

# CRATERS OF THE MOON

A Project of The Sun Valley Center for the Arts

May 20-July 30, 2016: Sun Valley Center for the Arts, Ketchum, Idaho

May 20-late September, 2016: Craters of the Moon National Monument, Arco, Idaho

**CRATERS OF THE MOON** is an exhibition in two parts, one at Craters of the Moon National Monument near Arco, Idaho, and one at the Sun Valley Center for the Arts in Ketchum, Idaho. The project celebrates a uniquely Western environment. Located in Idaho about an hour's drive from Sun Valley, Craters of the Moon National Monument is "a weird and scenic" landscape that evolved over eight volcanic eruptions that occurred 15,000 to 2,000 years ago. (The hot spot underneath Yellowstone National Park is the same one that created Craters' lava fields.) Craters is a vast sea of black lava flows, tubes, caves and cones, dotted with sagebrush and other vegetation and punctuated by wind-sculpted limber pines. The area first gained attention when Robert Limbert

walked the 50-mile length of its Great Rift in 1920 and then began lobbying for National Park designation.

Coinciding with the National Park Service Centennial, the exhibition at the Sun Valley Center for the Arts features work by five artists, each considering Craters of the Moon from different points of view. The Sun Valley Center for the Arts has commissioned two of these artists to create large-scale, site-specific sculptures that will be located at Craters of the Moon National Monument during the summer of 2016 before being relocated to sites in the city of Ketchum in the fall.

## OUTDOOR SCULPTURES AT CRATERS OF THE MOON NATIONAL MONUMENT

**JOHN GRADE** visited Craters with The Center's curators in January 2015, camping overnight at the park. Struck by its extraordinary geology, he returned in September 2015 to digitally scan the interior of a lava tube that is the basis for a 75-foot long sculpture that he is currently constructing. Large enough for visitors to pass through, the sculpture is constructed of standing deadwood cedar from Alaska. The journey through Grade's sculpture will mimic the experience of exploring caves within the park. During the summer of 2016, the sculpture will be sited at Craters of the Moon's East Overlook, a scenic pullout along U.S. Highway 20/26/93 located approximately one mile east of the entrance to the park's Visitor Center.



John Grade, model for *Spur*, 2016, courtesy the artist

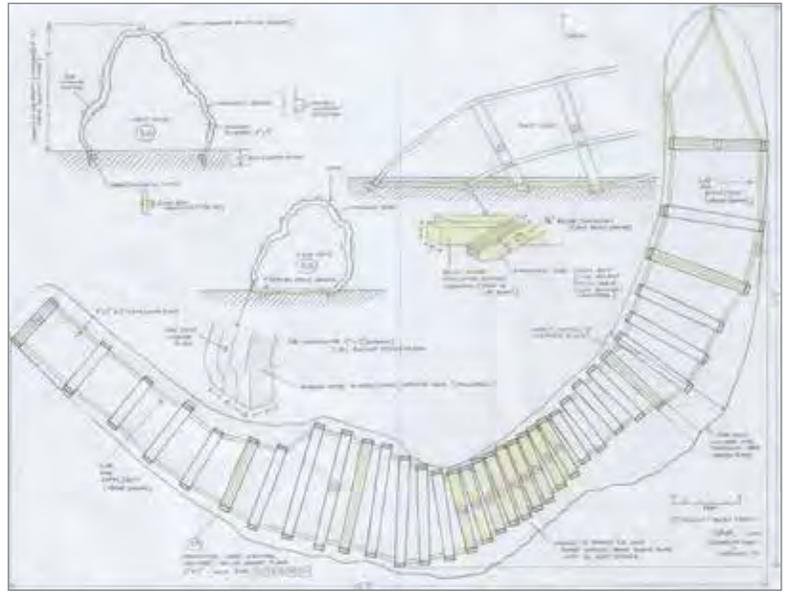
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## OUTDOOR SCULPTURES cont'd

In the fall of 2016, after its tenure at Craters of the Moon, the sculpture will be re-installed on a long-term site adjacent to a 20-mile long bike path that links the cities of the Wood River Valley (Sun Valley, Ketchum, Hailey and Bellevue). The path was built along tracks the Union Pacific Railroad once traveled, and the site Grade has chosen still holds a small section of track. The sculpture's charred black surface and the horizontal spines running the length of the sculpture evoke railroad tracks and allude to the bike path's history, as does the sculpture's title, *Spur*.

Grade has executed numerous large-scale projects at museums in the United States and Europe. Most recently, he received national attention for *Middlefork*, commissioned for the inaugural exhibition at the newly reopened Renwick Gallery at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. To create *Middlefork*, Grade cast a 100-foot section of an old-growth hemlock tree in Washington State and then worked with hundreds of volunteers to build a new tree out of a half-million segments of reclaimed cedar.



