**On Everest**

Sasha Bezzubov

(2016-2024)

*On Everest* is a series of portraits and landscapes made in Nepal during several treks in the Everest region between 2016 and 2024.

When I started hiking in Nepal, one of the first things I noticed were the porters. Some of the porters are familiar to westerners – they carry the equipment and supplies needed for trekking and mountaineering expeditions. These porters are paid a small wage by the trekking companies, but depend largely on tips. They are motivated by the possibility of ascending the ranks to become cooks, guides and trip organizers. Their labor is difficult and dangerous, yet somewhat regulated. For instance, the weight these porters carry is limited to 30 kilos (66 lbs.). At least in theory, this work can provide a chance at upward mobility in a region with little economic opportunity.

The second group - commercial porters - are the porters documented in this project. Usually, commercial porters do not have the education or opportunity to move up through the ranks, nor do they have any worker protections. These porters carry the supplies needed for the lodges that cater to trekkers, **f**rom crates of beer to sheets of plywood. Their loads range from an excruciating 60 - 140 kilos (132 - 300 lbs.), sometimes as much as twice their weight. Because they get paid by weight, they are incentivized to carry as much as possible. To save the little money they make, they economize on meals and often share a single bed between two-three people. As altitudes rise, so do the prices, and even these sparse accommodations become increasingly costly. The work is physically demanding even outside of the weight they carry, and they are often subject to respiratory infections, altitude sickness, hypothermia and chronic disability.

This project builds on my photographic work on tourism and tourist populations in the developing world, starting in 1997 with *The Gringo Project*. Most of my previous work involves documenting travelers themselves, but in *On Everest* the traveler's presence is implied through the portraits of porters and the things they carry. Everything they carry - whether toilet paper, mattresses or building materials - is ultimately

for the trekkers. On Everest, this harsh labor was happening right alongside me, on the same trails I was hiking, in front of the thousands of trekkers who come to Nepal to hike in the most spectacular mountains in the word. Being a tourist is always full of contradictions and hypocrisies, but those conflicts can often be temporarily shelved for the sake of leisure and rest. The labor behind tourism is usually hidden, with much effort,  to provide a kind of seamless enjoyment for the tourist. On Everest,  it is impossible not to see the individuals doing this work. Their hardship is laid bare in the sublime mountains of the Himalayas and it is this very labor that makes these exalted adventures possible.

***we are the kings and queens of narnia***

**Sasha Bezzubov**

2010 - 2024

When our son Niko was two months old, we went to Costa Rica. We carried him in a backpack, close to us. We went to the Caribbean coast, but the hurricane season was in full swing, so we changed our plans and took a twelve hour bus ride to the Pacific coast. It was tricky to travel with an infant, but the locals, seeing how far we had come with a newborn, were extra helpful and somehow we made the best of it. When Niko turned three we decided it was time to go on a long hike. That winter we went to a volcanic island in Nicaragua and spent a week walking around its periphery. My wife Jessica carried Niko in a backpack and I carried everything else, which consisted mostly of a massive bag of Diapers.

Walking all day has the effect of reducing everything to the very basic and elemental. Where will you sleep? What will you eat? How long is the walk that day? How challenging is the terrain? When life becomes this simple you tune everything nonessential out and just concentrate on a task at hand. Your daily routine becomes how to satisfy some basic but vital necessities, and you are too tired to think of much beyond that. It’s a respite from so many tasks, and thoughts, and confusions of daily life. It's like the classic Zen story, about when a student asks his teacher, “What is enlightenment?” and the master replied, “When hungry, eat. When tired, sleep.” Sometimes neither is possible, so you talk about eating and sleeping and fantasize about all sorts of luxuries unattainable at the moment. And when you finally arrive at a place where those luxuries are available, you’re flooded with a great sense of appreciation.

We walked from one village to the next, knowing there would be some place to stay, but having no idea how it would be or what it would look like. Each day was a complete discovery and we all fell into a kind of rhythmic trance. Niko hung in the back and pointed at things he saw, made approving sounds and sometimes even said things. Each day we improvised. There were no cribs, all the beds were high off the floor and the floors were hard tile or cement. One night we woke up to a scream in the middle of the night. Niko had rolled off the bed and fell onto the hard tile floor, surprising himself and us. The following night we made a platform of pillows around the bed and from then on we collected him from the floor each morning.

