

Dec-2002

The Iceland Suite: Monotypes

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Recommended Citation

Hausrath, Joan (2002). The Iceland Suite: Monotypes. *Bridgewater Review*, 21(2), 15-18.
Available at: http://vc.bridgew.edu/br_rev/vol21/iss2/8

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The Iceland Suite

Monotypes

by Joan Hausrath

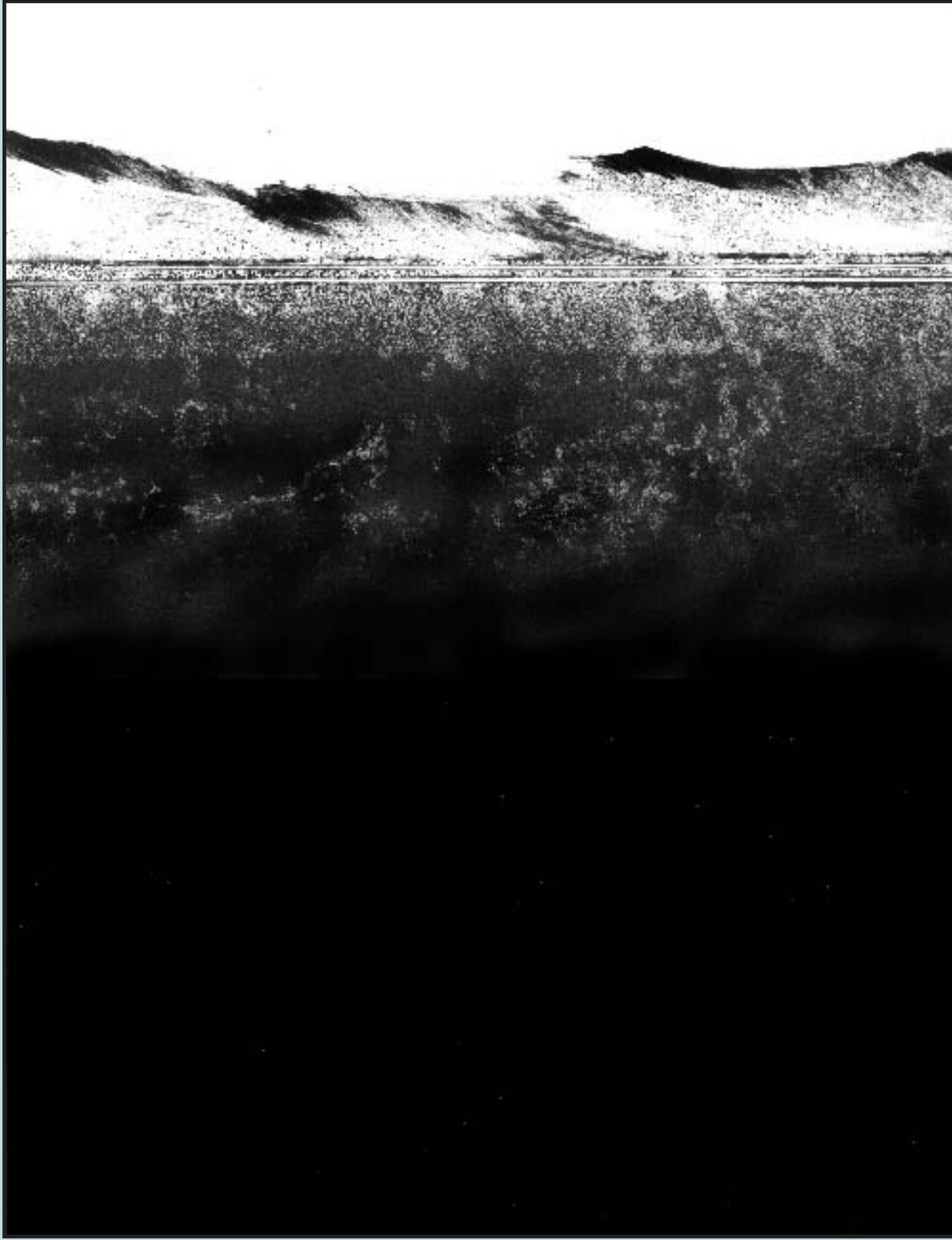


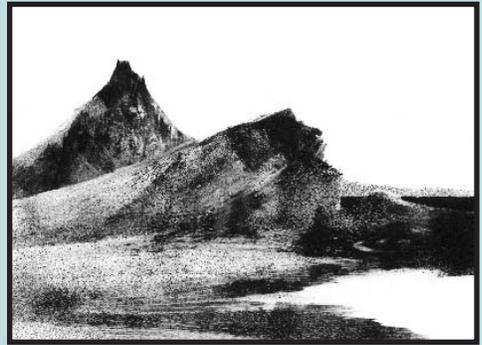
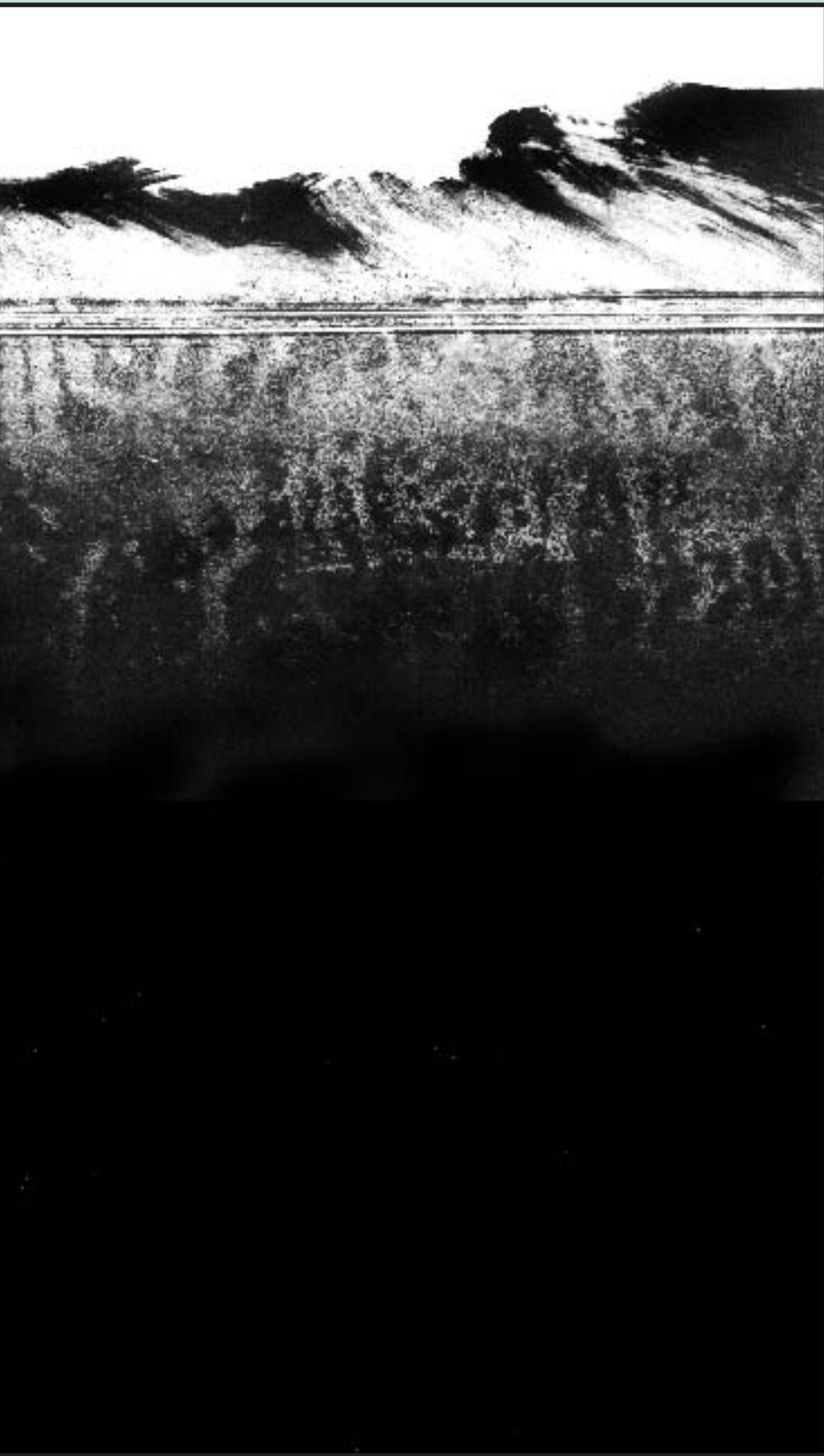
Photograph by Greg Thomas

While traveling in Iceland in June 1999, I was greatly taken by the variety of forms and textures as well as the dramatic expansiveness of the treeless Icelandic landscape. Not only did the visual beauty of the countryside move me, but I also responded with awe to the natural phenomena of volcanoes, glaciers, steam, water, and wind and how they left their impact on the terrain.



THE ICELAND SUITE *JOAN HAUSRATH*





After returning from the trip, I made a number of exploratory drawings and several monotype* prints inspired by what I had experienced. My goal was to capture the essence of the rugged beauty of Iceland through scale, form, and technique. My images were based on memory and on the photographs that I took during my trip.

I set out to create a portfolio of twenty 9" x 12" monotype prints, to explore the spirit of the Icelandic landscape—the variety of surfaces, textures, and forms created by volcanic eruptions, lava, glaciers, erosion, flooding, vegetation, and steam and thermal waters. In developing twenty different images, I challenged myself to express in each a primal connection with the earth using a minimum of graphic definition. For painterly and textural effects, I utilized the properties of the monotype process where ink was applied and wiped, as well as the properties of the ink itself—its viscosity, its solubility. The prints display an economy of visual form. To convey a sense of drama and starkness, I chose to use black and white. Seven prints from the portfolio are on these pages and on the cover.



“A monotype is a one-of-a-kind print. I begin with a drawing. Referring to the drawing, I apply ink to an acrylic plate using brayers and brushes; I wipe and manipulate the ink to create the image. I print the inked image: placing a sheet of damp paper over it, I run paper and plate through an etching press. If the print needs further development, I print over it. Often I am not satisfied with the image as it is first printed, so I remake the print and modify the image. Sometimes I re-ink and reprint and even over-print the same image three or four times. The ink that I use is water-soluble and does not require the use of solvents. It dries permanent and archival.”

*—Joan Hausrath,
Professor of Art*

