Photomural image by Richard Gordon

Bowen, May 18, 1980

Courtesy of the Bowen Family
Indigenous peoples along the Columbia River used the substance of adjacent volcanoes—particularly basalt, andesite, and obsidian—to create objects of great beauty for utilitarian, cultural, and aesthetic purposes. The extraordinary sculptures displayed here were made from various forms of basalt, the most common volcanic rock, which is formed by the rapid cooling of lava near the surface. These objects were selected from the collections of the Portland Art Museum to recognize the original inhabitants of our common landscape and the importance that Native peoples have long assigned to the many volcanoes in our area.
Lucinda Parker
American, born 1942
The Seething Saint, 2019
Acrylic on canvas
Courtesy of the Lucinda Parker & Russo Lee Gallery, L2019.105.1
ERUPTION

We woke to a boom.
Our bed shook, windows rattled.
From the bridge we beheld
A fierce column of ash and gassy debris. Back home, packing
Peanut butter snacks & our 3 year-old daughter, we sped to Sauvie Island
For a wild sight Northeast
Across the Columbia, transfixed
For hours while Abigail dug in sand.
A thousand feet of mountain
Shot off sky-high
Right before our eyes.

Back in '72 Steve & I climbed
Shoe-string glacier, southside.
Just short of summit we skirted
Exposed wingtips of a pre-WWII plane buried in ice.
Descending, we unroped,
Road our own butts down
Sitz-glissading,
Ice-axes athwart our knees
Boots heel first to break our slide
Scoping below to avoid drop offs.
Five hours up, 45 minutes down.
The Saint was one smooth mountain
Before the blast.

Lucinda Parker
January 2020
Ryan Molenkamp
American, born 1977

Vancouver! Vancouver! This is it!, 2017
Acrylic on panel
Courtesy of Linda Hodges Gallery, Seattle, L2019.90.1–3

I was three when Mount St. Helens blew, living well north of the blast in Lake Stevens, Washington. I remember visiting the area a couple of years later with my family and seeing everything pumice-grey, with all the fallen trees and mud-lines from the lahars on the trees that still stood. I wore out the Everett Herald’s short book *Mount St. Helens Erupts*, which had stories of victims and survivors alongside photos of the destruction. They were powerful images that stuck with me. These three paintings are inspired by the four time-lapse photos of the eruption taken by Vern Hodgson. The title of my paintings quotes the last transmission sent to the USGS office in Vancouver, Washington, by geologist David A. Johnston before he was overwhelmed by the blast.

These works are part of my series *Fear of Volcanoes*, which has a lot to do with the stubborn refusal of people to respect and pay attention to both our impact on the environment and how the environment is responding. If we don’t change, the destruction that Mount St. Helens caused will be nothing compared to what is in store for us.

—Ryan Molenkamp
Henry James Warre
British, 1819–1898

Mount St. Helen’s (Volcanic) from Settlement on Cowlitz [sic] River, September 1845
Watercolor on paper
American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts, L2019.41.1

Henry James Warre made the first known paintings of Mount St. Helens. The viewpoint for this watercolor sketch was the Cowlitz Farm, or Fort Cowlitz, an agricultural settlement of the Hudson’s Bay Company a few miles north of modern Toledo, Washington. It shows Mount St. Helens erupting steam and ash from a vent on the volcano’s north side, which was blown away in 1980.

Warre was a British spy, who was sent to the Pacific Northwest in 1845 to determine if a war could be won against the United States for the Oregon Territory. The dispute was settled with the signing of the Oregon Treaty of 1846.
Henry James Warre  
British, 1819–1898

Mount Coffin and Mount St. Helen’s (Volcanic) Columbia River, ca. 1845

Watercolor on paper

American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts, L2019.41.3

Warre visited Mount St. Helens near the end of an eruptive period that began in 1800 and ended in 1857. As this watercolor sketch demonstrates, he witnessed eruptions of steam and ash from a vent on the north side of the volcano.

The viewpoint is from present-day Longview, Washington. Mount Coffin is the promontory in the middle ground. It received this name from European explorers because it was a burial ground of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. Mount Coffin was leveled in 1929 so that its gravel could be used in constructing the port of Longview.
Paul Kane
Canadian, born Ireland, 1810–1871

Mount St. Helens as Seen From the Cowlitz Farm, March–April, 1847

Watercolor and graphite on paper

Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Gift of Raymon A. Willis in memory, Emmie à Court ("Chelsea"), daughter of Allan Cassels and granddaughter of the Honourable G.W. Allan, L2019.42.1

Kane created this sketch in the weeks after he made the watercolor at far left on March 26, 1847. While his first depiction of Mount St. Helens showed the volcano quiescent, this work shows an eruption from a vent on the north side. Once back in Toronto, Kane made the oil painting at left based on this study.
Paul Kane  
Canadian, born Ireland, 1810–1871  

The Cattle-putle [sic] River with Mount St. Helens in the Distance, March 26, 1847  

Watercolor and graphite on paper  
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Gift of Raymon A. Willis in memory of his mother, Emmie à Court (“Chelsea”), daughter of Allan Cassels and granddaughter of the Honourable G.W. Allan, L2019.42.2  

Paul Kane is well known for his depictions of Native Americans in Canada and the Pacific Northwest. He followed the tenets of salvage ethnography, a nineteenth-century movement that sought to record cultures thought to be threatened with extinction owing to colonialism.  

