



General statement

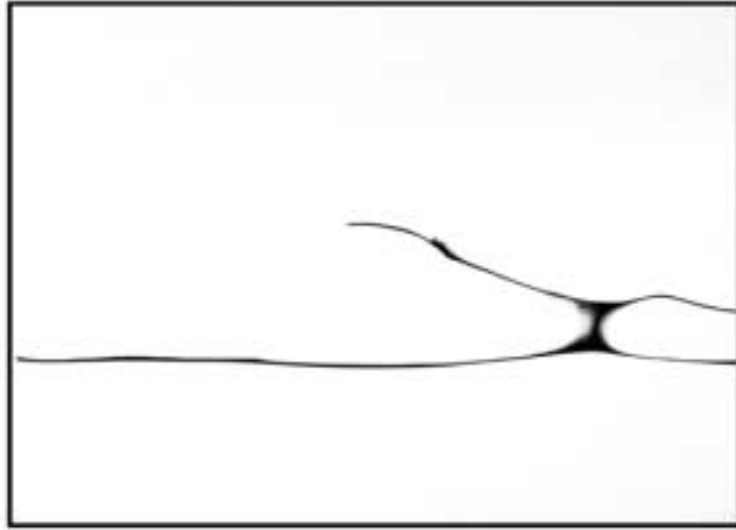
The issues in my work are often of similar nature with an abstract edge. Though I build on past experience, I attempt to eradicate previous habits of seeing and thinking. I keep searching for what is visually new to me while always hoping that a fusion of form and content will take place.

Barbara Crane, 2002



FLESHY FUNGI

Though these images were done in 1989-90, I first began this particular visual search in 1982. For eight years I primarily exposed the front object by moving in very close to it, using an extreme wide angle lens in order to exaggerate and enlarge it so that it dominated the image area while the area behind it became miniaturized. In this way, I intended to change the reality of a microcosmic world.



**Barbara Crane: Human Forms,
1965/66
revised 7/15/2002**

These images are taken from a body of work done for a Master's Degree in Photography at the Institute of Design at Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. The famous Bauhaus School from Weimar, Germany became what is now the Institute of Design in Chicago when it was moved to the United States in 1937. The photographic section of my graduate thesis consisted of ninety pictures which is rather large for such a project. Because I had never explored the concepts included in the School's undergraduate curriculum, I immersed myself in exploring the assignments in depth at a graduate level in order to better understand the philosophy of the School.

For years I had only used a twin-lens reflex camera but I wanted to learn how to use a 4x5 view camera for the project. This also expanded my technical knowledge for my teaching position in photography. The view camera brought new insights to my work because of the precision and versatility inherent with the use of large format equipment.

My interests were in issues of form, light, line, volume, and visual discovery with a heavy emphasis on

experimentation. Each situation required adjustments due to the model, lighting, my past photographic experiences, and my technical development at that specific time. I began with my children as models with an agreement between us that their faces would not be recognizable. Which allowed me to become more abstract in my vision.

Originally, I continued using my old twin lens reflex camera enabling me to have more concentration by using just one camera with the addition of a supplementary close-up lens. Abstraction of my subject matter became more accessible by virtue of a close-up position. When I changed to a 4x5 camera I learned to make use of my many technical mistakes thereby opening exciting new ideas. I was not seeking the type of realism that many people recognize as essential in photographing the nude body. My cause was form, elements of composition, and a transcending of obvious realism. In using light to control and delineate the body rather than illuminate the form, I found new freedom of concept. Due to a fellow student's insistence that cropping a negative was not Apure® photography, I developed the discipline of composing the final image on the ground glass or in a view finder so that no changes needed to be made to the images while I was enlarging them in the darkroom.

In the black background pictures I was seeking to obtain a fine line of the body form in various simple positions as if painting with a small brush coated with Alight® against a deep black background. Because of tonal gradations and shadows some of these pictures lend an illusion of floating in dark space. Others, with fewer modulations and stronger chiaroscuro, are almost two-dimensional.

I titled the white background series as the AFine Line of Form®. It was as if my Abrush® were a fine one coated with Ablack® pigment. Theory being that the fine black line of the shadow would rhythmically delineate the body in the white space as if it were a drawing. In these images delicacy of line was important and was to be found in the creases of the body or under it. From this group of pictures a new purpose evolved in the synthesis of reality and abstraction and they were a turning point in my vision and in my entire future body of work. With this awakening, along with a continuous search and steady growth in image making, came a desire for exploring new ways of expression. My technical improvement and growing visualization abilities nurtured new ideas and the human body became a limitless subject matter. My driving force was a

sense of discovery both within myself and on the ground glass. Each picture widened my image concepts and ideas while the accidental or technically imperfect pictures became cherished ones by opening new doors.

