Subject: High Altitude

Disquisition of the state and future of the highest mountains and people living there from an artist's perspective

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Introduction

My approach

This concept and the series of works associated to it follow my works on public places. Those were exploring the impact of public places on people and vice versa.

I started focusing on landscapes in 2008 because the backgrounds of my public places paintings reminded me of them. Especially mountains proved to be an interesting subject.

The development of paintings of high mountains and especially of the Alps happened in parallel to the valorization of them\(^1\). I recognized that we are currently witnessing the development of the highest mountains on earth. As a result, I focused my work on them and especially on Mount Everest.

This new concept is summing up the investigations and works I made since. It describes what is happening at 8.000ers and what is likely to happen from an artist’s point of view.

I used Internet research, books and discussions on Facebook as a source for information – the Internet plays its role in the complete changing of mountaineering, as we know it. Today, it is not problem to understand what expeditions are around at a mountain, how the weather is and hence how likely success is.

Even the photos I used to paint come from the Internet, as I wanted to be as close as possible to the situation of climbing. This means, cutouts and lightening of the templates is oftentimes bad – some of them are even black and white. This is the case also for the TV films that have been produced sending full camera teams to the summits. I had to make up for this through my painting.

And I also tried to make up for this by climbing a higher mountain: Mount Elbrus in Russia - the highest mountain of Europe with 5642 meters. Also I think I understand how the climbers feel since I ran a couple of marathons and since I have 600 skydives.

After all, I think I managed to show this subjects absurdities and superlatives - absurdities and superlatives of High Altitude.
What happened before

Mountain paintings

Mountains and especially the high mountains such as the Alpes were unknown to our predecessors. Mountains have been equally terrible and hostile like desserts throughout the 17th century.

People that need to pass them such as the Romans, Hannibal or even Henry the IVth on its walk of penance to Canossa in 1077 made first contacts.

Leonardo da Vinci created noteworthy drawings and paintings starting in 13th century. 500 years later, towards the end of 18th century, lifelike paintings were created. Caspar Wolf is one of the most important painters of mountains this time. He used sketches to paint his drawings in his studio and finished them on site. More and more sketches and paintings were made: Goethe made sketches, Joseph Anton Koch painted the “Schmadribachfall” and Caspar David Friedrich worked on the subject. Classical BGB structure dominated the paintings. The foreground was brown, hills and forests were green and the sky blue. In addition the paintings focused on some person in the foreground.

The mountain gets the main motif only with Theodore Rousseau or William Turner. With them also light and wind got important. Turner was able to build enormous tension with his paintings. But even modern works such as Warhols or Richters prints of the Alpes lack the remoteness, the uncompromising absoluteness and the finality of High Altitude.

The French painter Claude Joseph Vernet recognized on a journey to Mont Blanc, that he could not transfer the giant motif in his painting.

Mountain concepts

During my studies I learned that mountaineers have spurred the development of the Alps – they are called alpinists since. English alpinists looking for accommodation and climbing help increasingly spend money, which finally let to the mass tourism of today. This generated a wealth that other nations with even more interesting mountains are interested in.

To travel to the Alps got “on vogue” in England in the twenties of 19th century. Simple hostels, bad food and porters were the only things available. This changed when the railway network was extended. And when Albert Smith started his show on Mont Blanc in London. He was the first to report on his adventures. Starting in 1852 he presented them for six years in a row. Tourism and imaginary changed the perception of mountains.
Jürgen H. Stäudtner, Subject: High Altitude

Current discussion raised the attention of professional artists. Hans Schabus work for the Venice Biennale 2005 elaborated on Austrian identity. Hamish Fultons hiking lead him in 2009 also to the summit of Mount Everest. Also snow had been brought down from a mountain and exhibited.

But the people on the mountains, their stories and feelings comprise the actual tension in any conceptual work on this subject. Today - as well as 300 years ago. Nature is only getting mysterious and scary as long as we imagine us experiencing it.

People

Mount Everest, also named Sagarmatha (सगरमाथा, nepalesian), Chomolungma (ཐོམ་ཐུང་ག་, tibetian) or Zhumulungma (珠穆朗玛峰, chinese), is a symbol of extremes. It is supposed to be the highest mountain on earth, to be really dangerous and one of the last remaining adventures on earth. However, both aspects are not fully correct.

Discovery and conquest of the Everest

The conquest of Everest started in the early 20th century. It produced many legends who had first achieved remarkable ascends or descends. Today, records are measured for almost everything: the youngest person to climb Mount Everest, and the oldest one. The fastest ascent with and without bottled oxygen, the first helicopter landing, the first descent by paraglider and the first descent by ski.

I selected nine of those legend climbers and painted them.

