



At first light, predawn colors are reflected and distorted by a rare rain puddle in Australia's highly saline Lake Eyre.

**Salt Flats** Lake Eyre might be the bleakest, most featureless place on Earth—a flat, arid salt sink in Australia with only the horizon to define its 3,700 square miles. Yet I went there 16 times in eight years. Why? To create a series of photographs out of infinite space.

I've always been drawn to multiyear projects in remote locations, like the series I shot in Patagonia, Tasmania, and the Himalaya. After that I went back to art school and studied the history and language of my field. It was then that I decided to “remove” the landscape from landscape photography. Lake Eyre was the perfect canvas.

Each winter I would ride my bike to the dried heart of the lake and camp for five weeks, working every day in the harsh sun, wind, and cold. Somehow I never got lonely out there. It was only when I got back to civilization, and sat at a quiet bar, that I felt truly alone.

All artists are interpreters of the world. This series is my attempt to translate the visual power of extreme desolation.

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THE PHOTOGRAPHER

**Murray Fredericks**

*The Sydney, Australia-based photographer's website is [murrayfredericks.com.au](http://murrayfredericks.com.au). For a video version of this series, go to [saltdoco.com](http://saltdoco.com).*



In the midst of a massive drought, two storms—thunder and dust—appeared and painted an apocalyptic portrait over Australia's Lake Eyre. I used a digital camera and stitched together multiple images to capture this panorama.

MURRAY FREDERICKS  
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Pilots who fly over Lake Eyre had told me about a red hue that sometimes appears when the bed dries. I later learned that it's caused by an organism that lives only in supersaline environments.



I took this shot as dawn was breaking, focusing my camera on the black line, which is the lake's edge. I had never seen this shade of yellow before—nor have I seen it since.



In this three-hour exposure during a full moon, the two brightest stars in the sky are described as arcing lines. The cracked bed of Lake Eyre, meantime, resembles nothing so much as a lunar landscape.



Cleanly divided by the horizon line (above), this frame was shot half an hour after sunset. Seen here through my 8-by-10-inch view camera, the clear light of the desert blends right into its reflection on a bit of salty rainwater.

The black line (left) is the edge of the lake, miles away from where I was standing. Working in such a space, I was keenly aware of variations in hue. In this shot, taken just after dusk, I was fixated on the subtle transition of orange to deep blue.