

Two Polaroid Sequences

Eight Wishes / Eight Returns

Artist Statement and Process Notes

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Overall Statement

Eight Wishes and Eight Returns are two related Polaroid sequences built around different ways of encountering an image.

Eight Wishes is a fixed grid. It asks the viewer to move across images as if moving through a compressed history: religious icon, classical body, museum object, pop face, fragmented identity, self-replication and intimate gaze. The individual appears within this sequence not as someone outside history, but as someone gradually shaped by the symbols, images and systems that came before them.

Eight Returns is an interactive draw-card sequence. It cannot be seen all at once. The viewer must draw, remove or reveal each layer gradually. Here, the image becomes closer to life itself: partial, delayed, uncertain and dependent on the actions of others. Darkslides, failed images, fractured faces and transformed colours become stages of a cycle rather than isolated photographs.

Together, the two works move between history and life. The first sequence asks how a person is seen, named and shaped by civilisation. The second asks how a person returns through chance, loss, care and collective action.

I use Polaroid because it makes these questions physical. A Polaroid is immediate but unstable, intimate but mechanical, personal but shaped by chemistry, industry and chance. It can be touched, damaged, kept, wasted, sold, collected or given away.

Across these two sequences, I am interested in the shared human core beneath different histories and identities. As individuals, we encounter birth, death and sexuality: the body appears, changes, desires, disappears and returns. As communities, we depend on trust, communication and resonance: the fragile ways people recognise, support and respond to one another. In the context of this exhibition, private images move outward and become gestures of care.

Group One: Eight Wishes

Image History and Personal Fate

Medium	Eight Polaroids and one Polaroid darkslide
Format	3 x 3 grid installation
Sale format	Sold as one complete set
Year	2026
Edition	Unique

Eight Wishes is a fixed grid installation composed of eight Polaroids and one darkslide. The sequence moves from sacred and historical symbols toward contemporary identity and intimate self-recognition. It begins with religious icon, classical body and museum spectacle, then passes through Warhol, consumer framing, fragmented faces, mechanical self-replication and private gaze.

The work follows two timelines at once. On the surface, it traces a compressed history of images: how bodies become sacred, idealised, displayed, reproduced and consumed. Beneath this public history runs a quieter personal line: how an individual is shaped by these images, yet still searches for fate, intimacy and self-recognition within them.

The darkslide reads: "Here are 8 wishes. Use them wisely." In the sequence, it functions as a final threshold. After moving through religion, sculpture, celebrity, repetition and intimacy, the viewer arrives at a black

industrial remnant: the place before the image appears, before memory is fixed, before a wish becomes visible.

The work is also informed by the tension between naming and namelessness. Religious, artistic, social and commercial systems all give names to the body. Yet Polaroid resists complete control. Its chemical instability, soft focus and one-off materiality allow the image to remain partly uncertain. In this uncertainty, personal fate quietly appears.

Sequence and Process Notes

1. Religious Icon

The sequence begins with a body already claimed by belief. The religious figure is not treated simply as an object in a museum, but as an inherited image of suffering, sacrifice and moral visibility. Through the unstable surface of Polaroid, the sacred body becomes less monumental and more vulnerable: a historical image that still asks to be felt physically.

Technical record: Polaroid SLR 680; DOM 1984.2.23; single exposure.

2. Classical Body

The classical body appears as a fragment: idealised, damaged and unnamed. It represents another way history gives form to the human body — not through suffering, but through proportion, beauty and abstraction. Yet the missing or cropped parts prevent the figure from becoming complete. The body remains a vessel shaped by civilisation, but emptied of personal identity.

Technical record: Polaroid SLR 680; DOM 1984.2.23; single exposure.

3. Museum Spectacle

Here the artwork is no longer only a body, but a public event. The sculpture is surrounded by architecture, reflections, passing figures and the atmosphere of the gallery. The image records the act of looking itself: how cultural objects are staged, visited, photographed and circulated. The viewer enters the same system of display that the sculpture occupies.

Technical record: Polaroid Model 2; DOM May 27, 1974; single exposure.

4. Warhol / Pop Icon

Warhol marks the point where the historical image becomes mass image. His face appears as an image of an image: already reproduced, already familiar, already part of consumer memory. By photographing it again with Polaroid, the work turns pop repetition back into a fragile one-off object. Celebrity becomes material, unstable and mortal.