I chose this approach to characterize Mount Everest. Like Claude Joseph Vernet I am not convinced that any painting, drawing or photography existing so far is able to reflect the full size of Mount Everest – even the 2 GB photo of David Breashears fails in this aspect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Climber</th>
<th>First to ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Herbert Leigh Mallory (18 June 1886 – 8 or 9 June)</td>
<td>First to extensively explore Mount Everest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climber</td>
<td>First to ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924) Sir Edmund Percival Hillary (20 July 1919 – 11 January 2008)</td>
<td>First to summit Mount Everest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinhold Messner (born 17 September 1944)</td>
<td>First to climb the Everest without oxygen and first to climb free solo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junko Tabei (田部井淳子) (born September 22, 1939)</td>
<td>First women to reach the summit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell Reginald Brice (born 3 July 1952)</td>
<td>First to lead filmed expeditions on Everest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marco Siffredi (22 May 1979 – September 8, 2002)</td>
<td>First to descend Mount Everest on a snowboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Dorjee (born around 1969)</td>
<td>Not first but one of the most experience Everest climbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Not first but alive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1: Legends of Mount Everest, 2013, 9 * 90 * 90 cm, Oil, Primer and Tempera on Linen*

The portraits of George Mallory, Sir Edmund Hillary, Reinhold Messner, Junko Tabei, Russell Brice, Marco Siffredi Robert Hall, Long Dorjee and an unknown climber give an impression of what it took to master the mountain. See the attachment for detailed information.

I have harmonized the portraits by eliminating the background and using the same color for their clothing. Focus is on the faces of the climbers and its expressions. The green color of the clothing has been achieved using tempera of Titan white and Terra di Sienna and an Imprimatur of Green Soil. This is technique has been used for portraits since Renaissance to paint under and prepare “Halbkreidegrund”.
The feelings of mountaineers

For most climbers, summits are only possible on certain days per year and even with weather forecast life threatening situations can occur. Weather can change within minutes from nice, warm and calm to horrible, cold and stormy.

Recue operations get only possible in these days and someone to talk to can be days away.

*Figure 2: Storm I, 2010, 60 * 50 cm, Oil and Tempera on canvas*

Sometimes orientation is only possible by remembering the way from a map the climber has seen days before. Whiteouts, a term borrowed from photography for a situation were everything is white, occur frequently.

In 1984 Reinhold Messner and Hans Kammerlander summited Gasherbrum I in a storm – only a view days after reaching the summit of Gasherbrum II, another 8.000er.

*Figure 3: Storm II, 2012 – 2013, 80 * 60 cm, Oil and Tempera on Canvas*

The summit was small, dangerous and covered with lots of snow – they could not stand there.

*Figure 4: Planned: Storm III*

Climbing an 8.000er stands for the most dangerous activity men can dare to do on our planet, for the harshest conditions and for distress. To ascent to the summit of such a monster is perceived as mastering a challenge.

*Figure 5: Heroic Moment, 2012 - 2013, 40 * 60 cm, Oil on Canvas*

Sometimes this is even intensified by climbing as a disabled, very old or very young human being (the oldest was 80 years and the youngest was 13 years old) or climbing in winter times.

Mount Everest was considered one of the most dangerous mountains. However, it is not any more. See the table on death rates in the attachment.

Many tourists visit its base camps every year and lots of mountaineers try to ascend and succeed. The highest mountains in the world attracts many well-experienced mountaineers as well as novice climbers who are willing to pay substantial sums to professional mountaineers. There are guided tours to the mountain, which offer a high probability to reach the goal. In 2007, the record number of 633 ascents was recorded by 350 climbers and 253
sherpas. Only 173 ascends in total have been without supplementary oxygen – professional climbers never use it in these days.

*Figure 6: On to Everest, 2012-2013, 135 * 120 cm, Oil on Linen*

Mount Everest has two main climbing routes, the southeast ridge from Nepal and the northeast ridge from Tibet, as well as many other less frequently climbed routes. Of the two main routes, the southeast ridge is technically easier and is the more frequently used route. The route using north-east ridge is cheaper. Both of the latter routes are used a lot, so that one could see long treks of climbers on nice days.

This means for most of the climbers that they have not been alone a single second. Perfect organization is dominating the climbing history at Everest since years.

*Figure 7: On Summit of Everest, 2012, 220 * 135 cm, Oil on Linen*

Once arrived at the summit there is no room neither. Similar situations occur at many of the well-known high mountains around the globe. Mount Elbrus, Kilimandscharo are Aconcagua are visited even more often.

**The Soul of Everest**

Mount Everest is also a symbol of personal fates and of philosophical dilemmas. Frequent dilemmas are “summit and let die or help and fail“, or “who earns the merit: the one that pays, or the one that helps“?

