

NEWS RELEASE

Exhibition: Barbara Crane, *Chicago Loop, 1976–1978*

Dates: May 15 – June 21, 2014

Opening: Thursday, May 15, 6 – 8pm

Higher Pictures presents Barbara Crane, *Chicago Loop, 1976–1978*, the artist's third solo exhibition with the gallery. Working continuously for over 60 years, Crane, at 86, has been the subject of seven retrospectives, numerous one-person presentations, and four monographs. Here the artist presents *Chicago Loop*, her celebrated photographic series on the architecture in her native city's commercial center. This marks the first solo exhibition of the vintage prints in New York.

Crane worked on *Chicago Loop* for three years, exposing over 550 5 inch by 7 inch negatives with her large format camera. She printed the images herself as contact prints to preserve the highest level of detail and printed extended black borders on the 8 inch by 10 inch gelatin silver paper to make it clear that she considered the shapes of the negative and the paper to be as integral to the composition as the image itself. With trademark precision and expression, she extracts her subjects from the greater urban context and focuses on the form, rhythm, juxtaposition and geometry of the architecture before her. Crane's Chicago is one seen from the city's seams, at the nodes and thruways between buildings where façades meet and overlap. Intersecting planes, competing patterns and abutting textures are layered with disorienting reflections and dancing shadows. Crane tightly contains the disorder within the frame; her meticulous eye for composition finds structure and grace within chaos.

Crane studied photography at the legendary Institute of Design at the Illinois Institute of Technology. The Institute was originally founded as The New Bauhaus in 1937 by László Moholy-Nagy, who was invited to open a school in Chicago embracing the mission of the original Weimar academy that closed its doors in 1933. When Crane matriculated there some three decades later, she was taught by Aaron Siskind, one of the most influential American photographers. Hallmarks of her experience there—virtuosic technical skill paired with a rigorous engagement with composition and abstraction—are clear in her work, from early figures suggested only by curved lines on a white background (*Human Forms*, 1964–65), to frenetic overlapping exposures of nudes and street scenes (*Multiple Human Forms*, 1969), to the hypnotically placid and detailed surfaces of the *Chicago Loop* prints.

Barbara Crane was born in Chicago in 1928 and earned her graduate degree in photography at the Institute of Design in 1966. A professor at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago from 1967 to 1995, she remains Professor Emerita. Crane currently lives and works in Chicago.

For more information please contact Stephen Javaras at 212.249.6100.