Technical record: Polaroid SLR 680; DOM 1986.4.12; single exposure.

5. Consumer Frame / Fragmented Nature

This image shifts from public image history into the decorated space of consumer identity. A face, fragments of nature and a commercial border occupy the same field. The frame appears playful, but it also behaves like a container: it packages the self, organises nature and turns experience into something collectible. The human figure begins to fracture inside the systems that frame it.

Technical record: Polaroid SLR 680; DOM 1984.2.23; custom 3D-MMP insert-mask / dark-bag system; triple exposure.

6. Gridded Face

The face is divided into a grid, becoming less a portrait than a system of parts. Identity is no longer shown as a unified presence, but as something split by screens, frames, classification and repeated looking. The viewer must mentally reconstruct the face, mirroring the way modern identity is assembled from fragments of image, data and memory.

Technical record: Polaroid SLR 680; DOM 1984.2.23; custom 3D-MMP insert-mask / dark-bag system; triple exposure.

7. Self-Replication

The artist enters the sequence as a repeated image. After icons, statues, museum objects and pop faces, the self is no longer outside image history; it has become one of its products. The body is split by optics and multiplied by the camera, suggesting a self formed through machines, reflections and repeated acts of self-observation.

Technical record: Polaroid SLR 680 with Spectra F-System Multi-Image Optic; DOM 1984.2.23; multi-image optical exposure.

8. Intimate Gaze

The sequence returns from public images to bodily closeness. Two faces are compressed into one field of vision, reducing the distance created by religion, museum display, celebrity and mechanical repetition. This image is not about being displayed to history, but about being recognised by another person. It brings the grid back to intimacy, vulnerability and mutual presence.

Technical record: Polaroid Macro 5 SLR; close-range instant exposure.

9. Darkslide / Wish

The final object is not a photograph but a darkslide printed with the phrase: "Here are 8 wishes. Use them wisely." It is the black surface before exposure, before memory, before fate. After eight images of bodies being sanctified, idealised, displayed, reproduced, framed, divided and recognised, the black surface becomes a threshold: not an ending, but a remaining possibility.

Process: Found Polaroid darkslide, preserved and placed as the final element of the grid.

Group Two: Eight Returns

A Drawing of Life

Medium	Polaroid darkslides, instant photographs, handwritten titles
Format	Interactive draw-card sequence
Sale format	Individual draw-card purchase / interactive sequence
Year	2026
Edition	Unique

Eight Returns is an interactive Polaroid sequence about uncertainty, choice and return. Unlike Eight Wishes, which is arranged as a fixed historical grid, this work is built as a layered sequence. The viewer or buyer may draw, remove or reveal the cards one by one. Each act of removal exposes another stage of the cycle.

The darkslides are industrial leftovers from Polaroid film packs. They are usually discarded, but here their printed slogans, numbers, logos and black surfaces become small pop objects. They carry ready-made instructions: make use of difficulty, preserve what is fragile, take a picture, make it last. These instructions are humorous, commercial and strangely existential.

The work begins with language and darkness. Before the image appears, there are already names, rules and commands. Then the sequence moves through fractured identity, visual noise, disappearance, scarlet transformation and a final figure walking into light. The structure suggests that life cannot be understood from a single image. It appears through delay, obstruction, accident and collective action.

Daoist thought quietly underlies the work. “名、器、执、我、物” appear as limits placed upon life; “大化、炉、复归” appears as loss, mutation and return. The darkslides are not empty. They are the state before image, before certainty, before identity is fixed. The final image does not offer triumph, but return: a small figure moving into dawn.

Within the context of a fundraiser for Living Positive, this work connects to visibility, stigma, vulnerability and care. The drawing of a card becomes more than a purchase. It becomes a shared gesture: a private image is released, another layer is revealed, and the work returns to the world through collective support.

Sequence and Process Notes

1. Axiom: Lemons / 名：律令柠檬

A darkslide printed with the phrase "When life gives you lemons." Life begins already wrapped in a ready-made slogan. It is an industrial form of consolation, a pop proverb and a command to transform difficulty.

Process: Found Polaroid darkslide; kept as an object-image and used as the first layer of the sequence.

2. Axiom: Refrigerator / 器: 冰冻保存

"Keep your friends close, and your Polaroid film in the fridge." Preservation becomes care, but also anxiety. The fragile object must be cooled, stored and delayed.

