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Sacred Sites and Ceremonies

AUGUST 2018 - SEPTEMBER 2018

RECEPTION: FRIDAY, AUGUST 3 2018 5-7PM

Peyton Wright Gallery is pleased to announce *Sacred Sites and Ceremonies*, an exhibition of color photographs captured by William M. Frej, presented along with artifacts and textiles from a number of the world's most sacred sites and enclaves. The exhibition commences with an artist's reception on Friday, August 3, 2018 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., and continues through September 4, 2018.

Frej's fine art color photography documents over 35 years of walking within the mountains of Afghanistan, India, Nepal, and Tibet, and through the jungles of Cambodia, Guatemala and Mexico. The photography captures both the stunning high peaks and remote mountain ranges of Asia, as well as the living cultures and religious ceremonies in the faraway regions of the Great Himalayan Range, the Ghats of Varanasi, India, rituals in Guatemala and Mexico, and the stone monuments of Cambodia's Khmer. Frej's transcendent photography will transport the viewer to these places of mountain grandeur and still vibrant religious practice.

Frej and his wife Anne first visited Nepal in 1981 on a month-long trek around Manaslu, the eighth highest peak in the world. Inspired by the practice of Tibetan Buddhism they encountered in remote mountain villages, this trek led to a lifelong quest, documenting both the world's highest peaks, as well as the resilient people living throughout the roof of the world. They returned to Nepal in 1982, and in 1985, they took a two-year sabbatical walking to the base camps of the world's highest peaks. Starting in the mountains of northern Pakistan, bordering Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor, the Frej's walked over 3,000 miles on their personal pilgrimage through Pakistan, India, Nepal and Tibet. Throughout this sojourn, Asia's highest peaks and their outposts of remote civilizations and religions provided a wealth of subject matter for photography, documenting peaks, people and ceremonies seen by only a few. Their quest continued over next three decades, until the present, returning to the Himalayas many times, living in Central Asia and Afghanistan, and documenting not only mountains, but ancient religious ceremonies that still define a way of life for Asia's Hindu, Bon and Buddhist peoples. Frej's most recent June of 2018 visit to the Indian Himalaya retraced the steps of India's devout holy men, the Sadhus, to Gaumukh glacier, the source of the holy Ganges, and continued through Ladakh, visiting 24 remote monasteries and participating in ceremonies at Lamayuru and Hemis Monasteries.

Frej has also spent considerable time the past five years documenting both the religious rites of Mexico's indigenous communities and the contemporary Maya, and the ancient cities their fore-bearers so skillfully created over a millennium ago. His images of *Semana Santa*, *Dia de los Muertos* and the *Feast Day of San Ildefonso* transport us to a place that imbues strong transformational power.

William Frej began his career as an architect and later served as an international development specialist, living in Nepal, India, Indonesia, Poland, Kazakhstan, and Afghanistan over a period of 27 years. Always with his camera at his side, he has been photographing indigenous people and their environments for over 40 years, documenting the changing lifestyles and architecture of many of the world's unique and ancient cultures. In 2014, his one-person photographic exhibition *Enduring Cultures* was featured at Galeria La Eskalera in Merida, Mexico. It included recent black and white and color photography from Afghanistan, Upper Mustang, Nepal, and San Agustin Etla, Oaxaca, Mexico. His photography was featured in a major exhibition which opened June 2015 at the Museum of Spanish Colonial Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, titled *Tradicion, Devocion Y Vida: 80 years of Black and White Photography in New Mexico and Mexico*. His photography on *Day of the Dead in Oaxaca, Mexico* was exhibited October-December 2015 in a one-person show at Peters Projects Gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico. A number of his photographs were exhibited at the Museum of Spanish Colonial Art in their exhibition titled *Chimayó: A Pilgrimage through Two Centuries*, in 2017. He was selected to participate in an exhibition titled "Faith in New Mexico" at Editions One Gallery in Santa Fe. Peyton Wright Gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico, has mounted two major exhibitions, *The Maya, Photography by William Frej*, of 32 large-scale, black and white photographs of Mexico's remote, off-the-grid Mayan ruins in 2016, and *Ancient Kingdoms, Hidden Realms*, an exhibition highlighting the Mayan and Khmer kingdoms, in 2017. Also, in the summer of 2017, a number of his photographs were included in the exhibition, *Mirror Mirror: Frida Kahlo Photographs*, at Santa Fe's Museum of Spanish Colonial Art.

Mr. Frej's photographs were also featured in one-person exhibitions, *The Nomads of Kyrgyzstan*, in Almaty, Kazakhstan in 2008 and *Himalayan Pilgrimage*, at the Museum of Asia and the Pacific in Warsaw, Poland in 1998. His photographic work, *Taninbar to Tibet*, was featured in a one-person show at the Duta Fine Arts Museum and Gallery in Jakarta, Indonesia in 1991. Mr. Frej's other exhibitions include the Tucson Art Center in 1972, The Eye Gallery in San Francisco in 1977, and the San Francisco Arts Festival in 1976 and 1977. His photographs of Peru received purchase awards from the San Francisco Arts Commission and the San Francisco Arts Festival in the 1970s.

His photographs of the Himalaya, India and Africa were featured in the Edwin Bernbaum book, *Sacred Mountains of the World*, and his photographs of India's Tilwara camel fair were highlighted in *Adventure Travel Magazine*. He is currently finalizing a fine art photography book on Maya ruins. Mr. Frej's photographic work is represented in numerous public and private collections throughout the United States, Europe and Asia. He is currently represented by Peyton Wright Gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Read the review in the Santa Fe Reporter

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

William Frej



William Frej has been photographing indigenous people for over 40 years, while living in Indonesia, Poland, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan and Mexico, as well as other remote mountainous regions of Asia, documenting the changing lifestyles and architecture of many of the world's unique cultures. In 2014, his one-person photographic exhibition *Enduring Cultures* was featured at Galeria La Eskalera in Merida, Mexico as part of a citywide arts festival. It included recent black and white and color photography from Afghanistan, Upper Mustang, Nepal, and San Augustin Etla, Oaxaca, Mexico. During 2015-2016, his photography was featured in the exhibition which opened June 2015 at the Museum of Spanish Colonial Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, entitled *Tradicion, Devocion Y Vida: 80 years of Black and White Photography in New Mexico and Mexico*. His photography of the Day of the Dead (*Dia de los Muertos*) in Oaxaca, Mexico was exhibited October-December 2015 in a one-person show at Peters Projects Gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Black and white photographs were featured in a major exhibition entitled *Chimayó: A Pilgrimage Through Two Centuries* at the Museum of Spanish Colonial Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico in 2016. His work was featured in the exhibition *The Maya* at Peyton Wright Gallery also in 2016. His work was also featured in *Mirror, Mirror: Photographs of Frida Kahlo* in 2017 at the Museum of Spanish Colonial Art in Santa Fe.

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www.williamfrejphotography.com

EXHIBITION IMAGES

