

## NEWS RELEASE

Exhibition: Charles Swedlund, *Buy Photographs - Not Gold! and Other Works, 1970–1975*

Dates: September 2 – October 3, 2015

Opening: Wednesday, September 2, 6 – 8pm

Higher Pictures presents *Buy Photographs - Not Gold! and Other Works, 1970–1975*, featuring a selection of unique and editioned photo-objects, toys, and games by Charles Swedlund.

In the 1950s, Swedlund was a student of the legendary photography faculty at Chicago's Institute of Design led by Harry Callahan and Aaron Siskind, a lineage clearly evident in a fifty-year oeuvre that comprises in-camera multiple exposures, ethereal nudes, abstracted object and surface studies, and delirious experiments in color processing, all characterized by virtuosic technical precision. A signature of his work from the early 1970s is the playful and humorous exploration of photography's documentary, conceptual, and didactic possibilities. These were years of making unexpected pieces—flip books, thaumatropes, puzzles, matchbooks, stickers, buttons, coins, and 'gumballs'—that celebrate photography's mutability and its accessibility and infinite popularity. Swedlund's is a generous, collaborative gesture: many of the works on view require the participation of the viewer/user/recipient in the art to resolve an image or otherwise complete the experience.

Set the flip-book *My Wife is Pregnant* (1971) into motion and see one complete 360-degree rotation of his wife Elizabeth's pregnant silhouette. Open the matchbook *Pyro (Burn)* (1973): a note inside suggests that the matches aren't for lighting cigarettes but for burning the edges of the piece itself. *Photographic Gumball Machine* (1973) dispenses wooden "gumballs," each featuring a different part of a nude figure; barter and trade for your favorites. Arrange the 49 small photo cubes and resulting 295 different image surfaces in *Photographic Cube Puzzle* (1974) into six discrete photographs. Press *PRESS Photograph* (1974) to hear a baby squeak and a picture purr.

Charles Swedlund was born in Chicago in 1935 and earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees in photography from the iconic Institute of Design (ID) at the Illinois Institute of Technology. A dedicated instructor, Swedlund taught photography at Southern Illinois University from 1971 until his retirement in 2000. His work is held in the collections of numerous institutions, including the Art Institute of Chicago; the Center for Creative Photography; and the J. Paul Getty Museum. Swedlund lives and works in southern Illinois.

For more information please contact Patrick Lloyd at 212-249-6100.