Kane visited the Pacific Northwest with the support of the Hudson’s Bay Company, whose main trading post was at Fort Vancouver. Kane set out from there on March 25, 1847, and traveled up the Cowlitz River by canoe. He made this watercolor sketch showing Mount St. Helens the following day. The volcano was quiescent at the time, but sometime in the next few weeks, he witnessed an eruption, as recorded in the sketch at far right.
Paul Kane  
Canadian, born Ireland, 1810–1871  

Mount St. Helens, 1849–1856  

Oil on canvas  
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Gift of Sir Edmund Osler, L2019.42.3  

Kane painted this work after he returned to Toronto from his travels in the Pacific Northwest. It was based on the sketch he made from life, on view at right. Although his pencil and watercolor studies were made in daylight, he created a nocturnal scene in this oil painting. This was inspired by the European tradition of depicting Mount Vesuvius erupting at night to accentuate the pyrotechnics. Kane knew such paintings from his travels in Europe from 1841 to 1843. An example of this type of painting, made about 1790 by Francesco Fidanza, is on view in the European Galleries upstairs.  

This is the most famous depiction of Mount St. Helens prior to 1980. It was last exhibited in Portland in 1971 at the Oregon Historical Society.
Rockwell spent his most of his career as a survey engineer and cartographer for the United States Coastal Survey, but he was also an accomplished artist. He was first sent to Oregon in 1868 to survey and map the mouth of the Columbia River. It was at this time that he made this panorama showing the three volcanoes immediately north of the Columbia.
William Samuel Parrott
American, 1844–1915

Mount Saint Helens, 1880s
Oil on canvas
Collection of Suzanne and Paul Coon, L2019.98.1

Parrott was born in Missouri and moved with his family to Oregon in 1847 at the age of three. Growing up here, he developed a great love for the mountains. He opened his first studio in Portland in 1867, and his mountain landscapes proved to be very popular with collectors and other artists. He trained several painters, including Eliza Barchus and Grace Russell Fountain, and his inspiration can be detected in their works at left and right.
James Everett Stuart
American, 1852–1941

Mount St. Helens from a Hill Back of Portland, 1885
Oil on canvas

Courtesy of Oregon Historical Society, L2019.72.3
James Everett Stuart
American, 1852–1941

Mount St. Helens from a Hill Back of Portland, 1885

Oil on canvas
Courtesy of Oregon Historical Society, L2019.72.3

This “sketch” of Mount St. Helens was made on October 6, 1885, as the artist recorded at lower left. On the back of the canvas, he described his vantage point as “a hill back of Portland.” It is not known if Stuart ever created a fully elaborated painting based on this sketch. The spontaneity of execution makes this work especially appealing to modern eyes.

James Everett Stuart was an itinerant painter for most of his career. He was born in Maine and moved to Rio Vista, California, with his family when he was eight. He studied at the San Francisco School of Design with Virgil Williams. In 1881, he opened a studio in Portland, where he remained for five years. After periods in New York and Chicago, he finally settled in San Francisco in 1912.

The late nineteenth-century American frame was generously loaned by Atelier Richard Boerth, Seattle.
Eliza Barchus
American, 1857–1959

Oil on board
Pam and Charles Muehleck Collection, L2019.101.1

Eliza Barchus was born in Salt Lake City and settled in Portland in 1880. She studied with William S. Parrott, whose work appears at right, because his style greatly appealed to her. She painted thousands of works up to 1935, when arthritis and failing eyesight finally ended her career. A stamp on the back of this painting lists the title and the downtown address of her first studio in Portland, where she worked from 1886 to 1891. In 1971, the Oregon Legislature recognized her as “The Oregon Artist.”
Albert Bierstadt
American, born Germany, 1830–1902

Mount St. Helens, Columbia River, Oregon, 1889

Oil on canvas

Collection of L.D. "Brink" Brinkman, LDB Corp, Kerrville, TX, L2019.94.1

Bierstadt was tireless in his pursuit of splendid scenery for his paintings. He was already internationally famous when he visited Oregon and Washington for the second time in September and October, 1889. During this second trip, he likely made sketches that he used in creating this painting in his New York studio. The autumnal foliage of the deciduous trees would seem to confirm this date. However, the artist regularly adjusted the appearance of sites as well as seasons to create a beautiful picture.
Grace Russell Fountain
American, 1858–1942

Mount St. Helens, ca. 1890

Oil on board
Collection of Matt and Judy Wilder, L2019.99.1

Grace Fountain grew up in Ashland. She later spent time in Klamath Falls and participated in expeditions to document Crater Lake for the Park Service. She subsequently moved to Portland, where she studied with William Parrott. Although he inspired her, she developed her own distinctive style, as can be seen by comparing this painting with Parrott’s work at left. Fountain shared a studio in Portland with her artist sister, Mabel Russell Lowther, until 1907, when Fountain moved to Oakland, California, with her husband.
Cleveland S. Rockwell
American, 1837–1907

Mt. St. Helens from the Columbia River, 1894

Watercolor on paper
Pam and Charles Muehleck Collection, L2019.101.3

Rockwell’s employment as a survey engineer for the U.S. Coastal Survey brought him to San Francisco, his first home on the West Coast. After experiencing Oregon, he moved his family to Portland in 1879. He then surveyed and mapped the lower Columbia and its tributaries, including the Willamette River. His work helped ensure safe transportation to and from Portland. By the time he made this exquisite watercolor in 1894, he was well established in Portland as an artist as well as surveyor.
Greta Allen  
American, 1881–1921  

Mount St. Helens from Portland, ca. 1910  
Oil on board  
The Miranda Collection, Courtesy of Randy Dagel, L2019.91.1  

