

# Tradition and Legacy: Hell's Half Acre

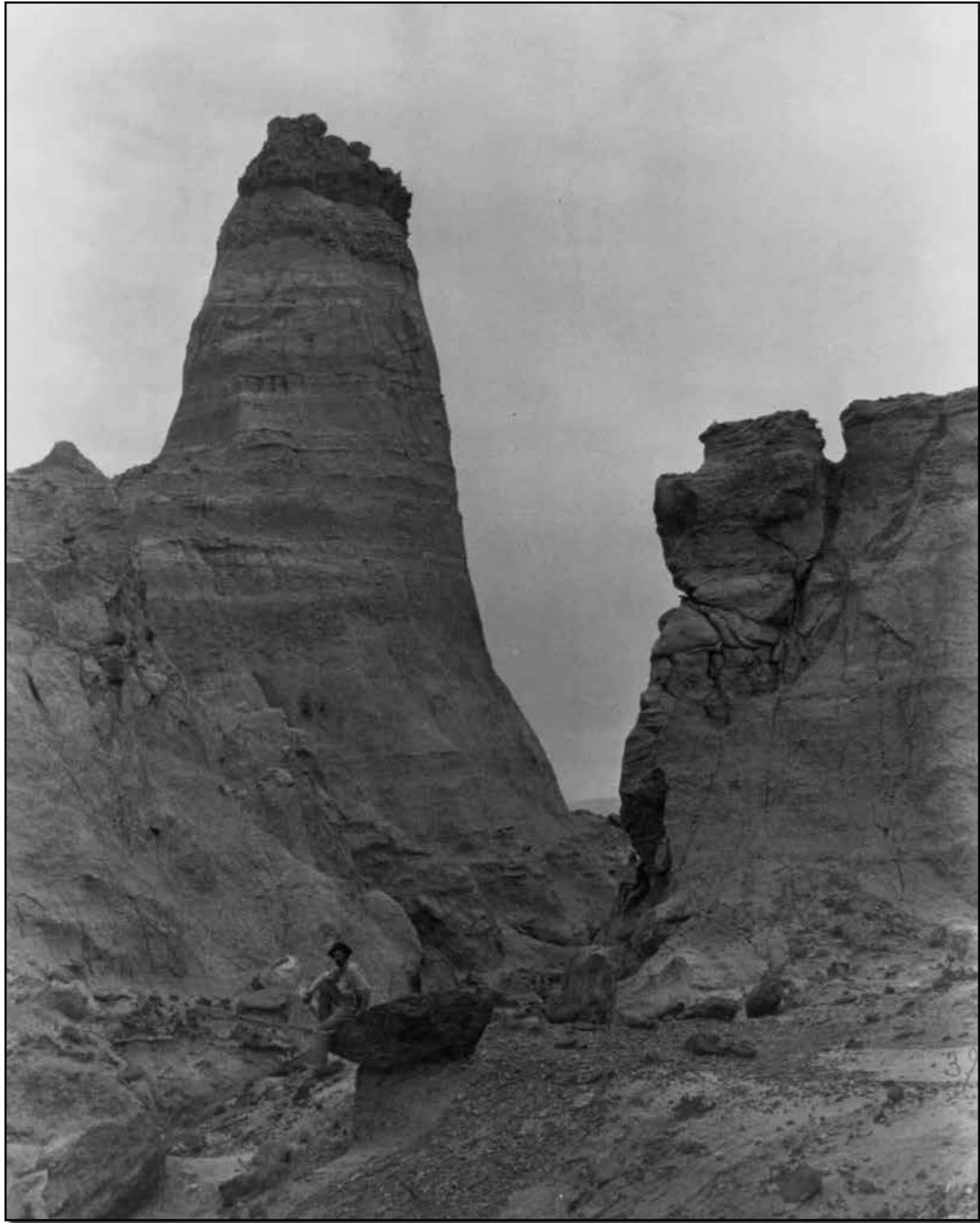
*Joe Lipka*





## Tradition and Legacy: Hell's Half Acre

The first photographs of the American West were created at a time when photographers were going out into the world instead of the world going to the photographer's studio. From about 1870 onward, American photographers produced pictures of the American West to educate an eastern, urban populace. These photographs were the beginning of a Tradition of American Landscape Photography.



