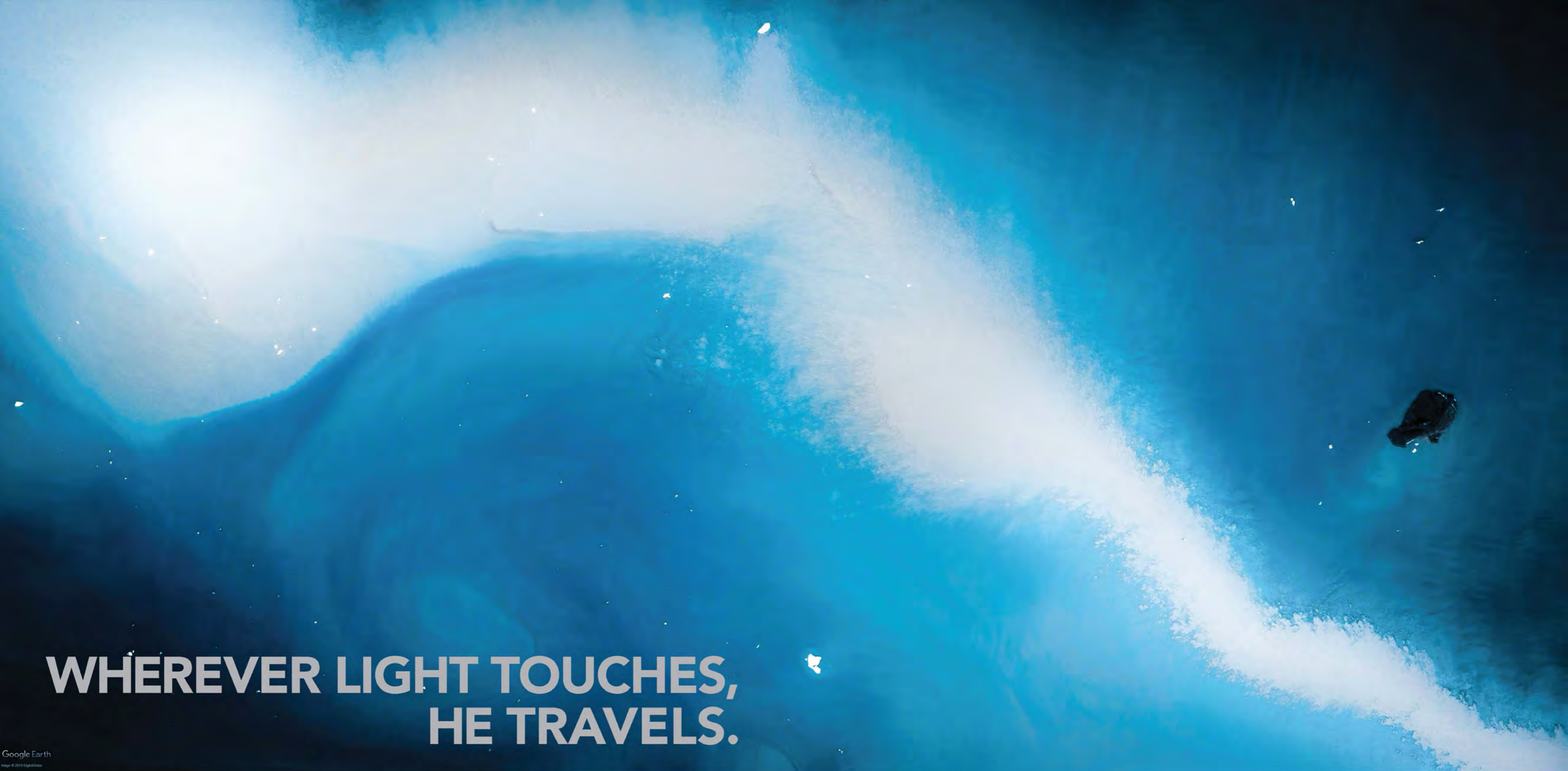


GOOGLE SPACE

Medford Deforest
[@deforest.medford](#)



WHEREVER LIGHT TOUCHES, HE TRAVELS.

Google Earth
Image © 2013 DigitalGlobe

Artist Interview with Medford Deforest by Mina Khouzam

Before the monumental heights of Alborz, northern Tehran's mighty mountain range, a young child playing in his neighborhood street once stood, chasing the setting sun with his eyes. A light that nurtured his curiosity of lines, of colors and shades, gave way to a love of shapes, energy, and the formation of concepts. But like a fleeting treasure before an explorer, the sun sought its daily refuge beyond the highlands, with its final glimmers of hope calling out to the inner child to explore the world beyond. The coming darkness of space would silently scream out its "limitlessness" to him.

This child grew up to be the award-winning multimedia artist, Medford Deforest, currently working towards his BFA in Photography at the New York Film Academy. Medford Deforest, as his name suggests, is invested in forests of visual thought. His pieces thematically speak to one's search for purpose amidst the spatial forests of the universe and our minds. Medford loves everything about light, space and time. In 2020 he applied to go to a Mars program even though there was a chance of no return. It's no surprise that he has seen the film *Interstellar* (2014) over ten times. The following text is a transcription from my interview with Mr. Deforest.



MK: You are a photographer who mostly mines Google Earth for your imagery. Is Google Earth your camera?

MD: Yes. If we live in a simulation as some scientists suggest, then a camera is a simple application used to interact in the environment by our Avatar. Also, in a build simulation like Google Earth, we still need a tool to capture the image. The Print Screen key or a camera button do the same thing within the simulation. I am becoming more and more accustomed to the reality of the virtual world through Google's lens. It enables me to question the world and discover beauty beyond our physical realm. I Initially used Google Earth to travel through space, back to my roots, to my family, a kinship of hearts rooted geographically beyond my reach. With current political conflict, this software provided a way to connect across borders. No longer limited to time or space, I began to travel this new world, chasing the light, over mountain tops and water-bodies, morphing them into powerful composite presentations and still images that parallel the energies of galactic-bodies amidst backdrops of stellar scatterings.