A native Bostonian, Greta Allen studied with Frank Benson (1862–1951) at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Benson had adopted the Impressionist style while training in Paris in the 1880s. His work inspired Allen, who became a distinguished American Impressionist in her own right. Allen visited the Pacific Northwest around 1910 and painted this lovely work from a vantage point in Portland’s Northwest Hills.
Eliza Barchus
American, 1857–1959

Mt. St. Helens, Wash., Sunset, ca. 1920
Oil on slate
Collection of Pam and Charles Muehleck, Scappoose, L2019.101.2

Eliza Barchus was an enterprising and prolific painter in the early days of Portland. After her husband’s death, she had to support her family from her work as an artist. She painted scenes of the Pacific Northwest and the great sites of the West in general, but also printed popular views that virtually anyone could afford. This work on slate illustrates her desire to appeal to all segments of the art market, including reasonably priced souvenirs. Many painters of this period represented landscape scenes at either midday or sunset, in line with the conventions of the time.
Barbara Noah
American, born 1949

Tag III, 1981

Oil on photolinen

Collection of the artist, Seattle, L2019.93.1
When Mount St. Helens first erupted with small emissions, I visited frequently, driving up logging roads to photograph it. I was amazed by the sublime spectacle, but also amused by the picnic atmosphere of crowds in lawn chairs lined up to watch it like a reality TV show. It became personified, a mighty and even benevolent sentient being communing with onlookers.

On the morning of May 18, 1980, I was in Seattle. When I drove down later in the day, access to the volcano was blocked. The mood was somber, no longer celebratory. The glorious spectacle had been transformed. The volcano, a dispassionate force of nature, had taken on a new persona. Tag III represents this transformation through the lens of pareidolia, which is the imagined perception of a pattern or meaning where it does not actually exist, e.g., seeing faces in things. The ensuing altered and anthropomorphic image alludes to Mount St. Helens’ transformations, from the ridiculous to the sublime and from Muppet to monster.

—Barbara Noah
Clara Jane Stephens
American, born England, 1877–1952

Mount St. Helens, ca. 1920
Oil on board
Collection of Jane Knechtel, L2019.92.1

This boldly painted view of Mount St. Helens poignantly highlights the encroachment of human infrastructure on the once pristine landscape. It was made by one of Oregon’s most outstanding women painters, Clara Jane Stephens, who was born in Land’s End, England, and arrived in Portland in 1894. After training in New York and in Italy, she became an exceptional American Impressionist. Her exhibitions in New York and on the West Coast consistently received enthusiastic reviews. She was also a devoted educator. In 1916, she taught children’s classes at the Portland Art Museum, and in 1917, she joined the faculty of the Museum Art School, serving until her retirement in 1938.
Clyde Leon Keller
American, 1872–1962

Mount St. Helens, 1922
Oil on board
Collection of Dr. Mark and Angela Reploeg, L2019.102.1

Keller was one of the Pacific Northwest’s most distinguished Impressionist painters. A native of Salem, he was precocious and enrolled in drawing classes at Willamette University at age 12. In 1894, he became a cartoonist for the San Francisco Examiner, but continued painting landscapes, seascapes, and portraits. He lost everything in the 1906 earthquake and returned to Oregon. He sustained himself by selling his oil paintings and watercolors, and by running an art and frame shop on Southwest Washington Street in Portland from 1907 to 1936. His favorite subject matter was Oregon scenery, and he particularly favored Sauvie Island. He retired to Cannon Beach and continued to paint until his death, leaving a large body of work. This is his only known depiction of Mount St. Helens.
Ray Strong’s earliest encounters with Mt. St. Helens occurred during his time with the YMCA. Strong’s most notable trek with the group occurred in 1921, when they were bogged down in six feet of snow on Christmas Eve. The trek culminated in an arduous ski and snow shoe slog to their newly erected cabin on the edge of Spirit Lake. Afterward, they circumnavigated the Loowit Trail. A few years later, Strong had established a reputation as a “Mountain Painter,” known for summiting many of the Cascade Mountains, paint box in hand. In the early 1950s, he spent three summers painting extensively throughout the Cascades with his young family in tow. He scaled up many of the resulting oil sketches, such as this one, in his California studio.

—Mark Humpal
Fritz G. Kempe
American, born Germany, 1909–1988

Mount St. Helens, June, 1980
Oil on board
Collection of Jean Kempe-Ware, L2020.13.1

Fritz Kempe immigrated to the United States from Germany by himself at age eighteen and eventually settled in Salt Lake City to be near family. This painting was created after he visited his daughter in Portland in April 1979. At that time, he toured southwestern Washington and made studies of Mount St. Helens. He was at work on this painting when the great eruption radically altered its appearance. The event compelled him to finish the work in the following weeks to record his memories of the beauty of Mount St. Helens as it once was.
I had flown over the Red Zone, but it did not prepare me for the experience of being there on foot. It was extremely difficult to walk because the landscape was covered in spherical pieces of pumice. We stumbled across a small lake. Because of the immense ash falls, the chemical composition of the lake had changed. The water was blood red, and dead trees were all around.

I have long been interested in the tension between American technology and the wilderness. For better or for worse, America has long held a war-like attitude toward dominating the sublime natural world. This cultural characteristic is seen in NASA, which used wartime missile technology to open up the wilderness of the solar system. That irony is explored in much of my work and this watercolor is an early example.

—Henk Pander
George Johanson  
American, born 1928  

Self as Baby (Volcano), 1980  
Color etching  
Lent by the artist, L2019.108.1

I had been teaching for 25 years when I retired in May, 1980. I was only 52, but had decided that, whatever the financial challenges, I needed to devote full time to my studio. The mountain erupted that month, in fact within a day or two of commencement. If I had asked for a sign from heaven to validate my decision, this would have been a pretty potent one. Linking the baby self with the volcano in this print is my way of suggesting a new beginning, perhaps a new self.

