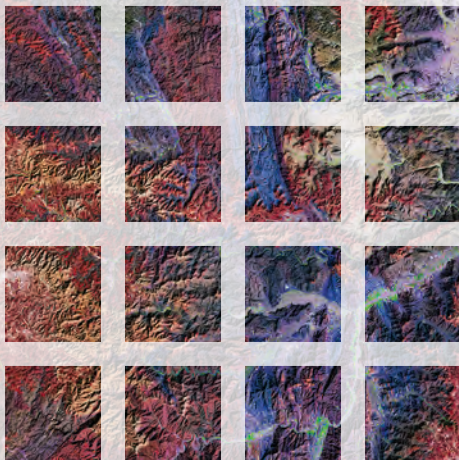
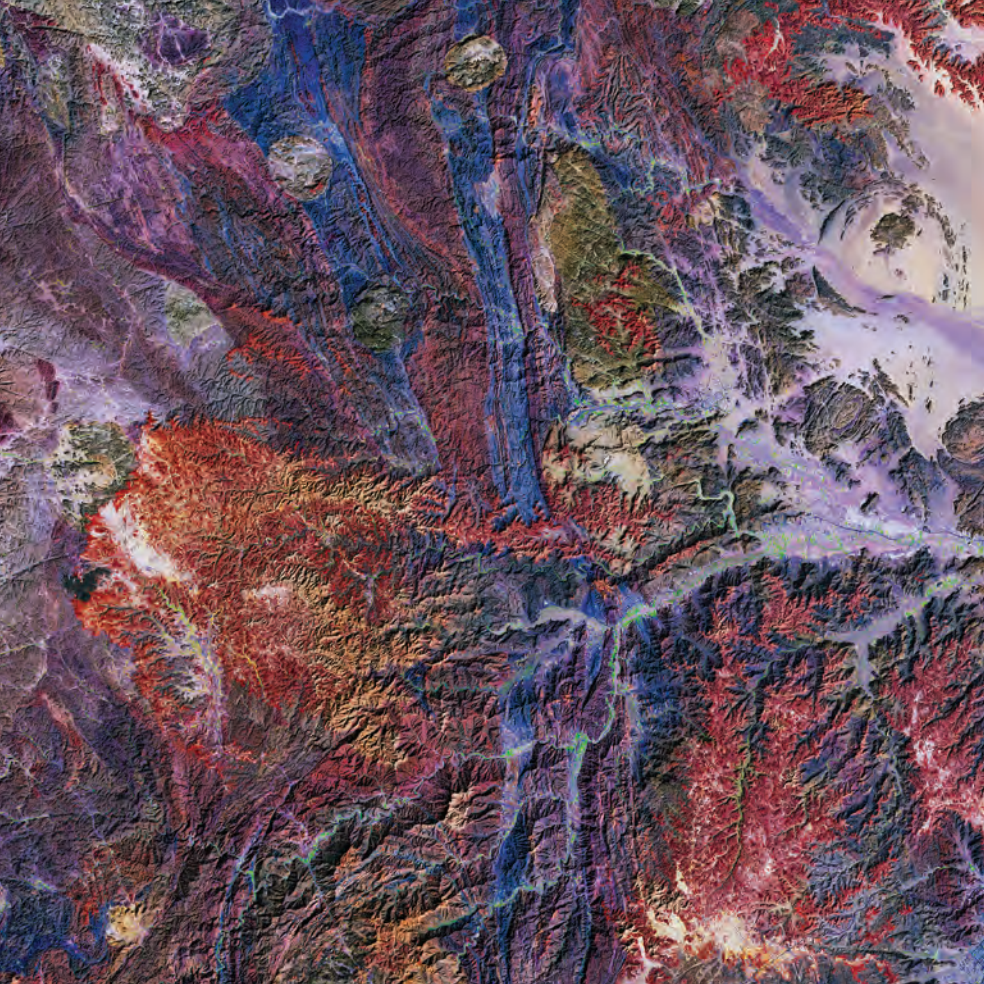


Earth As Art 5



General Information Product 186
Version 1.1, November 2018

U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey



Earth As Art 5

Fanciful Fluorescence. Lurking Madness. Serene Expressions.

The titles of the images in this fifth edition of Earth As Art speak to the powerfully artistic qualities of Earth's natural features when tinged with unnatural colors.

Art serves as a great partner in the communication of science, bringing emotion to the pursuit of understanding. The pieces in this collection look like abstract art but are actual satellite images.

Satellite imagery has long served the rational and disciplined approaches of science to better understand our Earth. But these images can also, with a bit of creativity, excite our imaginations with the beauty and art that surround us.

