

FIFTY ONE

FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY

Michael Wolf
“*The Transparent City*”

March 20 – April 25 2009
Opening: March 19, 18-21h

Fifty One Fine Art Photography is pleased to present **Michael Wolf’s** new solo exhibition, ***The Transparent City***.

In 2005, when Michael Wolf visited **Chicago** for the first time during his trainride from the airport, he noticed almost immediately the experimental and unique buildings of many different styles. This would be his inspiration for the series *The Transparent City*. As artist-in-residence for the high-powered commercial real estate firm in Chicago, he was given access to numerous rooftops, where he set up his camera and long lens to capture images of humanity stacked in architectural rows and columns.

While other photographers focus on glorifying Chicago’s unique architecture, Wolf concentrates on the city more abstractly: less on the individual structures and more on the contradictions between the architectural styles. His photographs of Chicago look through the multiple layers of glass to reveal the social constructs of living and working in an urban environment.

Michael Wolf (°1954) was born in Munich, but at a young age he moved to North America. After college at Berkeley University in California, he attended the Folkwangschule in Essen, Germany, where he graduated as a photojournalist. The first 16 years of his career he worked as an editorial photographer for several German magazines like GEO, Time, Spiegel and Stern.

However, he began to desire a more personal artistic vision and presumed he had to get out of Germany to find it. He decided therefore to move to Hong Kong, China, where he could develop his visual diversity. It was here that Wolf found his artistic voice and left his career as an editorial photographer behind.

In an attempt to visualize the dense life in Hong Kong, Wolf examined the endless ranks of nearly identical residential housing complexes. Creating a distinctive style of photography, he photographed the high-rise buildings close together from opposing buildings. By doing this, he gained a direct vantage point that allowed him to remove the sky and to flatten the space to a relentless abstraction of urban expansion with no escape for the viewer’s eye. This is a technique he also applied in his Chicago photographs.

The Transparent City is Wolf’s first body of work to address an American city. Bringing his unique perspective on changing urban environments to a city renowned for its architectural legacy, Wolf chose to photograph the central downtown area, focussing specifically on issues of voyeurism and the contemporary urban landscape in flux.