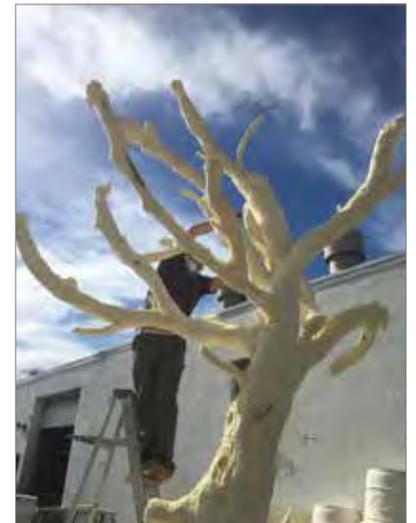
John Grade, plan for *Spur*

**JASON MIDDLEBROOK** also spent time at Craters with The Center's curators last winter. While Grade is focused on the park's geological history, Middlebrook was struck by its ecology. He is currently at work on a steel sculpture modeled on the dramatic form of one of the many dead limber pines that dot the lava flow. Its skeleton will be tiled with slate, giving it the appearance of lava. It will be installed in the park's Old Man Picnic Area, which visitors can access from the park's Loop Road. Middlebrook's sculpture will then be installed long-term in downtown Ketchum's Little Park in the fall of 2016.

Middlebrook has executed several site-specific public art projects, including *Underlife*, at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York, and *Brooklyn Seeds*, a mosaic installation commissioned by the MTA for a subway stop along New York's Q line.



Jason Middlebrook, preliminary sketch, 2015, courtesy the artist



Jason Middlebrook, *Homage to the Limber Pine (1000 Years of High Winds, Heavy Snow and Countless Gazes)* in process, 2016, courtesy the artist

During the summer season, Craters of the Moon's Loop Road is open 24 hours a day. Vehicles must pay a \$10 entrance fee. Those entering by bicycle, motorcycle or foot pay \$5 per person. Individuals age 15 and under enter free.

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## EXHIBITION AT THE SUN VALLEY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Both John Grade and Jason Middlebrook will contribute materials related to their sculptural projects to the exhibition at the Sun Valley Center for the Arts in Ketchum, including photographs, plans, drawings and maquettes.

Three additional artists will also participate in the Ketchum exhibition.



Binh Danh, *Cinders at Craters of the Moon*, 2013, original camera-exposed daguerreotype, courtesy the artist and Haines Gallery, San Francisco

Photographer **BINH DANH** is well known for his experimental work with photographic techniques. Growing up in a family that fled Vietnam for the United States when he was 2, Danh never felt a particular connection to America's natural landscape; camping in the wilderness didn't appeal to his parents, who had lived in camps before leaving Vietnam. Danh, though, had always wanted to see Yosemite, which he knew only through famous photographs. Several years ago he finally visited the park, documenting it in a series of daguerreotypes. The experience made him feel a sense of ownership of the park itself; he quotes Carl Pope in the PBS series *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*: "My sense is that our special connection with the National Parks comes from the fact that we're a nation of immigrants. We're a nation of people for whom this is not home, and the National Parks are what anchor and root us on this continent. They are the meaning of home for many of us."

The Center invited Danh to continue his consideration of national parks, immigration and citizenship with a project at Craters of the Moon. Danh has visited the park twice to make work for the exhibition: daguerreotype landscapes as well as images of different types of volcanic specimens, and portraits of rangers at the park as custodians of the landscape on behalf of all American citizens.

Painter **CINDY TOWER** has twice spent extended periods of time making work at Craters, once as its Artist in Residence. She was drawn to the park in response to the 2011 BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, which was about the same size as the lava flow at Craters, covering 750,000 acres. Mixing tar with oil paint, she produced a series of dense, heavy paintings that are meditations on our human relationship to the landscape (as something to be enjoyed or exploited), and on the physicality of Craters itself, which has a textural and tactile quality like few other places.



Cindy Tower, *Queen's Crown*, 2011, mixed media on fabric and canvas, courtesy the artist and Ochi Gallery, Ketchum

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## EXHIBITION AT THE SUN VALLEY CENTER FOR THE ARTS cont'd



Charles Lindsay, *Sampler*, 2015, reclaimed metal, rock, sound recordings, courtesy the artist

**CHARLES LINDSAY** has visited Craters of the Moon regularly over the past two decades to record sounds, take video and photograph. The exhibition features two new sculptural devices and a composite photograph from his series *Mining the Moon*. A multi-disciplinary artist interested in technology and eco-systems, he has made art at NASA Ames and here references NASA's use of Craters of the Moon as a location for space science research and training since 1969.

