



BRAD JOHNSON

Brad Johnson has been making pictures and interactive media experiences since the mid-1980s. After studying philosophy at Washington and Lee University, he lived in the Bay Area for a decade making art, exploring the fusion of photography and paint with shows at the Susan Cummins Gallery in Mill Valley, CA., the Pro Arts Annual in Oakland, CA. and at the Bade Museum in Berkeley, CA. In 1994 he moved to digital media where his interactive projects were shown in various group shows in the Bay Area, and at Postmasters Gallery in New York. For the next two decades he led the creative enterprise of Second Story, an interactive media studio that designed and developed over 400 award-winning projects in almost every digital medium. Often through the lens of the landscape, his work investigates the blending and blurring of worlds—the material and digital, the natural and cultural, the imagined and observed, the ravaged and reborn.

My passion for pictures of our natural world was re-awakened after several visits to Mount St. Helens where the earth is busy creating new landscapes. There the volcanic destruction created a new canvas on which the interplay between geological and biological forces converged in utterly new, dynamic landscapes. A series emerged through the photographic documentation of 6 visits to the crater and blast zone. Attempting to inject some degree of material authenticity in the subsequent prints—the mark of the maker, evidence of having experienced the place, a presence beyond that of an image printed on paper—prints were embellished with paint and mixed media inspired by the processes depicted in the scenes. The ‘finished’ pictures languished: they were almost satisfying, but not entirely. After many months, the flotsam and jetsam of pictures were cut into parts, recombined, and reassembled into new combinations where together in new contexts they render the eternal cycle of destruction and renewal inherent in art and nature.

