

Photographer sets town to lights in exhibition

by Cara Glatt

The City of Chicago is never at a loss for things to do. The downtown area alone, still referred to as "The Loop," is

truly a visitor's paradise.

Shopping aside, it offers such tempting things as lunchtime movies, symphonic music, dramatic plays, plus architecture and art in all its many forms, both inside and out.

At this time the Daley Civic Center is featuring *My Chicago*, a photography exhibit by Karen I. Hirsch, featuring works she has created in the past 25 years of Chicago's people, places and events. As it happens, artist Hirsch has ties to our own Hyde Park Community. Her parents and sister both attended Hyde Park High School, and Karen went there for algebra while still in grammar school at O'Keefe. She then attended South Shore, the newly built neighboring high school. So you see she was never far from her South Side roots.

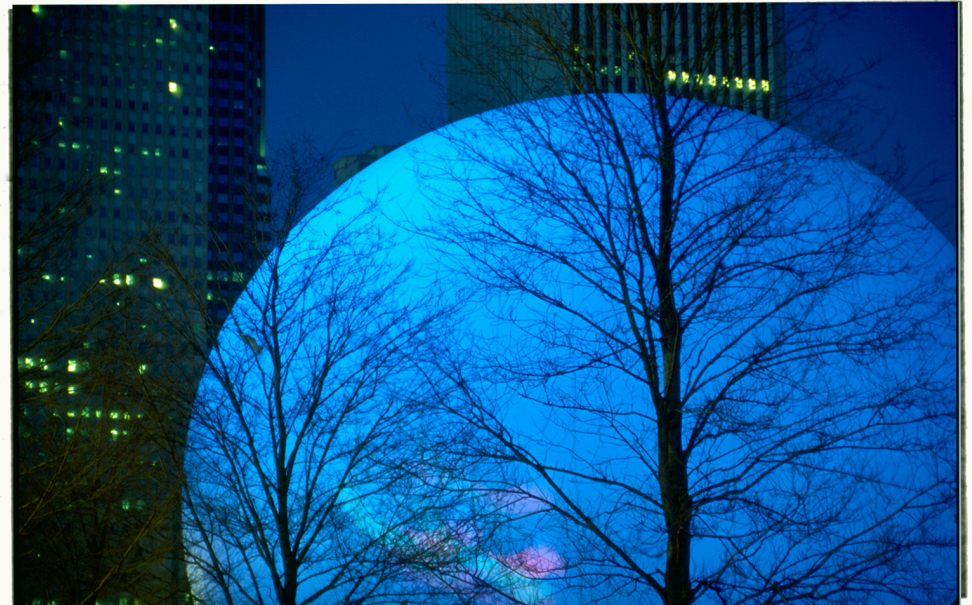
But getting back to her highly acclaimed photographs, they show a kind of evolution of techniques over the last 25 years. They begin with journalistic type photos, then go on to color photos, then digital photos, done on a computer. The exhibition also demonstrates how photography has changed and how this artist has adapted to the changes. Says Hirsch, "Now I can use my imagination to express my feelings. I have been very pleased with people's reaction to my show."

art review



The ribbon cutting of *My Chicago*. Photographer Karen Hirsch is in the center.

One of the exhibit themes is "The Four Seasons." Another is "Faces of Chicago" where Hirsch depicted famous and not so famous Chicagoans in different stages of life, from baby to toddler, to grandmother and granddaughter. People from various ethnic groups are also included. For many years, Hirsch was known primarily for her depictions of the great Chicago boat races. For the Millennium celebration, where two guests from every country in the world were invited, she photographed the vast empty



Millennium Park Dome, part of the *My Chicago* exhibit.

dining room at McCormick place before the guests arrived. Glass sculptor Dale Chihuly was also there, checking his chandeliers, put together with the help of students from Gallery 37. Hirsch also leads a yearly Holiday walk. This year it was to Millennium Park where she photographed the ice rink and the Columns. Although it was before her time, she divulged that the Columns used to be there in 1937. As luck would have it, I happened to view Hirsch's exhibit at the time of the St. Patrick Day's

festivities. On stage were young ladies, starting at about age 8, wearing gorgeous costumes of many colors, made for them in Ireland. They were followed by a large chorus of men and women. All in all, it was a wonderful afternoon in Chicago. *My Chicago, Photography Exhibition*, by Karen I. Hirsch is presented by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. It continues through March 31. The Daley Civic Center is at 50 W. Washington St. Open Monday to Friday, 7am to 5:30pm. Admission is free.