

## Cave Art Continuum: 2009 – present

*Cave Art Continuum* is an analogue photography project of abstract patterns and manmade notations found within obscure, cave-like brick and steel flame trenches located beneath 1960's era launchpads. My documentation explores the metaphysical connection between pre-historic human expression created on the walls of fire-lit caves with space age surfaces transfigured by rocket-powered fire.

With more than several decades of exceptional access into NASA's Kennedy Space Center, I have been photographing long-term stories on human and robotic spaceflight. During this time, I became fascinated with the restricted launch pad infrastructures whose massive, weather-worn steel structures dot along its costal wildlife landscape like Richard Serra and Alexander Calder sculptures.

Abstracting these cave-like spaces devoid of scale, I have, over repeated visits, visually explored these hidden, multi-storied, highly scorched flame trench surfaces that were created from the cumulative mix of exhaust fire, sun-like heat, water and steam from more than a half century of rocket launchings.

### Time and Distance.

Save for a slight sea breeze and the occasional kee-yah sounds from sea gulls, I experience mystery, memory and loss while documenting these imperfect, frozen-in-the-moment layers of metamorphosed surfaces. Charred and rusting, surfaces created during the Apollo Moon and Space Shuttle eras. Cave-like surfaces that I realized represent the unintended signatures from the machines that had first begun transporting humans and their tools off these earthly cement and steel gateways into the time and distance of our solar system.

Within one of these flame trenches were imperfectly shaped  $\square$   $\circ$   $+$   $^{\circ\circ}$   $*$  ... spray painted by engineers in ocher, black and white to designate fractured surfaces. Contextually, they were nearly identical to the color schemes and geometric markings either drawn or painted by early humans more than 40,000 years ago at Paleolithic sites like Lascaux, Chauvet, and El Castillo in Europe, and the Blombos Cave on the southern coast of South Africa.

Unfortunately, one of the Apollo era flame trenches was demolished for reasons having less to do with historical memory and more to do with commercial space pragmatism. As a result, some of my images are the only representation from an inspirational source that no longer exists. It's as though a "Lascaux" of the space age had been unintentionally created, accidentally discovered, and then just vanished.

### Transcendence?

These images, ideally exhibited large scale on mural size prints, would I hope, both challenge and humble the viewer by connecting to the significance of our Earthly human cave art past with the mysteries of space — the planets, moons, asteroids, and the seemingly infinite universe.

Meanwhile, I continue photographically exploring these ideas within the hidden, altered surfaces beneath recently constructed and older launch pads. Among them is another former Apollo era pad that has been repurposed into a 21<sup>st</sup> century gateway. A departure point of surfaces that has begun to be scorched with the signatures from the fire of modern-era machines that are lofting humans off Earth to explore the moon's billions-of-years-old surfaces of craters, hills, and caves ...