Washakie Badlands, Wyoming, 1872  
Timothy H. O'Sullivan

Photographs were proof positive that America's scenic wonders were not a mountain man's tall tale or the flights of fancy from an artist's sketch pad. "Photographic proof" was required to confirm such wonders really existed.

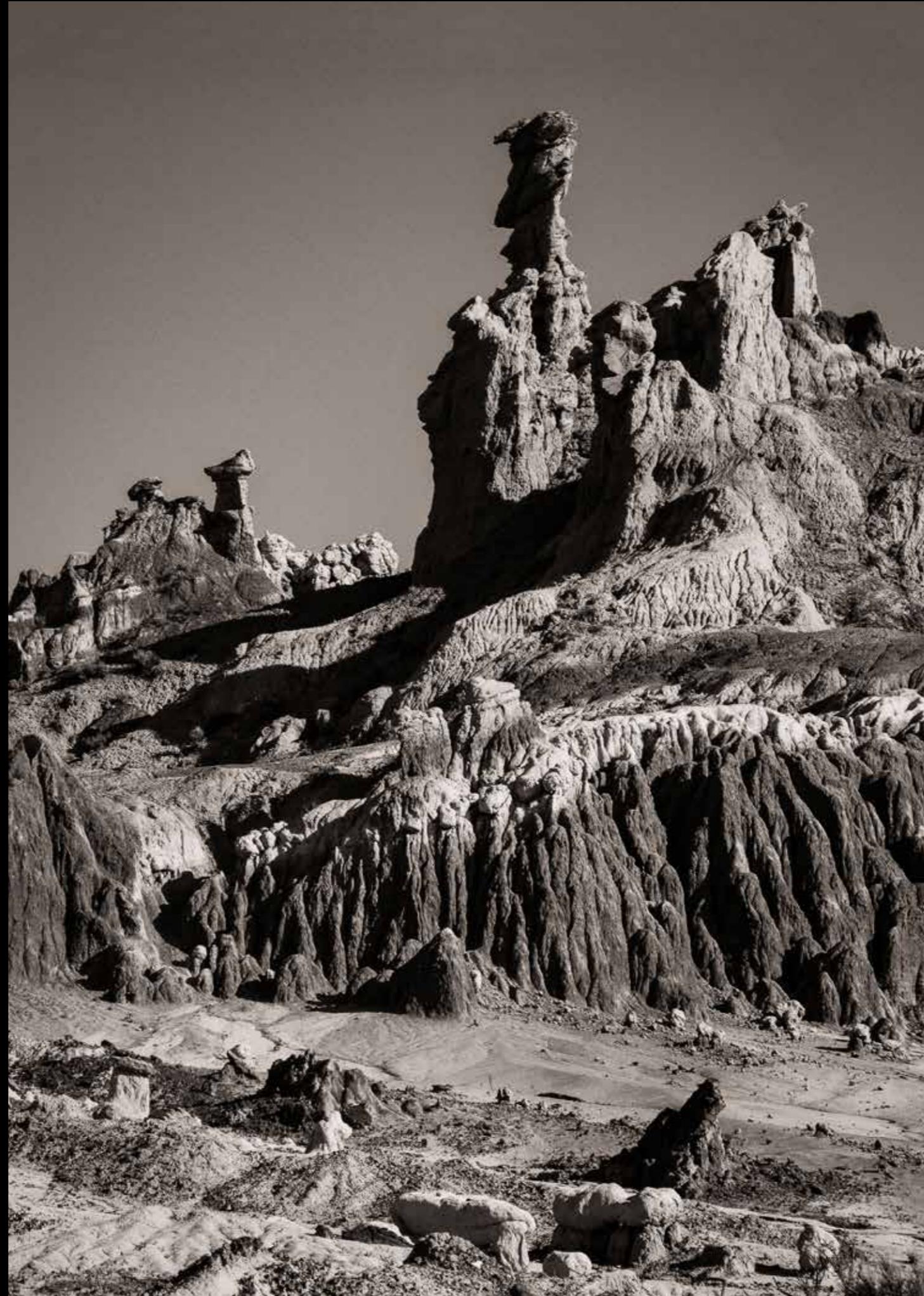
The proof provided by photographers such as Timothy H. O'Sullivan and William Henry Jackson was to include themselves or their assistants in the photographs. The presence of humans verified the scale of such wonders and created a record of the unspoiled American West. The pristine landscape of the O'Sullivan and Jackson is almost impossible to find today, but we continue their legacy in photographing the American West.



