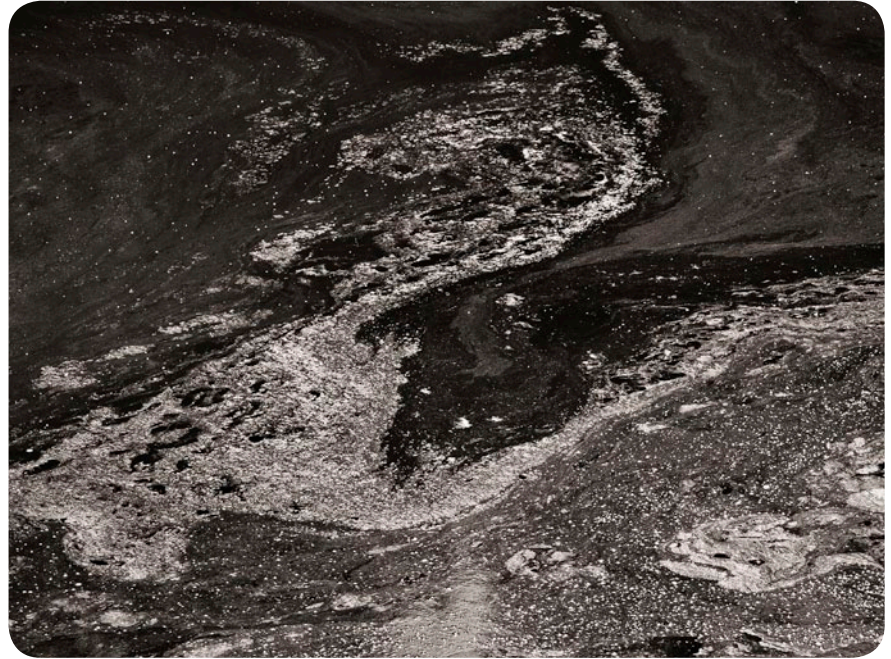




# SKETCHES

*A Chapbook Series by  
Brooks Jensen*





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*Worlds Within Worlds*

*JBrooks Jensen*

Brooks Jensen

In his 1961 classic on the cosmos, *Music of the Spheres*, Guy Murchie begins with this first line:

*The stars beneath my feet stare upward, strange and bold. They do not twinkle.  
They burn steadfastly in the black, bottomless sky.*

With this we are off on a journey through the universe in his imaginary space vehicle, exploring cosmic dust and stars, galaxies and quasars. Aboard his paper spaceship, Murchie takes us to strange and distant worlds where space and time are explained as two aspects of the same thing. We travel with him on a journey beyond the imagination that is all the more fantastic because it is real. How vast the universe! That point of light in the night sky that looks like a star — that dot right there — is not a star, but a galaxy of millions of stars. Worlds within worlds.

For a new teenager whose world was defined by the limits of how far he could peddle his bicycle, this book was a revelation in relativity, an introduction to the vast size of the cosmos. It was a shock to learn that my world was not a big thing, but a tiny thing, circling within an unimaginably larger thing. It was a revelation into my indescribably small existence in the cosmos. It was also an invitation to imagine the unimaginable.

But then, I reasoned, if my world is a tiny thing inside an immense thing, what about the molecules so small we can only imagine them? Are they not the same? Galaxies of existence on the tiniest scale, so small they could be worlds of populated matter in the circling molecules in the very hair on my arm.

Circling, galaxy-like — circling, planet-like. Perhaps light years, or maybe only microns, always circling. Nano-moments or billions of years, both are Murchie's "bottomless sky." It was enough to make one's head spin — but then, why would my head be any different than the rest of the macro and micro cosmos?

