

Volcanic Proportions

Meet the inspirational professor of Landscape Photography

Mathias Van Hessemans is not one of those professionals who finds himself dedicated to teaching and ultimately skirting the perimeter of their passions. Mathias has found a way to combine his enjoyment of teaching with his enthusiasm for the mysteries of geology, heading straight for the epicenter of his own "self actualization." The best part is, Mathias willingly shares his experiences in an effort to inspire others to follow their own instincts of fulfillment.

Mathias Van Hessemans is West Valley College's professor of Landscape Photography. With the support of his colleagues, his mother, his wife, son and newborn baby girl, he was recently set free to answer the call of the wild for a second calling to Mt. St Helen's, where he proceeded to fly straight up, over and occasionally into the

recent fray of activity, continuing his ongoing quest to document the unfolding power and mystery of the birth of new land.

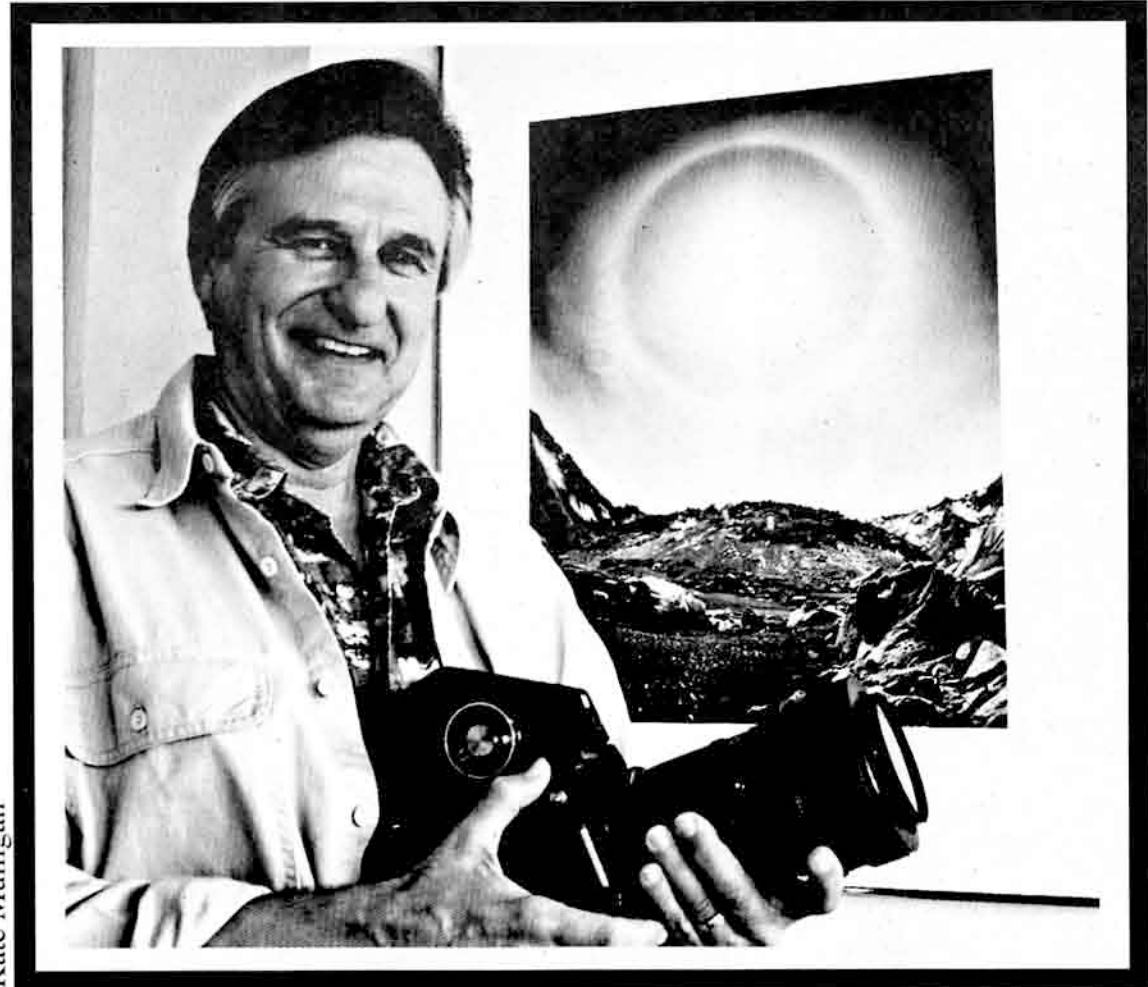
Mathias began his career with historically gifted photographers as teachers, Ansel Adams, Brett Weston and Wynn Bullock. These influences were a foundation for translating his passions through photography via the camera— and not just one camera at a time, mind you— but up to five, including a digital video used to document the process.

MamiyahassponsoredMathiaswith camera equipment since 1976, a 28-year testament of creative support. Mamiya has also participated in on-campus and field demos for students. The latest trips were to Bodie and Mono Lakes, arranged by Tommy Gibson, photography department chair.

