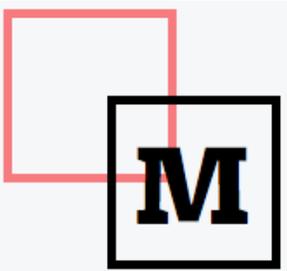


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(LVL3 Media, September 8, 2014)

Artist of the Week: Chelsea Culp

Chelsea Culp is an artist based in Chicago. She graduated from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2007 with a dual degree in Studio Art, Art History Theory and Criticism. She recently exhibited with *Queer Thoughts* at The Material Art Fair in Mexico City. She has performed at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago and in works directed by Matthew Lutz-Kinoy at The New Museum, N.Y.C., and The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, ND. She is partner in the curatorial, *NEW CAPITAL* with artist, Ben Foch and part of the performance group, *APOCALYPSE FOREVER*, which will release their 3rd album in winter 2014. She is an instructor at The University of Chicago Graham School.



What are some recent, upcoming or current projects you are working on?

The year started with a trip out to Mexico City for *Material Fair*, where *Queer Thoughts* was showing my work, and my partner's, Ben Foch. It was a really interesting art scene to explore and we made it out to Teotihuacan and climbed the Pyramid of the Sun. It was beautiful, people dancing Bachata and picnicking on top.

We just came off a 3-month west coast road trip, that was instigated by 3 consecutive projects; my solo show at *Important Projects*, a show Ben curated in L.A. for *Black Paper*, a new arts organization, and our shared residency at *Summer Forum* in Joshua Tree. We stayed with friends and family along the way and explored the national parks (Joshua Tree, Muir Woods, Big Sur, Grand Canyon, (the Meteor Crater outside Winslow, AZ), and general American oddities. At the Grand Canyon we visited *Tusayan Ruins*, an 800 year-old Pueblo settlement; it's possible the community was never larger than 30 and the central structure was a Kiva, the site for public ritual. This concept and organization has been pretty influential to my work with the band I'm a part of, *Apocalypse Forever*.

There are five of us; me, Ben, Mike Kloss, Leo Kaplan, Hope Esser, and a 6th rotating member. Both our shows have been at *The Mutiny* for Ron Ewert's project, *Chicago CD Music*. It's actually the reason we formed, but decided to keep working together after.

Now we have a rehearsal space at the *Carroll Arts Building* (same spot as *Perigrene Program* and *Julius Caesar*). We are working on a play (tentatively titled *The 5th Dream*. The narrative is woven from the dreams we've shared with one another). We'll probably debut it in Winter/Spring at the

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rehearsal space, which is morphing into a playhouse.

The vibe is somewhere between a childhood living room tent, Ferlinghetti, Artaud, and a Viennese Actionist gathering. Also, been pretty inspired by this documentary, *Hearts of Darkness*, by Eleanor Coppola. She foregrounds the murky boundaries of art, life, theater, and film, during the making of an Apocalypse.

Now and how everyone was pushing one another to towards the outer reaches of everything.

The space seats 12, plus our 4' x 12' stage. After the weekend run of our play, it will become Caligula Theatre, and the 5 of us will program experimental performances there. It takes inspiration in part from a project in Berlin by Max Pitegoff and Calla Henkel, New Theater. We should be up and running by Fall 2015.

I was in a group show this past Sunday, Meet Me at The Soho House. It was curated by Night Club at Iceberg. I'm really looking forward to the PplSft yard art! Other than the play, I'm spending the fall in the studio, we are finally putting in a kiln so I'm going to be able to fire some ceramics that have been in a very precarious state.



What kinds of things are influencing your work right now??

The San Francisco craft and denim embroidery of the 70's in that the art production was tied to a larger cultural moment. *Native Funk & Flash* is a book I've been getting into that has some great images. A lot of the pieces were in a show at The Oakland Museum, *Radical Acts*.

This guy, Garth that lives in cement tepee in Joshua Tree and invites anyone to build on his mile by mile property so long as its adobe/cement and blends in. Neil Doshi is doing a pretty crazy project out there.