And so, we traveled as a family, the three of us, mostly to places where we could walk for days, sometimes weeks on end. This became our annual or semi-annual ritual. During those weeks we became very close and shared such intimacy that I cannot imagine life, or family life, without it. There's nothing more intimate than becoming hungry together and knowing that you need to cross this hill and walk for another 5 kilometers before someone is kind enough to cook for you. Or talking for days on end about blisters that won't heal. Or riffing on some silly joke over and over as you walk through the Spanish countryside. Traveling like this and walking was something Jessica and I had done as a couple before becoming parents, but we also wanted to share this with Niko, to make it a part of his world.

When Niko was six we were in Mexico, walking in the Oaxacan mountains, crossing countless streams. At first, we stopped at each stream and removed our shoes and held them in our hands as we crossed. We soon tired of this pointlessness, so we just left our shoes on and let our feet get wet. This was not supposed to be a very long or arduous walk, but as sometimes happens, the farther we walked the more we wanted to keep going. We knew this path was leading somewhere and somewhere along the way, the advantages of turning around and walking all the way back, seemed to recede. We had been reading The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe out loud to each other in bed for days and on this adventure, we imagined ourselves transported into our own magic kingdom. At some point during this hike, maybe when we needed some extra encouragement, we put our hands together and came up with the chant, "we are the kings and queens of narnia". This became our little pact and battle cry.

This year Niko turned fifteen. He has now traveled to more than a dozen countries and has hiked over a thousand miles in Europe, Central America, Asia and the US. Being a teenager, I don't know how much longer he will be

interested or willing to travel with us. Whereas when he started to hike we had to walk short days in order not to overburden him, he can now easily run past us, wait at the top of the hill and make it seem completely effortless. During our last hike he said, in his sweet way and careful of our feelings, that it's not that he doesn't want to keep hiking, but next time he may not want to hike for an entire 2 or 3 weeks and may want to do other things instead. So this transition seems like the right time to close this chapter.

**The Searchers (Parts I and II)**Sasha Bezzubov + Jessica Sucher(2006)
The photographs in *The Searchers* look at various aspects of Western spiritual tourism in India. India has long had a vast, loosely organized industry in Spiritual training made up of Utopian communities, yoga centers, meditation retreats, Gurus both Indian and Western, and a massive circuit of festivals, pilgrimage sites and places of worship. This landscape of spiritual (and social) possibility, along with exotic surroundings and low costs draws large numbers of Western seekers who come for a week or a lifetime.
*The Searchers* builds on our previous work The Gringo Project (Bezzubov, 1997-2003) and Expats and Natives (Bezzubov + Sucher, 2002-2005) by addressing the population of young Western travelers visiting the developing world, their relationship with their host country, and what this means within the larger questions of history, economy, race, and idealism. *The Searchers (Part I)* is a series of photographs made in various spiritual communities that largely cater to Westerners, paired with portraits of the seekers we encountered there. Both the act of travel and spiritual search are transitional states. The overexposed portraits of these seekers attempt to evoke this liminal condition. The faded look of these portraits, as well as the clothes and jewelry they wear, harkens back to the beginnings of this movement in the 1960's.
*The Searchers (Part II)* is a series of portraits of Westerners that have converted to one of India's many spiritual traditions and live in or around India's spiritual centers, or have found their own path and live in isolation. Although this project began as a critique of this phenomena (India as a location for Western spiritual journeys - with all the historical, sociological and economic questions this activity summons up) the Western converts we encountered in India made us question our reductive assumptions.
Believing that no one stylistic approach could accommodate this multi-layered subject, we formed several responses - from somber to humorous, from visually driven to conceptually structured. Using a large format view camera, we photographed transient seekers and lifetime converts, architecture in the communities they found, and the spiritual practices they engage in.

**The Beatles Ashram**(2006)
The photographs in *The Beatles Ashram* were made at the site of the former Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Ashram in Rishikesh, India. After The Beatles visit in 1968 – they were briefly Maharishi's disciples – the exodus among young people from the West to India in search of spiritual enlightenment began in earnest. The Ashram was abandoned in 1997 and now the site, that

formerly housed hundreds of students, numerous celebrities, and was central to introducing the West to India's spirituality, is being slowly consumed and overtaken by the surrounding forest and the workings of time.

