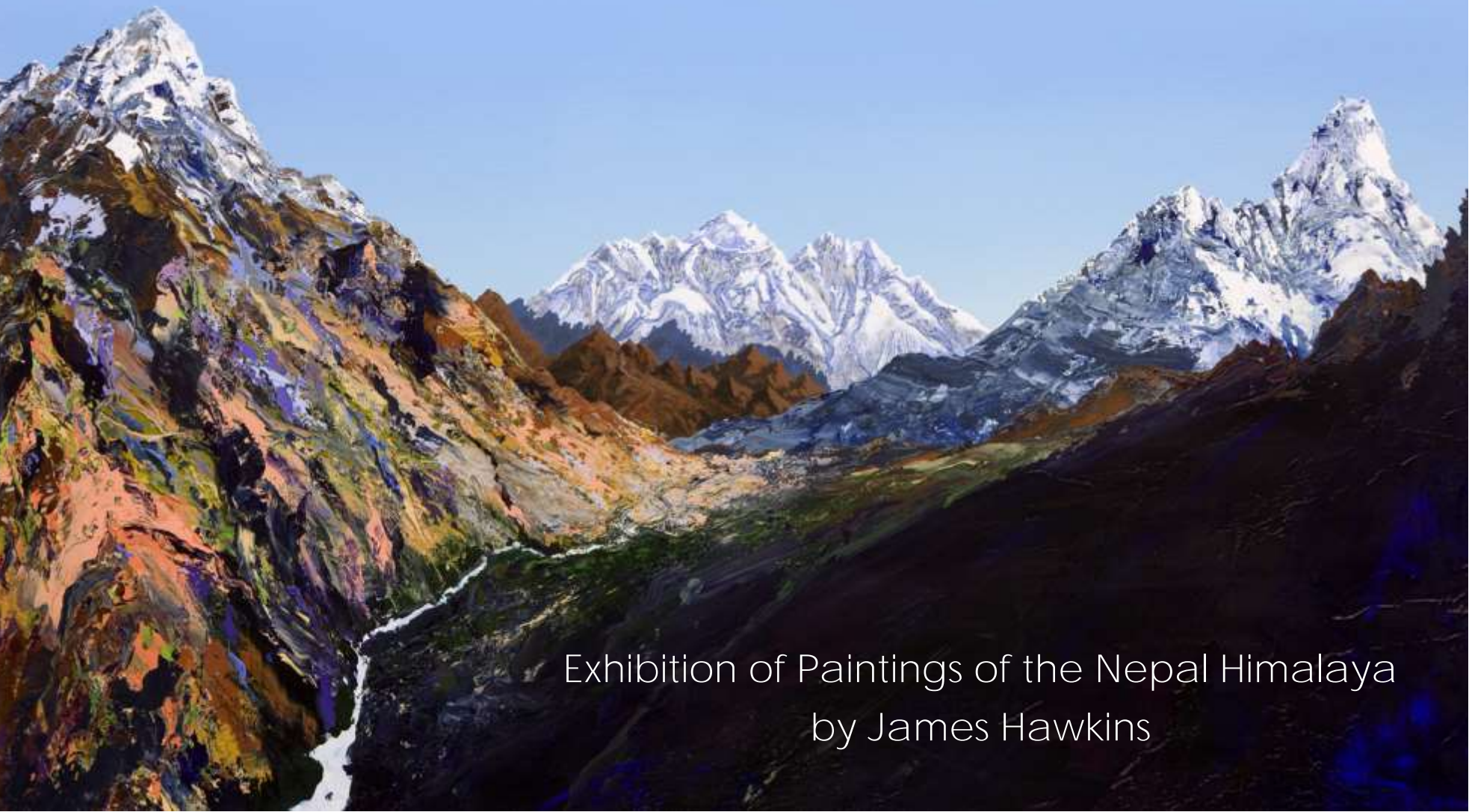


A SHORT WALK IN THE SOLU KHUMBU



Exhibition of Paintings of the Nepal Himalaya
by James Hawkins



Phortse

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James and his wife Flick have recently had an amazing trip in the Solu Khumbu region of Himalayas with Tengboche Trekking. A unique partnership set up by Tashi Lama, a Buddhist monk from the Tengboche Monastery and James Lamb from Scotland. Profits from this partnership are donated to The Little Sherpa Foundation which was originally established to support families affected by climbing incidents in Mount Everest National Park in Nepal. However, the recent devastating earthquakes changed that, so the charity now helps anyone in the region in need.

Some of the proceeds from this exhibition will be donated to

The Little Sherpa Foundation.



A short walk in the Solu Khumbu, Nepal October 2017

Back in October 2016 I came home from holiday to an e mail from James Lamb asking if I would like to go trekking with him in Nepal, he knew of my work as an artist and wondered if I would be interested in making some pictures of Nepal to raise money for his charity the little Sherpa foundation. I must have thought about it for all of thirty seconds before writing back with an enthusiastic yes. James and his wife Karen came to visit and we walked our dogs around Inverpoly while discussing plans, we were reassured when James told us that trekking in the Khumbu would be no harder. Because I often paint the lochs in Scotland we decided to head up to Gokyo where there are seven lakes of differing sizes, this I hoped would be my way in to painting the Himalayas. Next was a trip to our G.P. to arrange the recommended jags and there was kit to buy, from travel sacks to walking trousers, hand sanitiser to sleeping bags.

