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Joan Myers: Fire and Ice, Timescapes



Author(s): Joan Myers

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Reviewed by: Richard Rivera

“will be a treasured volume for years to come.”

Joan Myers is a premier landscape photographer and documentarian whose remarkable images of the most remote geographical locations prove she is in full command of her photographic and writing skills.

Her amazing photographs such as the aerial view of the Hawaiian house that is sitting in caked-over black lava is outstanding. As is the image of dark blue shrouded nuns standing in the desolate steamy geothermal fields of Iceland, or the breathtaking view of a shadowed craggy precipice giving foreground to the vast and empty reddish volcanic crater of Haleakala on Mau'i, Hawaii.

Her description of photographing on the crater's rim of Mount Erebus, in Antarctica, and viewing the magma chamber of 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit through parting clouds is exhilarating and frightening. Her images transport you to forbidding icy landscapes where you can almost feel the grip of the wind chill. Myers' images let us glimpse those vast landscapes of the earth's surface with conditions so extreme that they are virtually uninhabitable.

The introduction of *Joan Myers: Fire and Ice, Timescapes* paints a vibrant picture of her twelve year process of working with the National Science Foundation, the Smithsonian, and a host of organizations that permitted her to travel to the far reaches of the planet to document such astounding vistas. There is also an insightful essay, "Traces of Time," by Kathleen Stewart Howe on Joan Myers' photography.

Myers has a painter's sensibility in her composition, ranging from documentary to the abstract, from recording the

devastation of an entire town under ash to the details of nature's process. The aesthetic of her color palette is a surprise of low contrast subtlety punctuated by colorful touches. Her images are crisp and highly detailed yet full of delicate tonalities. In conjunction with the skillful printing of Damiani they are a visual feast in which virtually every page contains an image that can only be described as exceptional, both in its photography and printing. They leave you shaking your head in disbelief that such vistas exist, and grateful that Myers has recorded them.

By documenting the unending ballet of dramatic volcanic eruptions, icebound landscapes, geothermal pools, sulphur plumes, basaltic lava plains, and high arctic walls of ice, Myers lays bare a marvelous poem of the Earth that is in continual rhythm of upheaval and change.

It is left unclear which photographic process or cameras Myers uses to work her magic in creating such images. It would have been a pleasure to obtain a glimpse of it.

Publisher Damiani has once again printed a book of extraordinary quality and depth in its nuanced color of powdery pastels, earth colors, and substantial darks for dynamic range that bring the images to life. The book is a large format 12 x 9.75 inches, gorgeously printed and beautifully bound. It will be a treasured

volume for years to come.

Richard Rivera is a native New Yorker who graduated from the School of Visual Arts in New York City. He has been an artist, designer, and writer in publishing, advertising, film, and illustration for over 30 years. Having begun as a painter his eclectic tastes range from visual arts to graphic novels and comics books to photography. He is also the publisher of Camera-Sense.com. His photographs are in the permanent collection of the Brooklyn Museum of Art. His forthcoming *Eagles of New York* is a photographic celebration of the eagle in the architecture and sculpture of New York City, the first of a planned series of large-scale art projects in major cities around the world.

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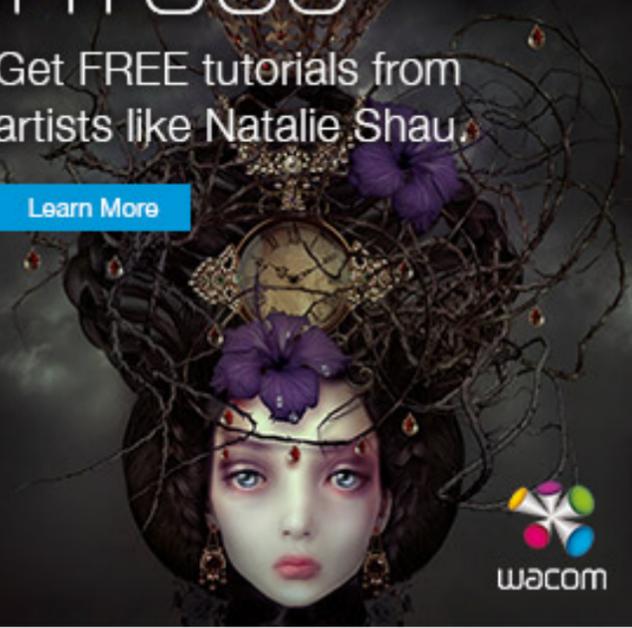
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