

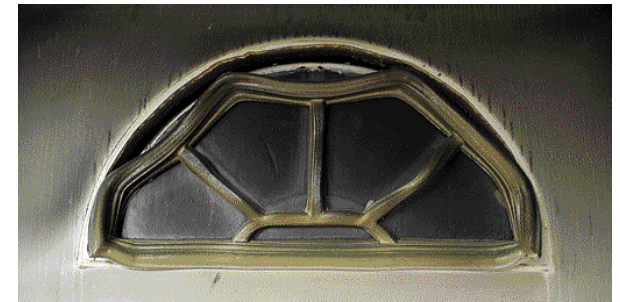
the nature of FIRE

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Among the natural elements, fire represents that which is most scarce. Humankind rose to evolutionary prominence on the shoulders of fire and then declared itself master of the element. Fire has been made invisible. It has been made available. It has been made convenient. Yet there exists a great divide between that which is harnessed and that which is controlled. In life and in art, fire represents a force of creation as well as destruction.

NEXT WEEK: **WATER**

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Damage to this door-frame window was the result of a fire on Louis Circle in Columbia. The fire started when a lamp cord shorted out underneath a bed mattress. Modern society finds contentment in the illusion that fire and its causes are a controlled phenomenon, harnessed for our convenience and commanded by the flip of a switch. Reality is much more complicated.

ABOVE: Kangi Tah Nagi performs part of a ritualistic fire ceremony during the construction of a Lakota sweat lodge on the property of Caya and Dan French on Oct. 13 in Columbia. Stones are heated in the fire and then transferred inside the insulated lodge. There, participants sit in the dark, steamy atmosphere of the structure built specifically for the ceremony. This was not the first lodge-building in which Caya French had participated, but it was the first time she had assumed the role of lodge-keeper because it was built on her land. The ceremony fell on the night of a new moon, as well as the fifth birthday of their daughter Aiyana.



ABOVE: An image of candlelight, shot with a camera setting of aperture f8 for 10 seconds, hints at the transitory, often invisible nature of fire, which commonly exists only as a potential event. Under the correct conditions, when heat and fuel meet, fire appears to spring from nothing.

RIGHT: Romance burns bright at the 18th annual Buckman family hayride, calf fry and rubble-burning party Oct. 15 in Hallesville. The inclusion of calf testicles as an appetizer did little to quench the sense of romance among young revelers. "Love is often gentle, desire always a rage," Mignon McLaughlin wrote in "The Second Neurotic's Notebook" in 1966.

