An aerial photograph of a beach at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, pink, and purple. The ocean waves are breaking onto the shore, with white foam visible. The wet sand reflects the colors of the sky and the water. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

REFLECTION

JOHN PAUL CAPONIGRO

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Reflection

Cloudwatching

What child hasn't spent scattered minutes, accumulated into hours or even days, watching slowly unfolding clouds and the changing sky? Wondering what they were, are, and will be. Imagining bodies (either whole or in pieces, especially faces), animals (whether commonplace, exotic, or mythical), plants, landscapes, and even mechanical devices. Who doesn't pause at the sight of the blazing colors of the morning and evening sky? How few pause long enough to see the stars begin to appear? How strange to think that the same sky is blue by day and black by night, studded with twinkling stars. Are we like this too? Why do so many adults cease to probe these mysteries as consistently and frequently and with as much curiosity as a child does? What do we lose when we lose the search?

Questions

These images are products of a process of asking questions. While there are many conclusions drawn and corresponding outcomes, the process of asking questions is more important than the answers. This is an ongoing process of discovery. It's my hope that these images offer similar opportunities for those who view them.

Surfaces

I'm fascinated by surfaces. Surfaces can be extremely challenging. Surfaces reveal so much. The marks painters make reveal so much about their work and themselves; their sense of proportion, line, and rhythm is more telling than their signature. Looking at the surfaces of nature may offer equivalent revelations. What do these shapes and patterns reveal about the world and their creator? Surfaces hide so much. Can a record of the light reflected by the body of a person reveal their beating heart and pulsing brain, their thoughts and dreams, their history, or the ways they touch the world and other people's lives? Every surface reveals and conceals. In order to show one thing, another is hidden. I search from many perspectives. Up and down, in and out, here and there. I search through many moments. Then and now. Even though many perspectives and moments are contained within single images, many more are contained within a series of related images. It takes a continuing search to develop a deeper more holistic perspective.

Progression

There is a progression in the development of this work; from calming, to clearing, to illumination. Skies gradually clear, rays of light appear, and finally so do sources of illumination. This theme and its progression were not conceived before executing the work but rather found during the process of its unfolding. Initially, I appreciated the first images for their calmness. Later, works began to contain a remarkable simplicity. In time, the photographs became so simple that the pure spaces they described began to reveal how charged with light they were. Finally, at first only in the byproducts they produced in their environments, the sources of light began to reveal themselves. Throughout this progression a growing intensity builds as the gaze is focused more directly into the source of illumination. Who knows what will reveal itself next?

States of Mind

In my work sky and water become metaphors for states of mind. Many religious traditions use bodies of water and weather as metaphors for states of mind. Throughout the ages, the world over, skies and water have been used in ritual practices to intuitively reveal what often goes unacknowledged by the conventional mind. If you watch water and sky closely, you'll understand why. As water grows still, it becomes clearer so you can see more deeply into it and its surface becomes calmer so reflections reveal more fully what's above it. When the sky clears you can better see the light in it and as color fades you can better see the lights behind it. In these states, it's not clear where one thing begins and another ends. They become

calmer, clearer, deeper, fuller, and more connected. How does their state change your state? How does your state change your experience of them? How does this affect your mutual unfolding?

Perception and Belief

What we see changes what we know. What we know changes what we see. Perception, belief, action, and change are codependent. Is seeing believing? Knowing that there are limits to what we can see, we believe in many things that are invisible; gravity, time, freedom, love, our very minds. Often, we posit the existence of these things through the influences they have on what we can perceive.