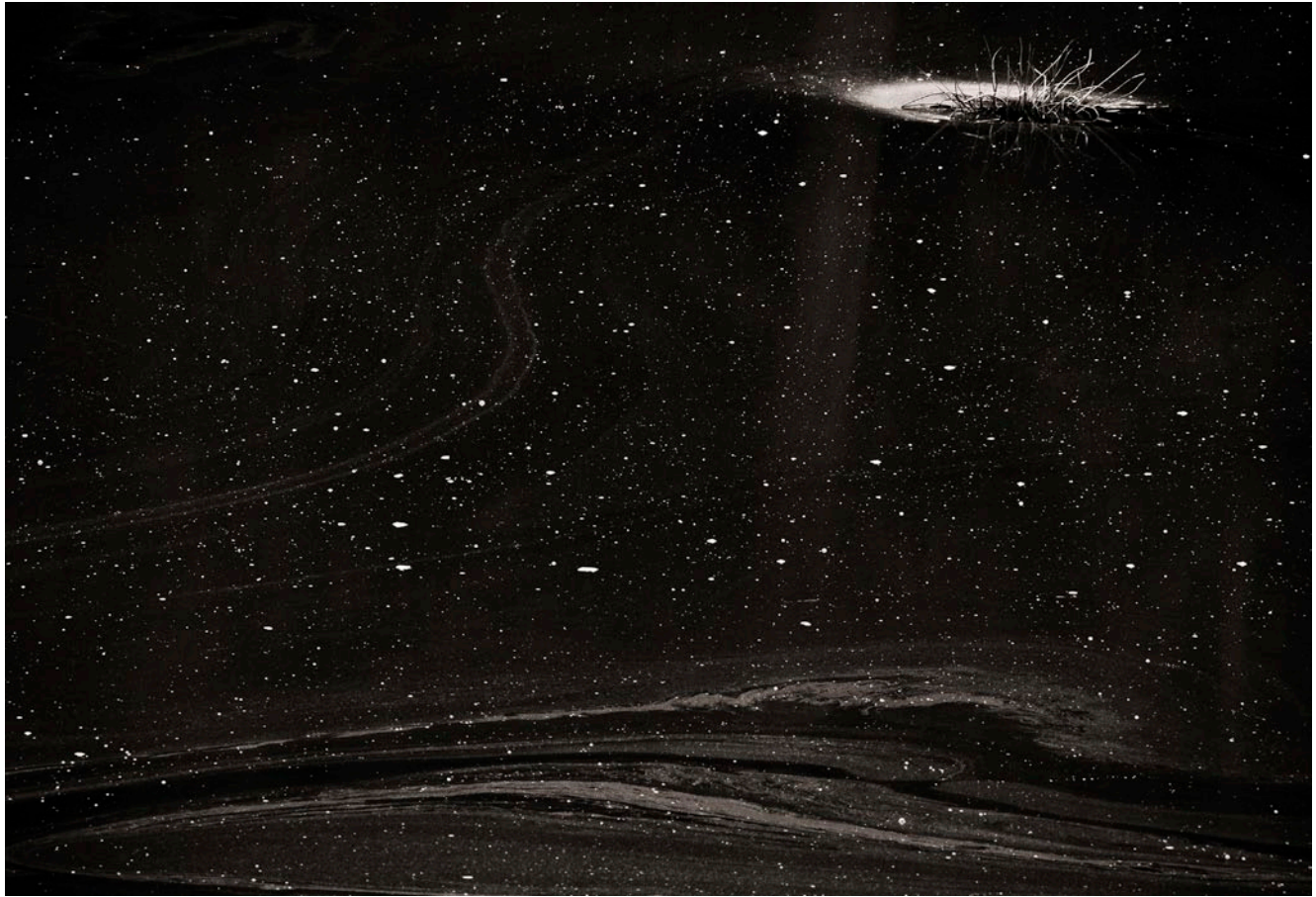
In a coincidence that has defined my life, I read Murchie, discovered photography, and stumbled into Zen and the great Tao at about the same time. Learning photography through the microscope, I was struck how Murchie's description of the vast cosmos looked so remarkably like what I was photographing in the tiny worlds in a drop of pond water. Seeing photographs of the great nebulae through the telescope reminded me of the amoeba under the coverslip. These similarities gave scientific testament to the words of Lao Tzu that, "The great Tao flows everywhere, to the left and to the right." Everywhere, including the cosmically vast and the microscopically small. Science, photography, Zen. Weaving these threads has been the constant theme of my artmaking ever since.

The first section of Murchie's text ends with a guide for photographers, for us artists, for all of us. He writes ...

