

Jim Denevan: Earth Drawings
Collection CAE1312

Introduction/Abstract

Self-taught artist Jim Denevan began creating ephemeral drawings in beach sand, then later on dry lakes in the desert and on frozen surfaces in the mid-1990s. Materials include extensive digital files on all ephemeral drawings since the early 2000s, including press, sketches, research materials, aerial and satellite photos.

Biographical Note: Jim Denevan

Self-taught artist Jim Denevan grew up as a surfer in Santa Cruz, California, where he worked his way up through restaurant cooking to become a head chef, then the founder in 1999 of Outstanding in the Field, the long running traveling farm dinner series that has helped inspire interest in the farm-to-table movement across the country. In the mid-1990s he began creating ephemeral drawings in beach sand, then later on dry lakes in the desert and on frozen surfaces, such as Siberia's Lake Baikal, where he made what is currently the record holder for the largest drawing in the world.

Scope and Content

Jim Denevan began making ephemeral drawings on the beaches near his home in Santa Cruz in the mid-1990s, a response to pressures caused in part by the onset of his mother's Alzheimer's condition. Denevan's mother, a mathematician, did early important work at Stanford on the behavior of light in stacked glass plates, the underlying principles of which were based on the Fibonacci series. That set of equations became an important organizing factor around which Denevan would compose his drawings, which became increasingly geometrical and larger in scale over time. The apotheosis of his work to date are drawings done on the playa of Nevada's Black Rock Desert and the frozen surface of Lake Baikal, the latter the largest drawing ever committed on the planet. Denevan uses pointed sticks and rakes, as well as wheel vehicles to create his drawings, which are erased by wind, tides, and changing temperatures.

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This archive is currently in process.