

NEWS RELEASE

Exhibition: Sheila Pinkel, *Folded Paper, Glass Rods, 1974 - 1982*

Dates: January 10 – February 21, 2015

Opening: Saturday, January 10, 6 – 8pm

Higher Pictures presents *Folded Paper, Glass Rods, 1974 – 1982*, two seminal bodies of cameraless photographic work by artist, writer, and professor emerita Sheila Pinkel. This presentation marks the first time the works have been shown in New York City and the artist's first solo exhibition in New York.

The prints on view evolved from experiments Pinkel began as an MFA student at UCLA. Fascinated by the possibilities of using light to make images without a camera or enlarger, Pinkel studied with a physicist and subsequently conducted rigorous visual experimentation with light phenomena including incandescent, X-Ray, ultraviolet, prismatic and digital sources.

To make *Glass Rods* and *Folded Paper Pieces*, Pinkel exposed her compositions—solid glass rods arranged directly onto photosensitive surfaces and sculptures made from sheets of photographic paper—to a brief flash of light from a single light source. From within this seemingly narrow set of parameters come rich and varied studies. In monochrome and candy-colored palettes, some of the glass rods are clearly identifiable, others begin to break down into vibrating woven patterns and further into geometric abstractions, and still others are stretched and warped into melting psychedelic planes. Pinkel found that layering the rods at increasingly perpendicular angles led to greater light refraction, bringing the final photograms closer to what she describes as visual music. The *Folded Paper Pieces* are lushly textured trompe l'oeil, pictures that Pinkel calls "time-space paradoxes," two dimensional representations of the paper as a three dimensional form. When the artist flashes the dimensionalized folded paper with light, planes of paper are exposed to varying degrees, giving the final image its dramatic shading and sense of volume. But developing the print itself requires flattening the sculpture back into a two-dimensional sheet that now holds an image of its own prior form. Distilling her process to the very essentials of photography allows Pinkel to work precisely at the intersection of the medium's double nature. It reproduces vision and has an endless capacity to defamiliarize it.

Sheila Pinkel was born in 1941 in Newport News, Virginia. She holds an MFA from UCLA, where she studied with Robert Heineken, and from 1986 to 2012 she was Professor of Art at Pomona College. Over the course of her 40-year career, Pinkel has created a strikingly diverse body of work that encompasses experimental light studies, documentary photography, social and political critique, and public art. Pinkel's variegated practice is conceptually driven by a desire to, in the artist's own words, "[make] visible the invisible in nature and in culture." Pinkel's work has been exhibited extensively since the late 1970s—most recently in the group exhibition "Heavenly Bodies" (2014) at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art—and is held in the collections of numerous museums, including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Art Institute of Chicago; The Santa Barbara Museum of Art; and the Musée National d'Art Moderne – Centre Pompidou, Paris. Pinkel lives and works in Los Angeles.

For more information please contact Patrick Lloyd at 212.249.6100.