**Three Months**Sasha Bezzubov + Jessica Sucher(2006)

The portraits in *Before and After* were made at a Buddhist Meditation retreat center in Dharamsala, India. We worked with a group of participants in the annual, 3 month meditation retreat. The Vajrasattva is a Tantric meditation practice in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, which involves visualization, mantra recitation, and purging of various mental negativities in order to purify the mind. The retreat is an intense experience that involves 5 AM wake up, 10 hours of meditation per day, fasting and daily periods of silence.

Each participant agreed to be photographed the day before the beginning, and the day after the completion of this life transforming experience. Using the tradition of Before and After portraiture, a photographic tradition that often demonstrates the effects of diet or plastic surgery, we wanted to see if the inner transformation - if one believes in such - leaves any tangible trace on the face and in the photograph. How do we approach photographic evidence and is photography sensitive enough to render such changes visible?

**Expats and Natives**Sasha Bezzubov + Jessica Sucher(2002-present)
The portraits in *Expats and Natives* were made in small-scale tourist destinations of the developing world -- islands in Thailand, surfing villages in Nicaragua, coastal towns in Mexico. We traveled to these destinations in search of natural beauty, indigenous culture and respite from the urban pace – irresistible notions inherited from centuries of storytelling, photographs and advertising.
In these areas, where there is seemingly little interaction between tourists and locals, we noticed a significant population of mixed families— travelers who stayed and became expats, living with their local wives (or less frequently, husbands) and raising a family in a new culture. We found westerners who had come for similar reasons as us, drawn by the exotic or the escape but who had chosen to remain, and locals who had found a different future outside of their culture. These families came

together as a consequence of tourism, a new manifestation of the complicated mixing of cultures that began along trade routes and continues through flows of capital and travel.
In some situations, these families seemed to echo the historical power dynamics between genders as well as between citizens of the developed and developing worlds – age differences, obvious gaps in background and economic levels, tensions and disillusionments. In other cases, the equity and tenderness of the family seemed to undermine easy judgments about status and power. Most frequently, the children in these pictures grounded the families in their shared futures.
As the largest industry in the world, it is often through tourism that the cultures of the developed and the developing worlds meet. These families suggest the layered history and unknown futures of these relationships formed in the intersection of two worlds.

**The Gringo Project**Sasha Bezzubov(1997-present)
Between 1997 and 2003 I traveled to many developing countries in Central and South America, North Africa and Asia to make portraits of Western travelers. I was looking for both an escape from the West and a search for its alternative. However, whether I was in the remote Himalayas or the jungles of the Amazon, I found that the West was everywhere: in fast food restaurants, name brand products, movies, and the Western travelers themselves. Where are these people from? What brings them there? How is the place and the traveler altered by this exchange? Seeing how ubiquitous traveling has become, I decided it was a phenomenon worth addressing.
These portraits are set in places that are perceived to be unchanged by the modern age. The search for an untainted past is one of the reasons we travel there. We are, however, another link in a long chain of explorers, merchants, missionaries, and conquerors that have left an impact on these cultures. This conflicts with the noble aspirations that guide the traveler - the desire to learn through encounters with the unexpected. How does travel - an act of freedom - relate to the history of colonialism, of which it is a by-product?
All the photographs in this series are full-length portraits. There is both tension and ease in the way the traveler and the setting coexist. This work addresses the paradox of traveling as being both personally sublime and culturally profane. These portraits act as signposts; all the ideas are reduced to a simple record of people in a place where they don’t belong. I believe this work is significant not only because it is a record of travelers all over the world, but it also reverses the old discourse on us and them. It presents a neglected aspect of our culture in its contact with the mythical opposites of the Other.

**Sad Tropics**Sasha Bezzubov(2012)
The Republic of Gabon is largelyrainforest. It is part of a forest that covers a large area of Central Africa,and because of its dense canopy and variety of its plant life, it is consideredone the world’s most precious ecosystems.
Nowadays, an unlikely mix oflocals and foreigners coexist in this forest, often with great tension. Thereare Gabonese villagers and indigenous

Pygmies, migrant workers from neighboringcountries, European technicians working in extracting industries, Chineselaborers, drug tourists, and a motley crew of conservationists, scientists,activists that come together in resource rich regions of the developing world.