—George Johanson
George Johanson
American, born 1928

Departure, 2007

Ceramic tiles mounted on plywood
Lent by the artist, L2019.108.2
George Johanson  
American, born 1928  

Mirrored Porch, 1984  
Oil on canvas  
Lent by the artist, L2019.108.3  

In *Mirrored Porch*, the volcano is a big event, but not solely a threatening one. It is also something like a celebration, like fireworks on the 4th. So, in this painting it becomes both menacing and a visual feast.

—George Johanson
In the early ‘80s, my wife Phyllis had already been involved with animal welfare work for over 25 years. Partly as a result of that commitment and also because of our love for cats, we had up to 10 living with us at that time. Phyllis used to take them all for a walk on a wooded side street near our home. She was like the pied piper with all the cats strung out and zig-zagging along behind her, following her up the lane. In this etching, the cityscape is an interpretation, as it might have looked from our house. The landscape is crowned by the volcano posing as a giant cauliflower.

—George Johanson
George Johanson
American, born 1928

Under the Volcano, 1984
Color etching on paper
Portland Art Museum, Gift of the Artist, 90.29.3

For many years, I have made a practice of doing a print from a painting, using the same composition. But the print is more than a reproduction of the painting. It has its own demands and interests. It is always drawn freshly, not traced from an image of the painting. Some shapes are added or changed. In an etching, I am involved with the way lines mass and how edges are arrived at in a different way than in a painting. Also, the black color is printed first with an oil-based ink. Then, further colors are added with brush and transparent water color. So, the sense of light is often quite different from the painting.

—George Johanson
Mary Davis
American, 1907–1989

The Mountain Speaks—Softly, ca. 1983
Oil on canvas
Collection of Peter and Cyndie Glazer, L2020.1.1

Mary Davis studied at the Museum Art School and later worked in the studio of noted artists Hilda and Carl Morris. She became a successful Portland painter in her own right and is best remembered for her emotive style, which sought to express the mystical qualities of her subjects.
Ken Weeks
American, born 1942

Untitled, early 1980s
Mixed media on Japanese paper
Collection of Miriam Hecht and Ivan Zackheim, L2020.14.1

Ken Weeks lives in Lyle, Washington, and was deeply affected by the eruption of Mount St. Helens and its impact on people and animals in the area. In addition to the loss of fifty-seven human lives, countless animals, large and small, were killed by the eruption over a vast area. The artist wryly included human dwellings encroaching on the volcano, pointing to our short memories and desire for expansion even where it is unwise.
The eruption of Mount St. Helens was a wake-up call, a reminder in stark terms that the very firm solid earth on which we rely is not what it seems. In reality, it is only a thin crust with a fiery molten beast lurking underneath that is ready to break out at any time.

Volcanos are not supposed to be in our backyard. They are supposed to stay far away, in stories and fables and on exotic islands. Suddenly this one was interrupting our own personal existence, for a time spewing its ash over Portland so that we could not drive without wrecking the car engine, or breathe outside without a protective mask.

The volcano began to be a motif in my work almost immediately after the eruption. It appears as a reminder of our subordination to nature. Over time, I have used it in various ways as a visual-emotional-intellectual device. As with my other subject matter, the volcano is transposed in painting, and can stand for qualities other than what it is in a strictly literal sense.
George Johanson
American, born 1928

Mirror Room, 1987

Hand-colored relief print from etched plate

Portland Art Museum, The Vivian and Gordon Gilkey Graphic Arts Collection, 2016.115.96
George Johanson  
American, born 1928  
Black Cat—Mountain, 1982  
Oil on canvas  
Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem, Oregon, Partial gift of the artist and Maribeth Collins Art Acquisition Fund, L2019.57.1

In *Black Cat—Mountain*, the volcano is stylized and set far back in the landscape. It is subordinated in color to other surrounding elements, but it is also a royal presence rising up majestically into the heavens. Everything in the painting is teetering and in flux. It is a statement about impermanence. And the volcano watches over it all like a monarch.

—George Johanson
George Johanson
American, born 1928

Departure, 2007

Ceramic tiles mounted on plywood

Lent by the artist, L2019.108.2
HENK PANDER

When I arrived in Portland by boat and train from the Netherlands in 1965, I was utterly unprepared for the grandeur of the Northwest landscape. Riding the train early in the morning through the Columbia River Gorge is forever engrained in my mind as an otherworldly experience. I had lived in the flat, damp, ditch-riddled Netherlands my whole life, and I loved it, but I had never experienced such immense volcanic landscapes. In those early years, the great volcanos intrigued me and I often wondered what an eruption would be like. So utterly un-Dutch.

In the 1970s I lived in a small house on Cable Street in Southwest Portland and had a stunning view of Mount St. Helens, the Mount Fuji of the Northwest in its perfection. The eruption of Mount St. Helens was fantastic. On May 18th 1980, I first saw the eruption cloud far away through a crack in the overcast. It loomed immense and mysterious. As an immigrant artist and a chronicler of contemporary experiences, I immediately started documenting the events surrounding the eruption in the form of works on paper and slides. Sometime after the big eruption, an ash cloud drifted over Portland. That night, I drove around in silence in the cement snow, the streets disappearing, the blossoming trees turning to stone. It was the period of Ronald Reagan’s presidency, and there was talk of nuclear war, star wars, and fallout. In my mind, the eruptions became a metaphor of what could be.
This work depicts Mount St. Helens on the evening of the great eruption of May 18, 1980. I took my wife Delores and my sons Jacob and Arnold to watch the spectacle from an ideal spot on Sauvie Island. I made the watercolor from life late that afternoon, when the eruption plume had subsided and drifted northeast across the landscape.