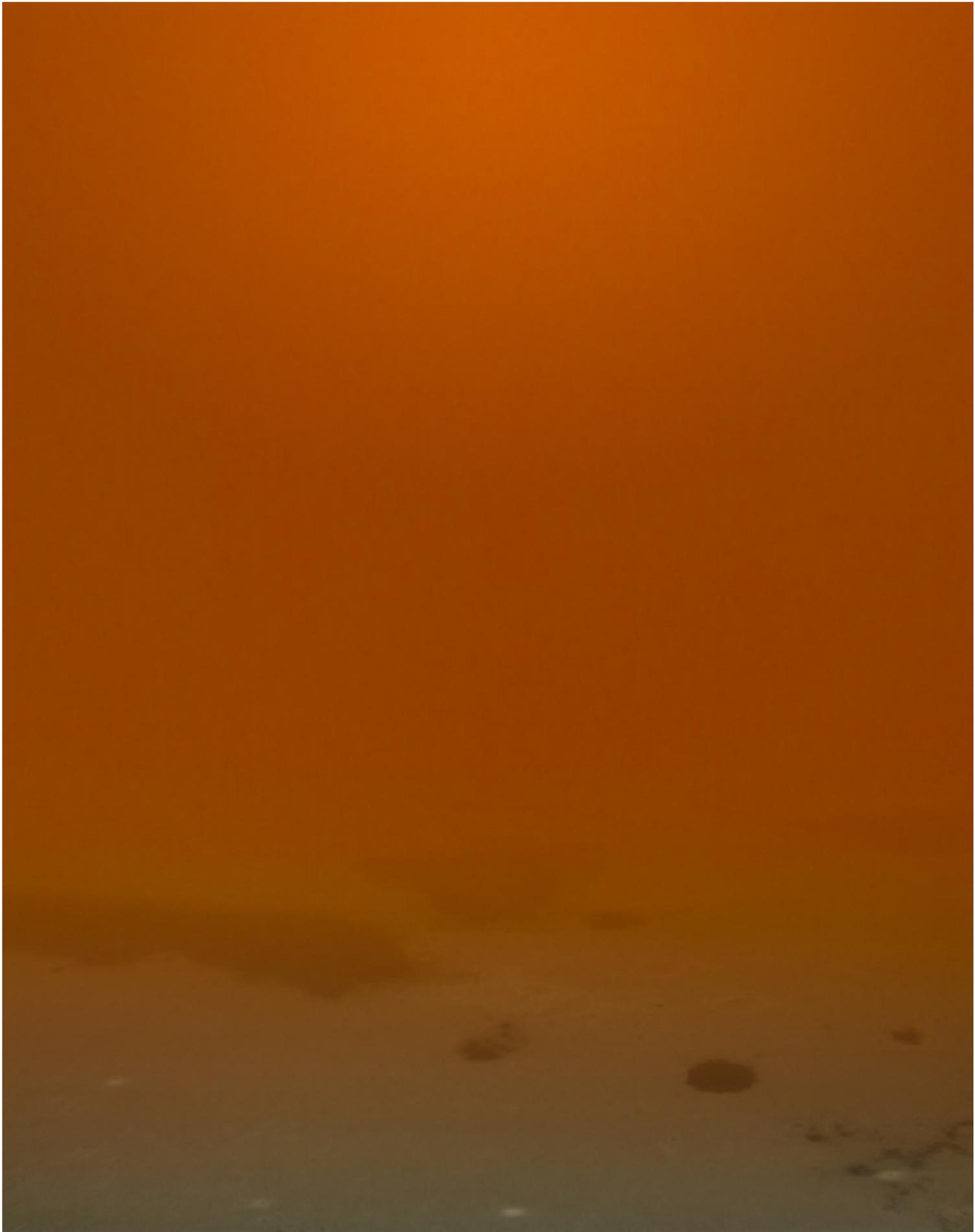
Is believing seeing? Are there times when our belief systems become so habitual that we ignore or discount things that don't fit them? Can we pierce our veils of limiting beliefs with direct observation?

Interpretation

Images rely on interpretive processes. These processes can be revealing for viewers and anyone they share their impressions with. I am reminded of a Hindu parable I heard when I was very young. Five blind men gather around an elephant. The first feels its side and deduces, "A wall." The second feels a leg, "A column." The third feels a tusk, "A spear." The fourth feels an ear, "A palm tree." The fifth feels the trunk, "A snake." And so a debate starts. No one man can deduce the whole truth from the fragment he possesses. But, once they share their limited observations they are finally able to sense more than they could individually and together are finally able to conclude that they stand before an elephant. It takes asking many questions from many perspectives and drawing conclusions from many experiences to truly understand something. What's more, the questions we ask and the conclusions we draw can lead us to a state of greater self-awareness.