Josh Reames has gotten me deep into Vapor Wave and Summer Forum, still has me mulling if Object-oriented ontology is liberating or totally depressing.



What are you reading right now?

Various things from the books and mags we collected while on the road, including some supplementary Summer Forum readings. I tend to interweave a mercurial grouping of texts over a few months time rather than dig-plowing through one thing. Unless it's really good and I immediately need all the knowledge.

Highlights of the current selection below:

Survival in the 21st century, Planetary Healers Manual
The Mike Kelley catalog
Body Sweats, The Uncensored Writings of Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven
RE/SEARCH #12, Modern Primitives, An Investigation of Contemporary Adornment and Ritual
The Lost Books of the Bible and the Forgotten Books of Eden

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If you were a drink what drink would you be?

Coconut La Croix or lemon-ginger tea.

What were you like in high school?

Punk/Hillbilly/Goth/Hippie/Geek. Pretty much the same as I am now except with blue hair. Actually, one difference is I was frustrated and rebellious. I still have traces of that but now, I'm more interested in solving problems than just pointing them out. I had a few key people that were really supportive while I was there, like my art and shop teachers, and some awesome friends (that I still consider the best people on earth, even if I don't see them enough).

Can you share one of the best or worst reactions you have gotten as a result of your work?

In 2011, I was making these 10'H X 15'-25' wide wall-mono-prints. The image emerged from a team of volunteers instructed to 'make their marks' while performing a choreography to transfer the paint print.

While working on this piece at Seerveld Gallery with about four students, a very passionate conversation emerged around the source of original inspiration, if it was yours and native to you or if it is God's and transmitted to you. Each student had a nuanced explanation based on their personal experience and the tenets of their Calvinist faith.

The conversation sensitized me to the complexity and specificity with which we each make sense of the world.

The lasting impact has been that I rarely assume anyone's beliefs. It made me more inquisitive.



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Most embarrassing moment?

Can't remember, have kind of developed a no shame philosophy, more like move on and do better next time type thing.

What do you want a viewer to walk away with after seeing your work?

I want them to enjoy the bizarre nature of existence and how dubious reality is. I like when sensitivity to nuance makes it difficult to say what something is.



Describe your current studio or workspace.

It's a warehouse in East Garfield Park. I share it with my partner, Ben Foch. We ran a temporary project space there (NEW CAPITAL) but have since converted it to our studios.

There are a few big spaces and the function of each changes based on what either of us are working on collectively or individually at any given time. For about six months the downstairs was kind of a mud-room-cement-spot for the ceramics we were making together, these cement trash pieces, and my cement shoes. Then we both got on an individual

painting kick and flipped it into a shop for making stretchers. Ben usually works in the main white cube of the old gallery, and has really minimal but specific material selections or he works in an old masters/Richter/photo-realist oil style.

I'm usually in this white brick space that has 3 windows with north light. Sunlight really inspires me, I love making a palette when I'm enveloped in it. Right now, it's full with a lot of large sloppy almost sculptural figurative paintings, all memory's interpretation and a couple dozen cases of rainbow La Croix cans.



How did your interest in art begin?

It came from my family, the homes, and cultures I grew up in.

My Mom worked in a frame shop, I'd go to work with her and she'd set me up with scraps of matt board, cool markers, and poster books to draw from. My favorite was Matisse's gold fish and any Modigliani because I liked the way he made eyes.

Later she opened an artist co-op with a half dozen other creatives' it was a frame-shop, gallery and artist studios (Working Artists). It was the first of its kind in the southern part of Kentucky where I am from. And has been a major influence to how and why I organized New Capital.

Paducah has since developed a pretty innovative housing program for artists to buy deteriorating property (which are all Victorian homes and storefronts at the confluence of the Tennessee and Ohio rivers) so there has been a resurgence of creative activity there. Unrelated to the program my Dad bought a property that was the hardware store he worked in when he was a kid. He repurposed all salvageable materials and spent about 8 years of his own labor on it nights and weekends. He created an incredible space.

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Paducah has named itself 'Quilt City U.S.A.' and every year generations of quilters come from across the country for Quilter's week. My great Mema was a quilter and I remember her colorful creations all over my grandparent's home.



