

Currently Hanging: Matthew Clifford Green's *Excitable Boy*

by [Jen Graves](#) • Feb 23, 2012 at 9:33 am



THE STRANGER

One half (the darker, thicker half) of Matthew Clifford Green's show at Lawrimore Project.

A row of luscious acrylic paintings **at Lawrimore Project this month** could easily be mistaken for **exploded floral arrangements**. Their surfaces are buried under layers of vivid color and palm-sized glop-bursts of red and yellow and white. They look like a typical gestural abstraction series—the kind of thing created when a painter hits on a palette and a theme, and runs with it.

But these are actually copies of each other, made by physically pressing piles of paint from one messy surface onto a blank, then adding some paint and repeating to create more. These paintings are versions of each other, even though **you can't quite figure out which one is the alpha**, which came next, or exactly how it worked. There are only indirect suggestions of relationships.

On the wall facing the thick paintings is a row of photographs of their back sides. These photographs have been printed on canvas, which has then been stretched and hung like a painting. **These are the B sides.**

Green, based in Portland, also makes and distributes music, and he **created this exhibition with vinyl record pressings in mind**. Paintings, even of the same subject, are thought to be uncopyable—each one essentially human and alive—versus vinyl records of the same piece of music, which are considered interchangeable. But Green's hamfisted process of smacking two surfaces together in order to create new paintings suggests that painters repeat themselves, too—become **machines of their own works**. And of course this is true in the larger sense: artists of all kinds find a style that works, then repeat, repeat, repeat. How is this so different from mechanical reproduction?

It's a juicy subject to take up, since **artists are often pressured to create a signature style**, then punished (or rewarded) if they stick too closely to it. It's disorienting not to know what kind of work to expect from an artist, but it's dull to be able to predict it. Green is a performer. This sticky display is a smart way for him to take up space in a fine art gallery.