Reflections

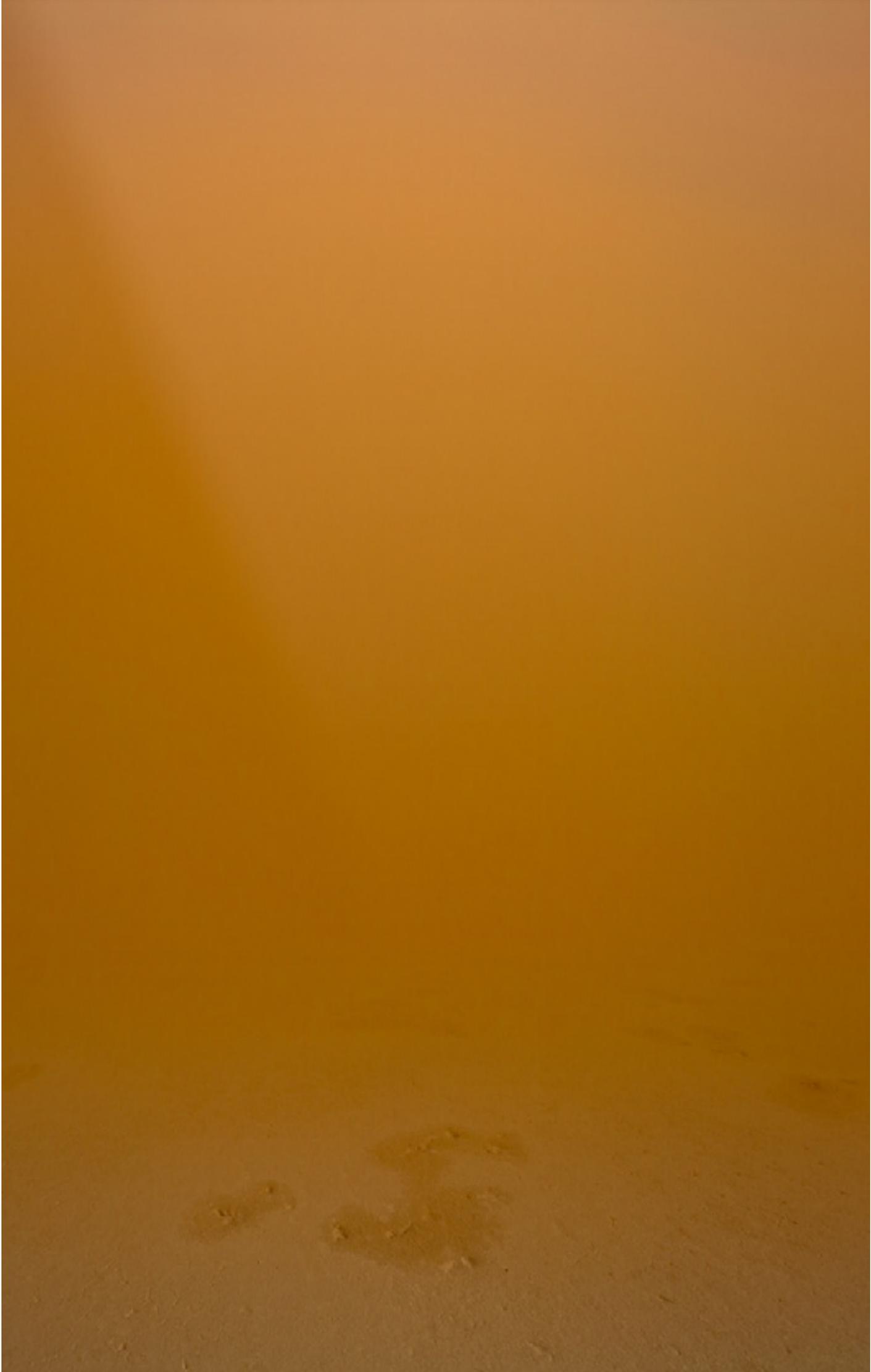
These images are records of reflected light in the natural world, byproducts of my inquiry and perceptions, and artifacts that serve as mirrors of self-illumination for those who view them. These meditations in nature offer a moment of pause, a still point in a turning world, ripe for further reflection and self-realization. This work is an invitation to look, and look again, and to look at us looking takes a continuing search to develop a deeper more holistic perspective. are codependent. Is seeing believing? Knowing that there are limits to what we can see, we believe in many things that are invisible; gravity, time, freedom, love, our very minds. Often, we posit the existence of these things through the influences they have on what we can perceive.



