



Reciprocity

James Farley

Acknowledgement of Country

I acknowledge the Wiradjuri people, the traditional custodians of this land on which I have the privilege of living. I pay my respect to Elders past, present and future.

I also acknowledge the sovereignty of the Wiradjuri Nation, and all Indigenous Nations of Australia.

Reciprocity | Cameraless Photography Towards Ecological Thinking



Reciprocity explores cameraless photography as a tool for ecological thinking. This exhibition concludes a larger sequence of research projects exploring post-photography and the practice of ecological stewardship, which I have undertaken as a PhD student at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga.

My research is motivated by the rising ecological crisis of anthropocentric climate change and the driving forces of unchecked exploitation from western capitalist cultures. I am particularly interested in the ways traditional landscape photography is implicated in this ongoing culture of exploration through the lingering influence of aesthetic traditions such as the beautiful, the picturesque and the sublime. Such traditions allow landscape photography to be used as a colonial tool for classifying, conquering and commodifying the land, ultimately reinforcing the western narrative of a Nature/Culture dualism.

Western cultures have long operated under the assumption that they are separate from, above and thus entitled to exploit all the earth's natural resources and ecological systems. However, climate science confirms that collective human activities are impacting the wider geophysical and biophysical systems that regulate and support the current community of life on earth. Anthropocentric climate change reveals the belief that human beings are in any way separate to those systems as a dangerous and destructive myth. This fact demands a reconsideration of all tools that have long been used to perpetuate this cultural myth. My project falls in line with a wider movement across the arts, sciences and humanities, that responds to this challenge through ecological thinking.

FRONT: *Reciprocity (Framed No. 5)* (detail), 2017. Unique lumen print

ABOVE: *Reciprocity* installed at Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, 2017

Ecological thinking is an expanded way of studying, understanding, and living within the earth's dynamic systems. It embraces radically expanded notions of self and species, and accepts that human beings are intricately connected to an all-encompassing web of codependent, interrelated and constantly varying processes which combine to regulate life on earth. Ecological thinking is committed to exploring and celebrating these connections.

As a recovering landscape photographer, my approach to ecological thinking is grounded in a photographic practice that does not impose a view of mastery over the land. Instead, I have employed the lumen printing process as a means of engaging with the environment, collaborating through a haptic process of exchange and chance to create images that reveal the agency, vibrancy and value of the ecological community. Put most simply, I make photographs with the environment, rather than take photographs of the environment.