In the use of multiple exposure I was able to transform the human body from how I had been used to seeing it. The multiple exposures play with reality, sometimes leaving it raw, complicating it, enhancing it, making it absurd, grotesque, or lyrical. With the camera's powers of both truth and deception, and with a view camera's accessibility I was enabled to place manipulations inside the camera. Multiple exposures produced new symbols thereby opening more new paths to follow. The human form with its infinite varieties, shapes, tones, creases, elasticity, complexity and simplicity served only as the occasion or reason for making a photograph. I found that the body could suggest images unrelated to the Aflesh@.

I had discovered that defining the figure by means of light and/or a light void as if one quick gesturing stroke of a fine or broad brush coated with Adark@ or Alight@ became enough to communicate a message. Employing either a black or a white background determined whether the shadow or the highlight would dominate the form. I had come to understand that light and its counterpart, darkness, were the prime keys to my success in pictures of all kinds.

Barbara Crane

6/1966, revised 7/15/02



Artist Statement in Reference to Polaroid Usage

I like to use Polaroid materials because I can immediately see if I have captured in a print what I was searching for while taking pictures. At the same time, I can get new ideas from a mistake or an unexpected visual happening by seeing my results quickly.

I work impulsively and the quick feedback of the instant picture is in tune with this energetic style of photographing. This immediacy of result shortens the time it would take my ideas to grow visually, technically and emotionally. What takes a summer of work with Polaroid materials would take three years of picture taking and darkroom time to bring my ideas to fruition.

My unattainable goal in photography is to make the ultimate image; the Polaroid print is as fine an end product as any of the materials I use. They are all tools for expressing the specific ideas that I pursue. Any picture done well transcends its technology and is a wonder in itself.

Barbara Crane



**Barbara Crane, Project
Description: *Taste of Chicago*,
June 23-July 4, 2000**

I photograph during Taste of Chicago because of the vast cross-section of people attending Chicago=s

biggest festival. I need jubilant and densely packed crowds which enables me to photograph with the camera very close to them. The results are a picture that has every inch of the picture area filled with layers of people and parts of their bodies. This in turn creates excitement and chaos in a chosen yet random way.



NATURES MORTES

Nature is complex with many choices to be made in traversing through its terrain which reveals remnants of the cycles of nature and life itself. Year after year I observe the inevitable effect of the passage of time on the natural world that always reminds me that all life is temporary. During my many visits to a particular place near the small towns of Coloma and Covert in Southwestern Michigan, I wander the woods and beaches as a witness to the persistent “little deaths” that occur there whether or not I’m there to observe them. Trees shed their leaves, hornets abandon their nests, birds mistake a reflection in a window for the sky during their migratory travels and the lake delivers beautifully weathered sticks to the beach. I am compelled to claim and photograph these “gifts” from the environment in an effort to acknowledge the

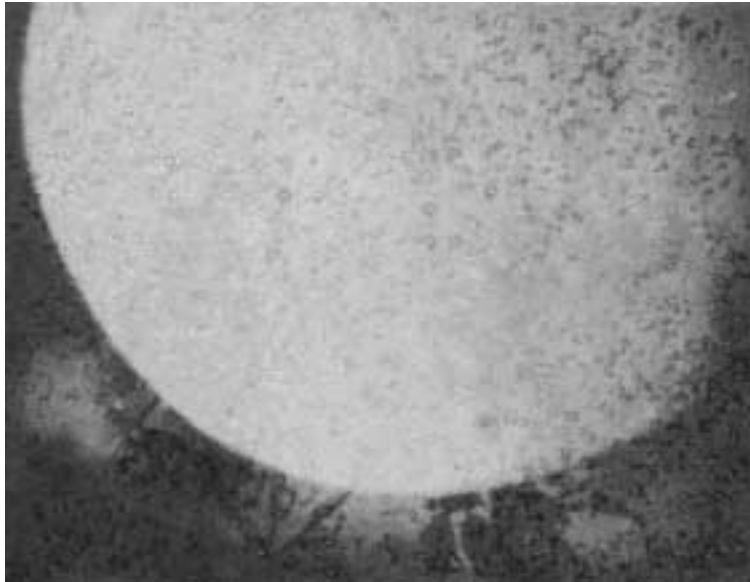
somber beauty and human metaphor in their ordinary deaths. They help me to come to terms with understanding the relationship between denial and acceptance of my own mortality.