MK: You seem to use a lot of post-production to create your visual world. Has that ever presented a challenge?

MD: I am either a photographic purest shooting 4x5 film that I print myself in the darkroom, or I am on a virtual quest, and in that practice, I utilize Adobe Photoshop to make the images my own. I manipulate the Google captures to parallel the energies of galactic-bodies amidst backdrops of stellar scatterings that I see in my mind's eye. I once attempted to composite over two hundred pictures together, but the computer froze and wouldn't let me save! That was a challenge.

MK: Tell us about your newest project "Google Space?"

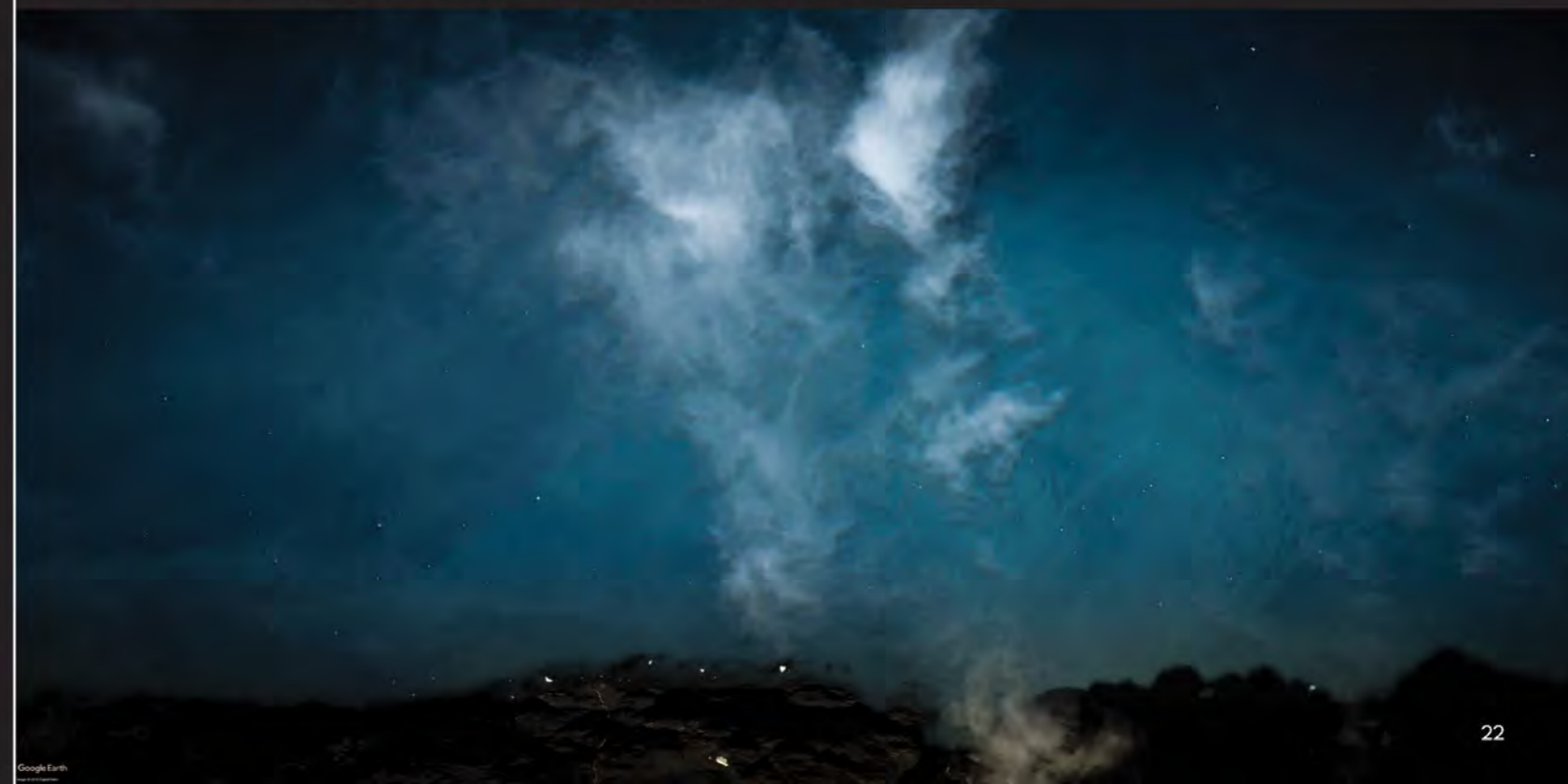
MD: The work, selected here, explores a palette of colors that take the viewer to familiar settings but different spaces and personal moments of deep reflection through the dark tones of both the universe and the self.



MK: I hear you are a firm disbeliever of the '69 moon landing. How does this questioning of reality play into this project?

MD: It's true, it's always struck me as fake. For one thing, the lighting and shadows were all off. They didn't have light from their vehicle, and even the camera manufacturer stated the camera couldn't work in lunar conditions such as toxic exposure to radiation from the Van Allen radiation belt. My Google Space project was in part inspired by my need to draw on the realism that these Google simulations enable. The mountaintop skylines invoke the young child that still looks up to space and sees infinity.

Today, Medford still heeds the invitation, beckoning the light, having taken him on a journey of discovery of both the cosmos and the Earth, the highlands, and his neighborhood streets, and ultimately, himself. Stay tuned for more from this rising art star and fascinating traveler of time and space.



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- Medford Deforest

