

EVEREST

EXPERIENCE AMIDST EXPEDITION AND TRADITION

As a pilot project in Leipzig in 2003, Yadegar Asisi tackled the subject of the world's highest mountain from two very different angles: the Far East's deeply reverential attitude to 'the roof of the world' and the West's more gung-ho, we-need-to-conquer-it approach to Mount Everest.

The Far-Eastern perspective is most prevalent among the inhabitants of the Himalayas, who learn and seek self-enlightenment by observing the natural world. Rather than going all out to reach the peak, they undertake pilgrimages through the mountain range. With the inner knowledge that all things are transient and man is but a small ripple in the stream of infinity, the pilgrims are released from worldly desires.

In contrast, in the West, nature is viewed as something to be beaten and subdued. This 'mountain of mountains' was discovered, sized up and, with enormous effort, conquered and measured. Left behind were piles of rubbish and the frozen corpses of tourists who paid thousands of dollars – a high and, indeed, the ultimate price – in their eagerness to reach the summit. The continuous effort to break new records has seen the mountain conquered every which way – from the north, the south, in winter, with and without oxygen cylinders. The journey of conquest has been undertaken by women, men, the blind, the very young and the very old.

From the viewing platform, visitors can marvel at the high peaks of the Himalayas as they change from bright blue to aquamarine, from snow-white to black. The 8,848 m Mount Everest and its almost equally monumental neighbouring peaks rise majestically from the 6,000 metre-high 'Valley of Silence'. The high plateau was chosen deliberately as the vantage point, as it is the final base camp for climbers before they set out for the summit. In this way, Asisi ensures a sense of distance and creates respect for the highest mountain on Earth.

EVEREST was displayed in Leipzig from 2003 to 2005 and again, in a reworked version, for six months between 2012 and 2013.