

Outer Limits: Travel to the Arctic through Diane Tuft's Lens

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Sometimes seeing is believing. The work of multimedia artist and environmental photographer, Diane Tuft, brings the invisible into sight with infrared and ultraviolet photography.

Her work is heartbreakingly beautiful, communicating the effects of Ozone depletion and global warming on Earth's surface with vibrant colors and deep textures. Diane's commitment to showcasing far-away ecosystems from logistically-advanced vantage points gives us access to otherwise inaccessible parts of the world, like Antarctica and the North Pole.

A true feminine powerhouse, Diane combines her aptitude for art, science, and math to create stunning images of rapidly changing landscapes. Her work is a springboard for discussion, so we'll let her put her own words to it here.

Did you know that you were setting out to be an environmental influence with your photography?

I was very curious to see what would happen if I photographed with infrared film. This approach captures infrared light-wave radiation off of the Earth, a spectrum that we can't see. On film, everything warmer becomes white, and everything cooler becomes dark. That was around 1998.

In 2005, I was able to go photograph the Spiral Jetty in Utah. It wasn't possible for me to get my infrared film through the airport because you can't open or X-Ray it, so this was the first time I shot with a digital camera. While I was flying out in a helicopter, the colors of the Great Salt Lake were so extraordinary, but when I came back to New York and looked at them on my computer, they were even more vivid than I remembered. I learned that the Great Salt Lake absorbs a lot of ultraviolet light due to it being 6,000 feet above sea level, shallow, and salty.

From then on I looked at places in the world that had heightened levels of ultraviolet light and learned that the Ozone Layer is meant to protect us from ultraviolet light, so Ozone depletion leads to an abundance of ultraviolet radiation reaching the Earth.. This was the beginning of learning about the various causes of climate change, and understanding the visual effect of what I was seeing through the lens.

What areas of the world have had the biggest impact on you?

Certainly Antarctica did, and then Greenland. I visited Greenland to photograph in July of 2007. I returned to Greenland the same time in 2016 and the difference in the landscape was shocking. Nine years ago the temperature was 30 degrees F, and there were huge amazing 150-foot high icebergs jutting out the water of Disko Bay. The Greenland ice sheet was a blanket of soft snow studded with cryoconite holes.

In 2016, the temperature was 65 degrees F. It was so warm that my window in the hotel was open at night., Disko Bay was filled with teeny little icebergs and the fluffy white snow of the ice sheet had been replaced with ridges of silt and ice emerging from meltwater ponds and lakes. Rapids flowed underneath several glaciers.

You have accomplished so much. More and more, we read about the role that self-care plays in manifesting a successful life. Can you tell us a little about how you invest in yourself?

My whole life I've eaten very organic. I was always very environmentally astute and concerned with what we put in our body and on our body. In terms of fitness, I like variety. I work out two days a week, do pilates two days a week, and yoga once a week. A holistic mind and body approach to wellness.

No matter where I've been in the world, I never skip cleansing, or go without moisturizer: it's something that I do just like brushing my teeth. Even while hiking to 19,000 feet in Bhutan with no access to water for showering, I still washed my face and moisturized.

Can you tell us about your recent work and upcoming book, *The Arctic Melt: Images of a Disappearing Landscape*?

I decided to go to the Arctic because the Arctic ice is melting quickly and I wanted to capture it before it disappeared.. The Arctic is closer to the sun and has more ocean and less land compared to Antarctica. Since the ocean is dark, it absorbs the light radiation and becomes warmer. White ice reflects rays back into the atmosphere so that when there is less ice, more heat is absorbed by the ocean.. Ocean rise is caused by the thermal expansion of the ocean , the melt of mountain glaciers and the melting of the Greenland ice sheet. This will result in coastal flooding and less land. What happens to all of these people in low lying places like Bangladesh?

The Arctic Melt features photographs of the North Pole, the mountain glaciers of Svalbard, Norway, and the icebergs and ice sheet of Greenland and chronicles the fastest rate of ice thaw in history.

Diane Tuft's recent video work will be displayed at The March for Science in Washington DC on April 22th. Her first foray into video, the footage is as close to witnessing the arctic melt in real time as possible, without physically being there.



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The team at Tata Harper Skincare is passionate about promoting a modern, health-conscious natural beauty lifestyle that's committed to safety, honesty and sustainability.