The “Top of the World” series consists of 11 portraits of climbers on Mount Everest and one landscape.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Climber</th>
<th>Story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fran Arsentiev (*1958 +1998)</td>
<td>Died on ascend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marko Lihteneker (*1959 +2005)</td>
<td>Died on descend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Sharp (*1972 +2006)</td>
<td>Died on descend after summiting in third attempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln Hall (*1956)</td>
<td>Rescued on ascend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitor Negrete (*1967 +2006)</td>
<td>Died on descend after his 2nd summit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jürgen H. Stäudtner, Subject: High Altitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Climber</th>
<th>Story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usha Bista (*1985)</td>
<td>Rescued on ascend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apa Sherpa (*early 1960s)</td>
<td>Ascended Mount Everest for 21 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan Boisson, (*1988 +2009)</td>
<td>Died visiting the Base Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Kinloch (*1982 +2010)</td>
<td>Died on Decend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Guide climber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Participant climber</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 8: Painting the Soul of Everest, 11 * multiple widths * 50 cm, 2011, Oil on Canvas*

The series was titled “Painting the Soul of Everest” by a journalist of explorersweb.com later. Some of the men and women I painted died on Mount Everest, which caused a lot of discussion. Others abandoned their plans to reach the summit and helped, or are lucky to have survived.

David Sharp's death in 2006 is the most discussed. He has booked a tour program but eventually was climbing on his own. Towards the end of the summit day he was too weak to continue and lied down. He spent a frizzling cold night. Early the next day he was passed by a number of climbers on ascend, none of which helped. Only when they were descending climbers and Sherpas unsuccessfully tried to help.

By contrast, only 9 days later, Australian climber Lincoln Hall was found alive after having been declared dead the day before. A party of four climbers gave up their own summit attempt, stayed with Hall and walked with him. Another 11 Sherpas were sent up to carry him down. This can be seen as one of the first large rescue operations from such height. Also Usha Bista would not be alive without the help of others giving up their dreams.

The fates of Vitor Negrete, Marko Lihteneker or Peter Kinloch are interweaved with altitude sickness. Like the one of Fran Arsentiev in 1998. She was climbing Everest together with her husband, Sergi, a Russian elite climber who has mastered other 8,000ers before. He also died while trying to help here.

The fate of Morgan Boisson in 2009 however was the easiest to avoid. Boisson and a group of other students flew to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet,
Jürgen H. Stäudtner, Subject: High Altitude

and ascended to Mount Everest base camp by bus, scaling 7,000 feet in two days. The ascension was too quick. He died at the Mount Everest base camp.

**Sherpas**

Sherpas play always a vital role – see the description of Sherpas in the attachment. But Sherpas increasingly understand their importance and this causes a lot of friction among climbers.

*Figure 9: Rests of a Sherpa Walkout, 2013, 10 Signs, Paint, Tape, Paperboard and Bamboo*

They called for a walkout one day to enforce higher wages and better working conditions. They initiated a brawl with three well-known and experienced professional climbers high up on Everest because they felt aggrieved.

Also Sherpas will increasingly learn from other guides organizing the tour to Mount Everest. Soon they will be able to make their own offers, which will accelerate the commercialization on Everest.

**Mountains**

**White Mountains**

Alpine mass tourism started with the European “White Mountain” – Mont Blanc or Monte Bianco – in the West Alps. The mountain has not only sparked mass tourism, but also disputes on borders on mountains: either France or Italy owns the summit. Today the summit is ascended by an average 20,000 mountaineer-tourists each year and could be considered an easy, yet long, ascent for someone who is well trained and used to the altitude.

White mountains are popular all over the world. For instance a large mountain range in the United States of America is called White Mountains. So is Dhaulagiri (White Mountain). Dhaulagiri is with 8167 m (26,795 ft) number seven of the highest mountains in the world. It is situated in Nepal.
and was ascended first in 1960. Dhaulagiri was considered to be the highest mountain of the world in early 19th century.

My work

*Figure 10: The White Mountain, 2012, 2 * 80 * 60 cm, Charcoal and Chalk on Paper*

shows the discrepancies of the development of Dhaulagiri and the other White Mountains. The table in the attachment accompanies it.

The first well know painting of Mont Blanc dates from 1802 (Pierre Louis des la Rive). Thomas Cole has painted the White Mountains in 1827. So far, there is no painting of Dhaulagiri.

**What is a mountain?**

Hundreds of mountaineers went there and many more want to go there. But little people so far had the opportunity to enjoy the view from the summit of Mount Everest without being in a hurry. Even better, when they are there they have little time to enjoy and understand what they see. For this reason I drew this 360 Panorama Schautafel from Mount Everest downwards.

It is the first such view without any clouds – one photo exists which is dating from the 80s of last century. All other panoramas of Everest are actually no real panoramas, as I understand this term. They all show the mountain from below.

