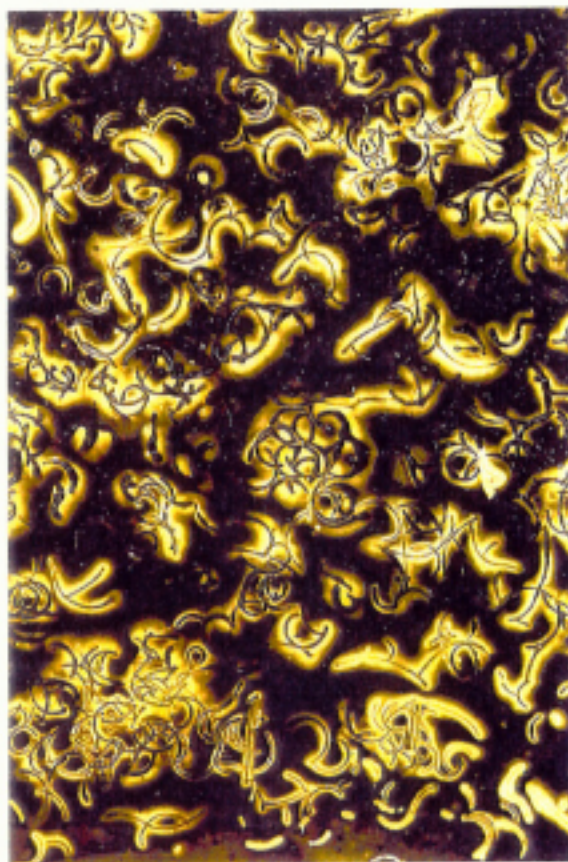


Collin Shutz: *Tattoo*, 1995,
Cibachrome transparency on
hand-built birch light cabinet, 52
by 42 by 8 inches; at Fuel.



SEATTLE

Collin Shutz at Fuel

In Collin Shutz's second exhibition at Fuel, each of seven hand-built birch light boxes contained a 41/4-foot-tall-color Cibachrome transparency that is an enlargement of an ink-or-mixed-medium-on-vellum "drawing".

The 34-year-old Missouri born artist assembles human body hair or fingerprints to create all-over compositions. These are enigmatic and beautiful extensions of body centered art. They evoke, instead of recognizable anatomical elements, microscopic close ups of cells which relate to Shutz's 1993 paintings.

Those earlier works, on paper and on stretched and shaped canvases, exuded a fetishistic obsession with nature at its most minute. They also employed a highly tactile sheen of oil and enamel that is now supplanted by the cold plastic surface of the light box. What these works sacrifice in physicality of surface, they gain in scale and impact. No longer intimate, they publicly assert private or usually invisible aspects of the body.

Pool consists of three staggered light boxes hung near one another, each a transparent blue suggesting water. The title, however, may refer to a genetic pool. Once one learns that the images are derived from the artist's fingerprints, allusions to DNA identity come to mind. *Pool* could be among the more unusual self-portraits ever made.

Tattoo and *Blue Tattoo* suggest a local art-historical precedent: the work of Mark Tobey. Shutz, in blowing up the equivalent of Tobey's elegantly curvy "white writing" into display-box size, reminds us how calculated and constructed any stabs at "mystic" transcendence can be. With everything ordered and controlled, enlightenment is purely the result of an electric light bulb.

Shutz is closing the door on the Northwest's ecological mysticism. He seems to put into quotation marks the expectation of religious experience based on nature, and to propose that all traces of transcendence are filtered through the experience of the body.

- Matthew Kangas



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