—Henk Pander
This painting is the culmination of a great many works I did in response to the eruptions of Mount St. Helens. The work was based on studies I made on July 22, 1980, when the eruption appeared against a clear summer sky. One of the studies is included in this exhibition. The view is from my yard on SW Cable Street. The painting is a reflection on the experience as seen in a mirror. It also recalls that it was a huge media event at the time.

—Henk Pander
Henk Pander
American, born Netherlands, born 1937

View of Portland with Eruption, 1980
Watercolor on paper
Courtesy of the artist, L2019.68.1

Henk Pander made a number of watercolors from life during the various eruptions of Mount St. Helens. This work was painted from his yard on Cable Street during the eruption of July 22, 1980. He later used it in creating the oil painting at left.
Lucinda Parker
American, born 1942

Magma opus, July 1980
Mixed media on paper
Collection of Stephen McCarthy, L2019.69.1

Lucinda Parker watched the great eruption of Mount St. Helens with her family from a vantage point on Sauvie Island. Not long thereafter, she submitted this sketch to a competition for a mural at Portland State University. She did not win and subsequently gifted the painting to her husband Steve McCarthy, as the inscription notes. The distinctive energy of the artist’s style is here beautifully matched with the subject.
Frank Gohlke
American, born 1942

Aerial view: Looking SE at Mount St. Helens from approximately 6 miles away 8/15, 1981; printed 1987

Gelatin silver print

© Frank Gohlke, Courtesy: Howard Greenberg Gallery, L2019.73.2
Frank Gohlke
American, born 1942


Gelatin silver print

© Frank Gohlke, Courtesy: Howard Greenberg Gallery, L2019.73.3
Frank Gohlke
American, born 1942

Aerial view: Fir and hardwood forest outside of blast zone, vicinity of Mt. St. Helens, Wash., 1981; printed 1986

Gelatin silver print

© Frank Gohlke, Courtesy: Howard Greenberg Gallery, L2019.73.5
Frank Gohlke
American, born 1942

Downed, Standing Dead, and Living Trees at the NE Limit of Eruption Impact Zone—13.5 NE of Mt. St. Helens, Wash., 1983; printed 1985

Gelatin silver print

© Frank Gohlke, Courtesy: Howard Greenberg Gallery, L2019.73.4
Frank Gohlke
American, born 1942

Valley of Clearwater Creek, salvage and replanting completed, trees left standing to provide wildlife habitat—10 miles NE of Mount St. Helens, Wash., 1983; printed 1993

Regrowth in valley of Clearwater Creek—10 miles NE of Mount St. Helens, Wash., 1990; printed 1993

Gelatin silver prints, dipitych

Courtesy of Artist and Gallery Luisotti, L2019.74.2a,b
Frank Gohlke
American, born 1942

Aerial view: Mount St. Helens rim, crater and lava dome, 1982; printed 2003

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Artist and Gallery Luisotti, L2019.74.3
Frank Gohlke
American, born 1942

Looking west over landslide—debris flow area from a ridge 3.5 miles NE of Mount St. Helens, Washington, 1981; printed 1983

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Artist and Gallery Luisotti, L2019.74.4
Frank Gohlke
American, born 1942

Rockfall—Mount St. Helens crater, 1990; printed 1992

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Artist and Gallery Luisotti, L2019.74.5
Frank Gohlke
American, born 1942

Aerial view: Blowdown near Fawn Lake—approximately 10 miles north of Mount St. Helens, Washington, 1983; printed 1987

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Artist and Gallery Luisotti, L2019.74.6
Frank Gohlke
American, born 1942

Aerial view: Landslide—debris flow area—looking east toward Spirit Lake, 5 miles north of Mount St. Helens, 1982; printed 2005

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Artist and Gallery Luisotti, L2019.74.7
Frank Gohlke  
American, born 1942  

View of Mount St. Helens from the vicinity of Spud Mountain, 1981; printed 1987  
Gelatin silver print  
© Frank Gohlke, Courtesy: Howard Greenberg Gallery, L2019.73.1  

“I am most touched by those places where damage and grace are inextricably entangled.”  
— Frank Gohlke
Frank Gohlke
American, born 1942

Visitors on the rim of Mount St. Helens, Washington, 1990; printed 2005

Ten minutes later, 1990; printed 2005

Gelatin silver prints, diptych

Courtesy of Artist and Gallery Luisotti, L2019.74.8
Frank Gohlke
American, born 1942

Looking SE across lahar (mud flow area), 6 miles SE of Mount St. Helens, Washington, 1983; printed 1994

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Artist and Gallery Luisotti, L2019.74.9
Frank Gohlke
American, born 1942


Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the Artist and Gallery Luisotti, L2019.74.10
Frank Gohlke
American, born 1942

Steam and ash eruption, from Muddy Creek mudflow, 5.5 miles SE of Mt. St. Helens, Wash., 1982; printed 1989

Gelatin silver print

© Frank Gohlke, Courtesy: Howard Greenberg Gallery, L2019.73.6
Frank Gohlke
American, born 1942

Blowndown on Slopes above Hoffstadt Creek—11 miles NW of Mt. St. Helens, Wash., 1981; printed 2004

Timber salvage on slopes above Hoffstadt Creek—11 miles NW of Mt. St. Helens, Wash., 1982, printed 2004

