

Paper Ghosts

J.G. Hampton is a versatile young artist who is not defined by his medium.

In March 2009 J.G. Hampton was one of eight students featured in AKA Gallery's exhibition of Saskatchewan's up and coming young artists. Officially, the show featured eight Bachelor of Fine Arts students equally divided between Saskatoon and Regina. But Hampton, a representative of the University of Regina, is not a BFA grad. He holds an interdisciplinary BA and his work reflects this diverse set of interests. Using various mediums, Hampton systematically interrogates art practice and its modes of representation.

The work exhibited at AKA and the work featured here is entitled *Portrait in Paper (1-5)*, a photographic series of portraits depicting people with their heads covered in torn strips of paper. The resulting images are barely there, hovering phantoms blending into white background. The physical prints themselves remind me of apparitions. They are floated in front of the wall with only their shadows marking their presence. The effacement of identity is thus twofold — the subject and photography itself. Hampton invites us to consider how we make sense of portraiture and photography as well as the assumptions that make a mode of representation seem natural.

Clearly Hampton can't be described as a photographer or new media artist although he uses the materials specific to each. Perhaps Hampton's source material isn't film or digital media but *medium itself*. To this end Hampton has also worked in installation, sound and public intervention. His most recent show, *The Circle and the Abyss* at Neutral Ground in Regina, featured a carefully plotted schematic diagram connecting white, card-sized photographic prints. The cards could be rearranged by the public and white gloves were provided to facilitate this process (as well as to reaffirm the distance between viewer and object!). A meditation on the status of art and culture?

— Dagmara Genda



J.G. Hampton, *Portrait in Paper (1-5)*, Giclée, 2008, 43 x 61 cm, courtesy of