*Figure 11: Panorama Schautafel I, 2013, 650 * 100 cm, Charcoal and Chalk on Paper*

The view from Mount Everest is breathtaking. Many details can be seen because the mountain is so much higher than its surroundings. In the East and the West six other 8000ers may been seen with good weather conditions. Altogether thirty of the highest mountains of the world are located there.

While watching the Panorama you may want to consider the definition of a mountain (see attachment).

The North shows endless Tibet. Still two of the highest mountains on earth are to be found here: Changtse and Khartaphu. In the foreground the main route from the north can be seen. The ABC camp, the north col on 7.000 meters and the North-East ridge with the three steps to be passed.
The most impressive silhouettes in the East are Makalu (5th highest mountain) and Kantschenjunga (#3). Because they are in the east, climbers summiting early in the morning will perceive Makalu as “black mountain” which is the translation of its name. To the right of Makalu one can view until Darjeeling in India. The Bengal sea is only 800 kilometers away. In the foreground the Kangshung face of Everest drops.

In the South Lhotse (#4) and Nuptse are closest and define the border of the silent valley and the Khumbu ice fall. The South-East ridge ends in the south col on 8.000 meters between Everest and Lhotse. The last camp for most climbers before the summit. Behind them, Ama Dablam is considered as one of the most beautiful mountains on earth. To its right, you see the valley most expeditions take reaching to Namche Bazar, Lukla airport and Nepal.

In the West the main arm of the Himalaya is glittering in the sun with Cho Oyu (#6), Manaslu (#7), Sisha Pangma (#14) and Gyachung Kang (#15). Also Pumori – considered as the best viewpoint for Mount Everest – is found here. The case camp of Everest is located just in its front. The foreground shows the west ridge leading to Lho La Pass on 6.600 meters height. To the right the Rongbuck glacier is situated – expeditions from the North take this way until they turn left behind Changtse.

I plan to do more such work:

*Figure 12: Planned, Panorama Schautafel II, Annapurna*
*Figure 13: Planned, Panorama Schautafel III, Broad Peak*

**Landmarks**

A solution to the difficulty of painting the huge dimensions of high altitude is to focus on tiny parts of it. This approach has proven to work well for me:

The Green Boot Cave is a small cave close to the summit of Mount Everest. Many climbers pass it on their way up the normal north route. It is named after the boots of Tsewang Paljor still lying there.

*Figure 14: Green Boot Cave, 2010 - 2011, 135 * 120 cm, Oil on Canvas*

The dead body of the climber lays curled in a fetal position under an overhang in the mid right of the painting. Tsewang Paljor is the victim of a storm that hit Everest. This cave came to be referred as Green Boots and represents one of the best known landmarks on Everest. The name derives from the fluorescent green Koflach boots he wore.
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Another very well know landmarks is the second-step on the North. This steep rock face has to be passed one by one. Mostly using a ladder, which is causing tremendous traffic jams. The same happens at the Hillary Step when ascending from the South, only that there is no ladder installed. This traffic jams are live threatening because climbers use their oxygen while waiting there in the cold.

*Figure 15: Planned, Ladder on 2nd Step*

*Figure 16: Planned, Tents at North Col*

**Impressions of a Mountaineer**

Another option has been to paint views from high up downwards. This series shows Mount Everest by describing its coldness, steepness, and scantiness – its extremes by painting.

These paintings show what mountaineers see while climbing Mount Everest. These landscape paintings reflect views from the most touristic paths on this mountain. Many climbers take the main routes over the south or the north col.

*Figure 17: Impressions of a Mountaineer, 2011-2013, 4 * varying Dimensions, Oil on Canvas*

It is very possible, that climbers of Everest have not actively perceived this view. If so, it also could have been the last thing they see. Since these views can be seen from the main routes on Mount Everest, everyone who has seen the sceneries in real also has seen dead bodies on the way.

**Vernet’s Mountain Challenge**

I am still working on resolutions to Claude Joseph Vernet's challenge. He once noticed on a journey to Mont Blanc, that he could not transfer the giant motif in his painting.

Since 2008 I am working on this subject and I am not planning to stop soon. I have been experimenting a lot with different viewpoints, perspectives and other techniques.