This forest is crisscrossedby logging roads that cut deep into the interior. The dust created in the wakeof passing trucks, which cart enormous trees to the port, covers everything insight. The rainforest turns deep red as the trucks leave behind clouds of dust.This dust settles on plants, smothering them and transforming their naturalgreens with an industrial concoction of red glow. The foliage flanking theseroads becomes a witness to this exploitation.

*Sad Tropics* is a series of portraits of foreigners and locals who coexist in thisthreatened environment: a microcosm of global trade and its ruinous effects. Also,running through this series (and anchoring its various layers of record andmeaning) are pictures of dust - a constant presence, insidious reminder, andsymbol of our destructive relationship with nature.

**Facts on the Ground** Sasha Bezzubov + Jessica Sucher(2010)
Early on during our time in Israel/Palestine, we climbed up to a lookout point in British Park and saw a lush green forest stretching out into the distance. It was the kind of sight that usually inspires awe and makes you feel grateful to those that had the foresight to preserve it. But within this park are the ruins of two villages that were home to Palestinians forcibly removed by Israeli troops in 1948. Since the villages are no longer visible, we photographed the pine forest that was planted to hide their remains and found it epitomized the misleading nature of the Israeli landscape.
There are ruins throughout Israel. Some are ancient sites dating back to Biblical times, but most of what you see today is more recent. They are the remains of over 400 villages destroyed by the Israeli military after forcibly removing 750,000 Palestinians from their homes during what Israeli textbooks refer to as “The War of Independence” and the Palestinians call the “Catastrophe” (al-Nakba). Their systematic destruction ensured that the exiled Palestinians did not have a place to return to, an act Israeli historian Ilan Pappe has identified as ethnic cleansing. The residents from these villages, along with their descendants, are now living as refugees or exiles throughout the world. There is not usually much left of these villages--a cornerstone, or evidence of terraced farming, or more frequently cacti--but if you know what to look for, you begin to see them everywhere. The sites on which they stood have been purposely renamed. Many of the parks in Israel/Palestine, including British Park (named for the funders who donated money to the Jewish National Fund for its creation), were part of an intentional design to hide these ruins in benevolent, landscaped settings. The JNF, working together with Israeli government, planted fast-growing European pines to form these parks, simultaneously covering the ruins of the villages and creating a familiar landscape for the new, European immigrants. The Zionist expression “making the desert bloom” hides a dark history.
This is the narrative we found in Israel/Palestine repeatedly — the history that has been purposely buried is actually traceable in the land.

We saw this in the ruins of villages, hidden in plain sight. We also saw it in the untended olive trees present throughout the West Bank. The trees look neglected, but they are a by-product of Israeli policy in the Occupied Territories. Israeli settlements, the Separation Wall, military checkpoints, and the segregated roads that criss-cross the West Bank have made countless olive orchards inaccessible to the Palestinian farmers who depend on them. These olive trees have been the main source of income for families that have tended them for generations, and their products, a leading industry for Palestinians. Palestinian ties to these trees run deep, and cutting off farmers from their orchards is a powerful strategy of symbolic and economic discouragement. These trees are beautiful in their untended wildness but their implication is devastating.

While the confiscated trees are a constant, sad feature of the Occupied landscape, the settlements are the main instrument used to impose, expand and cement Israeli control. The term “facts on the ground” is used to describe these housing developments that are intended to establish permanent Israeli presence in Palestinian territory, in effect negating Palestinian claims to their land. The scale of some of these projects is so vast and the ongoing construction so blatant, it’s difficult to reconcile that their existence is illegal under international law.

Whether the settlements are built in the style of North American suburbs, remote mountain outposts, or populous cities, their placement on the hilltops overlooking Palestinian villages in the valleys is menacing. This is both a symbolic and strategic maneuver, a policy of physical and psychological dominance. The settlements are now home to a half million Israelis and one of the main obstacles in any peace process. They are islands of concrete and asphalt and their influence stretches beyond the built structures, radiating out into the desert with circles of security fences, roads, and checkpoints. Their presence fragments the West Bank, making it nearly impossible for Palestinians to go to work or school, get medical care, or see their families. The Occupation strangles Palestinian life, making it all but unlivable, forcing those Palestinians who can to leave, and confining the rest in what can only be called ghettos.