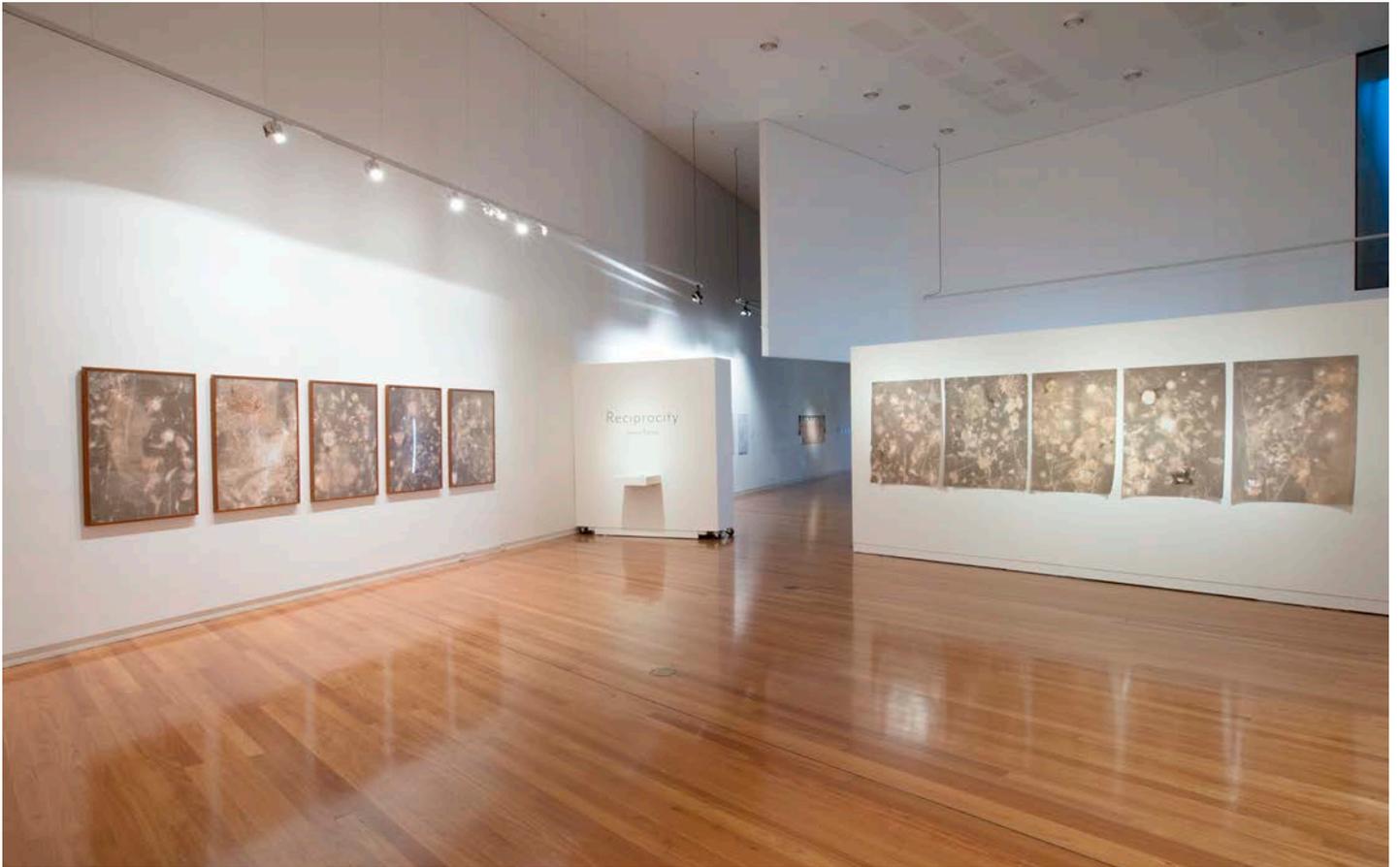
The Lumen Print Process

Lumen printing is reminiscent of the earliest forms of photography. In this contemporary application, the process has been refined to embody a more ecological approach by embracing openness, engagement and the serendipity of chance. These lumen prints were created outdoors, not in a darkroom. They were created in my backyard garden, on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River and in the compost heap of Little Triffids Flower Farm. Without the use of a camera, the photographic paper is immersed in these environments and left to develop for extended periods of time (usually 24–48 hours). During these long exposures, the fundamental characteristics of the photographic process take place to create an image. This process is often affected by rain, wind, or any number of other possibilities. Dogs, cows and humans are just some of the beings that have left their mark on these prints. At the end of the exposure, the prints are collected, chemically fixed and washed. This process makes each lumen print a unique object, the outcome of a collaboration between multiple forms of human and non-human agency.

As an object to be looked at, not through, lumen prints conjure a dual indexicality which points to the haptic exchange registered in both photographic and material terms, while also evoking the ceaseless cycle of give and take at the heart of all natural process. In this approach, the representative powers of cameraless photography are considered in equal measure with their affective and material qualities, to both embody and enact the reciprocity and respect central to what I hope is an emergent culture of ecological stewardship.



Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, 13 May - 25 June, 2017



ABOVE: *Reciprocity* installed at Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, 2017
LEFT: *The Rambunctious Garden (No. 3)*, 2017, Unique lumen print

About the Artist

James Farley is an artist, gallery technician, teacher and research student based in Wagga Wagga, NSW. James' practice has slowly shifted away from a traditional understanding of landscape photography to embrace and explore a more open, experimental and collaborative approach informed by ecological thinking.

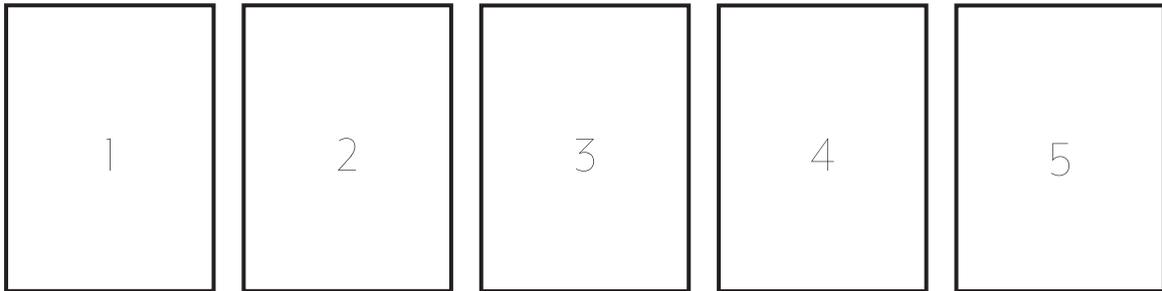
James has studied photography at university in Australia and the United States of America, and is currently a PhD candidate at Charles Sturt University, where his research explores post-photography and the practice of ecological stewardship.

