

Sabine



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'Travelling in Greenland can be a humbling experience. That, at least, is the impression one gets reading Knud Rasmussen's introduction to the account of the first Thule expedition in 1912: Many of the joys and experiences the travelling man finds worthy of writing down may be found naive and insignificant by the more blasé city dweller, but I have not sought to disguise this by feigning a sense of superiority I do not possess. It is my belief that total abandonment is the result of openness to the moment. As the words imply, this vast country, with its coldness, wide open spaces and hardy population needs no dramatic staging in order to communicate with its audience. Greenland is best spoken about in a low voice. It is large enough in itself.

This attitude is echoed in the work of the 23 year-old Dane, Jacob Aue Sobol, travelling to East Greenland at the beginning of the new millennium. Neither his images nor his words shout. Even though his camera captures violent images there is no showing off. The intensity of the images emerges from the unspoken, the ambivalent, the

understated. Sobol originally set out to take photographs in Tiniteqilaaq. Even the name of the place implies the ends of the earth: The strait that runs dry at low tide. After five weeks he had had enough. He took his black and white photographs and headed home – albeit with the sense that his village portrait was distorted. Four months later he returned to face the small society that had far more layers and levels of meaning than he had seen at first. And that is when Greenland captures him. The mountain landscape lies transparent and luminous, and the frozen waters lure him. He makes friends among the hunters, who take it upon themselves to train him. When this new existence suddenly starts to function – despite the arctic cold he can provide himself with food – the pampered motherland to the south shrinks into the pallid past and he resolves to test his strength against East Greenland’s basic, existential challenges. But behind this decision lies his true motivation: Falling in love with Sabine. - from the forward by Finn Thrane

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