

**FOR
IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

76 GRAND STREET NEW YORK NY 10013



The Self-Esteem Salon

The Baptism Series

Chris Verene & Christian Holstad

April 6 – 20, 2002

Deitch Projects is pleased to present The Self-Esteem Salon – The Baptism Series, a collaborative action and sculpture exhibition by Chris Verene and Christian Holstad.

The Self-Esteem Salon is the continuation of a participatory photography installation begun in 1998 by Chris Verene. The work was staged in its most elaborate form at the 2000 Whitney Biennial. Verene and a team of facilitators produced a series of therapeutic portrait sessions as a public response to his infamous Camera Club series.

The Baptism Series is the result of a collaboration between Verene and Christian Holstad. They worked together at the Kohler Artists Residency Program in Wisconsin where they built four ceramic "Cleansing Center" fountains that function as contemporary baptismal fonts. Verene and Holstad formed their friendship at the 1998 Gramercy International Art Fair where Holstad performed with the now-defunct FancyPantz dance troupe and Cheri Nevers, Verene's alter ego, presented an early version of the Self-Esteem Salon.

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The Self Esteem Salon – The Baptism Series is a living participatory marathon. The artists will, in their words, “baptize lucky infants to the delight of onlookers.” Adults and older children may join in an assortment of spiritual explorations. Participating clients will encounter a full complement of therapeutic processes, which climax in a fantasy photo/portrait session. Clients can consult with Cheri Nevers, a widely published beauty and fashion photographer, to create an appropriate beauty photograph. Clients can choose their most flattering picture.

Advance and walk-in appointments are welcomed, and portrait appointments may be arranged as gifts.

In addition to his participatory works, Chris Verene is known for his photographic series of his relatives in Galesburg, Illinois and his infiltration of suburban camera clubs. A portfolio of his images will be featured in the spring 2002 issue of *Parkett*. A monograph featuring the Galesburg series was published in 2000 by Twin Palms. Verene lives in New York and travels monthly to Galesburg and Atlanta.

Cheri Nevers’s work has been featured in *Big*, *Flaunt*, *Bust* and *Elle* (Holland.)

Christian Holstad, an artist and designer, lives and works in New York.

**GALLERY HOURS 12 – 6, TUESDAY – SATURDAY
FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT**