



**ARTIST**

John Banasiak

**TITLE**

Untitled, from the series 'Chicago Night'

**DATE**

1976

**DIMENSIONS**

8.75 in H x 12 in W

**MEDIUM**

Gelatin Silver Print

**CATALOGUE NUMBER**

1977.066

**CURRENT LOCATION**

1114-4B

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**JOHN BANASIAK**

**BORN**

1950

**BIRTHPLACE**

Blue Island, IL

**GENDER**

Male

**CITIZENSHIP**

United States

**CULTURAL HERITAGE**

European-American

**LIGHT WORK RELATIONSHIP**

Artist-in-Residence, 1977

Lecturer, 1977

Light Work Retrospective Exhibition, 1985

**LIGHT WORK PUBLICATIONS**

Contact Sheet 1  
Contact Sheet 75/76  
Contact Sheet 97

## **BIOGRAPHY**

I was born and raised on the south side of Chicago, and attend public schools through the 1950s and 1960s. I received scholarships and teaching assistantships at the Art Institute of Chicago, and the University of Chicago, where I received both my Graduate and Undergraduate degrees in 1975 and 1972. After teaching for one year at New York State University in Oswego, and spending a year as a visiting artist at Auckland University and Christchurch University in New Zealand, I accepted a teaching position here at USD in 1980, and have taught here ever since.

## **ESSAYS**

I use photography as a sketchbook - a journal of images which describe moments of interest in my life - I usually don't go 'out' to take pictures - I am out to live - I don't particularly like carrying a camera or bringing it into moments of silence - It is a machine - and it sometimes interrupts feelings that flow peacefully from me to people I'm with - but I feel a need sometimes to record those moments and to compose them in a way that tunes into my feeling of what is going on at that time. When I focus in on images in front of me - I am just as much focusing in on myself - and as I later look back to those images I get another perspective of where I am coming from and consequently where I am presently.' John Banasiak, 1976 I am interested in Photography as a personally expressive and creative medium. I have been using it as my own artistic language and medium since 1969, and have been teaching it since 1971. I feel that I am a tenacious teacher. I stay with my students for as long as they need me. Teaching the mechanics, and technical processes and operations of the medium is woven into a larger and more significant fabric of personal design and emotional color. I am, in the end, more concerned about who my students are as human beings, than simply what they do. I strongly feel that an artist is not able to make a visual piece that is any more sensitive than they are as a human being. My classes are constructed with assignments, slides, and demonstrations that I feel have potential to open up new passages of growth and self understanding, but ideally I want my students to find, for themselves, personally significant themes and issues that may be wrapping their own lives, and I want them to try and invent and design a visual language that will personally present and interpret the meaning and significance that lies near the deepest roots of their lives. Why students learn, I feel, has much to do with the need for self understanding and the desire to grow. I try to provide a nurturing environment for this to take place. Photography's big challenge is to somehow infuse a personal and emotional truth into the camera's mechanical reflection of a physical truth. I make sure that my students know that what is physically there is important, but what else is there, metaphorically, or symbolically, could be something beyond the surface of understanding, and more within a stratum that reveals a more personal significance. From the website <http://www.usd.edu/faculty-and-staff/John-Banasiak>