I have always been attracted to found objects and in 1982 began to photograph the weathered, mutilated, and often destroyed objects I had begun to collect and hang all over my kitchen wall. A run over tin can or discarded child's hairbrush, flattened and distorted over time, once observed and absorbed became strangely familiar and emblematic of the cycles of life in the city. In their transformation these objects take on a formal beauty that is haunted with transience. This body of work, titled *Objet Trouvé*, embodies the suggestion of human evolution and human fatalities.

In my new work, *Still Lives: Natures Mortes*, found natural objects, caught in the process of decay and change, are isolated and photographed minimally on a black background. This direct, confrontational approach prioritizes and dignifies the subject while at the same time establishes an unavoidable clarity. The extremely large scale of the objects in the final images emphasizes a "hyper-reality". This forces the viewer to inspect the magnified details of the subject while engaging in the intrinsic dialogue between description and transformation. The fixed gestures of the dead animals have human references and reinforce my desire to come to terms with the vulnerabilities of my life. These iconic images are tangible, if somewhat fatalistic, emblems of an uneasy preoccupation with the inevitability of death.

Barbara Crane
2003 .

Barbara Crane, 2003

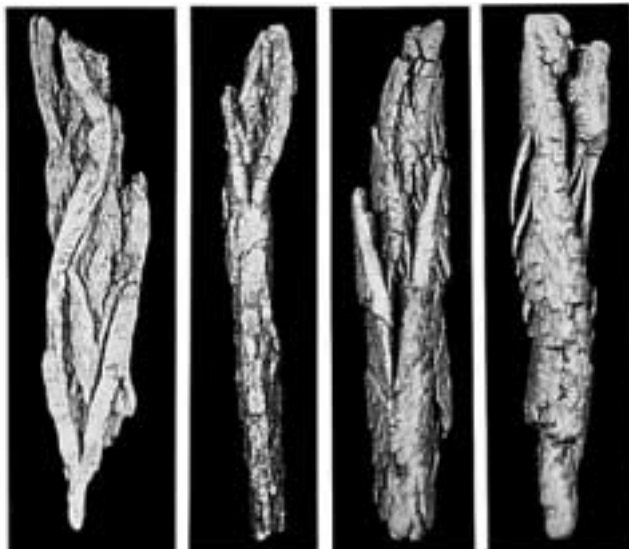


Visions of Enarc II

I have made these pictures by printing Polachrome 35 mm slides on Polacolor 2 print material. The print (at an early stage in its development) is then transferred to 100% rag paper. I have altered the colors in the pictures to emphasize a particular feeling or desired impact. Each picture becomes unique both due to the unpredictability of the process and my individualized application of color.

The imagery reveals a natural world that I have twisted, thereby producing an alternative world simultaneously surreal, ominous, and romantic. My aim is to transcend mere replication by approaching my subject in a visually and tonally aggressive manner.

Barbara Crane, 1993



Coloma to Covert sticks

My intention with this body of work is to convey unadorned simplicity. Divorced from their natural environment, floating in blackness, these sticks are studies in severity striving for Zen-like balance. The photographs attempt to capture the essence of each stick: to examine its form, skin, and the space it occupies. They beg the viewer to scrutinize the details. By utilizing even lighting, a stark and clinical aspect is imparted to these pictures. This, in turn, is meant to stoically operate on the emotions of the viewer while the narrow format deliberately emphasizes the linear nature of each stick. In looking closely at these restrained images, the viewer is allowed to see the distinct and individual temperaments emerge: voluptuous, virile, withdrawn, playful, tense, sensuous, lyrical.

Barbara Crane

October 1999



"Wipe Outs" 1986

Since 1982, I have been exposing the front object with flash, moving in close, using an extreme wide angle lens, very often looking for overt and subtle displays of affection - touching, kissing and other aspects of human contact. These acts on the one hand seem saccharin, on the other, compassionate in a dispassionate world. I assault these acts in a visually and tonally aggressive manner in order to gain an emotional and intellectual dichotomy - an

uncanny tension I construct to reach and disturb the viewer.

The surface grit of the image, the imperfections, the disorganized raster lines lend visual static to the physical and emotional content of the picture. I derive an additional emotional state through wiping-out a human being's individuality by eliminating skin tone and details in the foreground while the background interprets the world in normal size and tonality creating an illusion of "real life." Yet the subjects do have autonomy in their changes of position during the lapsed time between my decision to photograph and pressing the shutter release. The difference between what I saw and what I photographed is a gift of a missed moment.

