

# Ben Bauer

## Shades of gray



◀ **Signs of Life**,  
oil, 10 x 25.  
▼ **White Bear  
Lake at Dawn**,  
oil, 26 x 32.

WHEN LANDSCAPE painter Ben Bauer views scenes filled with brilliant fall colors, he doesn't zero in on Mother Nature's amazing reds, oranges, and golds. Instead he focuses on the shades of gray that lie in between the eye-popping colors. So it comes as no surprise that his signature landscapes tend toward the tonal and have an ethereal, atmospheric quality. His seasons of choice: late fall, winter, and early spring.

The Minnesota artist received a top honor in Greenhouse Gallery's Salon International show last spring for his painting *SIGNS OF LIFE*, which is also a good example of his affection for the gray side of scenes and seasons. "I love the greens with the violets that were just starting to fade away with the new growth coming in," Bauer says. "And the gray sky makes everything moody and drew the painting together for me."

The artist says he has felt tied to the landscape since he was a small child being raised in a family that saw nature as a sanctuary. As a youngster he was never without a pencil to sketch, and eventually he went on to study art at the University

of Wisconsin in Menomonie—a school he chose because of its strong, progressive art program. He recalls that professors pushed him in directions he didn't necessarily want to go, but he is now thankful for how they encouraged him to think outside the box and less literally.

Today he turns to landscape artists such as T. Allen Lawson, Doug Fryer, and Marc Hanson for inspiration. He says that by studying their work, he finds the encouragement to continue to stretch the boundaries of traditional landscape painting and blend it with a more abstract style. "I see things as simplified elements," Bauer says. "I see a color, usually gray. I feel a mood. I feel emotionally tied to a particular location, and I am compelled to represent that through my voice as a contemporary landscape painter. I am trying to convince people that the things we pass by every day are beautiful." —Bonnie Gangelhoff



### representation

Rehs Galleries, New York, NY.

### upcoming shows

**Naples Art, Antique & Jewelry Show**, Naples, FL, February 7-11.

**Palm Beach Jewelry, Art & Antique Show**, Palm Beach, FL, February 15-19.