For the majority of non-Palestinians, the dominant Israeli narrative invites one to look away from recent history and current policies of encroachment. We made the photographs in *Facts on the Ground* with a large format camera, which describes the world in precise detail and compels one to look at  the landscape with great deliberation. The photographs stay away from the dramatic violence of the conflict that is frequently seen in the news, and reveal instead the enduring ways the Occupation has transformed the land. Being both American and Jewish, Facts on the Ground is a reckoning with our own nationalities and backgrounds. US foreign policy, ever favorable towards Israel, is one of the factors that legitimizes and enables the cruelties, small and great, that Israel inflicts on the Palestinian people. Being Jewish means that Israel, the Jewish State, performs these injustices in our name. The conflict in Israel/Palestine is often portrayed as timeless and deeply complex, a portrayal which actively discourages scrutiny of recent and current policies. And while the path to any future resolution will be complex, the history of the conflict and the methods of the Occupation are more blatant than many want to admit. They are stamped on the land.

**Albedo Zone**Sasha Bezzubov(2008)

*Albedo Zone* addresses questions of climate change through a series of

black and white photographs that deal with the “Albedo effect”. The series consists of very light images of ice, and very dark images of water, making apparent the transformation of ice from an element that cools the planet into one that warms it. To create these photographs I used a large format camera and the “Zone System”, a photographic technique invented and refined by the mid-century American photographer Ansel Adams. This work was made in Alaska, a part of the world where global warming and thawing are at their extreme. Alaska, as well as many Arctic regions and Antarctica contain massive volumes of water in the form of glaciers and sea ice. As the glaciers continue to melt, the rising sea levels may spell disaster for half of the world’s population that lives near the coast. Albedo is a measurement of light that is reflected by earth’s surface. Each type of earth surface reflects and retains light and heat in a different way. Ice and snow are the most reflective surfaces; they return the majority of sunlight that reaches them back into the atmosphere, thus preventing the earth from warming. Water, on the other hand, is one of the least reflective surfaces, retaining most of the light that reaches it, thus warming the earth. As the ice sheets, glaciers and sea ice throughout the world melt and become water, these areas transform from being the most reflective to the least reflective surfaces. This causes a feedback that creates further thawing, warming, rising water levels and desalinization, which is, in part, responsible for the climate disaster we face today. It is this transformation of ice into water that *Albedo Zone* photographs address.
Photography (drawing with light), like the climate, is wholly dependent on the reflectivity of surfaces. The objects that reflect the most light appear white and the objects that reflect the least light appear dark or black. The person most responsible for transforming this phenomenon into a technical/theoretical system is Ansel Adams. Dividing the spectrum of reflectivity into eight to ten zones, Adams created a pedagogical method he termed the Zone System. He used this technical approach to create many iconic black and white images that, in their impeccable tonal range, define his transcendentalist and romantic awe of nature and its creations.

While I share Adams’ awe of nature, I also realize that Earth’s environment is being destroyed at an ever-accelerating pace. Addiction to natural resources, growing dependence on arable land, and our incessant need and desire for more of everything, everywhere, at all times, has greatly contributed to the current environmental crisis. We live at a time the writer Bill McKibben has described as “The End of Nature”, a world that, since Ansel Adams, has endured several decades of extreme abuse. It is highly problematic to treat nature as an omnipotent force in relation to which humans are insignificant – a philosophy that Adams embraced. We humans, much to our detrient, have finally become the masters of nature, not only affecting it locally, but also changing nature’s very core, the atmosphere. I think it is imperative to represent nature as the endangered space that it is, while continuing to be aware of the power and beauty it still possesses.

**Wildfire** Sasha Bezzubov(2003-2007)
The photographs in the *Wildfire* series were made in California from 2003 to 2007. The work began as part of a larger project titled *Things Fall Apart* (2001-2008), which took me to different parts of the world to make landscape photographs in the aftermath of hurricanes, tornadoes,

earthquakes and tsunamis. Wildfire was published by Nazraeli Press in 2009 with an introduction by the writer and environmental activist Bill McKibben.

Every fall California burns. These wildfires can no longer be called a “natural disaster”. Each season, these fires are more and more difficult to fight. Over-development in California is so rampant that the only sound solution - to let the fires burn themselves out – is unfeasible.