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Alumni
Relations



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: CHELSEA CULP AND BEN FOCH



Shifting Focus

Chelsea Culp and Ben Foch debut their first collaborative work since New Capital projects in two CAM exhibitions.

By Evangeline Politis (MA 2013)

Chelsea Culp (BFA 2007) and Ben Foch (1995–99) are showing their first collaborative work since their curatorial project, *New Capital*, in two Chicago Artists Month (CAM) exhibitions, *The Installation Experiment* organized by Sculpture International and presented in seven storefront galleries on Halsted Street, and *Home: Public or Private?* at 6018 North.

With the December 12 closing of their artist-run project space, *New Capital*, located in East Garfield Park, Culp and Foch are using their role as featured artists in CAM as a platform to return their collaborative focus to presenting their art work, while still acting as a curatorial team in other venues.

“We wanted to be very distinct about [this work],” Culp explains. “While we’re introducing these curatorial ideas into our collaborative work, *New Capital* will stand as an autonomous artistic curatorial project.”

“It’s kind of like a band where you have your solo project—you have your two-person project, and then you have your band,” Foch analogizes.

The two were honored to introduce their two-person project under the auspices of CAM. Barbara Hashimoto, one of *The Installation Experiment* organizers and exhibitors, approached the couple after reviewing dozens of submissions.

“The other five artists in *The Installation Experiment* are interesting artists that wouldn’t usually be curated together,” says Culp. “It was really cool to be a part of it with them because they are making exciting work.”

Hashimoto was hoping to create a representative show, picking artists of different ages and genres from neighborhoods all over the city—supporting this year’s CAM theme, *Art Block by Block*, which explores the impact of Chicago-based artists on the city’s neighborhoods.

Culp and Foch represent the East Garfield Park community where Foch has kept a studio for the past 11 years and where the two-year-old gallery stands. They both have witnessed some changes there due to the growing artist population.

“I think in some ways artists have annexed this block within East Garfield Park,” Foch explains. “There are now street signs, pavement, street cleaning, trees, and it’s a much safer block now. But I don’t know how much it had impacted the East Garfield Park community at large.”

“It’s done more for artists than it has for the community,” Culp chimes in. “I’m not sure how much being part of what some might call ‘the first wave of gentrification’ really improves the immediate community. In some ways it threatens it. The most honest response to the question of how we improve our community is, ‘I’m not sure if we do.’”

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Soon the New Capital chapter of their lives will be closing. They set up the “project,” as they have coined it, with many parameters, including a two-year timeline. They felt they couldn’t commit to something longer than that during this time of flux in their careers, but, on the other hand, could still build momentum, relationships, and cachet in the timespan of 24 months.

“When there’s enough time for something to happen more than once, you can really come to know it,” says Culp. “I have a better understanding of what motivates someone to make and exhibit work, including myself.”

Foch and Culp have been able to observe how artists produce and distribute work and used New Capital as litmus for the cultural climate both locally and nationally. This has pushed them toward their plans after the gallery: they will produce a catalog documenting the gallery’s run, produce and exhibit their collaborative works, and visit other artist-run exhibition projects around the world, including the Sober and Lonely Institute for Contemporary Art in Johannesburg, South Africa (the equivalent of a project like New Capital there, they explained). “We really want to be a little mobile and experience this independent production in other places. We want to know the values and issues of other artists,” Culp explains.

The two describe their SAIC education as supporting the success of their grass-roots gallery. Foch, who studied in the Painting department, and Culp, who studied studio and Art History, Theory, and Criticism, both remember nothing being off limits—no discipline or project. In navigating how to run their own gallery, they started by setting their own objectives and parameters, a skill they learned in the open environment at the school.

“At school, people really encouraged you to pursue whatever you’re interested in,” she explains. “At the time, I found that really stressful because there wasn’t any direction. But for better or worse, the way that plays out is like the real world. There is no definite path to find out what you’re supposed to be doing; you just have to decide what you want to do and figure out how to do it.”

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RAI A SPIRITS contemporary art talk

EDITION #16



August 26, 2013 · [Print This Article](#)



The Scene at Iceberg Projects this Saturday.

