



Rafts of Lava with Strange Infrared Properties

ESP_033556_1890

This image covers part of the Athabasca Valles flood lava, the youngest large lava flow on the surface of Mars. At this location, there are two rafted pieces of lava crust with strange infrared properties. Compared to the rest of the lava flow, these two raised areas are cold at night and warm in the day. This property of the surface, where the temperature changes quickly, is called "low thermal inertia." Rocks tend to have relatively high thermal inertia, so this is unexpected.