One hundred fifty years later photographers continue to make the traditional journey to the American West hoping to find a place that has never been photographed. While we have our dreams to add to the American Tradition, the best we can hope for is to photograph the same place in a different way. Sometimes we succumb and make our version of the pioneer photograph. As homage to the true pioneer photographers we include a figure in the landscape to become part of their grand tradition



























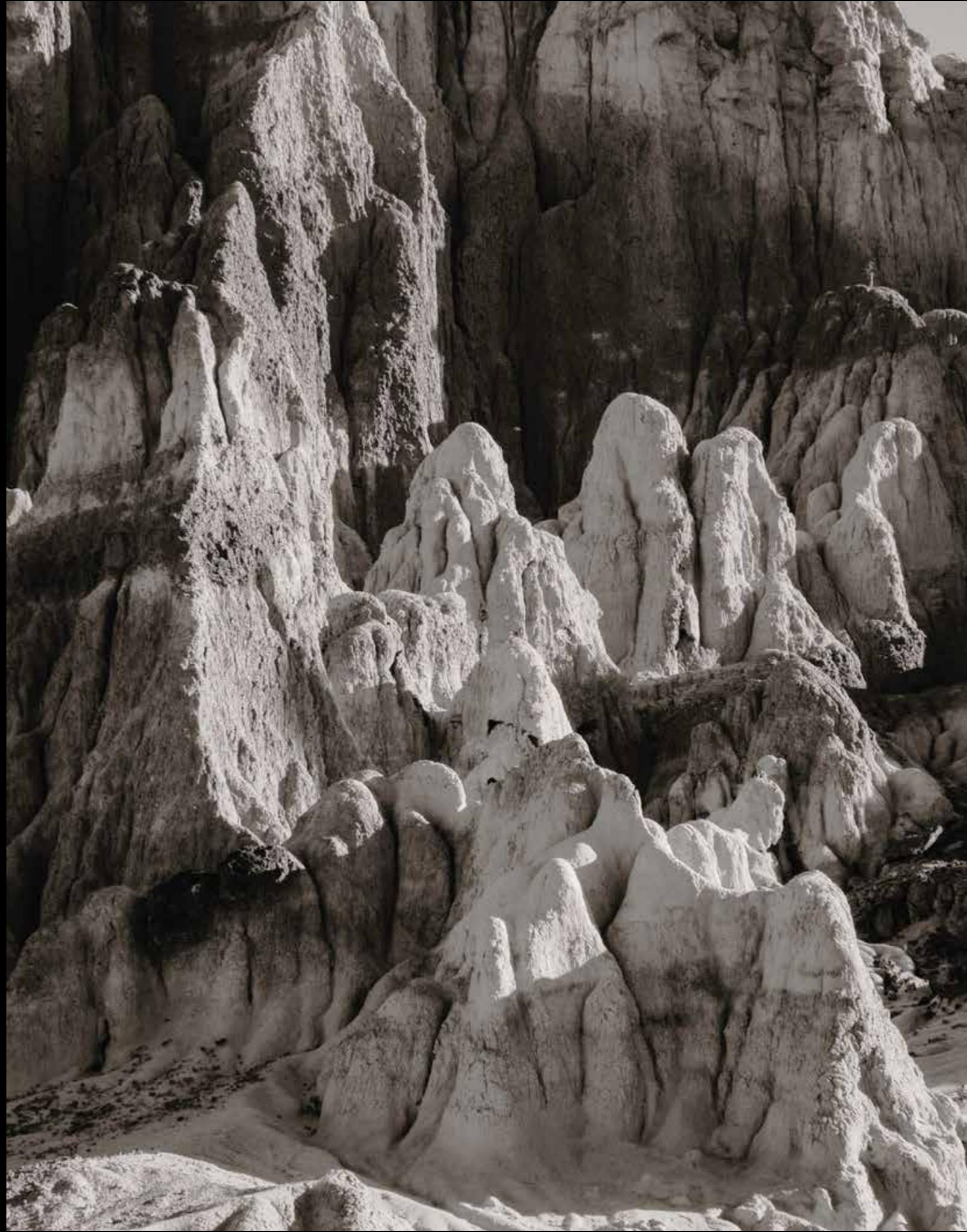


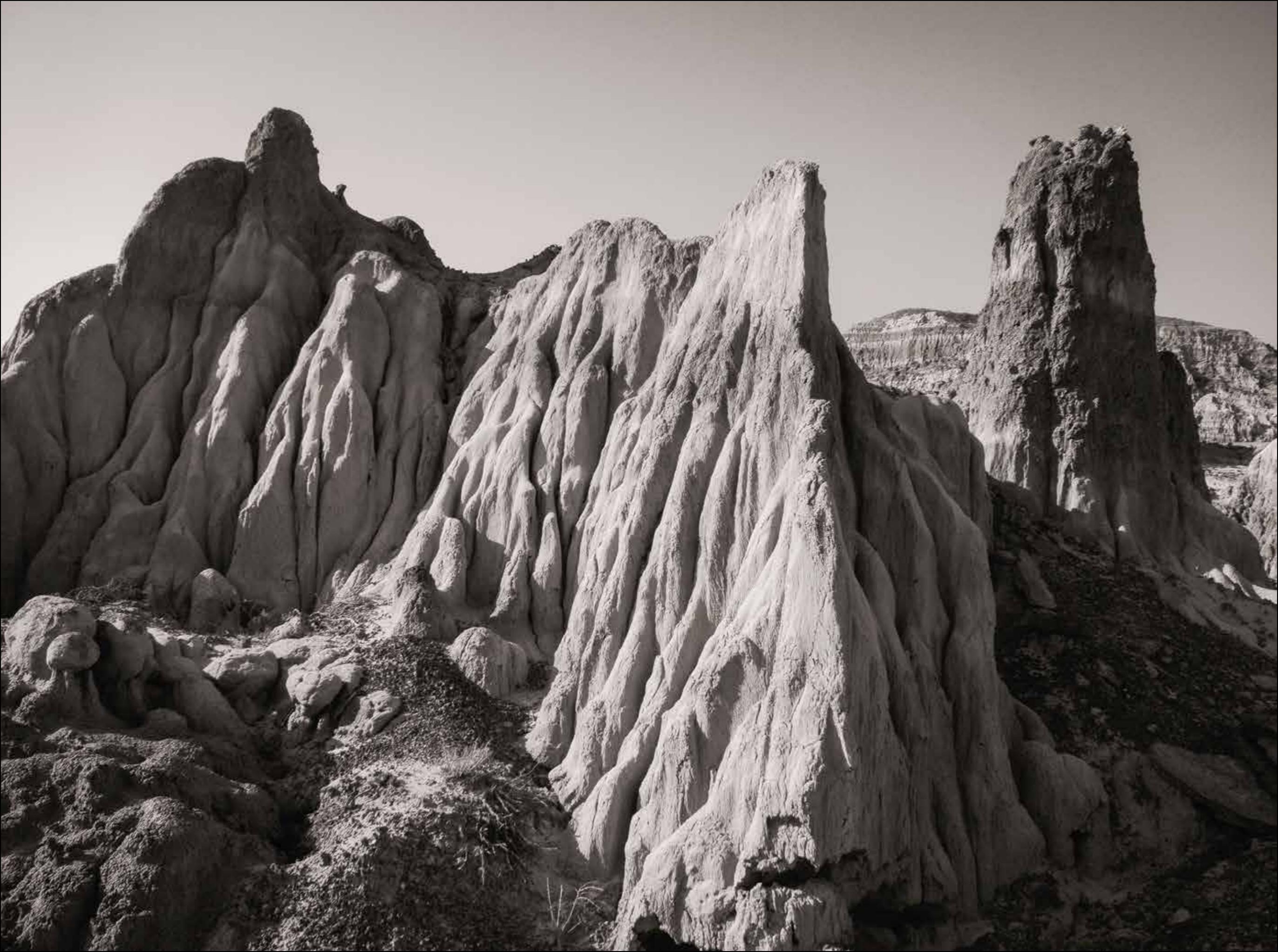






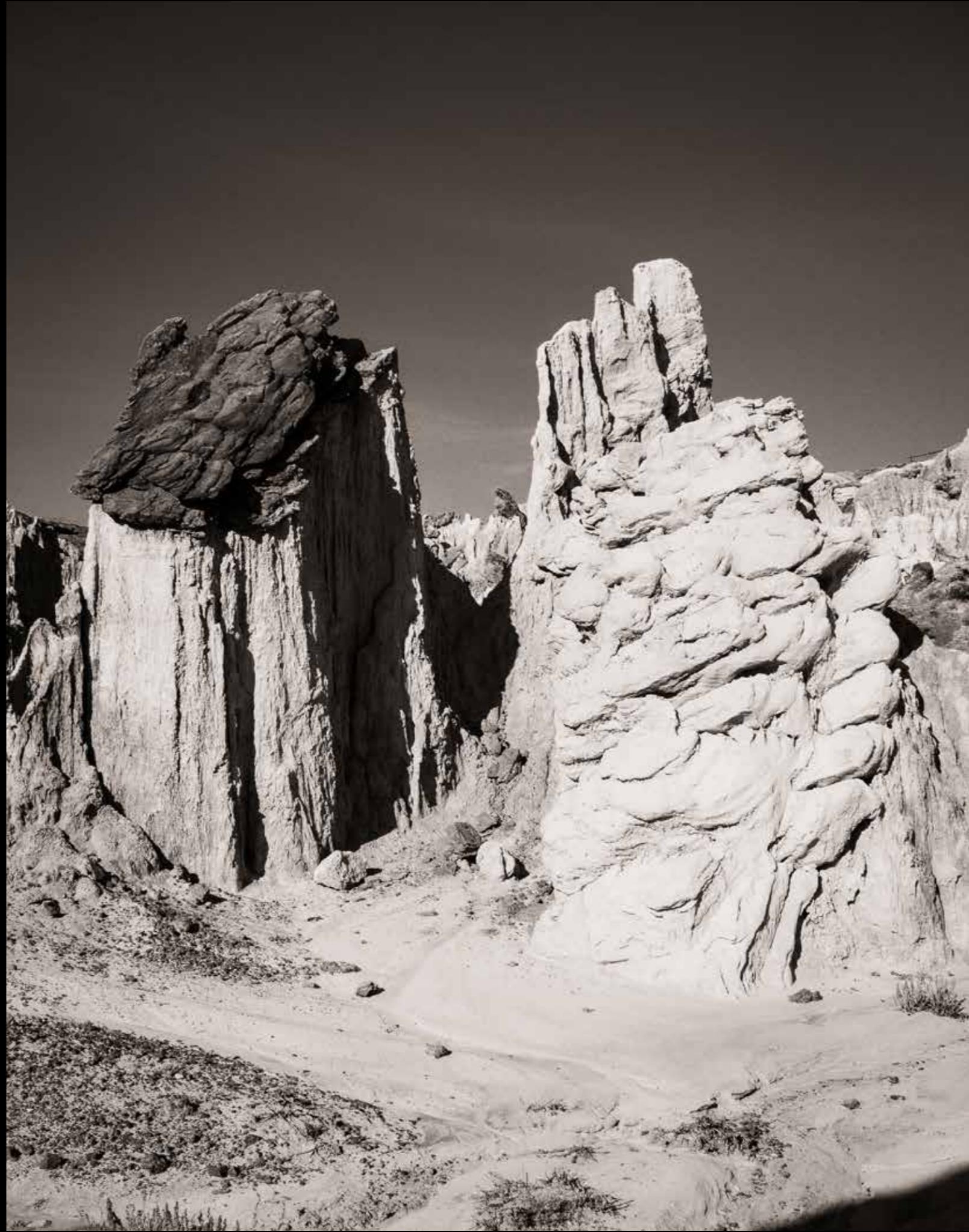




