However my focus has changed. I am no longer looking on the 14 highest mountains on Earth. I have outlined above, that the term 8.000er is artificial. But I examine those mountains that give me a reason:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mountain</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ama Dablam</td>
<td>Beautiful mountain close to Everest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annapurna I</td>
<td>8.000er. Most dangerous mountain we know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cerro Torre</td>
<td>Beautiful and difficult to climb mountain in Argentina.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cho Oyu</td>
<td>8.000er. The easiest of the high mountains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chogolisa</td>
<td>Beautiful 7.000er close to Concordia and the Gasherbrum group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhaulagiri I</td>
<td>8.000er. It's beautiful south face has not been climbed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hansehellaren Cave in Flatanger, Norway</strong></td>
<td>Home to one of the most difficult climbing routes: change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K2</td>
<td>8.000er. Very nice shape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kailash</td>
<td>Holy mountain in the Himalayas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangchenjunga</td>
<td>8.000er. Lovely view from India.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machapuchare</td>
<td>Fishtail mountain, Holy mountain in the Himalayas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makalu</td>
<td>8.000er. The black mountain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manaslu</td>
<td>8.000er. Looks like the devil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masherbrum</td>
<td>Beautiful 7.000er close to Concordia and the Gasherbrum group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muztag Ata</td>
<td>Holy mountain in China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanga Parbat</td>
<td>8.000er. Its 4.500 meter south face is the highest face on the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shishapangma</td>
<td>8.000er. Looks like a hill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trango (nameless) Tower</td>
<td>Almost hidden mountain close to Baltoro glacier.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reasons are the potential to be a future tourist attraction like the Seven Summits, to look nice or have an extraordinary shape, or mountains which have a story to tell. Mount Everest is not among them, because Everest is a brick, not a beauty.

**Future scenarios**

Above I highlighted some absurdities around high altitude and the Mount Everest especially. Looking on other developments on earth I found some more questions.

**Scenarios for the Future of the Highest**

This work shows some possible scenarios, which would help to answer many questions around Mount Everest. I have assessed the feasibility of each of the options as far as possible. All are possible and costs are controllable. Whether they are likely to happen or not is a question of discussion and opinion.

**Safe transport to high Altitude**

The safe transport will be of increasing importance to reduce the number of fatalities with increasing tourism. It can be provided by installing electric supplies high up the mountains - electricity can provide normal air pressure, heating, water, light, internet access – and constantly monitor the climbing paths.

Standard high altitude containers can be used to transport goods by autonomous spider robots to great height. The utmost transport facility will be the installation of railway systems to develop remote areas and of elevators to the top of the mountains.
Experience of High Altitude

Also, the experience high altitude in a safer manner is an area of development. Heated and pressurized carbon fiber tents can be combined to high tech houses.

A pressurized hotel on top of Mount Everest will allow everybody who can afford it a spectacular view. Building a skyscraper there will increase its height to above 9,000 meters.

In-town high altitude simulators will provide easy access to high altitude climate conditions including low air pressure, cold temperature and wind.

Politics and High Altitude

High altitude will be an area of politics, as long its access remains difficult. Multiple solutions are possible. The least likely though is to block the access to high mountains so nobody can go there any more. It is far more likely that more visitors will be attracted and disputes about frontiers will not be a central theme.

Since 420 million inhabitants in the northern areas of India alone are living as close as two hour flights, and they will have increasing wealth, there should be no lack of visitors.

Further recreation areas

Not only Everest will develop, but all regions with high mountains, or better said, attractive tourist destinations, will prosper. As wealth increases more and more people will be likely to travel.

North India alone is home to around 340 million inhabitants living less than 2 hours by flight away from Everest.

*Figure 20: New Indian Recreation Areas, 2011, 4 * 41.5 * 29.5 cm, Coal, Chalk and Ink on Paper*

If required transportation mechanisms are provided, these people will come for weekend trips, full vacations and even winter games are possible here.
Appendix

The author

Born 1967 in Würzburg, Germany
Married, two kids
Living and working in Haan nearby Düsseldorf, Germany

Foto: Michael Englert, Düsseldorf

Selection of 17 exhibitions:

Solo shows
Trockene Schmitts, Randersacker, 2010
Galerie KU 28, Essen, 2008
Galerie Heinz-Martin Weigand, Ettlingen, 2007

Group show
Kreiskunstausstellung Mettmann, Ratingen, 2008
Kunstspur, Freie Akademie der bildenden Künste, Essen, 2008
Art Athina international art fair, Athens, Greece, 2007
Art Cologne, Special Guest der Galerie Weigand, Köln, 2007

Recitations
Around 15 recitations in regional, national and international newspapers and magazines (e.g. www.AOL.com).
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Studies
2003-2008, Painting, photography and conceptual art, FAdbK, Essen, Akademiebrief, Meisterschüler B. Lokai, T. Zika