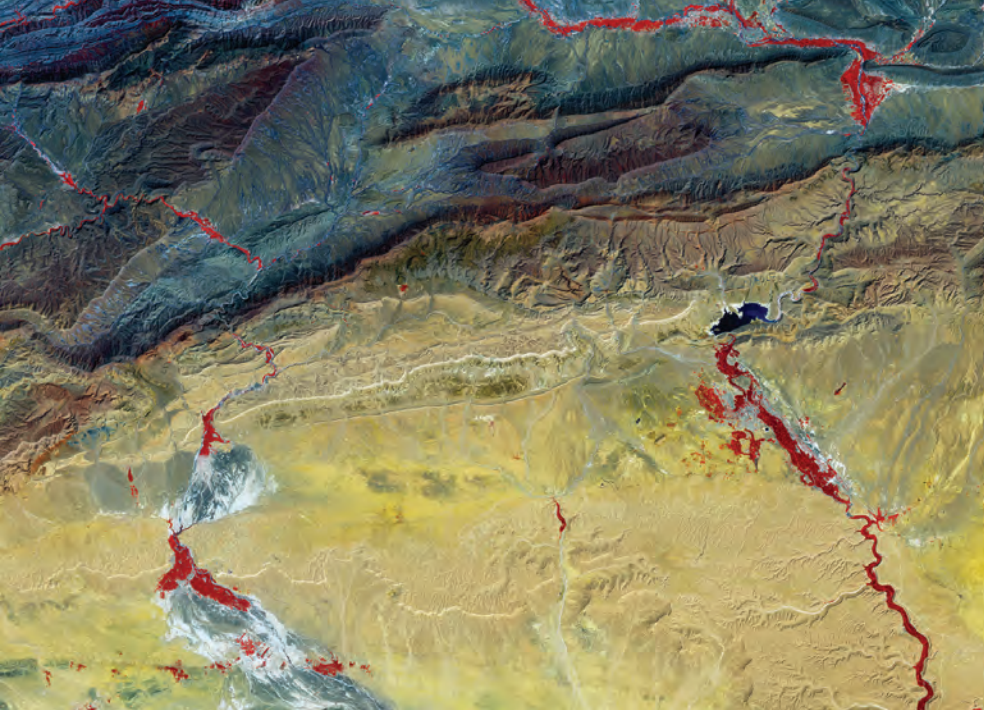
In this newest collection of Earth As Art, we continue to display the Earth as our eyes cannot see it—in creative combinations of visible and infrared light. Although beauty in art is often subjective, the science data provide objective views of the Earth's changing land surface. However, we will let these images speak to you as art. Enjoy the latest additions to Earth As Art!

The images in the Earth As Art 5 collection can be downloaded for free from the Earth Resources Observation and Science (EROS) Center Image Gallery at <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/eros/science/earth-art-5>.



Caspian Scour

In shallow waters surrounding the Tyuleniy Archipelago in the Caspian Sea, chunks of ice were the artists. The 3-meter-deep water makes the dark green vegetation on the sea bottom visible. The lines scratched in that vegetation were caused by ice chunks, pushed upward and downward by wind and currents, scouring the sea floor.



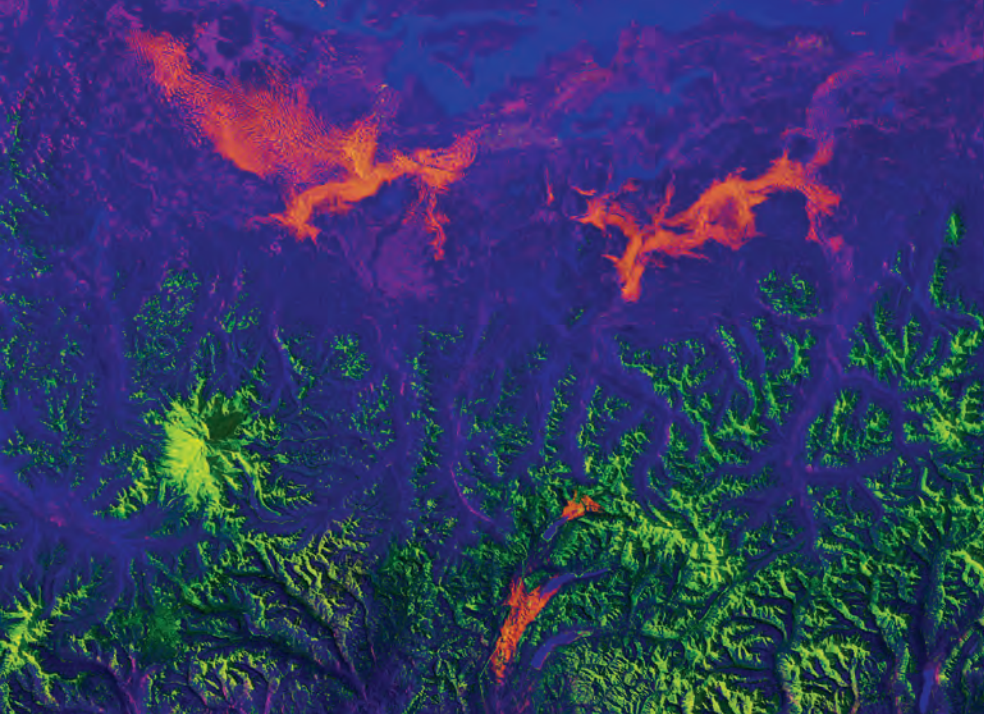
Crimson Streams

Vegetation appears red in this piece, which moves from dark to light in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco. The vegetation grows along streams, which seem to follow a tortured course through the ridges and valleys before wandering through the desert.



