

2013

Chauvet Cave

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Recommended Citation

Brink, Jolene (2013) "Chauvet Cave," *Studio One*: Vol. 38, 5.

Available at: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/studio_one/vol38/iss1/5

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Chauvet Cave

“They have been here!”
—the first words spoken by Éliette Brunel
on discovering the world’s oldest cave paintings

Inside the stone vessel
an ark of leopards
stalk ochre reindeer.

The painted horse
goes roaming again,
his spotted eye watching

the flashlights of academics
scratching notes.

It doesn’t matter
who entered the cave first.

The bison go on huddling
over the entrance, guarding
the red handprints left behind.

And we go on discovering
a form of ourselves we
no longer recognize.

-Jolene Brink
CSB '09