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Legends of Mount Everest

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Climber</th>
<th>First to ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Herbert Leigh Mallory (18 June 1886 – 8 or 9 June 1924)</td>
<td>First to extensively explore Mount Everest in the first three British expeditions to Mount Everest in the early 1920s. During the 1924 British Mount Everest Expedition, Mallory and his climbing partner Andrew &quot;Sandy&quot; Irvine both died only about 800 vertical feet from the summit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinhold Messner (born 17 September 1944)</td>
<td>First to climb the Everest without oxygen with Peter Habeler on 8 May 1978. First to climb free solo on 20 August 1980.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junko Tabei (田部井 淑子, born September 22,</td>
<td>First women to to reach the summit of Mount Everest. On May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climber</td>
<td>First to ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell Reginald Brice</td>
<td>16, 1975. First to lead three expeditions on Everest which were filmed by the Discovery Channel. The series touts Brice's experience, weather savvy, and professionalism compared to other groups on the mountain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marco Siffredi</td>
<td>First to descend Mount Everest on a snowboard in 2001 via the Norton Couloir. In 2002, he disappeared after making his second successful Everest summit, while attempting to snowboard the Hornbein Couloir.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Edwin Hall</td>
<td>Not first but known for being head guide of a 1996 Mount Everest expedition in which he, a fellow guide, and two clients perished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Dorjee</td>
<td>Not first but one of the most experienced Everest climbers. He summited Everest 13 times. Not Dorjie Sherpa who, as of 2004, holds the world record for the quickest climb of Mount Everest in 8 hours and 10 minutes. Also not Dorje Sherpa who married his girlfriend Moni Mulepati on Summit of Mount Everest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Not first, but alive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Painting the Soul of Everest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Climber</th>
<th>First to ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fran Arsentiev (*1958 +1998)</td>
<td>Died on ascend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marko Lihteneker (*1959 +2005)</td>
<td>Died on descend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Sharp (*1972 +2006)</td>
<td>Died on descend after summiting in third attempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln Hall (*1956)</td>
<td>Rescued on ascend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitor Negrete (*1967 +2006)</td>
<td>Died on descend after his 2\textsuperscript{nd} summit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usha Bista (*1985)</td>
<td>Rescued on ascend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apa Sherpa (*early 1960s)</td>
<td>Ascended Mount Everest for 21 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan Boisson, (*1988 +2009)</td>
<td>Died visiting the Base Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Kinloch (*1982 +2010)</td>
<td>Died on Decend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Guide climber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Participant climber</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## White Mountains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mont Blanc - Monte Bianco</th>
<th>Dhaulagiri - (धौलागिरी)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mont Blanc - Monte Bianco</td>
<td>Dhaulagiri - (ढोलागिरी)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest face and southeast face drop 3km - other faces do not drop - 4km rise over Vougy (40km distance) / cable car to l'Aiguille du Midi - 3.842m / observatory on summit from 1893 until 1906 / tunnel since 1965 - 11.6km</td>
<td>South face and west face drop 4km, north face drops 3.5 km, east face drops 2.3 km - 7km rise over Kali Gandaki gorge (30km distance) / no cable car / no observatory / no tunnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000 ascents per year - climbed in two to three days - including one day acclimatization / twelve rescue operations each summer weekend - app. 0.01% death rate / routes are Voie des Cristalliers (normal) - la Traversée - Grand Mulets - Aiguilles Grises - Miage-Bionnassay-Mont Blanc crossing</td>
<td>Around 150 ascents in total - climbed in 30 days - including 14 days acclimatization / no rescue operations - 60+ fatalities in total - 40% death rate / routes are northeast ridge (normal) - southwest ridge - west face - southwest buttress - north face / south face unclimbed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamonix - at northwest face - Chamonix valley - France / 9.800 inhabitants - 10,000 beds / 995m above sea level / 47 ski lifts / railway station since 1901 / airport Geneva-Cointrin at 88 km</td>
<td>Baglung - at southeast ridge - Kali Gandaki valley - Nepal / 30.000 inhabitants - unknown number of beds / 1020m above sea level / no ski lifts / no train station / airport Pokhara at 60km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courmayeur - at southwest face - Aosta valley - Italy / 3000 inhabitants - 6,000 beds / 1.224m above sea level / 21 ski lifts / no train station / airport Turin at 147km</td>
<td>Zhongba - at 80 km air distance to north - China / 18,000 inhabitants - unknown number of beds / 4600m above sea level / no ski lifts / no train station / no airport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painted 1802 by de la Rive - 1834 by Rousseau (group Barbizon) - 1862 by de Latour / illustrated 1775 by Bourrit - 1790 by von Mechel - 1842 by first travel guide (Baedeker) / marketed 1854 by Ruskin - 1852 by Smith - 1857 by Whymper for the Alpine Club (London) /</td>
<td>Unknown first paintings / unknown first illustrations / unknown first marketing efforts / unknown first photography</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Eight-thousanders

14 mountains are said to be above 8,000 meters. A list based on foot (e.g. the 26,000ers) would include a different amount of mountains and has not been asserted although it would make equal sense.