"It is when I come back from these types of trips that I am happiest and most content with my life. That is probably why they are so willing to let me go!" says Mathias as a smile gleams from his eyes. Apparently his timing to St Helens was perfect. The day the volcano became active once again, Mathias was right on top of it— literally.

KIRO 7, a Seattle television station, just happened to be at the heart of the action the same time. "They shot some of the footage I had along with an interview of my work at the volcano on the 11 p.m. news that night."

Our own KTVU CH 2 was also at the mountain, and interviewed Mathias



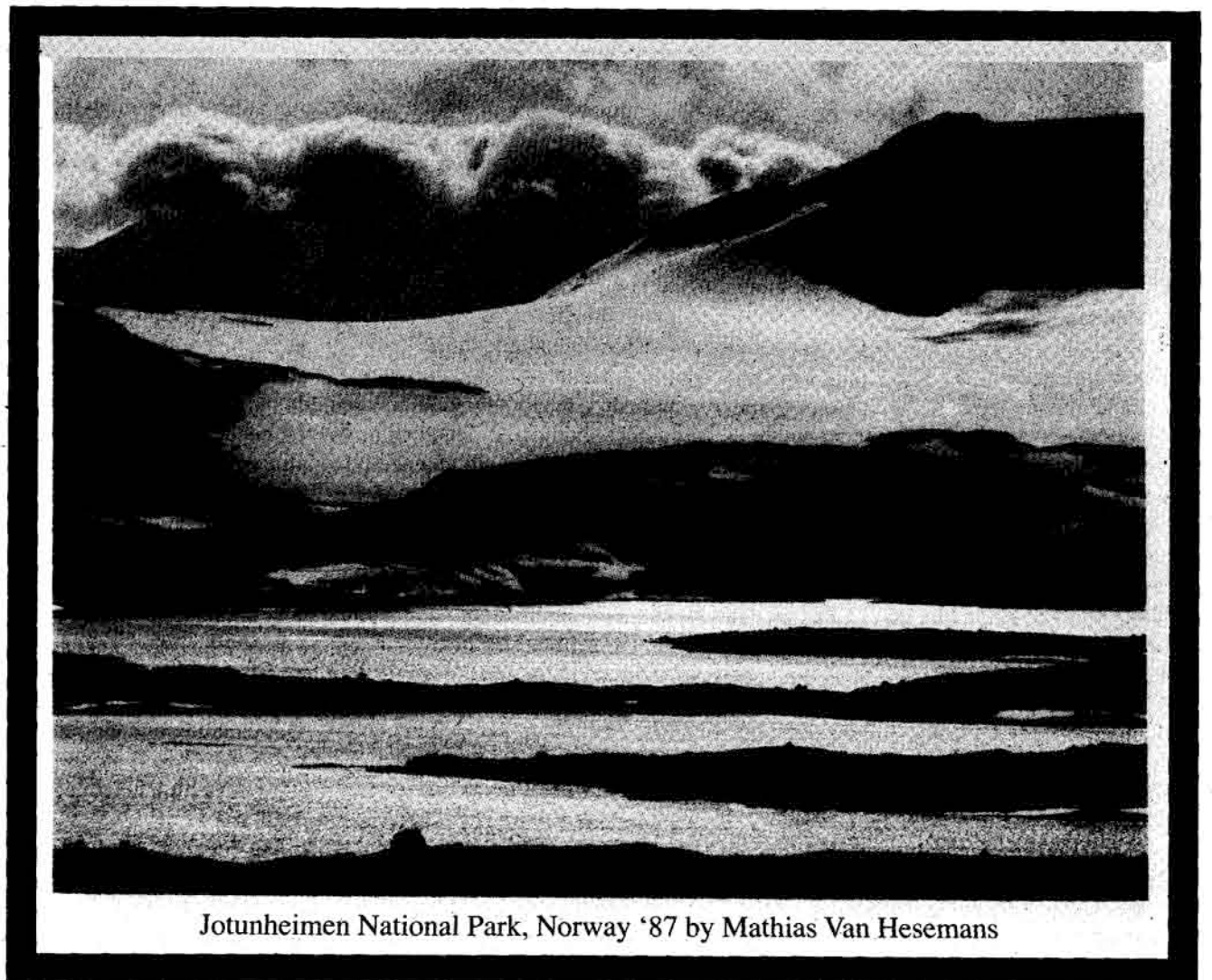
Kate Mulligan

Mathias Van hessemans holding a Mamiya RB 6x7, 100-200mm zoom lens.

as he was photographing and filming an Oct. 5 eruption. Mathias has created a body of work that puts together an even bigger picture— a scientific documentary, one with artistic proportion.

Mathias directs me to view his

latest accomplishment, a CD of packaged volcanic visuals. This includes documentary footage from his Mount St Helen's work in the 1980's, photographs and digital video of the latest volcanic activity and footage taken of Mathias viewing



Jotunheimen National Park, Norway '87 by Mathias Van Hessemans