James has exhibited extensively in Australia and in the United States of America. In 2015, James represented Australia at the Sony World Photography Awards in London. Also in 2015, he was an inaugural recipient of a Young Regional Artist Grant from Arts NSW. In 2016, James was named the NSW/ACT Young Achiever of the Year (Arts).

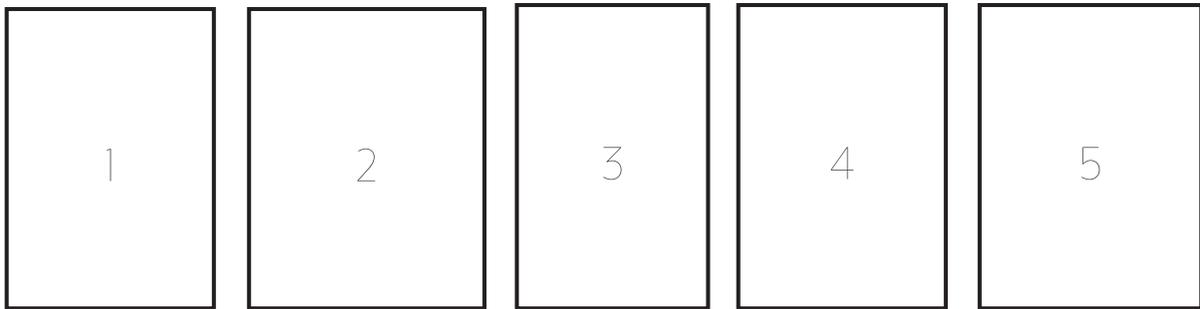
WORK FOR SALE

Solar Plants, 2017 | Unique lumen print on gelatin silver paper.

Framed Series | **\$1400 each** (Inc GST)



Unframed Series | **\$900 each** (Inc GST)

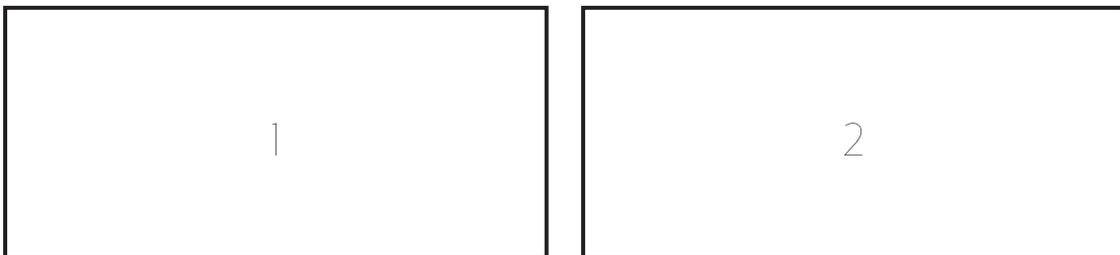


The Rambunctious Garden, 2016/17 | Unique lumen print on gelatin silver paper.

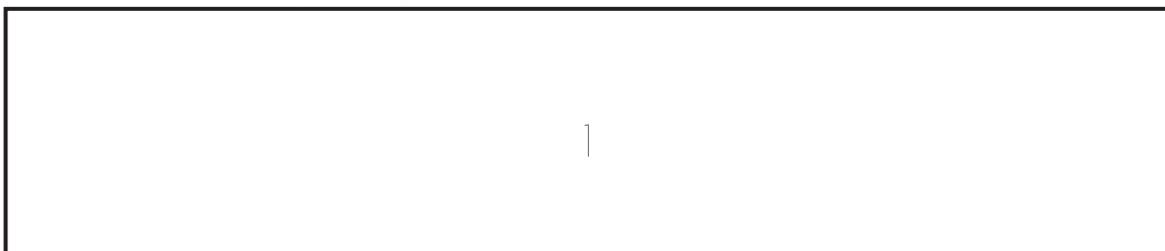
Framed Series | **\$1500 each** (Inc GST)



Summer Mural with Little Triffids | **\$2000 each** (Inc GST)



Flooded River, Gumly Gumly Commons | **\$3000** (Inc GST)



Reciprocity, 2017 | Handmade foldout book, including a unique lumen print.

Signed and Numbered. Limited Edition of 10 | **\$100** (Inc GST)



Please see the gallery shop for all purchases and enquiries. A deposit of 20% is required at the time of purchase, with the total due by the end of the exhibition period.

For more information about this work, please do not hesitate to contact James via his website.

Thank you for your support.

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