

## Cave Art Continuum: 2009 - present

I am a documentary photographer who explores obscure locations, objects and micro cultures, confounding representation through abstraction to explore shape, form, meaning and memory.

One of my long-term projects, *Cave Art Continuum* is a meditation on the transcendence of time in context to the hidden surfaces and symbols photographically explored under 1960's era launchpads.

Far from public access at NASA's Kennedy Space Center, restricted launch pad infrastructures dot along a costal beach and natural wildlife landscape as though they were Richard Serra sculptures. Never contemplated for historic or philosophical meaning other than for their launch functionality, I secured access to explore and photograph within these obscure, cave-like, brick and steel flame trenches. As a result, the travel, weather, security and photographic logistics required careful planning and patience.

Intended to be displayed as mural size giclee prints, these medium format analogue film images explore the imperfect, frozen in the moment layers of charred, rusting, metamorphosed surfaces etched from the cumulative mix of exhaust fire, sun-like heat, water and weather from over a half century of rocket launchings. Surfaces that I felt represented evidence of the unintended signatures from the machines that had first begun transporting a few humans and their tools off these earthly cement and steel gateways into the time and distance of the universe.

As the photography of these surfaces evolved, the images became more devoid of scale like those close-up images made by probes photographing our solar system's planets and moons.

These surfaces also evoked a sense of time and distance between our pre-historic past and contemporary present. From an era in time when humans had expressed themselves on the stone surfaces of fire-lit caves to tens of thousands of years later to surfaces transfigured by man-made fire and the unexpected discovery of hand-painted symbols.

In one of these launch pad trenches were imperfect, prehistoric like  $\square + \bigcirc \cap \square$  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.

When I learned this flame trench was going to be demolished and replaced, I experienced loss knowing that the fleeting shadows from the Saturn-Apollo and the Space Shuttle era would be gone. It's as though a "Lascaux" of the space age had been unintentionally created, discovered ... and then vanished.

More than a decade later, I continue exploring these contexts by photographing the altered surfaces under another modernized 1960's era launch pad, now a 21<sup>st</sup> century gateway for humans and their tools leaving Earth on SLS Orion to explore the moon's surface and perhaps habitate in some of its yet undiscovered lava tube caves.

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[michael@soluri.com](mailto:michael@soluri.com)