Art Lovers Gravitate to Rogers Park Galleries

ICEBERG AND BIKE ROOM VERITABLE MAGNETS

Rogers Park was the place to be Saturday night with killer back to back openings taking place within blocks of one another. The weather couldn't have been better and both shows had robust turn outs. Unioned Labors at the aptly named Bike Room featured not one but three different collaborative projects from duos. Small and whimsical, this show packed a big punch. Alberto Aguilar & Alex Bradley Cohen filled the space's hallway with a mural pieced together with delightfully bold and colorful paintings on cardboard and complimented by a playful soundtrack. Inside the gallery itself a video of Aguilar's & Cohen workin' it out in the Bike Room's backyard that shared a similar soundtrack. Amanda Ross-Ho and her father, Ruyell, used one of his playful abstractions that reads "Less is Not More" to adorn one of Ross-Ho's signature oversized t-shirts. The most somber offering, Frank Piyatec & Judith Geitchman's rhythmic black and white text and abstractions were arranged into a giant checkerboard.

Rhoades Scholar, curated by New Capital's Chelsea Culp and Ben Foch at Iceburg Projects, was similarly sparse yet arresting featuring one piece each from young guns Murat Adash, Naama Arad, Marie Alice BrandNer-Wolfszahn, and Oren Pinhassi. Adash also staged a performance where sightseers focused attention on various objects and people in the Iceberg space during the opening. Particularly mind blowing were Arad's and Pinhassi's work. Pinhassi's backpack

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looked like it was dipped in papier-mache and wrapped in a chalk-covered blackboard. The mutant backpack was placed open and empty on the floor revealing that crappy red nylon that's suppose to be water proof but never really keeps anything safe. Despite all this there was definitely something magnetic about this unassuming backpack combining school daze nostalgia with the sculptural sensibility of Rachel Harrison and Kate Ruggeri. Naama's sumptuous oil pastel drawing also pulled on our heartstrings by pairing a technique learned in grade school with stunning use of color and line. This rug inspired work was not your grandma's tapestry.

Definitely recommend going to the ends of the Red Line to check out these shows. Also recommended: beef patties from the Caribbean American Bakery on the way.

Iceberg Projects open by appointment.

The Bike Room open by appointment.

Caribbean American Bakery located at 1539 W Howard Street.

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INTERNATIONAL ARTS AND CULTURE

UNCATEGORIZED

QUEER THOUGHTS, CHICAGO AT WAKE IN HAMTRAMK, MICHIGAN FOR AN OFFSITE PROJECT “DARK ROSES” TOMORROW, AUGUST 8TH.

SFAQ – AUGUST 7, 2013

SHARE ON: [f](#) [t](#) [g+](#) [p](#)

QUEER THOUGHTS is a great space in Chicago who is currently contributing an artist interview in the upcoming issue of SFAQ #14. They have some amazing programming and tomorrow, August 8th will be hosting an off-site project titled, “Dark Roses” at WAKE in Hamtramk, Michigan. This project will feature works by Marcel Alcalá, Michael Clifford, Chelsea Culp, Miguel Gonzalez, Siera Hyte, Sam Lipp, and Luis Miguel Bendaña The opening reception is 7:05pm sharp. Not 7pm, not 7:10pm... 7:05pm sharp. Below are some words that accompany this off site project’s statement.

What my parents think I do:

Hmm, well, the big question has always been are u gay or are u just weird?? The pants are too damn tight, but they still sag too low :(AND oops this young man did not properly dispose of his pubic hair after removing it from his body!! And can you tell me just what kind of boy would do that??

What old people think i do:

Granny sees me in the girl pants and says wow I’m glad you’re not like those saggy bottom boys. Smile and put the hat at a proper angle. I’m not a thug; I show my teeth and they are dull-white and blunt not gold and pointy! If we go to the mall or 6 flags or another place girls go I can easily replace my costume with a pimp costume by lowering the jeans a bit...

