BURNING IMAGES

This mushroom cloud is the result of a 210-kiloton nuclear test, code named Truckee, that was carried out over the Pacific on June 9, 1962. The photograph was taken from Christmas Island, 10 miles north, and is one of 100 images produced by the U.S. military during its era of above-ground nuclear testing, 1945-62, that appear in the exhibition "100 Suns" by Michael Light at Wood Street Galleries, Downtown. SEE PAGE D-6.
ART REVIEW

Too close for comfort

Photographs show the power and consequences of nuclear testing

By Mary Thomas

The reality of nuclear weapons is nearly incomprehensible — a distance measured in light years or the 1 trillion national debt — but photographer Michael Light has found a way to visualize these catastrophic systems.

In his 2002 book "100 Bars," Light takes his exhibition on the road with a series of images in the above-ground nuclear tests. Most of them are from the test sites dotted around the globe, where the bomb was tested for the first time.

The exhibition is accompanied by a discussion of the images and their implications. Light, a San Francisco-based artist, has been documenting nuclear test sites since the 1980s.

The photographs include both aerial and ground shots, showing the destruction caused by the explosions. Many of the test sites are now visited by tourists as part of guided tours.

The exhibition runs through July 9 at the San Francisco Art Institute. Light is one of the organizing forces behind the exhibition, which is part of the 2012 San Francisco Film Festival.

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