*I have come here with open eyes to see the unseen.  
I have come with open mind to listen to the music of the spheres.*

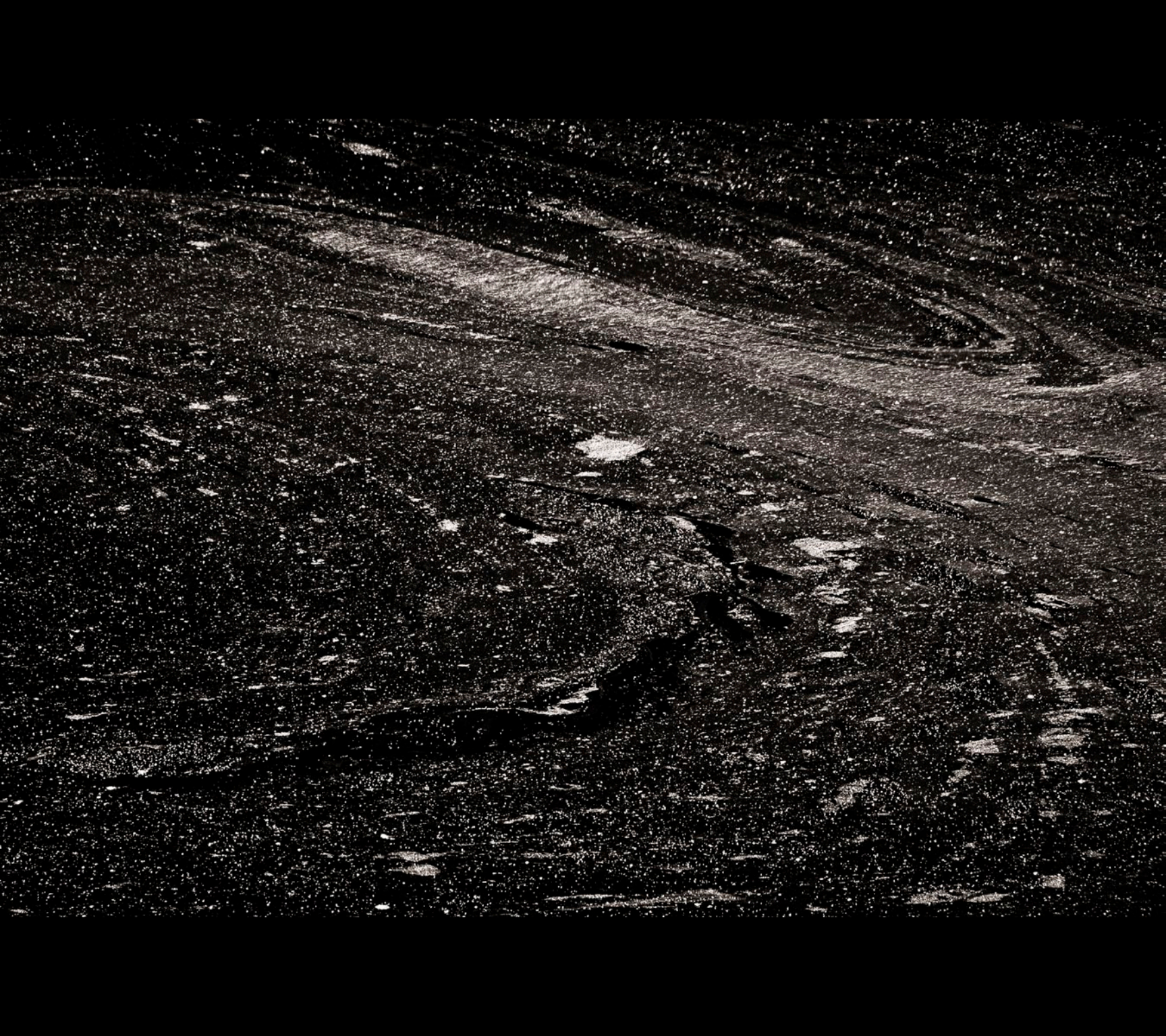




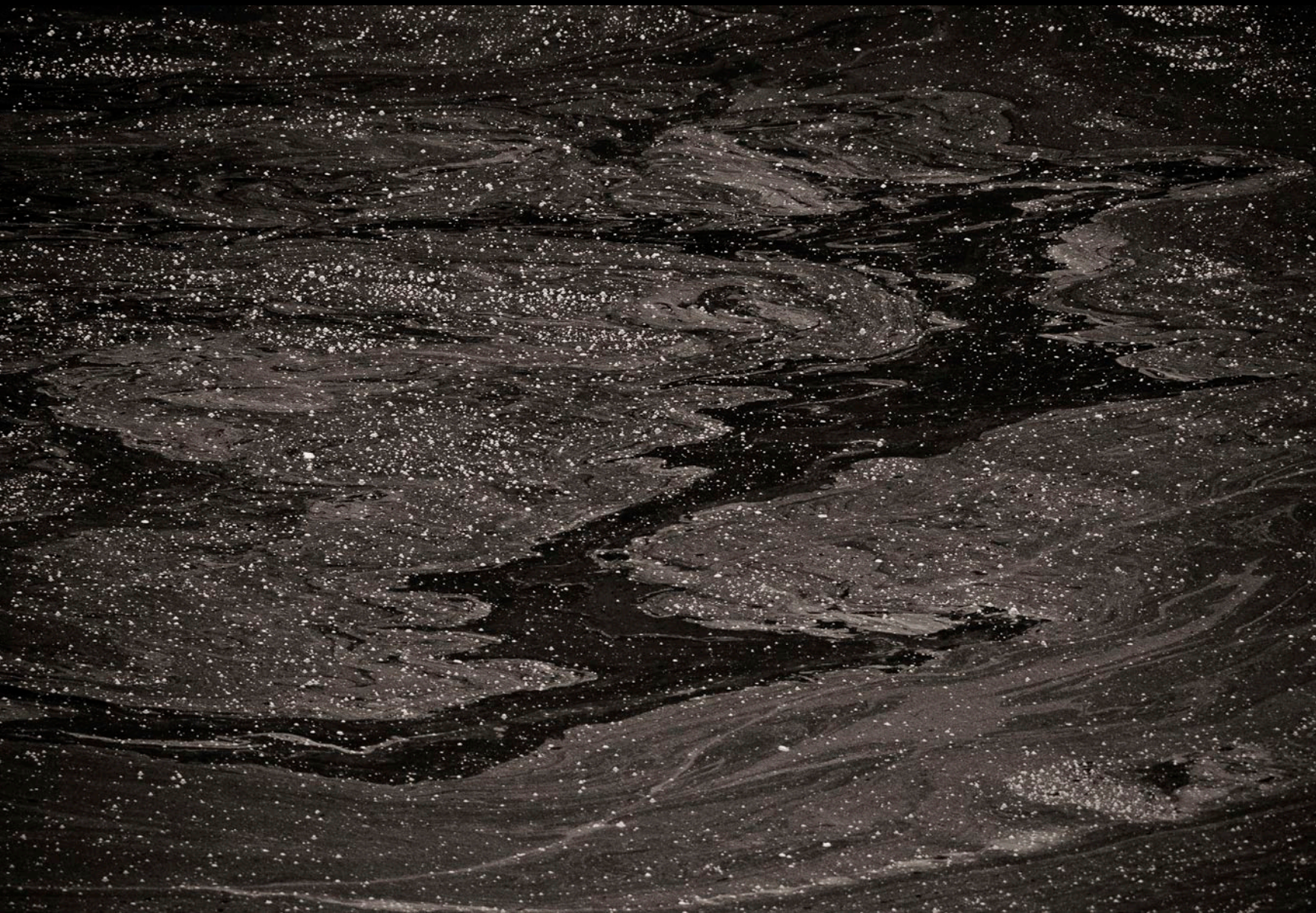
























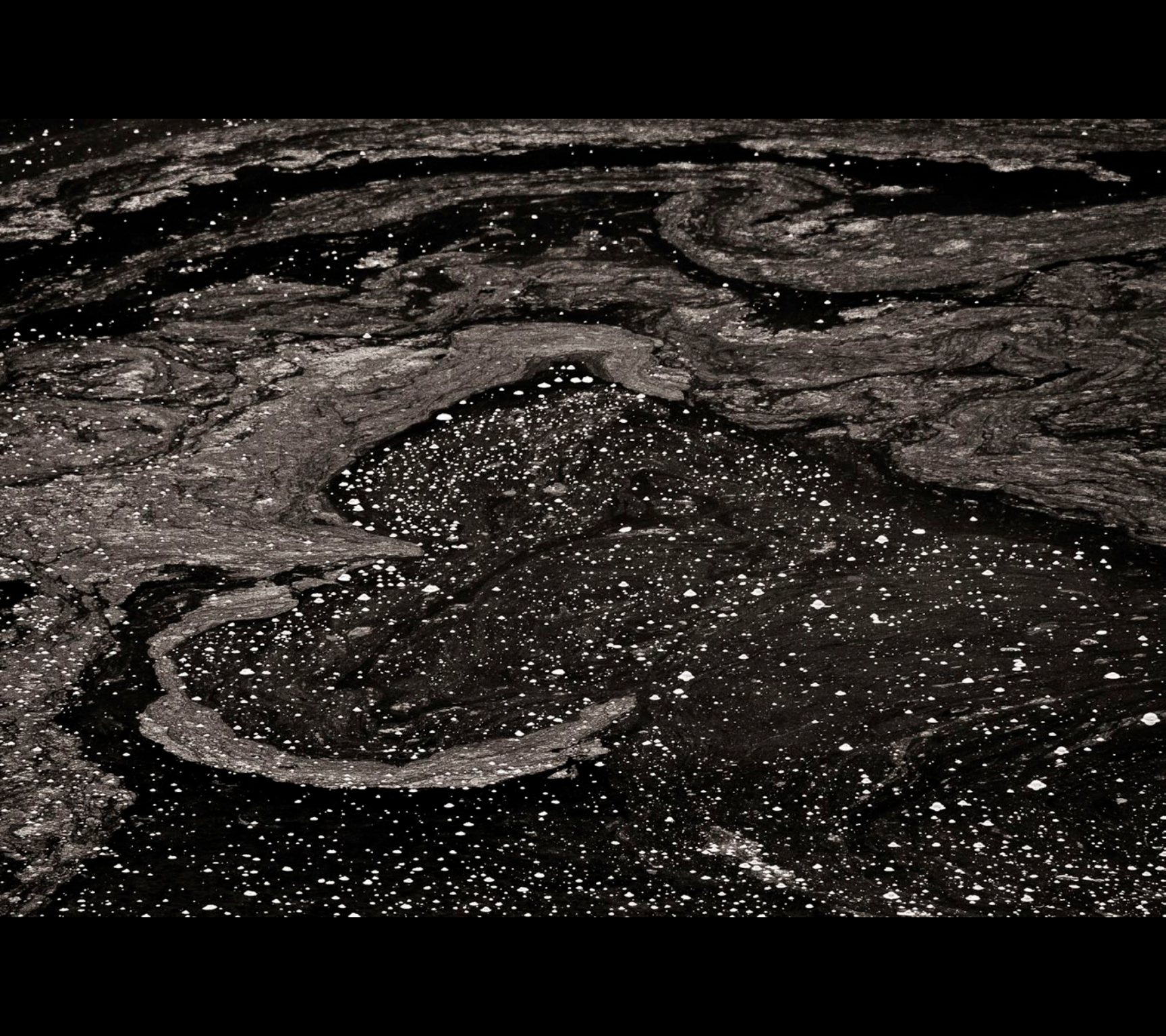












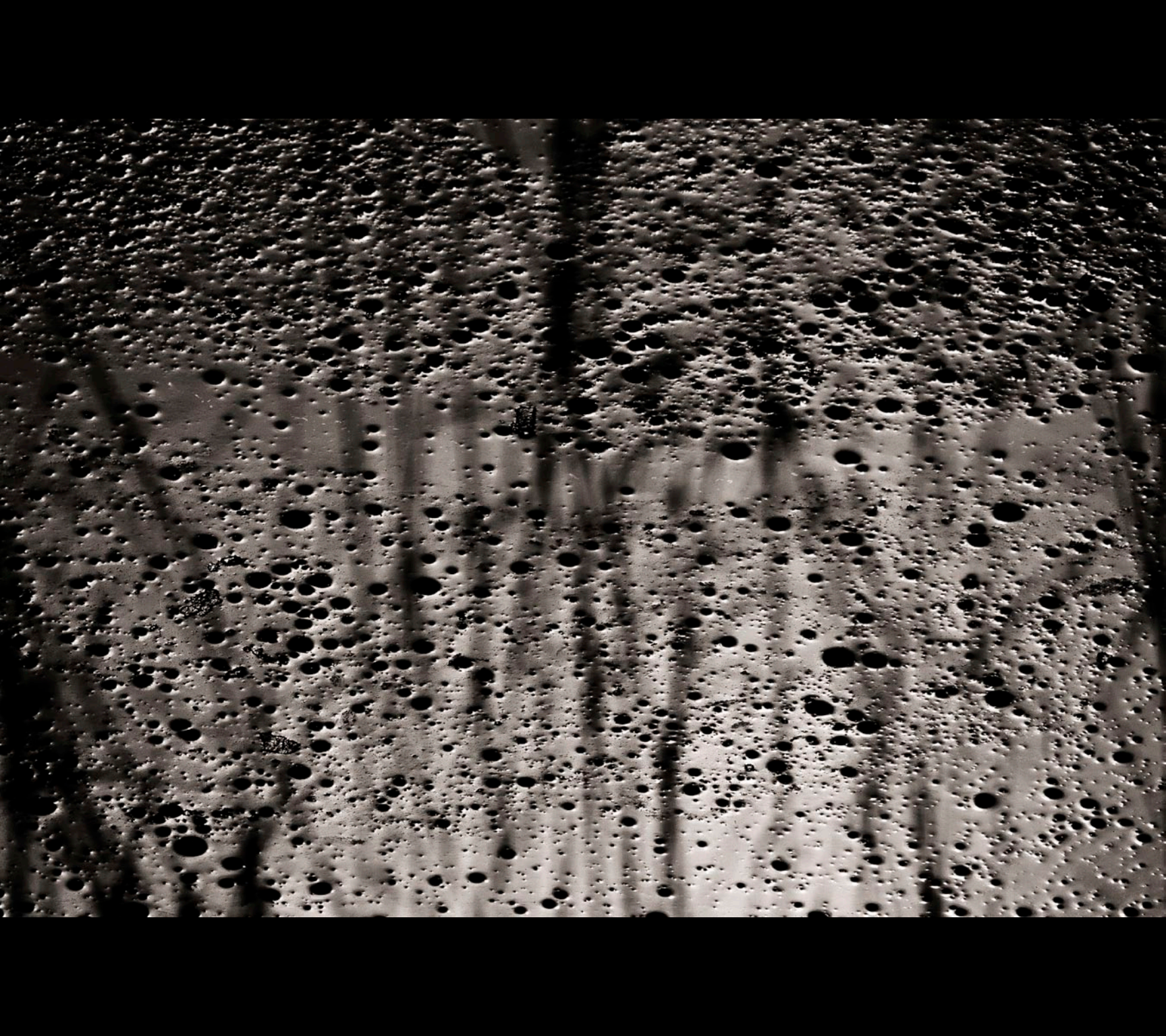








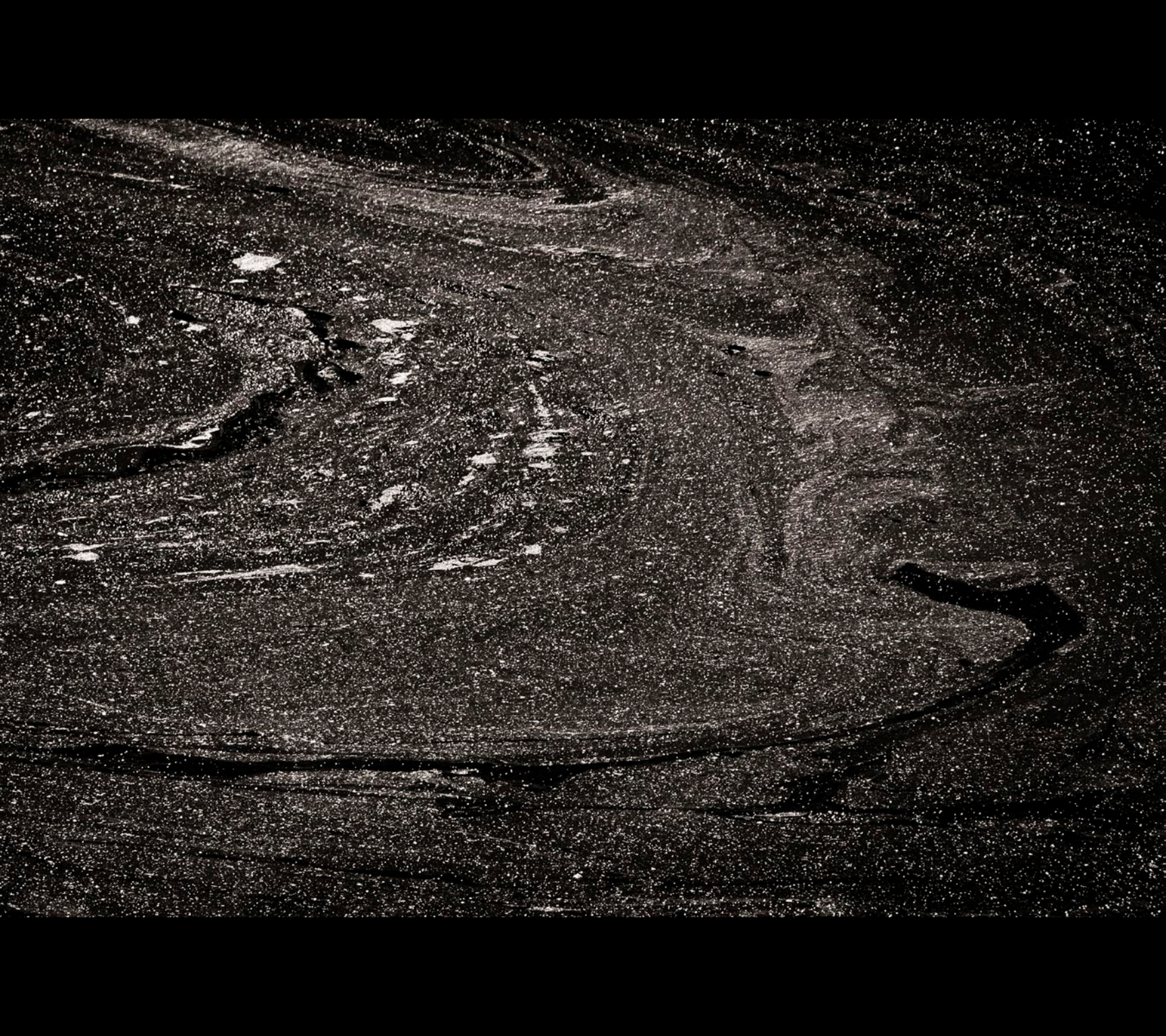














## About These Photographs

In what is surely one of the sagest bits of advice ever offered to photographers, Minor White advised us to photograph “Not only