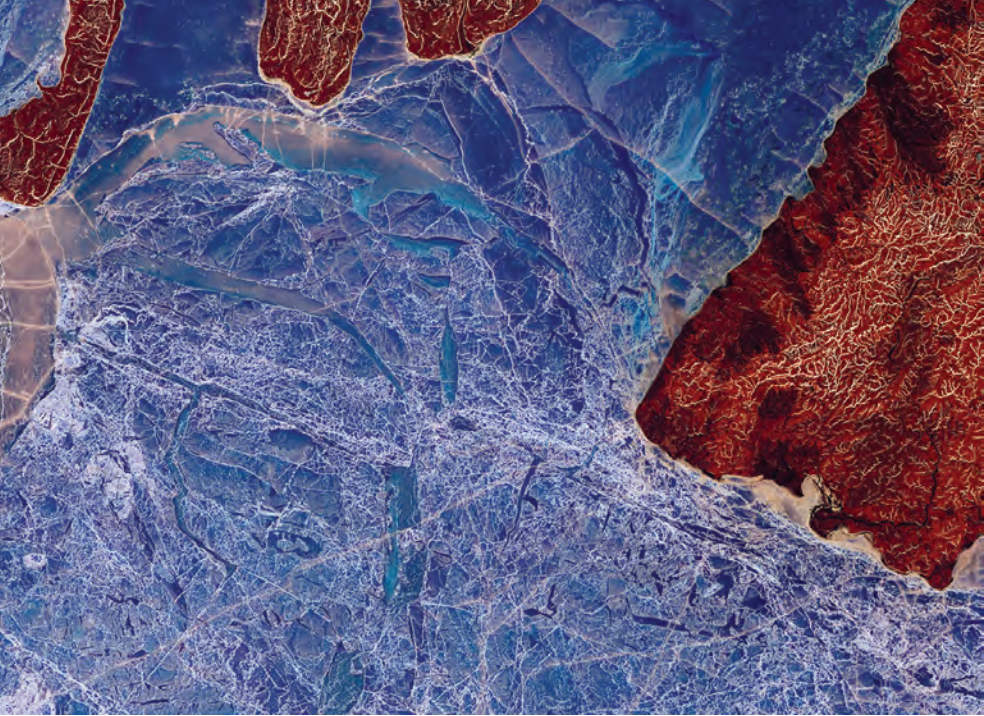
Expressions in the Desert

In a remote part of the Western Desert in central Egypt, highly eroded plateaus rise from the desert floor. The bright speckles are ancient dry lakes, the salt deposits reflecting brightly. Long ago, water flowed off the plateau, forming the breaches seen on the plateaus' edges. This desolate land between oases is surrounded by extensive sand dunes.



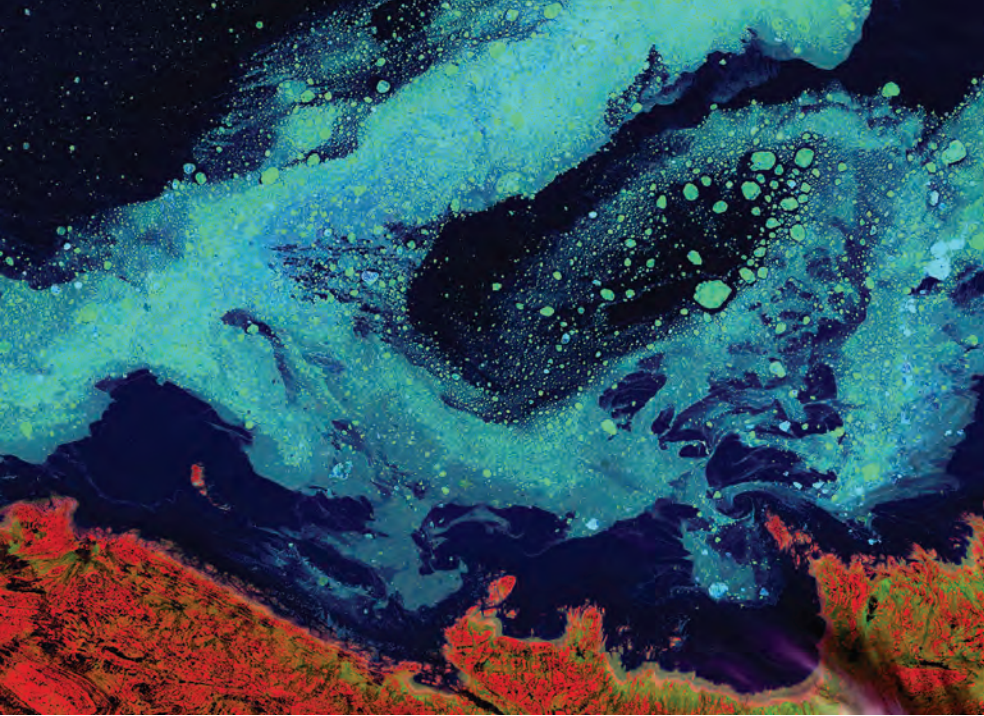
Fanciful Fluorescence

Fluorescent colors dominate this dreamlike scene. The orange shapes look like glowfish in a fanciful underwater world. Those glowfish are actually clouds, and the neon green represents mountains, including Mount Rainier, near Seattle, Washington.



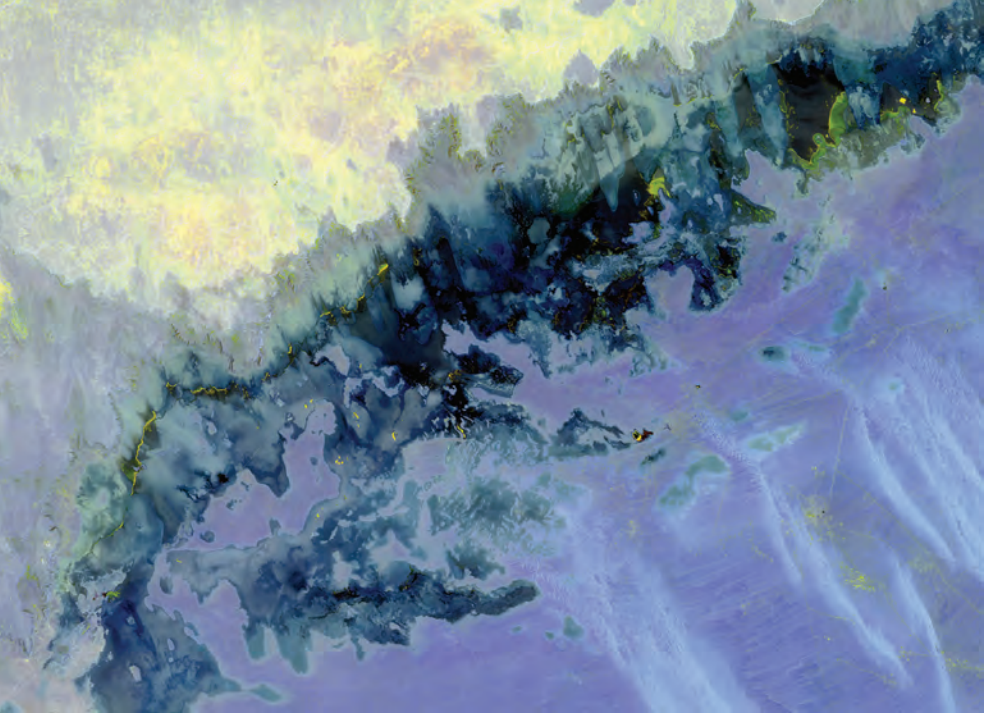
Fractured

Cracking ice on the Arctic Ocean fractures like broken glass in far northern Canada. Uninhabited Eglinton Island is the land on the right. Fingers of land from Prince Patrick Island stretch downward in the upper left of the image.



