



By: Gilles Decamps
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Hasted Kraeutler presents Planetfall, an exhibition of photographs by Michael Benson. Michael creates intensely detailed views of the solar system, by collecting and composing images he finds by mining the vast archives of raw image data from robotic spaceflight. Planetfall focuses on images taken during the last twelve years by contemporary spacecraft such as the Cassini Saturn orbiter, the intrepid Mars rovers Spirit and Opportunity, and the Earth-orbiting Solar Dynamics Observatory.

Michael Benson's work focuses on the intersection of art and science. A photographer, writer, and filmmaker, Benson studied photography as an undergraduate at SUNY-Albany and attended NYU Graduate Film School. He was an established journalist and freelance writer and photographer before he moved to Slovenia in 1991 to make what became the award-winning documentary, Predictions of Fire, about the controversial Neue Slowenische Kunst (New Slovenian Arts) collective in the context of the Balkan wars of the 1990's. In 1992, in collaboration with the Slovenian arts collective Irwin, Benson created the art performance piece Black Square in Red Square, in which a square of black cloth, 75 feet to a side, was unfurled in Moscow's Red Square in homage to Kazimir Malevich and Suprematism.

Benson has been working with planetary photography under the title Beyond and Planetfall since the early 2000's. His photographs have been widely exhibited internationally, including in museums such as the Smithsonian Institution, and have been published in three books, Beyond: Visions of the Interplanetary Probes (Harry N. Abrams, 2003), Far Out: A Space-Time Chronicle (Harry Michael Benson, Sun on the Pacific ISS 007 Crew, July 21, 2003, 2012 N. Abrams, 2009) and now Planetfall: New Solar System Visions (Harry N. Abrams, 2012). He recently worked with director Terrence Malick to help produce space and cosmology sequences for Malick's film Tree of Life, which drew in part from Benson's book and exhibition projects. The film won the Palm d'Or at the 2011 Cannes Film Festival. Benson is currently working on a fifth book for Abrams, pertaining to electron microscope photography, titled Nanocosmos.