Process: Found Polaroid darkslide; the original printed instruction is recontextualised as a metaphor for preservation, fragility and bodily anxiety.

3. Axiom: Retention / 执: 强行留痕

"Take a picture. It'll last longer." Photography promises permanence, yet the Polaroid itself ages, fails and fades. The wish to keep becomes another form of attachment.

Process: Found Polaroid darkslide; the commercial phrase is treated as both photographic instruction and existential statement.

4. Outbreaker: The Fractured Ego / 我: 破茧镜像

A face appears through a butterfly-like mask. This is the first emergence of the self, but it arrives already split, mirrored and partially hidden.

Process: Physical masking / optical fragmentation during Polaroid exposure; the image is produced through obstruction rather than digital editing.

Technical record: Polaroid SLR 680; DOM 1984.2.23; custom 3D-MMP insert-mask / dark-bag system; triple exposure.

5. The Turbid Stream: Octet / 物: 浊流八重

An eightfold exposure made through a front filter insert. Unlike the earlier works that divide the face through masking or optical grids, this image allows place, object, colour and accident to accumulate into one unstable field. The result is not a clear scene, but a stream of fragments: visual noise, abundance, memory and material confusion. The self is no longer separate from the world, but absorbed into the flow of things.

Process: Eightfold exposure made with a front filter insert using a Lomography glass wide-format instant camera. The layered exposures create density, distortion and temporal overlap in-camera rather than through digital editing.

Technical record: Lomography glass wide-format instant camera; front filter insert; eightfold exposure.

6. The Cyan Farewell / 大化: 青色告别

A cold blue image of butterfly, tree and dissolving form. The body begins to return to atmosphere, chemistry and natural pattern.

Process: Polaroid exposure with strong cyan colour shift; chemical instability and colour drift are preserved as part of the work.

Technical record: Polaroid SLR 680; DOM 1984.2.23; custom 3D-MMP insert-mask / dark-bag system; triple exposure.

7. The Scarlet Baptistry / 炉: 绯色洗礼

This image was made inside MATRIA, an immersive pink inflatable installation by Penique Productions at Melbourne's Royal Exhibition Building. The original installation transformed the historic, institutional architecture into a warm, maternal and womb-like environment. In the Polaroid, the space becomes softer and more ambiguous: a furnace, a shelter, a waiting room and a chamber of return. Resting bodies appear suspended inside a red field, as if held before another stage of emergence. The work does not show transformation directly; it shows the condition before transformation, where warmth, protection, vulnerability and rebirth coexist.

Process: Polaroid exposure shaped by colour shift, lighting condition and chemical response. The red/pink cast is retained as a material effect rather than corrected, allowing the space to become bodily, atmospheric and womb-like.

Technical record: Polaroid SLR 680; DOM 1984.2.23; single exposure.

8. Marching into Dawn / 复归: 走向破晓

A high-contrast black-and-white figure walks toward light. After naming, preservation, attachment, fracture, noise, disappearance and transformation, the work ends not with certainty, but with return.

Process: High-contrast black-and-white Polaroid capture; silhouette and architectural light are used to reduce the image to movement, body and threshold.

Technical record: Polaroid SLR 680; DOM 1984.2.23; single exposure.

Overall Note

Across these two Polaroid sequences, I am interested in how images shape a person before that person can fully recognise themselves.

Eight Wishes begins with images inherited from history: sacred bodies, classical fragments, museum objects, pop icons, consumer frames and fractured faces. The sequence moves from public image systems toward a more private form of recognition. It asks how the individual is named, displayed, repeated and divided by the visual structures of civilisation, and how intimacy might still appear within them.

Eight Returns begins from another direction: not with completed images, but with darkslides, slogans, chance and delayed revelation. The work unfolds through drawing, removal and exposure. Its images move through fracture, accumulation, disappearance, transformation and return. Here, life is not presented as a fixed identity, but as something that appears through uncertainty, accident and the actions of others.

Together, the two sequences treat Polaroid as both image and object. The front of each work carries a visible image; the back carries its material record: camera model, DOM, exposure method and physical process. This makes each photograph not only a picture, but also an encounter between body, machine, chemistry, time and chance.

In the context of this exhibition, these private images move outward. They become small gestures of visibility, care and connection: a way of asking how people are shaped by history, how they return through uncertainty, and how images can still create recognition between strangers.