What I think I do:

When i grow up I’ll be a fox. Beautiful red hair and I could live in the woods or a city, but never in the suburbs, well maybe on a golf course! I will be known for my cunning and be strong enough to hunt, but vulnerable enough to be hunted. Still I am maybe smart and nice enough to befriend a basset hound and if he kills me in the end I’ll still be the hero.

What I actually do:

I look in the mirror or in photobooth and I think wow this is the ideal me – not that me you see in tagged pics or as I walk down the street. I open my mouth a lil and my eyes can I pose like this every minute of every day? But really I am caught slouching, eyes barely open, hair not neat enough to be clean cut not messy enough to be a sk8r and that is how i feel. too nice to be the bad boy too bad to be fuck boy??

–Nick Guenther

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CHICAGO ARTISTS MONTH

BEN FOCH + CHELSEA CULP

WEBSITE:

<http://www.newcapitalprojects.com>



MEDIA

Collaboratively, we have worked in painting, sculpture, video and photography. While our current project, NEW CAPITAL, functions as an exhibition space, it is also a conceptual artwork, social sculpture, and performance. For The Installation Experiment, in the POD display cases on Halstead St. Chelsea Culp and Ben Foch will create a set of 3-5 ceramic, glass, and found object totems. Secured on small motors, the totem will continuously turn 360 degrees, displaying to the stationary audience, all views of the work. The three totems will be set against a painted background, spotted by portrait mirrors, reminiscent of both Yayoi Kusama and Roy Lichtenstein.



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INSPIRATION

In 2013 we will complete and exhibit 'Six Quilts for Satan, Cult of Santa 666,' a series of 7 hand-stitched soft-sculpture quilts that conflate the palettes and iconographies of Early Americana Christmas through Camp, the Occult, a fin de siecle Parisian boudoir, maritime tools, and popular symbols for luck and fortune. At NEW CAPITAL we will be preparing for 24HRS/25DAYS, a 25 day long exhibition and event celebrating the life cycle of the project. EVERYONE is invited to produce work downstairs and/or exhibit work upstairs at ANYTIME between Nov 18th 2012 and December 12th, 2012. Upon completion of the life cycle, we will begin an artist book titled 'CATALOG' which will document activity at NEW CAPITAL as well as profiling a network of related people and projects. To submit work to 24HRS/25DAYS or 'CATALOG' email newcapitalprojects@gmail.com, with the project title in the subject line.



WHY CHICAGO?

We have chosen to work in Chicago because of affordable space, and the savvy and diverse audiences available to artists. While we are happy that our work facilitates art communities, it is true that these art communities also implicate us in a politics of oppression, particularly in East Garfield Park, perhaps only perpetuating problems elsewhere.

BIO

Ben Foch and Chelsea Culp began collaborating in 2009 with their exhibition Substance and Shadow at the now defunct "Vega Estates" in Pilsen. Culp's background is in performance and sculpture, Foch's in painting. Their mutual concern for Art History, Theory and Criticism has supported their collaborative process of constructing a conceptual framework specific to every project. In November of 2010, this dialogue lead to the formation of NEW CAPITAL, a split level exhibition space located at the intersection of Albany and Carroll in Chicago's East Garfield Park neighborhood, where each artist maintains their studio practice.

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BAD AT SPORTS contemporary art talk

CHICAGO ART IN PICTURES: NEW CAPITAL

May 20, 2013

This week, independent of one another, Chicago-based writers Caroline Picard and Jason Foumberg both raised questions related to sustainability in the art world. Within the context of Bad at Sports, Picard wondered about communal failure, ethics, and Utopia, particularly as those political concepts concerned the field of social practice. And at the alternative weekly publication Newcity, Foumberg offered a comparative overview of local, economic models in gallery practice.

Six months earlier, the proprietors of Chicago's New Capital Projects, Ben Foch and Chelsea Culp, began a twenty-five day round-the-clock closing event for their gallery. Foch and Culp had, from the outset, planned a limited, two-year run of public exhibitions at their venue. And having reached the end of their finite schedule they threw open the doors to everyone interested in one last collaborative endeavor entitled "24HRS/25DAYS." Whither came the funding for such a spectacle? In 2011, the Propeller Fund announced that Foch and Culp were recipients of a 6000 USD award.