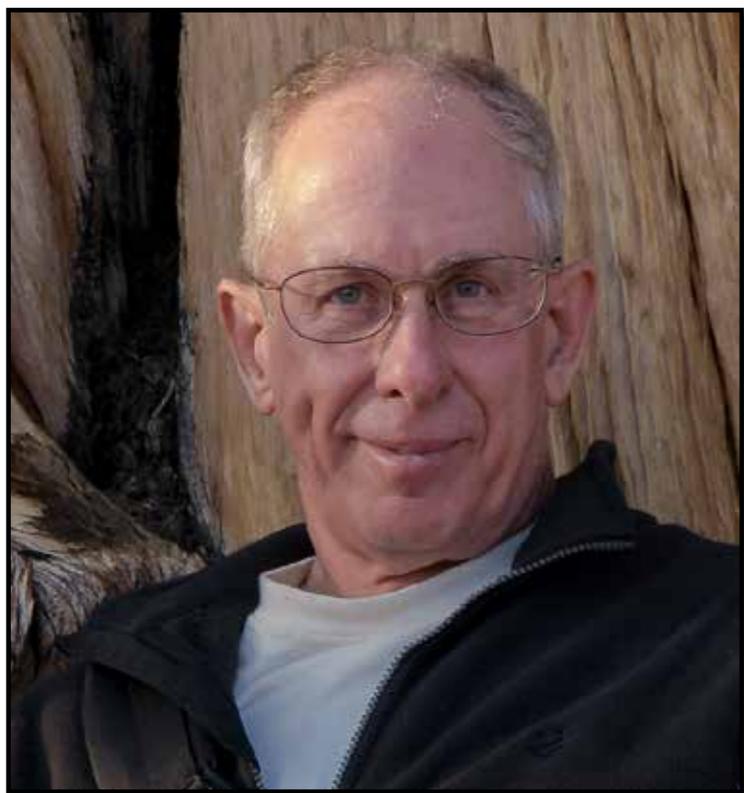


## *About This Project*

These photographs were made in Hell's Half Acre in Wyoming. I first visited this spot in 1996 as part of a whirlwind tour of Wyoming with Brooks Jensen. We returned in 2006 with the sole intent of photographing Hells Half Acre. We spent a week photographing the site. Every morning we got up early and drove from Casper, Wyoming to Hells Half Acre and walked down into the most amazing rock formations we had ever seen.

In 2010, Brooks called and said he had the opportunity to photograph Inner Mongolia in the depths of winter and would I like to join him? Part of the invitation was to participate in a joint show of landscape photographs with members of the China Photographers Association. Inner Mongolia, depths of winter and photography; sure, why not join him on that adventure? Deep down I knew the only thing between Inner Mongolia and the North Pole was Siberia and some barb wire fences. I scraped together the funds and sallied off to Xiang Sha Wan the day after Christmas, 2010.

These photographs of Hells Half Acre were my contribution to the photographic exhibition.



Joe Lipka has shared his vision since he began photographing.

In the last thirty years, his photographs have appeared in over one hundred juried exhibitions, more than twenty solo exhibitions and have been printed in both *LensWork* and *Black & White Photography* (UK) Magazines.

His website [www.joelipkaphoto.com](http://www.joelipkaphoto.com) has continuously evolved since it was launched in 2004. His blog *Postcards from the Creative Journey*, published weekly since 2010, is a collection of his photographs and thoughts on the creative process.

## COLOPHON

### Tradition and Legacy: Hell's Half Acre

*Joe Lipka*

*The images in this portfolio  
were made in September, 2006  
in Hell's Half Acre, Wyoming*

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Web site: [www.joelipkaphoto.com](http://www.joelipkaphoto.com)

Blog: <http://blog.joelipkaphoto.com/>

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