




The
Moment

10:13 am • Trinity Peninsula, Antarctica

Photographs by [Steve McCurry](#) / Text by [Hillary Richard](#) / September 17, 2024 

In the Southern Ocean one December morning in 2019, photographer [Steve McCurry](#) stood on the windswept deck of the *Silver Cloud*, captivated by a landscape that seemed to transform before his very eyes. In the near distance was one of the “mammoth pieces of floating sculpture” that he says he’d looked forward to seeing on this, his first visit to the White Continent: an enormous iceberg, adrift in the Gilbert Strait near Trinity Island, with an uncanny archway and towering, snow-topped columns reflecting the pale polar sunlight. McCurry watched for what felt like hours as the light shifted, the ice melted, and new shapes and shadows revealed themselves. It was, he recalls, a mesmerizing sight — and a world away from the scenes he’s accustomed to capturing.

Throughout his career, McCurry has focused on bringing a human element to everything he photographs. His images depict conflict zones, ancient traditions, and contemporary cultures. One of his most iconic portraits is of the “[Afghan Girl](#),” whose piercing green eyes seemed to gaze back at readers from the cover of *National Geographic* in 1985. Decades later, his first visit to Antarctica presented a welcome career challenge, in a way only the world’s most remote region can: How could McCurry bring his signature human element to a continent devoid of humans?

“I liked switching gears and doing something completely different. Something quiet. Something monochromatic,” says McCurry. Alternating between a Nikon D850 and a Leica SL2, he took advantage of the nearly round-the-clock light (save for a small window between 11 p.m. and 3 a.m.). What he lost in sleep, he gained in appreciation for the ever-changing landscapes — and for a chance to slow down and take a more meditative approach to his work.

"I knew it was going to be something really spectacular, but it really was even more than I'd hoped it would be."

The additional photographs below, some of McCurry's favorites from that 2019 expedition with Silversea, highlight the details that make the journey to the far ends of the earth worthwhile.



"Antarctica is unlike any other destination in the world. It felt like I was on another planet," says McCurry, who enjoyed watching the colors and lights change on the icebergs the ship passed. This one is in the Errera Channel, regarded as one of the most beautiful parts of the Antarctic Peninsula. The constant current often fills Errera with small icebergs whittled by the elements into Seussian shapes.



Hillary Richard, Further's Managing Editor, is an award-winning journalist who worked in darkrooms throughout high school and college.



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