Human-caused global warming is rendering the fire season longer each year. The longer fire season means that the wood becomes dryer, which makes it ready to ignite from the hundreds of thunderstorms that scan the American terrain every day. Add to this tinderbox the proximity of man with our campfires, grills, automobiles, atvs, and the occasional pyromaniac and you have an environment where human habitation and that which threatens it, coexist in a state of chronic catastrophe.

It is this landscape that *Wildfire* attempts to describe. A landscape of charred ruins equally frightening and beautiful. A landscape that we humans have created following our desires to live in the mountains, forests, canyons - to be closer to nature. And a landscape that is not only contemporary, but a landscape of the future. A future that we will dwell in with a much less cooperative nature.

Photography plays a remarkable role in this. It was in big measure thanks to photographic representation that the West was so appetizingly packaged and so quickly settled. The great 19th century American landscape photographers and the geological surveys that employed them utilized the power of the photograph (under the guise and with assistance of scientific exploration) to sell the land. The implication that ran through these powerful images of vast stretches of terrain, new rail lines, mountains and valleys and streams inhabited sparsely (if at all) by subjugated natives - was “come and settle”. In *Wildfire* I attempt to both pay tribute to those earlier photographs, but also to bring them and the landscape they helped to fashion into question.

**Things Fall Apart** Sasha Bezzubov(2001-2007)

*“It is thus that we are warned at each step of our nothingness, man goes to meditate on the ruins of emptiness, he forgets that he himself is a ruin still more unsteady, and that he will fall before these remains do.”*
- Chateaubriand

Looking at ruins has a long cultural history, particularly in poetry and painting. Traditionally, the contemplation of ruins signified the contemplation of mortality – both of the society and of the self. Starting in the 17th century, the Grand Tourists visited the ruins of former civilizations to be reminded that even the mightiest of empires would eventually become “time’s shipwreck”. If the seemingly indestructible stone buildings of ancient Rome succumbed to armies, natural disasters and decay, why wouldn’t they? Witnessing the destruction of cities and the wreckage of our built enviornments, we too are reminded that we, and everything we’ve created, are transitory and impermanent.

As the name indicates, a natural disaster is a normal occurrence, a standard way that the earth regulates itself. However, because of our unprecedented impact on the environment, these events have become catastrophically severe, frequent and deadly. As the systems that cause the earth to warm continue to affect each other, the feedback loops they create may render the decline irreversible. The presence of the ruins left in the wake of these disasters may become less of an exception than the

rule.

*Things Fall Apart* is a series of photographs of destruction caused by natural disasters in India, the US, Indonesia and Thailand. Using the genre of landscape photography, a tradition born with and used to celebrate industrial expansion, these photographs evidence the fragility of the man-made as it is transformed into dreamscapes of apocalyptic proportions. I derive a guilty pleasure from witnessing and representing ruins. Images of destruction are beautiful because there is pleasure in knowing a kind of truth, the truth of fragility and impermanence. But there is suffering buried in these images, the suffering of others, and by extension, of ourselves.

**Not-Self Portraits** Sasha Bezzubov (2000)

The photographs in *Not-Self Portraits* attempt to represent - through the genre of the photographic portrait - the invisible actions of mental, spiritual and physical transformation.

*Not-Self Portraits* are portraits made while I was doing a Buddhist meditation practice. I sit, remaining as still as I possibly can, for one hour. During these hour-long exposures the camera records the accumulation of my stillness, and my movements. A single candle - often utilized in meditation practice as an object of concentration - is used as my only lighting equipment. Physical stillness is considered very important in photography. Its absence causes a motion blur, a faulty, imperfect exposure. This was a primary obstacle photography had to overcome in its early days in order to become the dominant form of representation. Daguerre, one of photography's inventors, bemoaned the fact that photography, because of its slow speed, would never be able to make portraits a practical reality. Physical stillness is also considered fundamental to meditation as it leads to mental stillness, which in turn, leads to realization. Meditation is a practice of stilling the body and mind in order to understand their nature and the problematic notion of "self". The Buddhist notion of Not-Self (Anatta), addresses the fact that self doesn't exist in the way we generally experience it, its realization is said to lead to enlightenment. Meditation masters are reputed to be able to remain perfectly still for hours, even, days at a time, and this skill is one of the contributing factors to their myth as realized beings. If stillness is an indication of realization, these portraits are a way of measuring inner realization, a kind of enlightenment barometer.