Bruce Silverstein is pleased to present Keith A. Smith: The Postcards, 1965-Present, the first exhibition dedicated to the artist's hand-made cards created over the last five decades. Following Book by Book (2011), and The Fabric Works 1964-1980 (2015), this exhibition is the third presentation of this acclaimed artist's work to be held at the gallery.

World-renowned for his innovative book making practice and lifelong interest in experimenting with new materials and processes, Smith has been thoughtfully creating these personalized cards as a way of remaining in touch ever since he was in school. These multi-layered works, rendered in small-scale are often created on postcard stock, using photographic negatives and prints, incorporating delicately-applied postage stamps and hand-sewn envelopes. Coming directly out of his archive, these intimate objects were meticulously crafted employing the various techniques used throughout Smith’s work—collage, hand coloring, and machine sewing. Many also revisit images from his prints, photographs and the pages of his books. Yet unlike the artist's hand-bound books or works on fabric, these postcards were made as a special means of conveying and maintaining friendship. Sending such hand-made cards is his way of staying connected—through a few words and a picture, much as an e-mail today.

Since his days in university, Smith opted to make these postcards typically 5 x 7 inches, approximately the size of his own hand, as he saw them as a way of touching people.

"For over 50 years, I have made postcards of text, of pictures, and text with pictures. Traditional prints can say some things, books can speak through movement, and postcards have their unique abilities to reach people as well. I don’t think of any of these as “art” but as my voice."

Keith A. Smith, 2017

Smith’s life-long pursuit of hand-crafting and sending his postcards out into the world shares a sensibility with the tradition of mail art exemplified by groundbreaking Pop artist Ray Johnson. Johnson championed mail art as a viable form of artistic expression, merging his identity with his community by producing and disseminating art through mail. With similar intent as Smith, Aaron Siskind was also known to send small mounted gelatin silver prints every holiday season to friends and family. While postcards may have become a lost form of communication for many in the digital age, for Smith, there is something quite special weaved through these precious pieces, something worth sharing and reflecting upon, several decades later.

Keith A. Smith’s work is in the collections of leading international public and private collections, including the Art Institute of Chicago; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Morgan Library, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Museum of Modern Art, New York; The New York Public Library; The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.