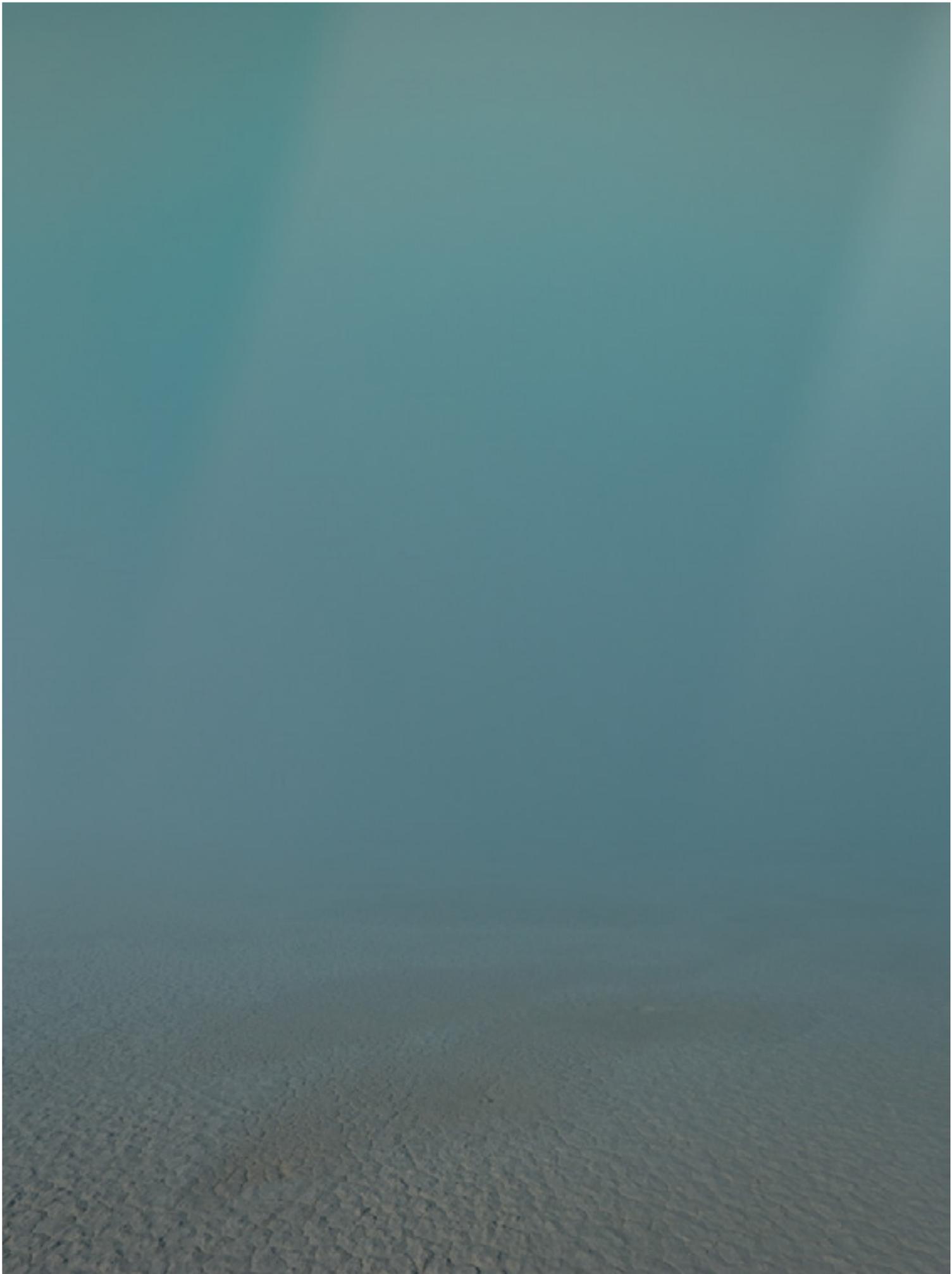
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