Regrowth after timber salvage at Hoffstadt Creek—11 miles NW of Mt. St. Helens, Wash., 1990; printed 2004

Gelatin silver prints, triptych

Courtesy of Artist and Gallery Luisotti, L2019.74.1a–c
Emmet Gowin
American, born 1941

Area of Mount St. Helens, 1980

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist, L2019.71.29
Emmet Gowin
American, born 1941

TOP TO BOTTOM:

Area of Mount St. Helens, 1980

Elk Rock area of Mount St. Helens, 1981

Gelatin silver prints

Courtesy of the artist, L2019.71.5, 16
Emmet Gowin
American, born 1941

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Ash from Mount St. Helens at the Confluence of the Cowlitz and Columbia Rivers, Longview, Washington, 1984

Toutle River Valley, near Mount St. Helens, 1980

Pyroclastic Ash Filling the Valley of the Toutle River, Area of Mount St. Helens, 1983

Ash from Mount St. Helen as the Confluence of the Cowlitz and Columbia Rivers, Washington, 1984

Gelatin silver prints

Courtesy of the artist, L2019.71.8, 37, 9; Museum Purchase: Funds provided by the Photography Council, 2017.33.2
Emmet Gowin
American, born 1941

Clear cut, 5 miles Southwest of Mount St. Helens, Washington, 1982

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist, L2019.71.18
Emmet Gowin
American, born 1941

Crater and Magma, Mount St. Helens, 1980

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist, L2019.71.13
Emmet Gowin
American, born 1941

TOP TO BOTTOM:

Erosion on the floor of a drained lake formed by debris flow in the Toutle River Valley, Area of Mount St. Helens, 1983

Debris flow at the Northern Base of Mount St. Helens, Looking South, Washington, 1983

Eight Miles North of Mount St. Helens, 1980

Gelatin silver prints

Courtesy of the artist, L2019.71.17,22,15
Emmet Gowin
American, born 1941

Spirit Lake and Mount St. Helens, Washington, 1983

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist, L2019.71.24
Emmet Gowin
American, born 1941

TOP TO BOTTOM:

Bear Cove, Spirit Lake, Mount St. Helens, 1980

Spirit Lake, Mount St. Helens, 1980

Gelatin silver prints

Courtesy of the artist, L2019.71.11, 32
Emmet Gowin
American, born 1941

My Camera above Bear Cove, Mount St. Helens, 1980

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist, L2019.71.26
Emmet Gowin
American, born 1941

TOP TO BOTTOM:

Spirit Lake and Mount St. Helens, Washington, 1983

Crater and Magma, Mount St. Helens, 1980

Gelatin silver prints

Courtesy of the artist, L2019.71.24, 13
Emmet Gowin
American, born 1941

TOP TO BOTTOM:

Ash and Snow on the South flank of Mount St. Helens, Washington, 1983

Mount St. Helens, 1983

Gelatin silver prints

Courtesy of the artist, L2019.71.31, 38
Emmet Gowin
American, born 1941

TOP TO BOTTOM:

View from Coldwater area, looking across the Toutle River Valley, 1983

The Crater of Mount St. Helens, 1980

Gelatin silver prints

Courtesy of the artist, L2019.71.39, 20
Harrison Branch
American, born 1947

Blast Zone, Mount St. Helens, 1983
Platinum/palladium print
Promised gift of Dan and Joan Kvitka, Portland, T2019.185.1

Harrison Branch served as Professor of Photography in the Art Department at Oregon State University from 1972 to 2013. The subject matter of his work has varied over time, but he is especially attracted to undeveloped natural areas. In the early 1980s, he was becoming convinced of the superiority of platinum/palladium prints for capturing subtle tonal variations, as this photograph demonstrates.
Diane Cook and Len Jenshel
American, born 1954; American, born 1949

Moonrise over Mount St. Helens, Hwy 504, Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, WA, 2009; printed 2019

Archival pigment print

Courtesy of the artists, L2019.84.2
Diane Cook and Len Jenshel
American, born 1954; American, born 1949

Mural of Mount St. Helens, Castle Rock, Washington, 2009

Pigment print

Gift of the Artists in honor of Terry Toedtemeier, 2011.64
Diane Cook and Len Jenshel
American, born 1954; American, born 1949

Crater and shadow of Mount St. Helens, with Mount Adams in distance, Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, WA, 2009; printed 2019

Archival pigment print

Courtesy of the artists, L2019.84.6
Diane Cook and Len Jenshel
American, born 1954; American, born 1949

Glaciers at summit, Mount St. Helens
National Volcanic Monument, WA, 2009;
printed 2019

Archival pigment print

Courtesy of the artists, L2019.84.7
Diane Cook and Len Jenshel
American, born 1954; American, born 1949

Roosevelt Elk, Debris Avalanche Zone, Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, WA, 2009; printed 2019

Archival pigment print

Courtesy of the artists, L2019.84.8
Diane Cook and Len Jenshel
American, born 1954; American, born 1949

North Fork Toutle River, Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, WA, 2009; printed 2019

Archival pigment print

Courtesy of the artists, L2019.84.5
Diane Cook and Len Jenshel
American, born 1954; American, born 1949

Log, Pumice Plain, Mount St. Helens
National Volcanic Monument, WA, 2009;
printed 2019

Archival pigment print

Courtesy of the artists, L2019.84.3
Diane Cook and Len Jenshel
American, born 1954; American, born 1949

Floating logs on Spirit Lake, Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, WA, 2009; printed 2019

Archival pigment print

Courtesy of the artists, L2019.84.1
Diane Cook and Len Jenshel
American, born 1954; American, born 1949

