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"PHOTOGRAPHS RECENTLY MADE BY VERA LUTTER USING CENTURIES-OLD TECHNOLOGY "

ON VIEW AT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY,
COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO

MARCH 22 THROUGH JUNE 15, 2002

Drawing on centuries-old knowledge of the camera obscura -in which light passes through a tiny aperture in a darkened chamber, producing an inverted image on the opposite surface plane -Vera Lutter (Germany, born 1960) has created large-scale, reversed negative images of Chicago. The eerie, unmediated cityscapes devoid of people and cars and with dark skies and light shadows will be on view for the first time at The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College Chicago, March 22 through June 15, 2002.

Each image was created in an enclosed space, usually a room in a hotel or office building, facing the view to be photographed. The room was darkened totally, except for a small hole in the window, and large-scale photographic paper was adhered to the far wall. Lutter then allowed the light to pass through the pinhole to expose the image for up to twelve hours.

Lutter was commissioned by The Museum of Contemporary Photography to work in downtown Chicago for six weeks during October and November 2001. Discussing the commission, Sarah Anne McNear, director of The Museum of Contemporary Photography, said, "Chicago has been a favorite subject of photographers who are drawn to its dramatic siting along Lake Michigan, its tradition of innovative architecture, and its vibrant urban center. However, Lutter's work is distinct among this group. Her choice of camera placement and the processes inherent in the use of the camera obscura creates images unlike any others."

The use of a room-sized camera obscura requires Lutter to occupy each location for up to a week in order to darken the room, test the camera, and make final exposures. Camera space was provided by The Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands; A.G. Edwards & Sons, Inc.; R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company; and LaSalle Bank, N.A., a member of the ABN-AMRO group of banks.

Currently a New York resident, Lutter studied art at the Munich Academy and photography at the School of the Visual Arts in New York. Her photographs have been exhibited at the Dia Foundation, New York; the Kunsthalle, Basel; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the Whitney Museum of Art, New York. Her photographs are in the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of Art, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among others.

Guest curator Elizabeth Siegel supervised the commission, the residency, and the organization of the exhibition of final works. Siegel is the assistant curator of photography at The Art Institute of Chicago, where she is currently coordinating the exhibition "Taken by Design: Photographs from the Institute of Design, 1937 -1971." She has organized exhibitions at the Art Institute and at the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art in Chicago and is nearing completion of her Ph.D. in art history at the University of Chicago.

The opening reception will be held Thursday, March 21 from 5:00 until 7:00 pm in the galleries of The Museum of Contemporary Photography. It is free and open to all. During the reception Lutter will discuss the photographs and her techniques.

This exhibition is partially sponsored by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts. This ongoing series of exhibitions is principally sponsored by American Airlines, the official airlines of The Museum of Contemporary Photography.

The museum is free and open to the public weekdays from 10:00 am until 5:00 pm (Thursdays until 8:00 pm) and Saturdays from 12:00 to 5:00 pm. It is located at 600 S. Michigan Avenue across from Grant Park. Phone 312.663.5554 for additional information. To contact the museum on the worldwide web, go to www.mocp.org.