

# “ELS PRIMERS 8.000” MOUNTAIN CINEMA - GRANOLLERS (1987-1990)

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It's difficult to describe the feelings, the doubts and the aspirations of mountain-climbers, members of my expedition in particular, at the beginning of the fifties. There were so many attempts, so many failures, over such a long period... There had been some tragic accidents. The people of the country were superstitious because their beliefs led them to consider it an invasion of the home of the gods." In this way, Lord John Hunt described the atmosphere in international mountain-climbing during the fifties, at the inauguration of the I Mostra de Cinema de Muntanya "Els primers 8,000", on 6 March 1987 in Granollers.

Until 1950, the year Maurice Herzog's French expedition crowned Annapurna, the planet's eight-thousands were virgin. By 1964, with the grandiose Sino-Tibetan expedition led by Sü Ching, at the height of Maoist revolutionary fervour, which topped the peak of Shisha Pangma, all fourteen eight-thousands had seen man's presence on their peaks. As well as the first and last: Everest (1953), Nanga Parbat (1953); K-2 (1954); Cho-oyu (1954); Makalu (1955); Kangchenjunga (1955); Manaslu (1956); Lhotse (1956); Gasherbrum II (1956), Broad Peak (1957); Hidden Peak (1958) and Dhaulagiri (1960). In just 14 years, then, the fourteen eight-thousands had been climbed. The build-up to each of these expeditions had at times been dramatic. Over the last three years, the Cercle Cultural of "la Caixa" and the Agrupació Excursionista de Granollers have offered us a unique and singular event: the presentation of the graphic material (photographs, transparencies and films) of the first expeditions to climb each of the fourteen eight-thousands; and whenever possible this material was presented by the very same climbers who took part in these legendary exhibitions. These three consecutive "Mostres" have therefore made a considerable contribution to the history of mountaineering in general and of Himalayan mountaineering in particular; three "Mostres" that have



allowed human and technical contact between the Catalan mountaineers of the eight-thousands and these great historic figures of international mountaineering: Lord John Hunt, Walter Bonatti, Sepp Jöchler, Albert Eggler, Jeanne Franco, Kurt Diemberger, Andy Kauffman and Fritz Moravec. This compilation of unique and original audio-visual material has

revealed that a great deal of it is on the verge of disappearing, which has made us realise the need for some kind of non-profit-making international organisation to ensure its survival and conservation. The "I Mostra" was inaugurated, as we have seen, by Lord John Hunt, head of the British expedition that reached the peak of Everest for the first time in 1957, who presented the film *The Conquest of Everest* (1953). Nevertheless, according to John Hunt himself, we shall never know whether Irvine and Mallory reached the peak before disappearing, on the Tibet face, during the British expedition of 1924. Then followed the projection of the films *Victoire sur l'Annapurna*, by Marcel Ichac, on the famous French expedition of 1950; *Nanga Parbat* (1953), by the Germans and Austrians of 1953, and *Italia K-2*, by the Italians of 1954. The "II Mostra", in April 1988, was inaugurated in the presence of one of the greatest mountaineers of all time and the father of modern climbing, the Italian Walter Bonatti, who was a member of the 1954 Italian expedition to K-2. Afterwards came Jeanne Franco, widow of Jean Franco, head of the French expedition to Makalu in 1995, who presented Lionel Terray's film *Makalu Expedition* (1954-55). Later, there were the films of the British expedition to Kangschenjunga (1955) and the Japanese expedition to Manaslu (1956). On Herbert Tichy's famous expedition to the top of Cho-oyu (1954) we had one of the best Austrian climbers of his time and rope-companion to Herman Bühl on the North face of the Eiger, amongst other places: Sepp Jöchler, a member of the expedition that reached the top with Tichy and Pasang Dawa Lama. Jöchler presented a video the Austrian television had

made to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of their climb. Finally, Dr Albert Eggler, head of the Swiss expedition which, in different groups and from the southern pass, managed to climb the Lhotse for the first time and Everest for the second, in 1956, showed his own slides and spoke of his own impressions of the expedition he directed, and it was he who closed the "II Mostra".

Finally, in April 1989, the Austrian Kurt Diemberger, one of the greatest, legendary climbers of the Himalayas, opened the "III Mostra" with his slides of his ascent to the top of Broad Peak (1957) with the also legendary Hermann Bühl, as well as his climb to the peak of Dhaulagiri with the Swiss expedition of 1960. We also saw a film shot during this expedition, which was sent to us by Norman Dyrenfurt himself, who had made it. After that we had the privilege of seeing the film on the Sino-Tibetan expedition that in 1964 climbed the last remaining 8,000, Shisha Pagma. Next, the North-American Andrew John Kauffman, who in 1958, with Pete Schoening, was the first person to climb Hidden Peak, was the guest of honour who

showed slides of his country's expedition, led by Nicholas Clinch, and also gave us the best account we had ever seen of the approach route along the Baltoro. Finally, Professor Fritz Moravec, head of the Austrian expedition that climbed Gasherbrum-II for the first time in 1956, presented the slides and the film of this historic expedition. Moravec closed the "III Mostra de Cinema de Muntanya" and the monothematic cycle devoted to the first ascents of the 8,000s, thus putting the final touch to an unforgettable experience which is without precedent in the history of international mountain-climbing, for which a painstaking and passionate job of research was needed, investigating bibliographies, documents, people, institutions, etc. A job which, in the words of Fritz Moravec himself, "is worthy of a mountaineering club from one of the European countries with most experience of the Himalayas, such as France, Britain, Switzerland, Austria, Germany..., rather than the «Agrupació Excursionista» of a small town, in a small country, without much experience or history in the Himalayas".



K-2 IN A PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRITZ MORAVEC TAKEN IN 1956 DURING THE AUSTRIAN EXPEDITION TO GASHERBRUM II.