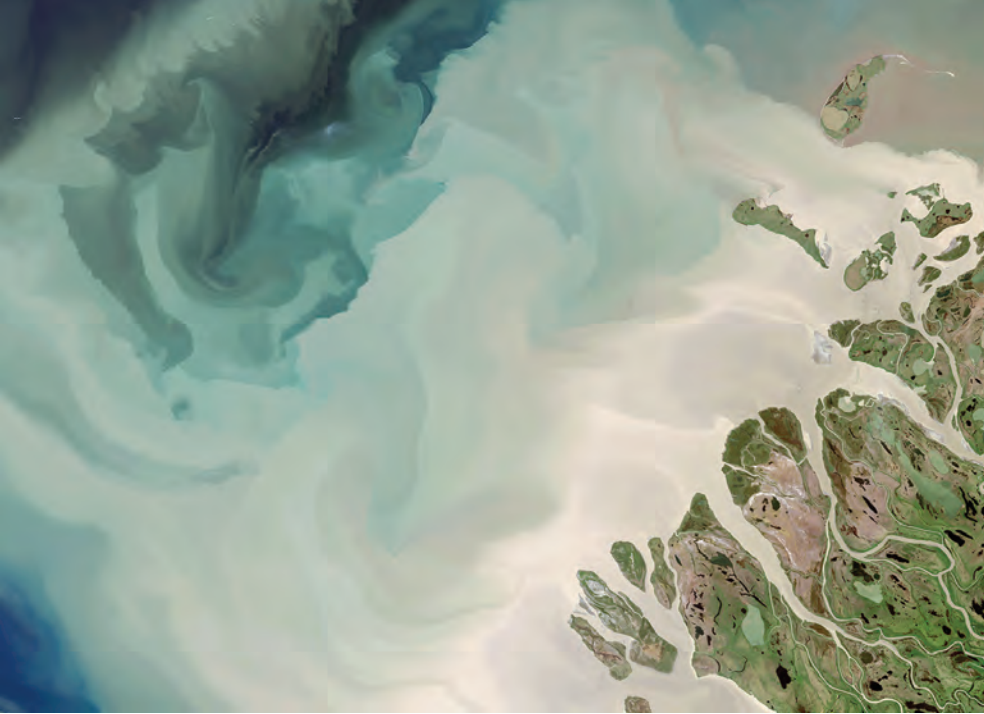
Icy Vortex

Appearing as if an artist imitating Jackson Pollock had randomly spurted ink onto the canvas, this image shows swirling ice in the Foxe Basin of northern Canada. Even though the image is from late July, there was still ice floating in the water this far north.



Lurking Madness

This Landsat image looks like a bold watercolor. Yellow dances across the darkness with muted violet underneath. With a kind of science-fiction flair, this scene shows a portion of the Qattara Depression in Egypt.



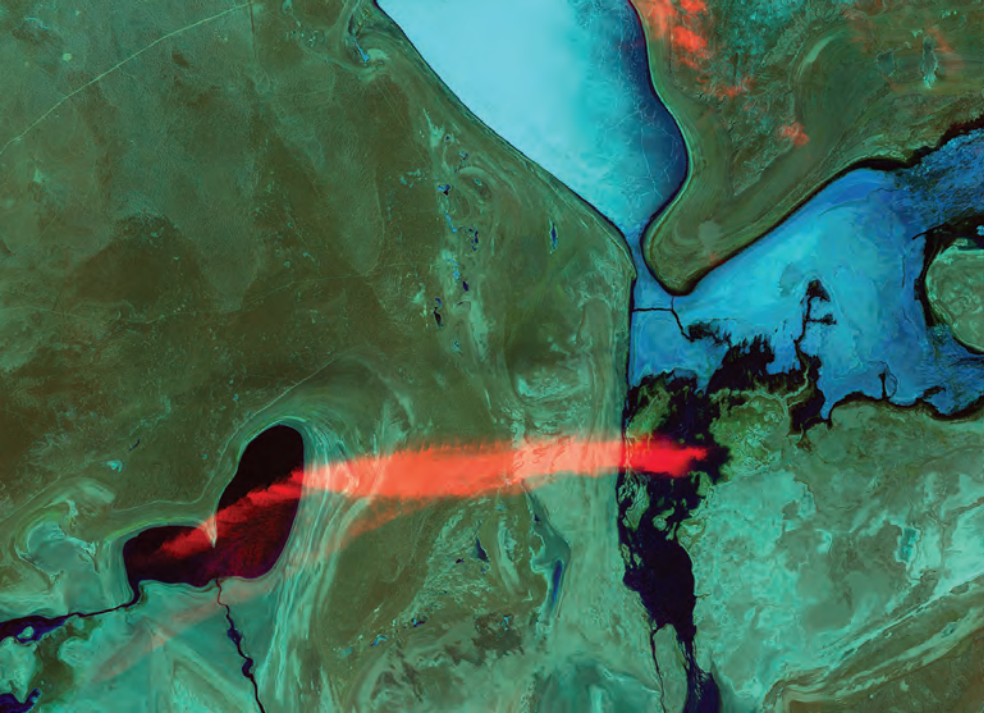
Mackenzie Meets Beaufort

In far northern Canada, pulses of freshwater flow down rivers after inland ice and snow melts. These pulses, known as a freshet, carry huge amounts of sediment. The sediment seen in this image flowed into the Beaufort Sea from the Mackenzie River, the longest northward-flowing river in North America.



