

Cave Art Continuum: 2009 – present

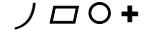
My photography visually explores obscure locations, objects and micro work cultures usually within the not-so-obvious realms of human space exploration. One of several conceptual projects, *Cave Art Continuum* is a meditation on the transcendence of time between the hidden surfaces and symbols photographed beneath 1960's era launchpads and the visual similarities revealed from pre-historic caves.

Far from public access at NASA's Kennedy Space Center, I became fascinated with the restricted launch pad infrastructures that dot along a coastal wildlife landscape like Richard Serra sculptures. Never contemplated for historic or philosophical meaning other than for their launch functionalities, I began — with rare access — to explore and photograph within the obscure, cave-like, brick and steel flame trenches.

There, I experienced a profound connection with the imperfect, mysterious, frozen-in-the-moment layers of charred, rusting, metamorphosed surfaces from the Apollo Moon and Space Shuttle eras. But, being surrounded by these imperfect etched surfaces, I sought meaning from the cumulative mix of exhaust fire, sun-like heat, water and weather from over a half century of rocket launchings into space?

Save for the kee-yah sounds from sea gulls, photographing within these multi-storied, highly scorched surfaces (with an analogue camera and film), a sense of the metaphysical framed my exploration: these surfaces represented the unintended signatures of the machines that had first begun transporting space probes, humans and their tools from these earthly cement and steel gateways into the time, distance and wonder of our solar system.

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

Within one of those flame trenches were imperfectly shaped  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.

Transcendence.

The historic flame trench I had been photographing was going to be demolished for reasons having less to do with preservation and more to do with engineering pragmatism. Although there would be these photographs, there would be the physical loss of the signed surfaces. It's as though a "Lascaux" of the space age had been unintentionally created, accidentally discovered, then otherwise destroyed.

I continue exploring time and distance connections by photographing the altered, hidden surfaces beneath both modern and older launch pads. Among them is another former Apollo era pad that has been repurposed into a 21st century gateway. A departure point that has begun to be scorched with the signatures from the machines that are lofting robotic tools and humans off Earth who will explore, live and photograph their fleeting shadows on the moon's ancient surfaces.