Location

All 8,000ers lie in the Himalaya or the Karakoram. These mountain ranges next to each other are separated by the Indus knee. Ten of this mountains are part of central Himalayas between Nepal and China, such as Mount Everest. These ten Mountains have a longitude comparable to the one of Miami, Bahrain or New Delhi. Everest is by air distance only 800 km away from the sea (Bay of Bengal).

Four of these mountains are located close to the Baltoro glacier in Karakoram. They are further north.
Everest itself is located next to Lhotse, Makalu and Cho Oyu.

**List of all 8.000ers**

A glance on the list reveals some interesting facts: the five highest mountains are significantly higher than the other nine. Typically an additional night is spent in high altitude before ascending to the summit.

The number of ascends differ dramatically. Cho Oyu (the easiest mountain) and Mount Everest attract many more mountaineers than the others. By end of 2010 in total 5104 ascends were counted. More than half of it has occurred since 2006. Lhotse is easy but not climbed very often because it is effectively the south summit of Mount Everest.

Most interesting however is the death rate. Annapurna is by far the most deadly of these mountains. Choy Oyu is the safest according to this list with numbers of 2008:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peak</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Ascents</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Death rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annapurna I</td>
<td>8091 m (26,545 ft)</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peak</td>
<td>Height</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Ascents</td>
<td>Deaths</td>
<td>Death rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K2</td>
<td>8611 m (28,251 ft)</td>
<td>Pakistan/China</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>23.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanga Parbat</td>
<td>8126 m (26,660 ft)</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>22.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangchenjunga</td>
<td>8586 m (28,169 ft)</td>
<td>Nepal/India</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>19.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manaslu</td>
<td>8163 m (26,781 ft)</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>17.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhaulagiri I</td>
<td>8167 m (26,795 ft)</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>16.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makalu</td>
<td>8485 m (27,838 ft)</td>
<td>China/Nepal</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gasherbrum I (Hidden Peak)</td>
<td>8080 m (26,444 ft)</td>
<td>China/Pakistan</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shishapangma</td>
<td>8027 m (26,335 ft)</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everest</td>
<td>8848 m (29,035 ft)</td>
<td>China/Nepal</td>
<td>3684</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>5.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad Peak</td>
<td>8051 m (26,414 ft)</td>
<td>China/Pakistan</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lhotse</td>
<td>8516 m (27,940 ft)</td>
<td>China/Nepal</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gasherbrum II</td>
<td>8034 m (26,358 ft)</td>
<td>China/Pakistan</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cho Oyu</td>
<td>8201 m (26,906 ft)</td>
<td>China/Nepal</td>
<td>2668</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1.46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only six mountains are located in one country. Two countries own the summit of the others.
Jürgen H. Stäudtner, Subject: High Altitude

Climate

The weather condition in Central Himalaya and especially on Mount Everest is extreme. Not only the very low temperature of in average between $-36 \, ^\circ C$ and $-19 \, ^\circ C$ on the summit and the thin air make it difficult to cope with the terrain.

Also the wind is a challenge for itself. Central Himal is the first major barrier for the Monsoon coming from South. Since it is close to the sea, and 8.000 meters in height need to be passed in a short distance, winds are especially humid.

Wind can be up to 300 km/h fast and lead to more than 3 meters fresh snow per day.

The death zone

When humans go up high, they have to deal with little air pressure and coldness. The most influential factor is the air. Pressure on altitudes above 8.000 meters is only about a third of the pressure on sea level. Therefore we receive less oxygen while breathing. But also the brain can swell can be squeezed by the skull. Various forms of anoxia (altitude sickness) exist. This phenomena is under investigation. Dexamethasone, also known as dex, a controversial anti-inflammatory steroid is used to reduce the effects of altitude sickness and high-altitude cerebral edema (HACE).

Frostbite is another major challenge. Oftentimes toes or fingers need to be amputated. High-tec shoes and multiple gloves are worn to reduce this risk.

In general our organism can only survive very high altitude a limited time. For this reason, mountaineers claim the area above 8.000 meters above sea level the death zone. But this is a wanton definition because the term 8.000er is used so widely. Also every human being reacts differently to those climate conditions.

Acclimatization

Acclimatization is done to increase the amount of red blood cells that carry oxygen. The more red blood cells a human has, the better he can live in high altitude. Climbing high and sleeping low helps to achieve acclimatization. A process which is repeated many times until enough red blood cells are expected to have been build.

Nevertheless most climbers are not trained well enough – they use additional oxygen while being in the death zone to be able to breath. This
oxygen is carried in bottles. One climber typically needs three bottles to ascend and descend.

Expert climbers do not use bottled oxygen. The blood saturation with oxygen of a professional climber is as low as in an intensive care unit.

