

Burnished Limestone: Near Limestone Lakes, BC

Set between a steep ridge and a chain of idyllic hanging alpine lakes, this remarkable valley floor is a wonder of its own. Thousands of years of erosion have sculpted the limestone slab into tiny grooves and spikes: a miniature architect's model of the looming mountains all around.

The afternoon weather in these mountains always seems mixed: ragged thunderclouds tumble through the sky, grumbling, spitting rain and hail. The sun struggles to see around them, its face blotted out at intervals like a drowning man. In between, in the penumbra, there are long, magical moments of half-light, of limbo, of waiting for the warming sun or the chilly alpine rain.

I photographed these spikes during one of these moments of clarity. It hadn't rained yet, but the rolling clouds seemed determined. The muted light played over the miniature topography as it did over the surrounding mountains - I set up my tripod low to the ground and photographed it this way, like a range of tiny, impossibly pointed alpine peaks. After I finished, my companions and I hurried on to set up our camp before the rain came.

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