Barbara Crane

June 1987



Chance

Many of my photographic ideas have grown both visually and technically from mistakes, chance or accident, or from a gift of the subject matter itself. When such unpredictable pictures appear, I try to harness the visual episode by taking pictures that will allow the new experience to happen with intent.

Barbara Crane, 1992.



Coloma to Covert Scrolls

The Coloma to Covert Scrolls reflect my longtime interest in Asian art, but specifically scrolls, horizontal and vertical as well as long and short in size. Some of my scrolls are comprised of Polaroid transfers, while others are made from multiple 8" x 10" negatives contact printed on rolls of paper. I print these myself with the aid of an assistant as the process is both cumbersome and physically demanding. As today's world continues to become more high-tech, I find my primitive, slow, and nearly archaic method of production suits the meditative tone of these images.

I have always found inspiration in the formal and sequential elements present in Chinese and Japanese painting. My scrolls, in their rhythmic, also reflect my interest in Haiku poetry. There is a stringent paring down found in both these forms which is a discipline I have endeavored to incorporate in my own work.

Over the years I have manipulated particular formal issues with various processes. This has enabled me to explore an idea utilizing different subject matters and techniques to see how the emotional and physical quality of the image changes. The underlying concepts remain constant, as depicted in the silver gelatin prints and the Polaroid transfer scrolls in the Coloma to Covert series.

Barbara Crane
1995



Chicago Loop Series

These large and small photographs were made with a 5"x7" view camera. They are an outgrowth of my work for the Chicago Epic mural. While photographing for that skyline project, I became increasingly sensitive to the miraculous relationships in juxtaposed sections of old and new buildings. I was entranced by the random layers of textures, tones and planes, all adding up to an explosion of visual excitement only comprehended when I had time to look carefully and was not rushing by car, bus or train on the way to some appointment in or around the Chicago Loop.

Barbara Crane
1978

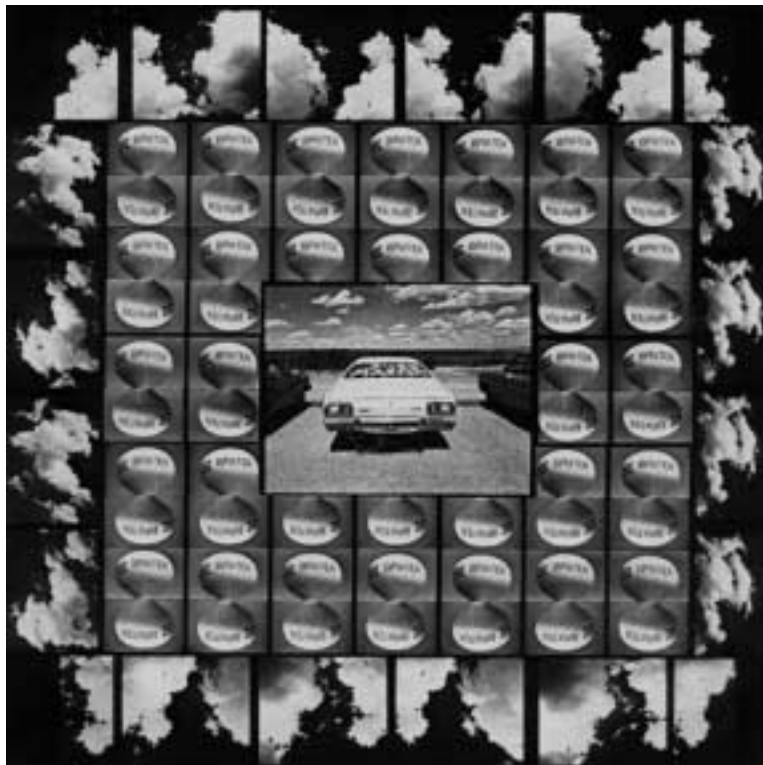
Murals for Baxter/ Travenol Labs

These photographic murals, created during 1975 and early 1976, were commissioned by Baxter/Travenol Laboratories for their corporate headquarters building in Deerfield, Illinois.

Those exhibited here both as 16x20 inch prints and shown on the walls in the small prints were installed throughout the building as murals 8x8 feet or 7x9 feet

in size. There are twenty-six different murals, eighteen of which were to be of Baxter/Travenol products and activities and the remaining pieces subject of my own choice.

These large photomurals are to be seen from up close, where extreme enlargement would involve esthetic difficulties with textures and grain, so I devised a modular system of lively variations, somewhat based on proofsheets, using multiple smaller enlargements to decorate a large surface.



Barbara Crane
1978