

SHIFTING GROUND; Geology as agency for creation and destruction; Richard M. Proctor

Overview;

Although geology is listed as the primary source of “ground” alteration — — — curiously this section begins with human source(s) of cataclysmic change — — — specifically thermonuclear destruction.

In fact, there are 6 thermonuclear pieces in Shifting Ground, 1 Earthquake, 3 volcano images, and one “environmental installation for a total of 11 works.

The Thermonuclears;

Ed Ruscha, “Atomic Princess”, 1990

A typical masked letter on white ground Ruscha , overpainted (mostly) horizontally. Stylistically identical to “Lost Empires, Living Tribes”, 1984 in the Colliding Cultures section; p.142 (also “Crystal Chandelier Headache” in the PSAM collection). Nothing I can add will enhance the the catalog text on pages 137-8.

Don English, “Miss Atomic Bomb” 1957

The personification of Ruscha’s two loaded enigmatic words, “atomic”, and “princess”.

NOTE: It is important to understand that the modern history of the “Greater West” from the arctic circle to the Bikini atoll is powerfully connected to a vast nuclear legacy.

Bruce Conner, CROSSROADS, film, 1976

“The awesome, terrifying beauty (?) of this man-made (nuclear) destructive force as it occurred on July 25, 1946.”

Chris Burden, “All the Submarines of the United States of America” 1987. The invisible made visible — — 625 cardboard models of America’s underwater arsenal from the 1890s to the 1980s suspended from the ceiling. A document not a critique.

Al Farrow, “Mimbres Pottery Series”, 1993

The signage for a nuclear fall-out shelter as “uncovered artifact” cleverly constructed from fabricated shards of faux Mimbres pottery. Almost funny. The Mimbres buried their dead in a seated position with an inverted decorated pottery bowl “cap” covering the head. The bowl would have a hole drilled to allow the spirit to escape. Another complete piece with Mushroom Clouds no less (also a spoof) appears on page 191.

Jack Malotte, “The End”, 1983

A beautifully painted vision of the apocalyptic end of the world by nuclear holocaust . Terrain similar to the Nevada

Test Site. Color palette and shading of traditional Japanese wood block prints.

The Earthquake

Teri Rofkar (Chaas' Koowu Tlaa) "1964 Earthquake Robe"
2006

A complex Ravenstail robe or "wearing blanket" loaded with earthquake symbolism including tsunami (67 ft. High waves), and "bear track" patterning representing weight moving. Not a clue about the three crosses — — almost like an attached Christian liturgical "stole" border — — odd. The weaving commemorates a 9.2 earthquake 3/27/1964

Ravenstail is an ancient geometric weaving style that predates Chilkat and is characterized by white, yellow and black designs originally made using pure mountain goat wool. The Chilkat weaving style evolved from Ravenstail in the early 19th century and incorporated more complex weaving techniques that [allowed](#) the weaver to depict curvilinear formline designs

A magnificent Chilkat blanket by the way is worn by Da-Ka-Keen on the endpapers of the Unsettled catalog.

Volcanos

Gerardo Murillo aka (Dr. Atl), "The volcano in a starry night", 1950. Perhaps symbolic of anger waiting to explode. Paricutin activated in 1943 in view of Dr. Atl

Rufino Tamayo, "The Volcano", 1958 Like colored meteors on a dark ground this glowing painting with no political

overtones from the Weiner collection is a familiar visitor to the PSAM.

Justin Favela, "Popocatepetl after Jose Maria Velasco", 2016 An academic style oil by Velasco reinterpreted with vast numbers of paper tabs like the surface of a piñata or the paper banners we associate with Day of the Dead folk art. Permanence (oil on canvas) made ephemeral (colored paper).

Environmental Installation

Bonnie Ora Sherk, "Bernal Heights Project" 2003 Drawings and archival material from a San Francisco project utilizing "dead space" beneath two highway interchanges.