Bleak Midwinter

Snow covers the landscape in southwestern Minnesota just a day before the winter solstice. It may look like a stark black and white image, but it is really a natural color image. The Minnesota River flows from the upper left to the lower right.



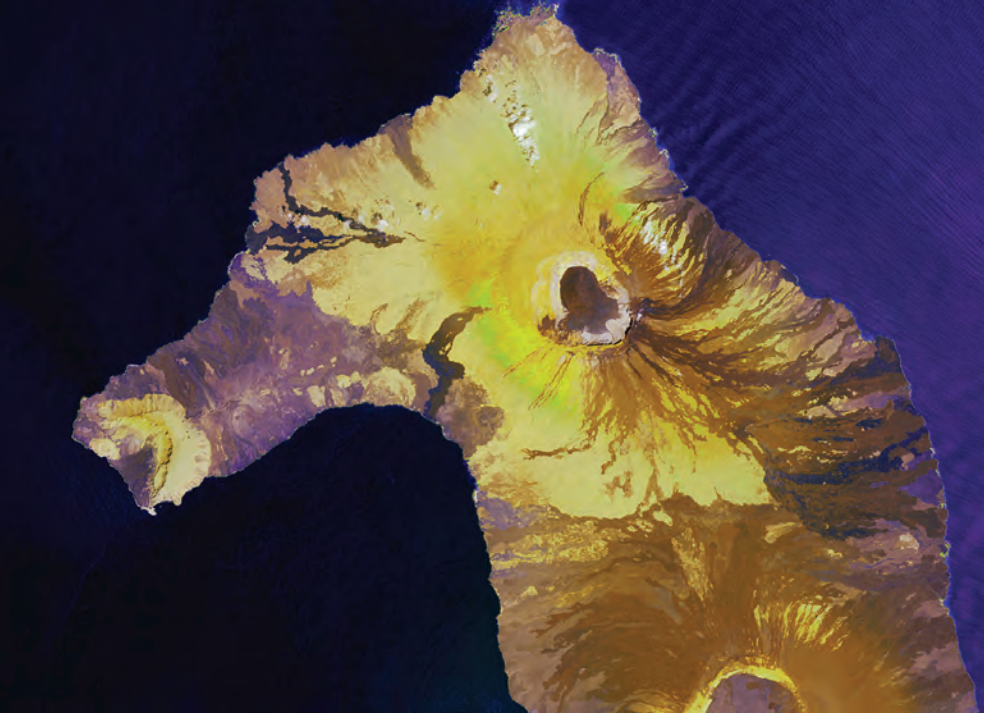
Bleeding Heart

A feathery, blood red streak cuts across the heart of this image. The translucent red paint stroke is not actually a feature of the land. It is a cirrus cloud detected by Landsat 8's cirrus band. This cirrus cloud, which hovers over the Aral Sea in Kazakhstan, is invisible in natural color imagery.



Moody Carvings

These orange shades and ragged shapes give an impression of moodiness. The jagged scars are extensive valleys carved by water flowing from the Andes Mountains in northern Chile. The crater in the lower right is the volcano Cerro Guachiscota.



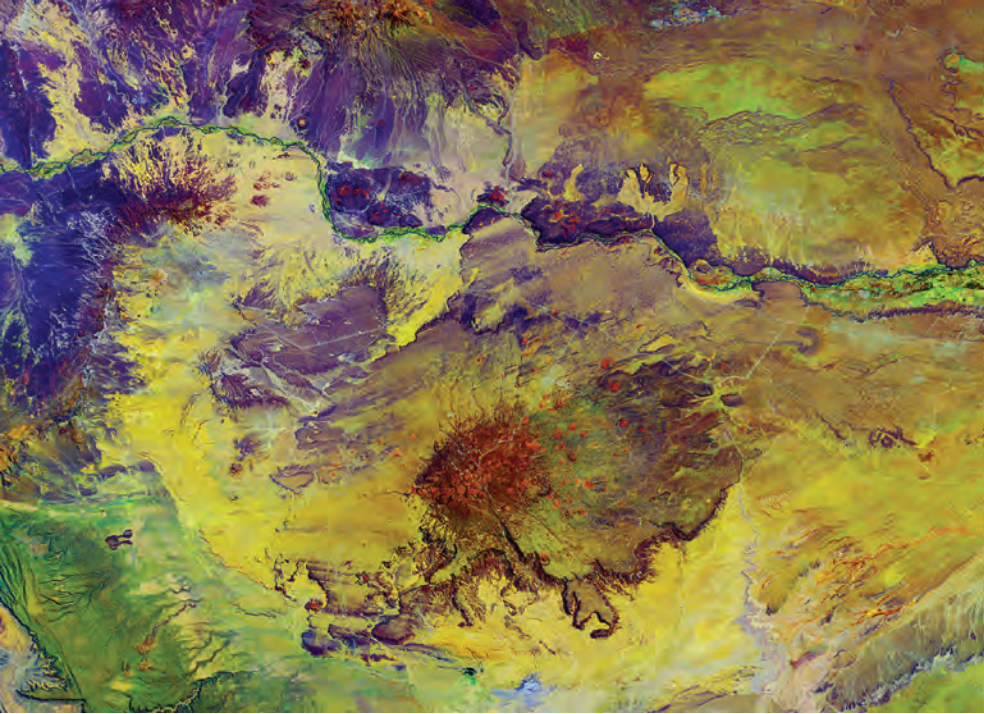
Painted Horse

The northern end of Isla Isabela in the Galapagos looks like a seahorse with warts—with an eye painted in the ancient Egyptian style. The island was formed by the merger of six volcanoes. Wolf Volcano is the prominent one in the center; Ecuador Volcano is the one that forms the seahorse's mouth. Past volcanic flows radiate from the large craters.



Parallel Dunes

Most of this image is in the Simpson Desert Regional Reserve of South Australia. The shallow lakes, appearing in colors ranging from nearly black to aqua blue, are dry most of the time. Here, they seem to stretch with the sand dunes, which extend for hundreds of kilometers.