**Topography**

Elevation, volume, relief, steepness, spacing and continuity have been used as criteria for defining a mountain\(^5\). Depending on its definition there are more or less than 14 Eight-thousanders. The most advanced definition of a mountain however comes from Topography.

**Prominence**

In topography, “prominence characterizes the height of a mountain's or hill's summit by the vertical distance between it and the lowest contour line encircling it and no higher summit. It is a measure of the independence of a summit.”\(^6\) Suppose that the sea level rises to the lowest level at which the peak becomes the highest point on an island. The prominence of that peak is the height of that island. Taking this definition, the highest peaks on earth are under water in oceans.

Prominence is interesting to some mountaineers because peaks with high prominences tend to be the highest points around and are likely to have extraordinary views.

Many lists of mountains take topographic prominence as a criterion for inclusion, or cutoff\(^7\). Most of them would show at minimum one 8.000er more: Broad Peak Central in Karakorum. It is located close to Broad Peak as part of the Gasherbrum group. It looks like a separate mountain, since its prominence is 191 meters. So it has been discussed for long whether it should be an 8.000er. The UIAA definition is that it is a mountain if it has a prominence of at least 300 meters (980 ft).

Also Lhotse means “South Peak” of Everest in Tibetan. Lhotse rises 610 m (2,000 ft) above the South Col. Lhotse Middle and Lhotse Shar are above 8.000 meters also. Lhotse's south face rises 3.2 km (2.0 mi) making it the steepest face of this size in the world, which may be an argument.

**Isolation**

The topographic isolation of a summit is the great circle distance to the nearest point of equal elevation. Topographic isolation represents a radius of dominance in which the summit is the highest point. Topographic
isolation can be calculated for small hills and islands as well as for major mountain peaks.

**Summit**

The term "summit" is used for a mountain peak with a significant amount of topographic prominence or topographic isolation. Summits near a higher peak, with some prominence or isolation, but not reaching a certain cutoff value for these quantities, are often considered sub summits (or sub peaks) of the higher peak, and are considered part of the same mountain. The UIAA definition is that a summit is independent if it has a prominence of 30 meters (98 ft) or more.

**People living close**

**Sherpas**

Sherpa (Tibetan for "eastern people") are an ethnic group from the most mountainous region of Nepal. Most Sherpa people live in Nepal's eastern regions. Today, the term is often used to refer to almost any guide or porter hired for mountaineering expeditions in the Himalayas, regardless of their ethnicity. Sherpas are renowned in the international climbing and mountaineering community for their hardiness, expertise, and experience at high altitude.\(^8\)

Very seldom they earn the merit for their work. Some Sherpas recently received more attention such as Apa Sherpa and Phurba Tashi Sherpa, for being 21 times on the summit by 2013, or Pem Dorjee Sherpa for the fastest ascend from Everest Base camp in 8 hours and 10 minutes in 2004.

**Tourists**

The population density of the northern Indian states is higher than the one in the south. Uttar Pradesh (199 million), West-Bengal with its capital Kolkata (91 million), Assam (31 million) and New Delhi (21 million) alone have 340 million inhabitants.
Central Himalaya is only around 700 km airline distance away from Kolkata, and 1.000 km away from New Delhi. This is a one-hour flight with modern airplanes.

Remarks

1 See “Der Berg, Schrecken und Faszination”, Bettina Hausler, Hirmer Verlag, 2008

2 Mont Blanc: See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Blanc

3 Mountain Range: See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Ranges: A mountain system or system of mountain ranges sometimes is used to combine several geological features that are geographically (regionally) related. Most geologically young mountain ranges on the Earth's land surface are associated with either in the Pacific Ring of Fire or the Alpide Belt. The Alpide belt includes Indonesia and southeast Asia, through the Himalaya, and ends in the Alps. The belt also includes other European and
Asian mountain ranges. A mountain range or mountain belt is a geographic area containing numerous geologically related mountains. A mountain system or system of mountain ranges sometimes is used to combine several geological features that are geographically (regionally) related.


5 In the Oxford English Dictionary a mountain is defined as "a natural elevation of the earth surface rising more or less abruptly from the surrounding level and attaining an altitude which, relatively to the adjacent elevation, is impressive or notable.". The UN defines “A mountain is a large landform that stretches above the surrounding land in a limited area usually in the form of a peak.” Using these definitions, mountains cover 33% of Eurasia, 19% of South America, 24% of North America, and 14% of Africa.[12] As a whole, 24% of the Earth's land mass is mountainous.


7 See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Topographic_prominence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Topographic_prominence), John and Anne Nuttall's The Mountains of England and Wales uses a cutoff of 15 m (about 50 ft), and Alan Dawson's list of Marilyns uses 150 m (about 500 ft). In the contiguous United States, the famous list of "fourteeners" (14,000 foot / 4268 m peaks) uses a cutoff of 300 ft / 91 m.