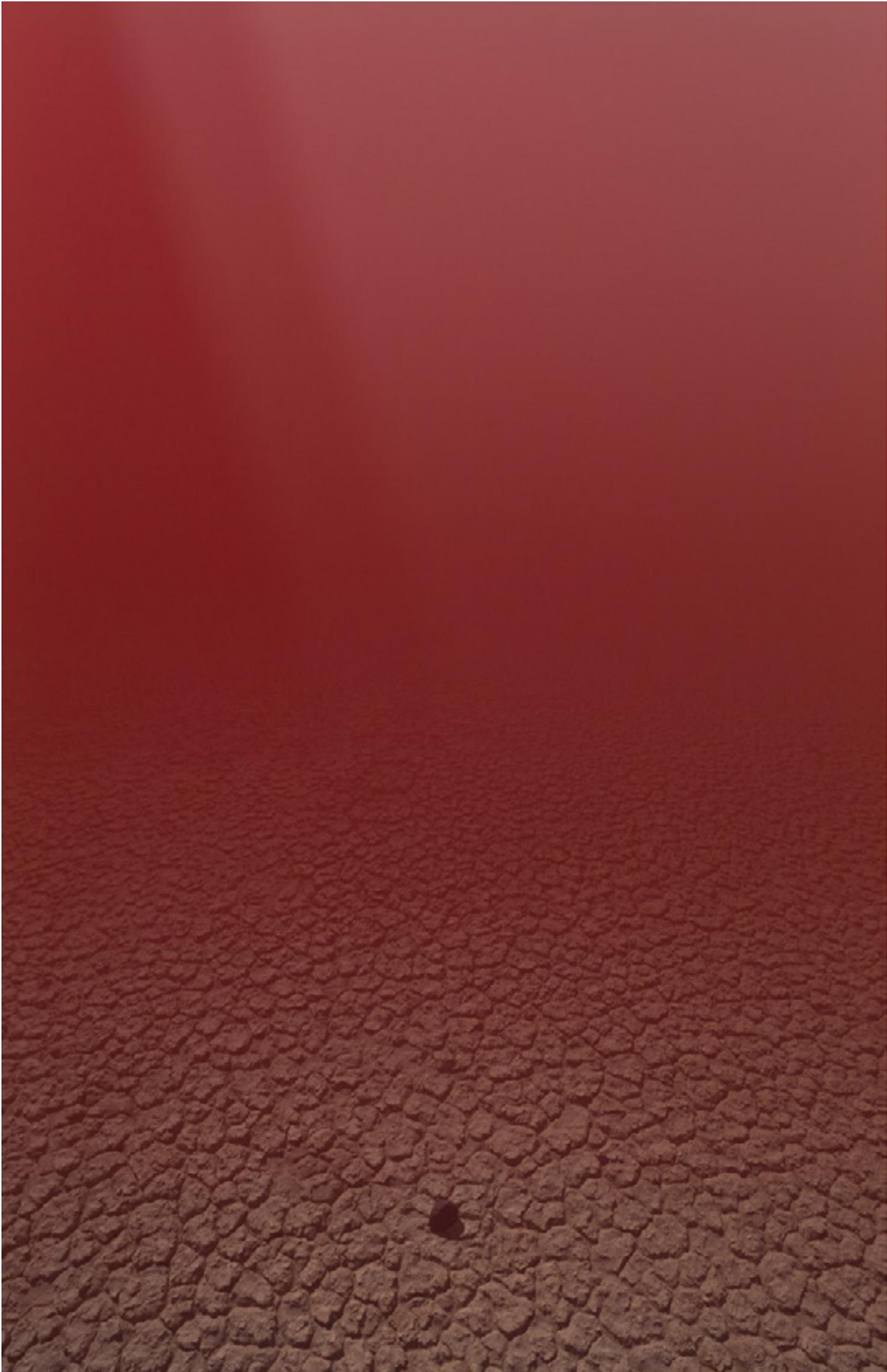
Reflection LI