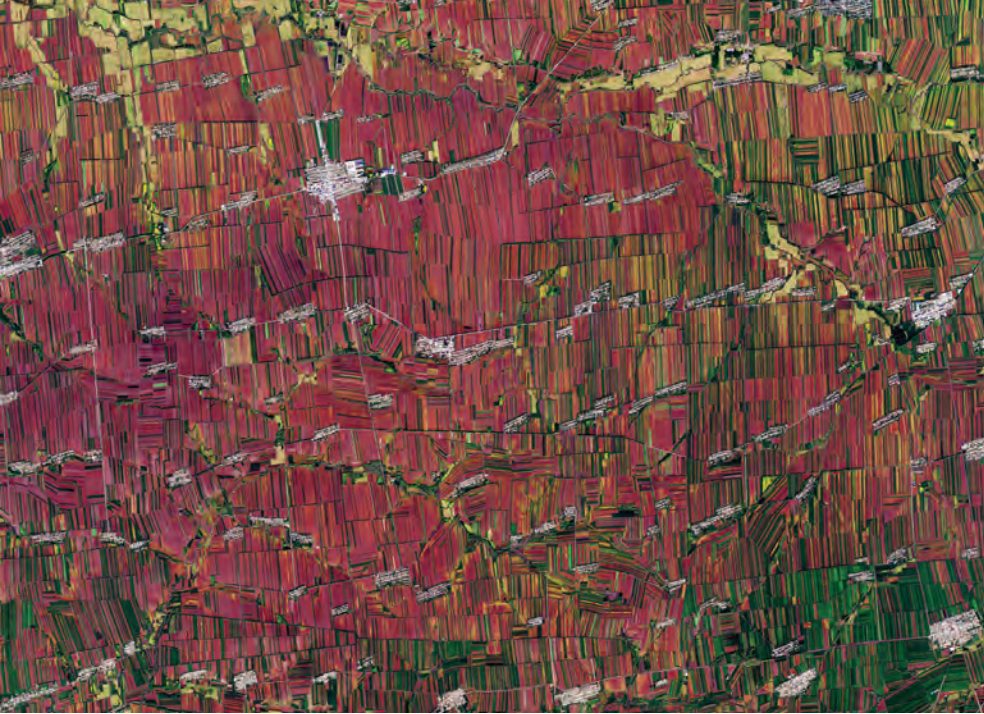
Sabotage

Tranquil colors and patterns intermingle near Argentina's Colorado River, which runs across the upper one-third of the image. The calming textures are interrupted by a violent splash in the center, the result of volcanic action from the Auca Mahuida Volcanic Field from long ago.



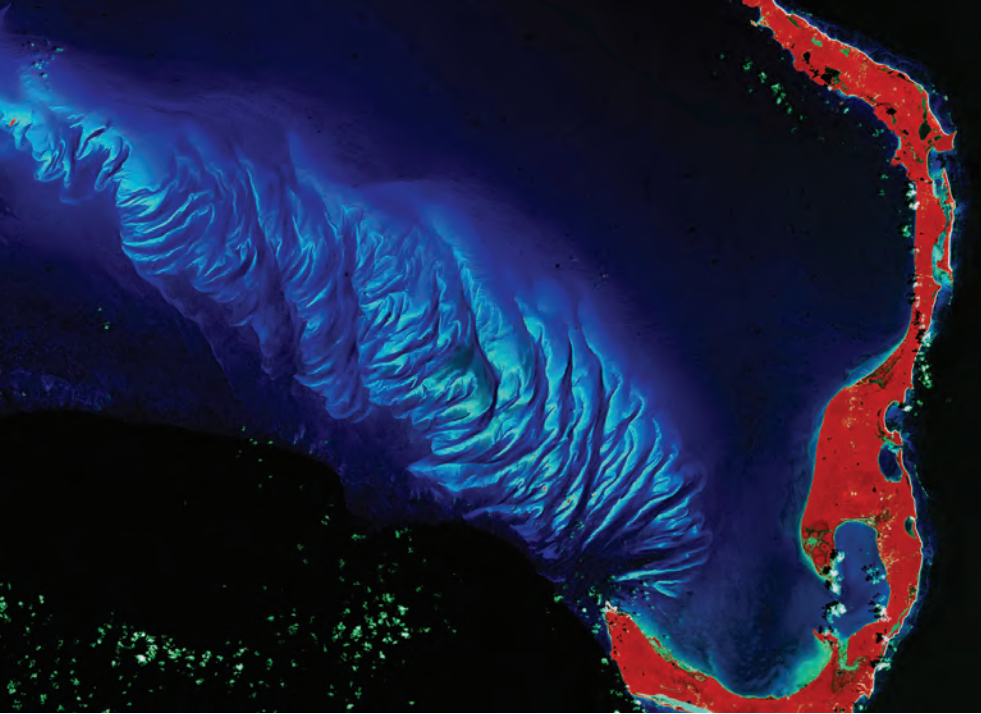
Serene Expressions

A serene gradient from red to smoky blue-gray seems to mask a chaotic scene underneath, expressing a wide range of emotion. Looking like a NASA closeup of Jupiter, this image reveals sediment in the Gulf of Mexico off the Louisiana coast.



Shifting Shapes

Extensive farmland in northeastern China shows a predictable pattern of vertical shapes. But on closer inspection, the shapes begin to look more random, with variances everywhere. Look closely to be surprised by patterns and broken patterns.



Shoal Complex

The main feature here, near Eleuthera Island in the Bahamas, is the Schooner Cays shoal complex. The tidal sand ridges, parabolic bars, and intervening channels explode in a blue rhythm. The Bahamas have the third most extensive coral reef in the world.



