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A Tale of Fire & Ice

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Beyond the realm of fantasy, Joan Myers' pictures depict the extraordinary impact of natural forces upon our planet

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Stromboli, one of the Aeolian Islands in Italy *Photography by Joan Myers*

Text Abby Schlageter



Fire and Ice
18 images

The Calbuco Volcano in Chile was a booming explosion which hit international news a few weeks ago, footage of ash-laden streets and boiling pink clouds putting Calbuco's power back on the map after decades of inactivity. Volcanic eruptions aren't quite as rare as they seem – right now there are likely to be about 20 volcanoes erupting around the world – but not all are as cinematic. Scientists think that three quarters of all eruptions happen under the ocean, along the mid-Atlantic ridge, as the dark sea-floor tip-toes apart.



Emerald Pool, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming *Photography by Joan Myers*

From the fiery to the frozen, cracking ice-sheets also trickle away with multiple big bangs, but are often surrounded by so much silence that no one hears. Ice is a large player on Earth, the Antarctic Ice Sheet alone covers an area larger than the U.S and Mexico combined, yet its hostile environment means no humans live in Antarctica permanently. Almost understandably, most of us can't comprehend the vast scales of ice that are out there and how our actions on other continents may be affecting these icy hinterlands.



A ringed seal in Croker Bay off the southern coast of Devon Island in the eastern high Arctic *Photography by Joan Myers*

In her latest book, **Fire and Ice**, photographer **Joan Myers** brings these forces closer as she documents the intimate life of the molten moving earth and melting icescapes. Often we are happily deluded, comfortable in the belief that land and ice sheets are solid and stable structures – yet as Myers shows, both can be reduced to frothy, flowing streams of mass, their melting point overcome as they meander to new territories.



Part of the Royal Gardens subdivision, Hawai'i *Photography by Joan Myers*

Myers has spent over thirty years of her life exploring the relationship between people and the land, so it is no coincidence that the most show-stopping images in the book are those that frame humans and animals in the midst of nature's shapeshifting. Tiny pink heads popping out of the sulphurous mud baths below Vulcano on Italy's Aeolian Islands become cartoon-like with the rocky mound towering over them. A white house in Hawaii is marooned, its struts precariously balanced on bubbling black lava floes that have crusted over everything around it, an unbelievable sight. A solitary seal glides through the mirror-like water beneath spiky blue icebergs in the high Arctic. Juxtaposing two of the earth's most profound forces, *Fire and Ice* is a beautiful reminder that from Indonesia, to the North Pole, from the Antarctic to Pompeii, the earth is an indomitable creaking mix of landscapes, crafted over glacial time, never sleeping for long.

Fire and Ice: Timescapes by Joan Myers is out now, published by Damiani.



Geothermal pool near the Blue Lagoon, Grindavik, Iceland *Photography by Joan Myers*

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