The Sun Valley Center for the Arts is located at 191 Fifth Street East in Ketchum, Idaho, and is open to the public from 9am-5pm, Monday through Friday, and from 11am-5pm on Saturdays in July. Admission is always free.

## PROJECT IMAGES



Binh Danh, *Portrait of Sonja Melander* from *Craters of the Moon*, 2013, courtesy the artist



Limber pine at Craters of the Moon National Monument



Aerial view of Craters of the Moon National Monument



Lava tubes at Craters of the Moon National Monument

## SPONSORS

The Sun Valley Center for the Arts has received support for *Craters of the Moon* from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the City of Ketchum and numerous private donors. The Center has also been recommended for a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts under the "Imagine Your Parks" initiative, a grant established in recognition of the NPS Centennial. In addition to financial support, numerous partners have helped make this project possible, including the National Park Service (and their staff at Craters of the Moon National Monument), the City of Ketchum, Idaho Foundation for Parks and Lands, the Blaine County Recreation District and other public and private partners.

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## OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

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**SHEEP HERDING** has been an important part of Idaho's economy for more than a century. Every spring, sheep leave their winter pastures along the Snake River Plain and head north into the mountains of the Wood River and Sawtooth Valleys for summer grazing. Craters of the Moon is itself a site for sheep grazing, which takes place in parts of the monument managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Located very near Craters of the Moon is Lava Lake Lamb, a family-owned ranch producing 100% grass-fed, wild range lamb. Lava Lake is a generous partner in the project and will be hosting a party honoring the project's patrons at their ranch in late June.

As sheep move north and south through the Wood River Valley, they travel along a stock driveway adjacent to the valley's bike path. Once John Grade's *Spur* is sited in Ketchum, thousands of sheep will pass by (and even through) the sculpture each spring and fall.

**SOUTHERN IDAHO IS HOME TO OTHER UNIQUE SITES** that are part of the National Park Service system.

These include:

- **Minidoka National Historic Site**  
Minidoka NHS preserves one of the relocation Centers where Japanese people were imprisoned during World War II.
- **Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument**  
Hagerman Fossil Beds contain the remains of plants and animals from the late Pliocene epoch. Located along the Snake River 30 miles from Twin Falls, the Fossil Beds are little known and not often visited.
- **City of Rocks National Reserve**  
City of Rocks is located in remote, far southern Idaho in the Albion Mountains. The park takes its name from its dramatic granite formations: towers, spires, cliffs and arches created through millions of years of erosion.

Craters of the Moon has a long-standing **TRADITION OF SPACE SCIENCE:**

Collaboration with NASA began in 1969 when Apollo astronauts trained at Craters to gain in-depth knowledge of volcanic features and processes. Thirty years after training here, in 1999, astronauts Eugene Cernan, Joe Engle, and Edgar Mitchell returned to Craters of the Moon to participate in the park's 75th year anniversary celebrations. Staff at Craters of the Moon captured the astronauts' experiences and testimonials in a video for school groups entitled "Return to the Moon." This short film is still used for educational outreach and for the park's Junior Ranger program (aka "Lunar Rangers"). Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve is also an active affiliate of the Idaho Space Grant Consortium, perhaps the only national park unit that is a space grant affiliate. Beginning in 2014, two research projects, FINESSE and BASALT, continued that tradition with new scientific missions here at the park.

- FINESSE (Field Investigations to Enable Solar System Science and Exploration)
- BASALT (Biologic Analog Science Associated with Lava)

Both teams of researchers are examining the lava landscape of Craters of the Moon as analogs for features found on Mars and other cosmic features.

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## THE SUN VALLEY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

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Established in 1971, the mission of the Sun Valley Center for the Arts is to enrich our community through transformative arts and education experiences. The Center's year-round programming includes Company of Fools' professionally produced theater, visual arts exhibitions featuring regionally and nationally recognized artists, lectures, concerts, film, classes in visual and performing arts, play readings and BIG IDEA multidisciplinary projects that explore a theme or idea through multiple events and disciplines. In addition, The Center works to enhance arts education in Blaine County schools by providing elementary school theater education, student gallery tours, in-school artist residencies and performances, arts-based classroom enrichment projects, student and teacher scholarships and professional development programs for classroom teachers. More than 40,000 people attend these events annually. Our programs are supported through the Engl Trust, the Idaho Commission on the Arts, the Idaho Humanities Council, the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, private foundations, proceeds from the Sun Valley Center for the Arts Wine Auction, grants, donations and membership dues.

## PRESS & IMAGE REQUESTS

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Please contact: Holly Bornemeier, Marketing Manager at [hollyb@sunvalleycenter.org](mailto:hollyb@sunvalleycenter.org), 208.726.9491, ext. 116.