

Ice and Light



CLOCKWISE (from above): *Avalanche Lake, Scenic Point View, Glacier Skies.*

NEXT SPREAD, CLOCKWISE (from top left): *Old Man Lake, Iceberg Lake, Sperry Glacier, Heaven's Peak.*

THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF BRET BOUDA

Glacial grandeur in black-and-white.

COWBOYS

INDIANS

ZECH NATIVE BRET BOUDA ESCAPED COMMUNIST rule in 1981 and now spends his days breathing in the freedom of the West with his lens trained on Glacier National Park's grandeur. For the photographer, Glacier has become a life work, a muse that fills his senses as well as his imagination. "Glacier Park opened the door for me to realize myself," Bouda says. "I can express my perception of natural beauty in this part of the world as nowhere before."

And, to his eye and mind, nothing captures the natural beauty of the vast Montana skies and the park's dramatic terrain better than black-and-white. The medium, Bouda says, best conveys the sense of classic light found in landscape, especially at Glacier. "Weather plays a major role in Glacier National Park. Many times a clouded and wet day creates the best light for photography, especially in a black-and-white format. There is nothing more beautiful than an innocent, easy trail of cedars in the middle of a rain. The world becomes a dream." He likes taking photographs of winter scenery on an overcast day "to reduce brightness and give some nice shade pattern." And his best advice: "Trust your own eye and imagination. If there is a moment you like, go for it. Don't waste the opportunity. Just remember, it is all about light."

But light can be elusive. "Light is changing all the time and fast," Bouda says, "and since light is essential for landscape photography, you have to be alert at all times and take advantage of every moment." He loves shooting at the "magic hour" of light—sunrise and sunset—but allows he's gotten some great shots at almost every time of day. It comes down to going with nature's flow. "Sometimes staying in one place and watching the landscape be changed by the






light is as rewarding as driving to the next turnout or hiking another mile of trail. The change of light can be inspiring.”

Though the timeless quality of his black-and-white work suggests the subtleties of film, Bouda takes full advantage of digital technology and new media, even producing images in oversize panoramic formats. In the eyes of this enthusiastic new American, bigger means better: Some of his photos on canvas measure 12 feet in length. Bouda calls his images the real deal—no filters, no special effects—just nature straight up. Which is exactly the way we take our nature in the West.

— Michele Powers Glaze

 To see more of Bret Bouda's work, visit his website at www.digitalbroadway.com or stop in *The Elusive Image Gallery & Creative Framing Shop* in Kalispell, Montana (124 Main St., 406.756.7052). For information on his exhibit at Glacier Park International Airport, *Timeless Light: A Centennial Image Collection of Glacier National Park*, visit www.timelesslight.org.