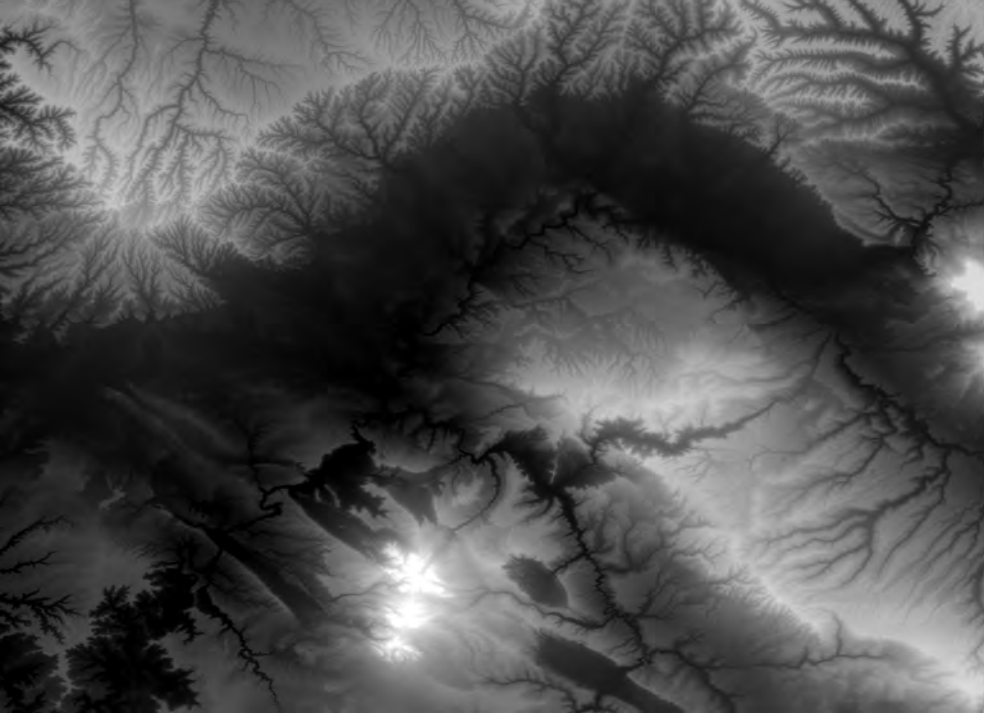
Southwestern Abstract

Abstract figures seem to appear on these South American plateaus. It is reminiscent of Southwestern artistic style with a modernist abstract twist. These farm fields are on the tops of plateaus in northeastern Brazil. Where the edges of the fields are ragged lines, the fields have been planted right up to the edge of cliffs.



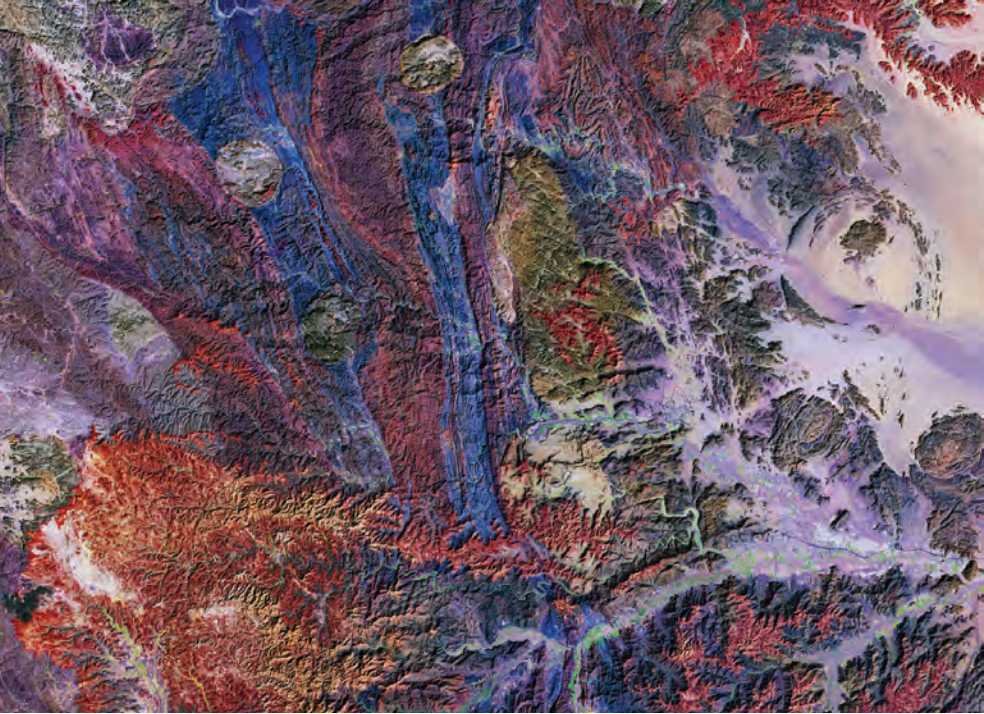
Storm Amid the Calm

Even with the calming blue tones, there is an unsettling feeling in the jagged marks that lead to a circular feature. This feature is Gweni-Fada Crater, a meteorite impact crater in the Ennedi Plateau of northern Chad. In addition to the tension between calm and storm, there is a sense that this scene could pass as a view on another planet.