Autumn snow, Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, Washington, 1980; printed 2019

Archival pigment print

Courtesy of the artists, L2019.84.9
Buzzy Sullivan
American, born 1979

Man behind beached log, south shore of Spirit Lake, approximately four miles north of Mount St. Helens, 2017

Pigment print

Courtesy of the artist, L2019.107.2
Buzzy Sullivan
American, born 1979

North Fork Toutle River through smoke from the Diamond Creek wildfire, approximately six miles northwest of Mount St. Helens, 2017

Pigment print

Courtesy of the artist, L2019.107.3
Buzzy Sullivan
American, born 1979

Volcanic bomb and dust from landslide, approximately one mile north of the lava dome, 2017

Pigment print

Courtesy of the artist, L2019.107.4
Buzzy Sullivan
American, born 1979

Loowit Falls, approximately one mile north of the lava dome, 2017

Pigment print

Courtesy of the artist, L2019.107.1
Buzzy Sullivan
American, born 1979

Volcanic bomb and dust from landslide, approximately one mile north of the lava dome, 2017

Pigment print

Courtesy of the artist, L2019.107.5
Brad Johnson
American, born 1964

Mount St. Helens Thin Place, Inferno, 2019

Oil, graphite, hide glue and gampi paper on archival pigment print

Collection of the artist, L2019.87.1
Celts described “thin places” as locales where the distance between heaven and earth is closest, where another dimension is right there, looming and palpable. Mount St. Helens is one of the thinnest places I’ve encountered.

I’ve been drawn back to the volcano many times since I first photographed it in 2009. Climbing into the crater is to ‘ascend to the underworld’ where dynamic geologic forces are breaking down and building up new interior landscapes. To observe these cyclical workings of the earth is to witness deep time, a transcendent experience that photography alone never seems to capture. In manipulating the surfaces of photographic prints of the crater I’ve attempted to inject, impress, and reveal the volcano’s many conjurings—in this case hell as described by Dante and rendered by Botticelli.

—Brad Johnson

Sandro Botticelli (Italian, ca. 1445–1510), Map of Hell after Dante’s Inferno, 1480–95, silverpoint, ink, and tempera on parchment, Vatican Library, Rome
Ursula K. Le Guin
American, 1929–2018

TOP TO BOTTOM:

Before snow, February 15, 1979

[Untitled], November 27, 1979

Pastel over graphite on paper

Ursula K. Le Guin Family Trust, L2019.971a, b
Ursula K. Le Guin
American, 1929–2018

TOP TO BOTTOM:

Ash eruption: Mt. St. Helens seen from Portland, March 30, 1980, 5:30 PM

Ashfall, June 13, 1980

Pastel on paper

Ursula K. Le Guin Family Trust, L2019.971f, e
Ursula K. Le Guin
American, 1929–2018

LEFT TO RIGHT:

First snow and river fog, October 28, 1980, 8:30 AM

[Untitled], January 18, 1981, 3 PM

Pastel on paper

Ursula K. Le Guin Family Trust, L2019.971d, c
Henk Pander
American, born Netherlands, born 1937

Ursula K. Le Guin in Red Zone, 1981

Ink on paper

Courtesy of the artist, L2019.68.2
In October 1981, three friends—artist Henk Pander, photographer Ron Cronin, and author Ursula K. Le Guin—managed to finagle a one-day pass into the Red Zone, the restricted area around the mountain. Le Guin later described the experience:

... the fear I felt that day went deeper than the physical. After driving miles up through the endless green vitality of a great forest, to turn a corner and enter a world of grey ash, burnt stumps, and silence—from the complexity of flourishing life into the awful simplicity of death: the fear I felt was metaphysical. And the scale of it all was beyond comprehension. I tried to write about it afterwards, in poetry and essay. I never felt I could describe it adequately, hardly hint at it.

—From In the Blast Zone: Catastrophe and Renewal on Mount St. Helens, Oregon State University Press, Corvallis, 2008

Henk Pander made this drawing shortly after the trip. He explains its most unusual feature:

Ursula used the great Northwest landscapes as inspiration for her description of alien worlds. Coincident with the Mount St. Helens event were the first Voyager flybys of Saturn, which greatly interested us both. One of its most beautiful moons was Enceladus, an icy world lacking craters, but covered in mysterious cracks. More recently it was discovered that salt water exists beneath its surface ice. There is speculation about primitive life forms in its dark, deep oceans, so it has become even more appropriate for Ursula.
Marilyn Bridges
American, born 1948

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Hand Shadow, Mount Saint Helens, 1981
Mount Saint Helens, Cracked Earth, 1981
Dead Trees, Live Trees, Mount Saint Helens, 1981
Swirl, Mount Saint Helens, 1981

Gelatin silver prints

Mark Ruwedel
Canadian, born 1954

Untitled (Mount St. Helens), 1986

Gelatin silver print

Portland Art Museum, Gift of the artist, 93.26
Lawrence Shlim
American, born 1954

Volcanic Ash, Centralia, Washington, 1980

Gelatin silver print

Portland Art Museum, Gift of the artist, 81.41.2
Mathias Van Hesemans
American, born 1946

Eruption, 1983, Mount Saint Helens, 1983

Gelatin silver print

Portland Art Museum, Gift of Stu Levy and Cris Maranze, 2011.115.4
Charles Arnoldi  
American, born 1946

**Untitled, 1983**

Acrylic, modeling paste and branches on plywood

Portland Art Museum, Bequest of Marcia Simon Weisman, 1997.191.1

A major figure on the West Coast in the movement to redefine the nature and materials of painting in the 1970s, Charles Arnoldi was mesmerized by the television coverage of the eruption of Mount St. Helens. The images of thousands of felled trees and the ragged crater prompted him to reintroduce actual sticks in combination with painting in his post-eruption works through the next decade. In *Untitled, 1983*, Arnoldi creates a dense, powerful work that is clotted in highly fluid, directional arrangements of sticks that overlap and collide to define both the painting’s surface and silhouette. The cultivated disequilibrium of the work’s elegant veneered surface of modeling paste and sticks produces a formally beautiful yet poignantly emotional evocation of the triggering event.

