographic Printing and most recently Painting. Currently studying a Bachelor of Fine Art (Photography) at The Victorian College of The Arts, her work is exploring the intangible experiences of time and human connection. A fixation on self-analysis and documenting of everyday life currently drives her to using contrasting colour with monochromatic imagery as a means to represent the duplicity of lived experiences.

JESSICA SCHWIENTEK

The *Silver City* series is an autoethnographic journey.

The work is about being displaced in time and space, disconnected from the constructs of connection.

This series is finding myself on a wide open stretch of road.

Jessica Schwientek is a fine art photographer practicing in Coburg, Melbourne. Her focus is on analogue and chemistry based photography. Photography is a loose term for Jessica's practice with an emphasis on the alternative and the experimental. Her work is intrinsic; looking in at the world, herself, society, anything. She is an outsider on the inside drawn to the safety of the fringes.



Silver City II, 2019

Silver gelatin on Cotton Rag from Washi film

20 x 20.5cm

POA

@jessica_schwientek

FIONA SHEWAN

These three works all deal with memory on some level. The photographic prints layer images alluding to the absence of a single narrative line in remembering. The super 8 film I made painting and scratching on a documentary reel of the Apollo 16 mission. Here I have reconstructed pre-existing material to create an alternative narrative.

I often find archival material to work with in my art practice. I generally like to look at elements from Australian history that have been somewhat forgotten. I then like to construct a poetic narrative around the archival material I have sourced. The narratives often deal with questions concerning the nature of fidelity in the action of remembering. The archival material is woven into a separate narrative in an act of reconstruction. As a result, my art practice raises questions concerning identity and perception in the face of trauma.



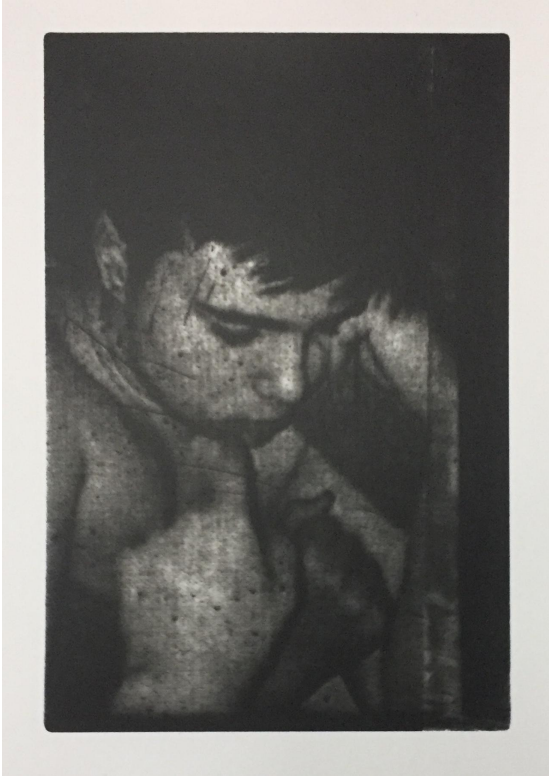
Untitled

Silver gelatin print

44cm x 35mm

\$100

KEELY VARMALIS



Intrusion, 2019
Silver gelatin
25 x 20cm
\$420

Work 1. 'Intrusion' depicts a vulnerable teenager miserably trying to sleep, while being disturbed by an unknown protruding hand from the bottom of the image. I am interested in the relationship and facades people adorn and hide behind, the fear at the root and outward action that suggests anxiety. 2. 'Teeth' is the story of a close friend whose mother, as a child gave away her baby teeth, to which she was distraught, enough for her mother to replace them with those of another child. The friend liked to place them back in her mouth as comfort, unknowing of this replacement. 3. 'Internal Conflicts' ambiguously mimics the discomfort and guilt of one's actions and how they affect others, and the immediacy that one often acts, without thinking of repercussions.

Finding solace in the quiet of the darkroom, Keely has recently discovered the similarities between her practice in printmaking and that of darkroom photography. Revelling in the unpredictable energy of the printed image, and the ambiguity achieved from her enlargement technique in the darkroom, the artist's photographs act in a similar manner to her soft pastel portraits, sharing a tenderness and vulnerability of subject with the viewer. Keely is currently pursuing a BFA in Drawing and Printmaking at the VCA.



21st dress 1978, 2017/18

Silver gelatin

20 x 25cm

NFS

SANTINA VELO

These three images that I'm exhibiting have strong links to my past. One is of my father before migrating to Australia in the 1930's and the print was made from an old negative, another is of my daughter wearing the dress I wore for my 21st, with an old sheet from the 70's used as a backdrop and finally my daughter wearing the going away outfit from my mother's wedding in the 1950's, and the backdrop fabric used was once the family's tablecloth where many family dinners were shared.

Melbourne based photographer, Santina Velo, has been honing her skills in film photography since retiring from teaching four years ago. She has been documenting her past through film photography and favours using black and white film for the nostalgic feel that can be created. She enjoys making her images come alive in the darkroom using silver gelatin and cyanotype chemicals.

@mummavelo



Failed Caffanol Experiment III, 2019

Giclée from 35mm

30 x 20cm

NFS

PETER VINCENT

I created pieces as a part of a failed experiment involving cross processing colour film using caffanol; an environmentally friendly developing solution made from coffee.

I have been a photographer for about 10 years, and have been working with film for just over a year. Though I still mostly shoot digital, I've found working with film to be a pleasing process. I put more care and thought into taking each frame knowing that there is still a long process ahead of me.



Impermanence I, 2019

Silver gelatin

20 x 12.5cm

\$100

MILLI YOUNG

Milli's work is an evolving investigation in attempt to dismantle the authority and censorship of post-colonial photography and rather explore site and the image-making process in a decolonising manner. In *Impermanence* 2019, the repeated image acts as an experimentation and rebuff of the 'the original', 'the final image' or 'proof' and rather reveals the endless possibilities of the subject matter and the darkroom photographic process.

Despite her attempts to achieve a certain outcome, the result ultimately gives way to chance.

Milli is a Melbourne-based multidisciplinary artist who works with illustration, photography and collage. Drawn to analogue and the tangibility of process-driven work, Milli's practice over the last three years has been based on exploring film photography and more recently developing prints in the darkroom experimenting with different formats, methods and materials. Recently completing a Bachelor of Fine Art at Monash University, Milli intends to continue her investigation of film and darkroom printing outside of the institution and in a broader cultural context.

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