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AWARDS

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Tonje Bøe Birkeland

The Characters

The Characters is a retrospective book by Tonje Bøe Birkeland, that holds together her projects: Character #I–V. Birkeland's work explores the authenticity of history through self-portraits that recreate expeditions of female explorers and heroines from the past. Each of The Characters makes its own meta-journey: through Greenland, Mongolian and to the mountains of Norway. These photographs and journals expound time and place, while investigating personality and physical limits. Birkeland demonstrates that fantasy, literature, and photography can fill a void in history, while revealing some of contemporary society's challenges: globalized colonization on the one hand and the loss of the great adventure on the other.

Character #I ALINE VICTORIA BIRKELAND (1870-1952), geologist and glaciologist, travels in the high Arctic and on Spitsbergen.

Character #II TUVA TENGEL (1901-1985), desert traveller, author and photographer, travels in the Gobi Desert, Mongolia.

Character #III LUELLE MAGDALON LUMIÈRE (1873-1973), stereophotographer – a traveller among islands, societies and continents. Luelle journeyed to New York, the Orkney Islands, and the mountains of western Norway.

Character #IV ANNA AURORA ASTRUP (1871-1968) sails along the East Coast of Greenland. Astrup charts sea depth, mountain peaks and coastline.

The story of each character is presented in four parts: Journal, Plates, Objects and Endnotes. The book is printed in 300 copies, each numbered by hand.

Tonje Bøe Birkeland

Tonje Bøe Birkeland works as a contemporary artist, with a major emphasis on photography, and is educated at Bergen School of Art and Design.

Since 2008 she has worked with the photo series "The Characters", which deals with four different female characters who are all explorers. In this series, she stages herself in the images of these characters.

Jo Straube