—Bruce Guenther
Cameron Martin
American, born 1970

Remission, 2006

Acrylic on canvas

Saint Louis Art Museum, The Henry L. and Natalie Edison Freund Charitable Trust, L2019.44.1
I was ten years old and living in Seattle when Mount St. Helens erupted. In retrospect, it was my first experience of the sublime—never before had the natural world excited a feeling of such awe in me. I have vivid memories of the clouds produced from the discharge. They were otherworldly forms that uncannily anticipated the Cloud City that would appear in *The Empire Strikes Back*, released a few days later. My grandparents’ Eastern Washington home was covered in a thick layer of ash that people feared would become like glue if it rained. It terrified me to think that the earth was capable of such wrath. As an adult, when I became an artist making work about how we picture nature, at first I resisted depicting the mountain that had made such a deep impression on my psyche. When I was finally ready to take it on, I spent several months painting what remains the largest work I have produced. It’s painted in a way that is meant to conjure a certain amount of instability, where the dark section, which reads as the foreground from a distance, becomes a possible void as you get closer. I titled it *Remission*, because you never know.

—Cameron Martin
The David A. Johnston Cascades Volcano Observatory (CVO) in Vancouver, Washington, is home to about 80 scientists, technicians, and support personnel devoted to the study and monitoring of the active volcanoes in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. The scientists have the diverse interests and expertise needed to study the past eruptive histories, develop new tools and ideas to understand volcanic systems, monitor current volcano behavior, assess future impacts, and communicate with officials and people at risk.

CVO is one of five volcano observatories in the United States supported by the U.S. Geological Survey’s Volcano Hazards Program. CVO is dedicated to David Johnston, the USGS geologist who was killed on May 18, 1980, at Mount St Helens.

This ten-minute video combines short historic and contemporary video clips drawn entirely from the archives of the U.S. Geological Survey:
VIDEOS:

Timelapse of Mount St. Helens, April 9, 1980
Length: 0:22

Timelapse of Mount St. Helens, April 28, 1980
Length: 1:11

Ash Plume of Mount St. Helens, May 18, 1980
Length: 0:40

Mount St. Helens 2004-08 Eruption: A Volcano Reawakens
Length: 4:36

Timelapse of Dome & Glacier growth at Mount St. Helens, 2004–12
Length: 00:21

USGS Unmanned Aircraft Systems Monitors Gas Emissions at Mount St. Helens, 2018
Length: 4:29

For more information on the Cascades Volcano Observatory:
https://volcanoes.usgs.gov/observatories/cvo
The 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens commanded the world’s attention when the largest landslide ever recorded on Earth and a powerful explosive eruption reshaped the volcano and dramatically modified the surrounding landscape. From 1980–86 and 2004–08, thick, viscous lava oozed onto the crater floor to build lava domes. In 2013, USGS published this illustration highlighting the changes from the May 18, 1980 eruption to the dome building that ended in 2008.
Breadcrust Bomb

Dacite erupted from Mount St. Helens, May 1980

On loan courtesy of the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument

Breadcrust bombs are volcanic rocks ejected as semi-molten lava during an eruption. The outer surface begins to harden while traveling through the air and becomes brittle. Meanwhile, the hot molten rock inside forms gas bubbles and begins to expand causing the outer surface to crack, like a piece of popcorn.

You are welcome to gently touch.
Mount St. Helens: Return to Life

On loan courtesy of the Mount St. Helens Institute and created by Second Story

Since the 1980 eruption at Mount St. Helens, scientists have been observing how life has returned to a devastated landscape. This interactive kiosk collects, preserves, and presents highlights of their ongoing discoveries. Interviews and data are from 2010.
Volcano Monitoring Spider

On loan courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey, David A. Johnston
Cascades Volcano Observatory, Vancouver, Washington

The Monitoring Spider, designed by USGS Cascades Volcano Observatory, is recent technology that helps scientists quickly monitor an active volcano while reducing risks to scientists. The sturdy Spider is deployed by a helicopter, and is designed to transmit data in real time to the Cascades Volcano Observatory. The Spider can detect small changes in the ground shape (or deformation) with GPS, lightning and/or low-frequency sounds from explosions, gas emissions, and shallow earthquakes.

1. Geodetic GPS antenna. GPS monitors local ground deformation and movement (to less than 1 cm)
2. Lightning detector for ash eruptions
3. Cable for deployment by helicopter
4. Digital radio transmits data real-time to volcano observatory
5. Rugged, stainless steel box contains power supply, electronics
6. Infrasound sensor detects sudden changes in air mass (like explosions)
7. Seismometer (inside protective container, tethered to spider) sits on the ground and detects local earthquakes
1. Mount Hood (Oregon)  
   Elevation: 11,250’

2. Mount St. Helens (Washington)  
   Elevation: 8,363’

3. Mount Rainier (Washington)  
   Elevation: 14,411’

4. Mount Adams (Washington)  
   Elevation: 12,280’

Image from Google Earth