Rather than being a survey of contemporary programming, this installment of Chicago Art in Pictures is a historical offering. If New Capital Projects' success (and it was a success) seemed contingent upon its engagement with artists, its monetary subsidization, and its relatively brief public existence, then maybe too it was the case that only an informal, ethical consensus allowed for a momentary sort of Utopia within the city's crumbling West Side.

While planning what might be possible for the future, it's helpful to remember what has worked in the past. And so, some of the activity surrounding New Capital Projects in the year 2012 is suggested by the imagery below. A full schedule for "24HRS/25DAYS" is still available at New Capital Projects' website. All artwork copyright original artists; photography copyright Paul Germanos.



Above: Ben Foch, left, and Chelsea Culp, center, with ACRE's (Moustache Phil) Philip Kaufmann, right, at New Capital Projects on a hot summer night, June 30, 2012.

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NEW **DIGITAL ARCHIVE** **MUSEUM**

PUBLIC PROGRAM:

Donna Haraway's Expanded Benefits Package

DATE

September 16 2011

DESCRIPTION

New York artist Matthew Lutz-Kinoy's latest dance performance, Donna Haraway's Expanded Benefits Package, is set in the compounded space of artist studio / gay bar / queer community center. Featuring music by SOPHIE, the event premieres a display of sculpture, large-scale painting, and a video projection entitled Ideals, Bars, Shoes, and Legs, setting the stage for a sensual physical space in which the artist and collaborator Chelsea Culp dance and recite collaged erotic texts from London and New York. The event highlights a shifting frame, which allows for chance readings of moving image, both painterly and physical. Donna Haraway's Expanded Benefits Package remembers the New Museum's neighboring historic center Judson Church by celebrating the tradition of translating daily activities into activist choreography.

ARTISTS

Matthew Lutz-Kinoy
Chelsea Culp

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Courtesy the artist and New Museum, New York

IDENTIFIER

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Donna Haraway's Ex...

MOVING IMAGE

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NEWCITY Art

Reviews, profiles and news about art in Chicago

Mar

Review: Chelsea Culp/Seerveld Gallery

07

► Sculpture, Suburban



RECOMMENDED

The advent of Abstract Expressionism in the 1940s meant a great deal to the art world. Generally, the movement of the body was now part of visual art, pictures didn't need to have defined centers or edges, and, rather than being forced to represent, art materials could be allowed to speak for themselves. But in the U.S. in particular, AbEx meant modernity could look individualistic and eccentric rather than merely slick and mechanical; the movement espoused freedom so alluringly that the CIA supposedly organized traveling exhibitions as a means of winning hearts and minds during the Cold War.

American Christianity embraced the AbEx ethos architecturally, as sci-fi contraptions calling themselves churches proliferated, many predating Frank Gehry's mature cheesecake factories. More recently, "Spontaneous Performance Jesus Painting" has, at least according to one blog, become a noteworthy latter-day AbEx phenomenon in some worship services. In general, gestural painterly abstraction seems to be quite popular among card-carrying Christian "fine" artists.

Performance artist (and non-Christian) Chelsea Culp has provided a new iteration for the cultural odd couple of Christian Expressionism (X-Ex?). In her installation at Trinity Christian College, six long church pews have been sawed and bolted together in a towering assemblage whose bulk recalls the welded piles of I-beams created by "plop art" public sculptor Mark di Suvero—although the form follows the smooth line of a Henry Moore work, and, as with Moore's reclining blobs, the shape affords 360 degrees of striking viewpoints.

The four walls have been adorned with massive, intricate blue finger-paintings, carefully transferred from stretched plastic sheeting in an ingenious monoprint process, to produce swirling, ethereal, immersive images that evoke no one more than Jackson Pollock, the high priest who announced, "I am nature." Rather than rendering any critical judgment on the legacy of American Christian modernism, whether in the mega-church or the blockbuster exhibition temple, Culp has created a space for moving within or contemplating in stillness (even while sitting on the pew piece), a blurring of edges that suggests openness and reconciliation. (Bert Stabler)

Seerveld Gallery, Trinity Christian College, 6601 West College Drive, Palos Heights.

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