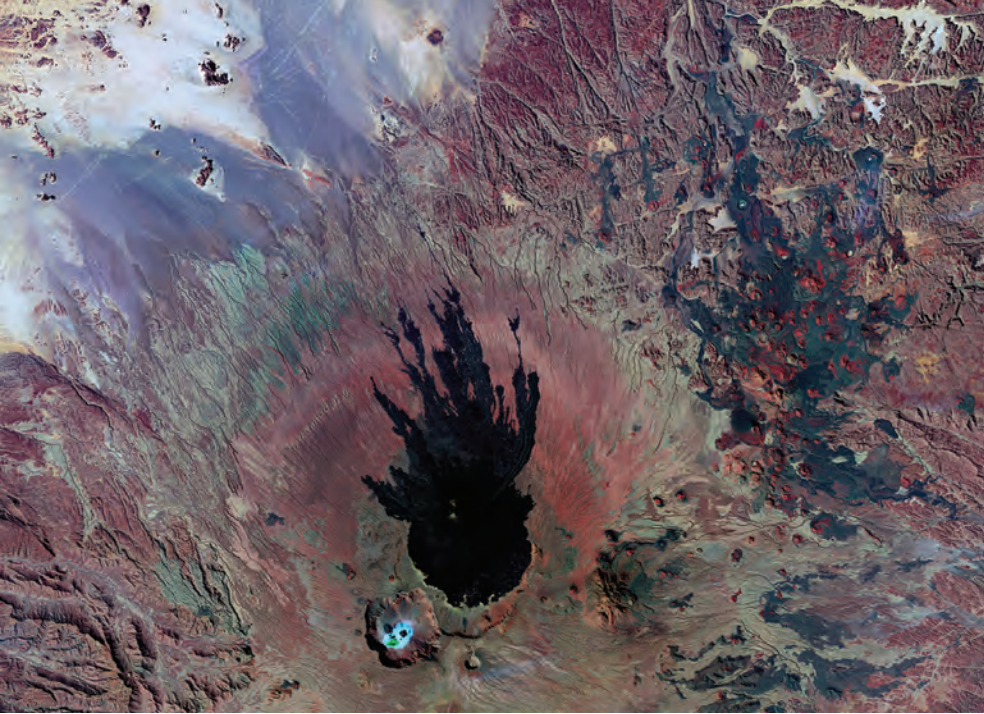
Tantibus

Tantibus is Latin for *nightmare*. This image does appear to be a creepy, foggy, haunted scene. But there is nothing to worry about—it is just science data. The elevation data shown here, recorded by space shuttle *Endeavour* in 2000, are from the Rocky Mountains of Utah and Colorado. Dark areas are low elevation, and the brightest spots are the highest elevations, here representing mountaintops.



Tapestry

Soft colors contrast with harsh terrain in southwestern Saudi Arabia, near the border with Yemen. Calming blues and purples seem to collide with an angry orange in this rich tapestry of colors, which are the result of the region's complex geology. The wild shapes in this busy landscape lie in a region known as the Asharah fault zone.



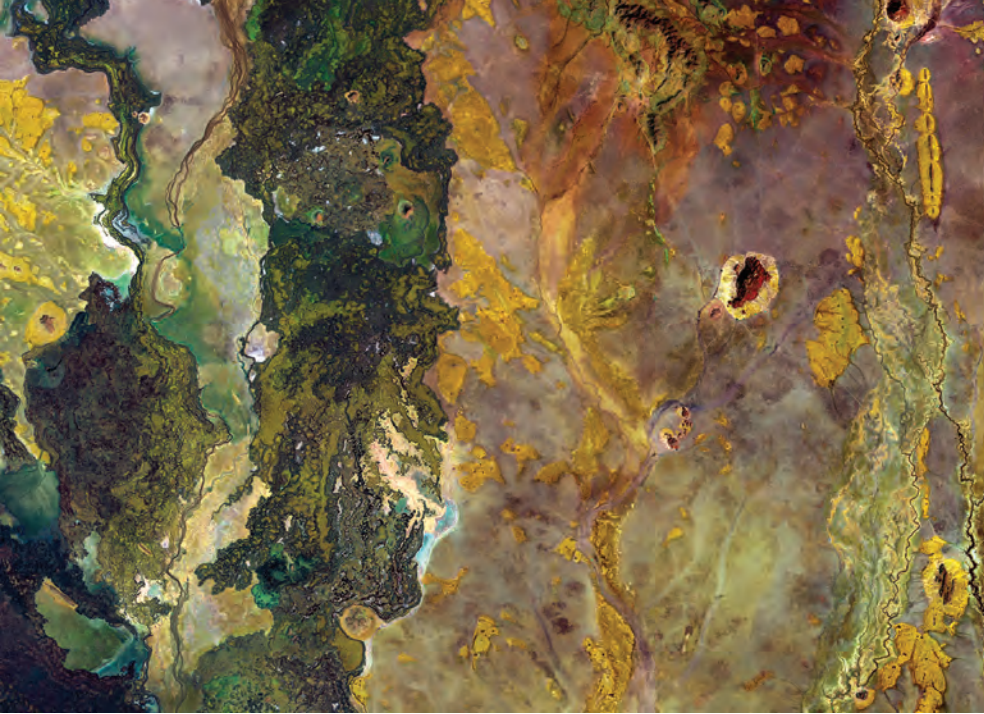
The Watcher

A volcanic landscape in the Tibesti Mountains of Chad shows some mysterious shapes. However, science can explain mysteries in satellite images. The octopus-shaped feature consists of ancient volcanic flows. In the crater below it, what looks like a face is bright salt deposits.



Unfriendly Landscape

In this region, called the Valley of the Moon in Jordan, steep-sided granite mountains alternate with sandy valleys. It may be an unfriendly landscape, but it makes nice textures for an art print. An intriguing interruption of those textures is provided by a few center pivot irrigation fields.



Weird Watercolor

Green shades seem to be bubbling up like a lava lamp on the left side of this image from northeastern Kenya. The right side is like rusted metal. The dark green is the result of geologically recent lava flows, and the other colors are different types of soils. Even with few defined shapes, the piece has a strange beauty.



For more information contact:

U.S. Geological Survey
Earth Resources Observation
and Science (EROS) Center
47914 252nd Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57198-0001

Phone: 1-800-252-4547

1-888-ASK-USGS

Email: custserv@usgs.gov

Web: www.usgs.gov

[https://www.usgs.gov/centers/
eros/science/earth-art-5](https://www.usgs.gov/centers/eros/science/earth-art-5)

ISSN 978-1-4113-4031-2



ISSN 2332-3531 (print)

ISSN 2332-354X (online)

<https://doi.org/10.3133/gip186>

