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My photographic explorations are used to create copper plate photogravure etchings and have resulted in several suites of related prints: *Putting Out Ashes*, *Vessels and Vestiges*, *Pyre* and *The Promise of Water*.

Since 1995 I have been exploring the theme of elemental forces of nature, photographing still life materials of stones, ashes, cremated bones and most recently water. I've become particularly interested in active aspects of nature, both regenerative and catastrophic. Elemental materials such as fire and water portray processes of destruction, as well as transformation, implying a metaphor of deep geologic time. Stones are collected by all of us and belong to our "collective unconscious." In researching about "stones", I discovered that it is the only material that transcends time to convey the same meaning to all cultures. Use of stone conveys the notion of a deep spiritual connection to earth. These materials are also used to suggest an inherent spiritual and/ or ritualistic sensibility.

Pyre is a series of 12 related photogravures. I'm interested in the duality of life that the fire represents, simultaneously conveying a sense of catastrophe and of life rejuvenating forces. Change is inherent with fire, with the process of destruction begins the cycle of renewal. Each print is intimate in scale and when grouped together the images create a large presence, thematically building on each other. The backdrop of stones and the structure of the flames take on a more naturalistic appearance and are intended to be ambiguous. The suite ends with a single flame hovering in a black field. This last fragment of fire invites the viewer to contemplate whether the fire will perish or persist.

In the series I am currently working on, *The Promise of Water*, I'm exploring metaphors of purity/purification, water as venerated source. Smooth white stones are arranged on ambiguous clear ground, which is free of specific associations to land, country or time. The stones are separated with water melting or washing over each. Water tears rock, thus becoming soil, implying an act of weathering, of reducing substance to their fundamental parts. I think of water as the blood of the earth.

A copper plate photogravure is a 19th century photographic process which is a technical marriage of the tonality achieved in a continuous tone photograph with the velvety, physical surface of an inked etching. To create an image, a copper plate is prepared with a thin gelatin film that has been exposed to UV light. This gelatin carries the image. In the final stages of the process the gelatin/copper sandwich is etched in a series of ferric chloride baths resulting in a low bas-relief textural surface, which holds ink when printed. I've worked with the copper plate photogravure process for many years as I feel it best enhances my work. I enjoy the richness and velvety quality of the printing ink and the delicacy of the photographic image. The inherent softness, the image sitting in the paper is esthetically appealing to me.