Reflection LII



Reflection LIII



Reflection LIV



Reflection LV



Reflection LVI



Reflection LVII



Reflection LVIII

Biography

John Paul Caponigro is one of the most prominent artists working with digital media. His art has been exhibited internationally and purchased by numerous private and public collections including Princeton University, the Estée Lauder collection, and the Smithsonian.

John Paul combines his background in painting with traditional and alternative photographic processes using state-of-the-art digital technology. His life's work is a call to reconnect with nature through conscientious creative interaction with our environment.

Respected as an authority on creativity and fine art digital printing, he is a highly sought after speaker, lecturing extensively at conferences, universities, and museums, in venues as diverse as TEDx, MIT and Photoshop World. He leads workshops globally.

John Paul's work has been published widely in numerous periodicals and books including Art News and The Ansel Adams Guide. A contributing editor for Digital Photo Pro and a columnist for the Huffington Post, he is the author of Adobe Photoshop Master Class and the DVD series R/Evolution. John Paul is a member of the Photoshop Hall of Fame, Canon's Explorers of Light, Epson's Stylus Pros, and X-Rite's Coloratti. His clients include Adobe, Apple, Kodak, and Sony.

Contact

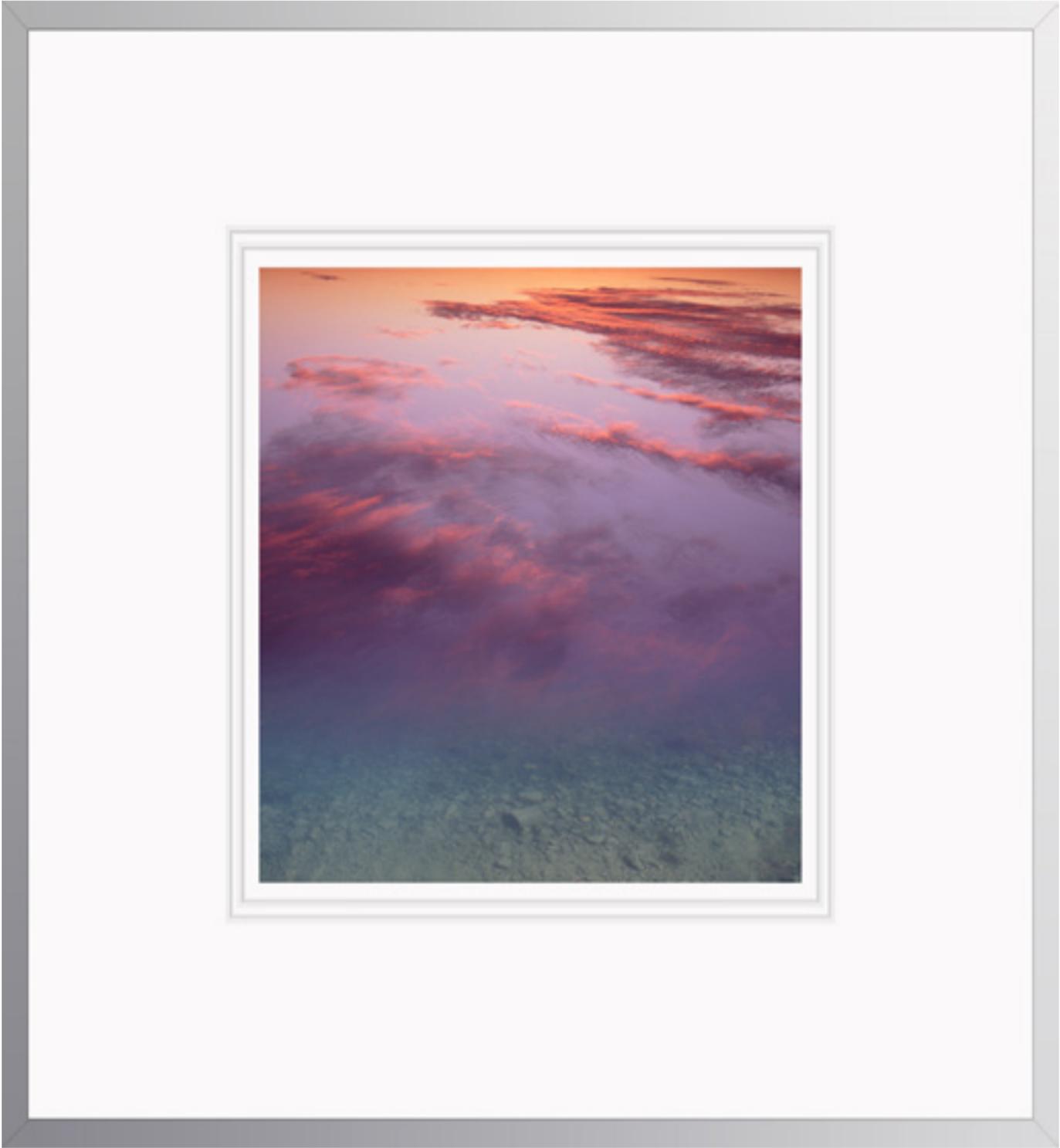
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