what it is, but what *else* it is.” Indeed, photography itself is a metaphor. How else can one describe a two-dimensional monochromatic art form used to image a three-dimensional world with infinite colors? Every photograph, whether we embrace it or not, attempts to show “what else it is.”

The photographs in this project are of Teal Slough — a tidal mudflat of no consequence and no importance on the Long Beach Peninsula in Washington state. I spent several days photographing the ebb and flow of the tidal waters and the detritus it carried in and out with each change of the tide. I should add, I did so much to the amusement of my photographic friend and the bewilderment of those who drove past. Their quizzical looks told that they no doubt wondered what in the world was worth photographing as they slowed to view me precariously perched on the far side of the highway guard rail, camera pointed toward the muck. What in the world, indeed.

What you see in these photographs is not what you would have seen had you been standing next to me gazing down toward the slough. The photographic process offers considerable flexibility in allowing us to change the tonal values so they more closely match our artistic intent. It has often been said that photographers don't *take* photographs but rather *make* them. This is definitely the case with this project. The star-like, galaxy-like appearance in these photographs is a function of artistic license, not photographic reality. Nothing has been morphed or added, but the tonal values have been significantly altered so as to



create the illusion of these star-like images. The muse often whispers and leaves it to us — and the craft of photography — to amplify that whisper for others to hear.





# *Sketches*



*An ePublication Series by  
Brooks Jensen*

## *Worlds Within Worlds*

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This project has also been produced as a folio of 10 prints and as a PDF ePublication,  
as well as an artist's chapbook of 6 pages.

For more information, visit [www.brooksensenarts.com](http://www.brooksensenarts.com)

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