So finally in early October 2017 we flew from Inverness to Manchester, then on to Abu Dhabi where gate forty eight made me smile, **that's where the Kathmandu flight left from** and it was as if the "Glastonbury filter" had been activated, ruck sacks, wild haircuts and colourful clothes amongst the beards and walking boots. Kathmandu is the only airport I have visited where they scan your luggage after you get off the plane; it was my first introduction to the delightful logic of Nepal.



We were met by Tashi, James' partner in Tengboche trekking, a company that creates local employment and generates money for the little Sherpa charity. Tashi is a twenty eight year Buddhist Lama who has lived in the Khumbu all his life and was our guide during the trek. The following morning we were up early to catch the flight to Lukla and I was very glad that Tashi was there to hassle, it's quite a scramble that early flight and always challenged by the weather. It was dreich in Lukla and we set off through mist and trees dripping with rain. Everything improved as we walked up the valley through small farms and villages to Phakding, conversation with Tashi and James flowed as fast and free as the great river we crossed and crossed again. Next day we climbed harder to reach Namche Bazaar by late morning catching a brief glimpse of Everest as slowly trees gave way to a more open landscape, the trails were busy on this lower section that is also part of the route to Everest Base Camp. Namche is beautifully placed in a South facing horseshoe on the side of a hill, **a great tea house and our last hot shower for three weeks. We had a "rest" day following that still involved plenty of steep ascent up to Khumjung and back but found us sleeping at the same height as the previous night to help our adjustment to altitude.**

Onwards up to Mong la and down and across to Phortse now clear of the tree line for a while; Thamserku across the valley behind, Ama Dablam ahead beckoning down the great Khumbu valley towards EBC. **If ever there was a Shangri La Phortse might be a contender, it's a great tongue of land at three and a half thousand meters at the confluence of the two spurs of the Khumbu valley, one flowing down from Cho Oyu, the other from Everest.** Glacial deposit over millennia has blessed it with at least half a meter of superb top spoil which shamed my garden at home, it faces South West and I swear that I saw the largest cauliflower I have ever seen, no bugs either!

We spent two days in Phortse getting to know the place and the people, this is where many of Sherpas who died on Everest in 2014 came from and is the heart of James' charitable operations, it's also Tashi's home. From there we walked up to Dole, Machermo and Gokyo. By now I was stopping to draw most days and Tashi would sit beside me and meditate giving a most empowering and comforting energy. Completely confounding my preconceptions Tashi strode the trails in full length maroon robes and climbing boots, often with a mobile phone held to each ear, he was our Mr Fixer and knew everyone it seemed. On one occasion he doubled back to fetch tea and cups from his Aunt's tea room that we had passed a short way back, it seems that Sherpas are one great extended family, a "cousin brother (or sister)" denoting a more distant relation.



We spent three nights in Gokyo and loved it; walking beyond the lakes up to Scoundrels point we left the crowds behind and were pretty much alone. Surrounded by Cho Oyu, Nuptse, and Everest, a lot of rock with a huge conflagration of glaciers below we felt we'd arrived, finally off the map and somewhere truly other. The weather was kind with clear blue skies and crystal air and I'll never forget the rock pinnacles, weird and wonderful shapes, pointed and crumbling, full of overhanging jagged shards that defied belief. That afternoon we crossed the glacier, ("no talking, walk quickly, don't stop" Tashi), to Dragnag. Mostly a rather scruffy conglomeration of grey boulders every so often the glacier revealed the beautiful ice forms of its interior. From Dragnag we walked back down to Phortse on the East side of the valley. It was much quieter here and we passed through hill farms where Tashi had spent idyllic summers with his grandparents, two storey stone buildings reminded me of the Lake District in their style.

During two more days in Phortse we enjoyed the ceremony of prize giving for the school children and pensions for the Sherpa widows and the elderly from James' charity. We made Trips to Pangboche and Tengboche monasteries where we were able to listen to the monks rehearsing for Mani Rimdu. Those great horns, the cymbals and drums and the chanting made avant-garde jazz sound mainstream, but if you let it all wash over suddenly it was like ocean currents, buffeting winds, tectonic forces moving within. We greatly enjoyed our four weeks with Tashi and immersion in Buddhist culture, finding a calmness and serenity in all the people that we met, who were tirelessly hospitable and generous despite not having much. Now as the photos run on my screen saver and I work up my sketches into paintings I remember with deep affection that month where time stood still and I learned to just be without really realising it; it is my greatest pleasure to have this chance to give something back.





Phortse from the path to Mong la
acrylic on canvas 93 x 62 cm



Ama

acrylic on canvas 91 x 122 cm

MACHERMO T' CHO OYO FROM PHORTSE EARLY MORNING





Early Morning, Phortse
acrylic on canvas 150 x 100 cm





Path to Dole

acrylic on canvas 122 x 71 cm



Ngozumba Glacier
acrylic on canvas 92 x 62 cm



Pinnacles Ngozumba Glacier 1
acrylic on paper 42 x 28 cm

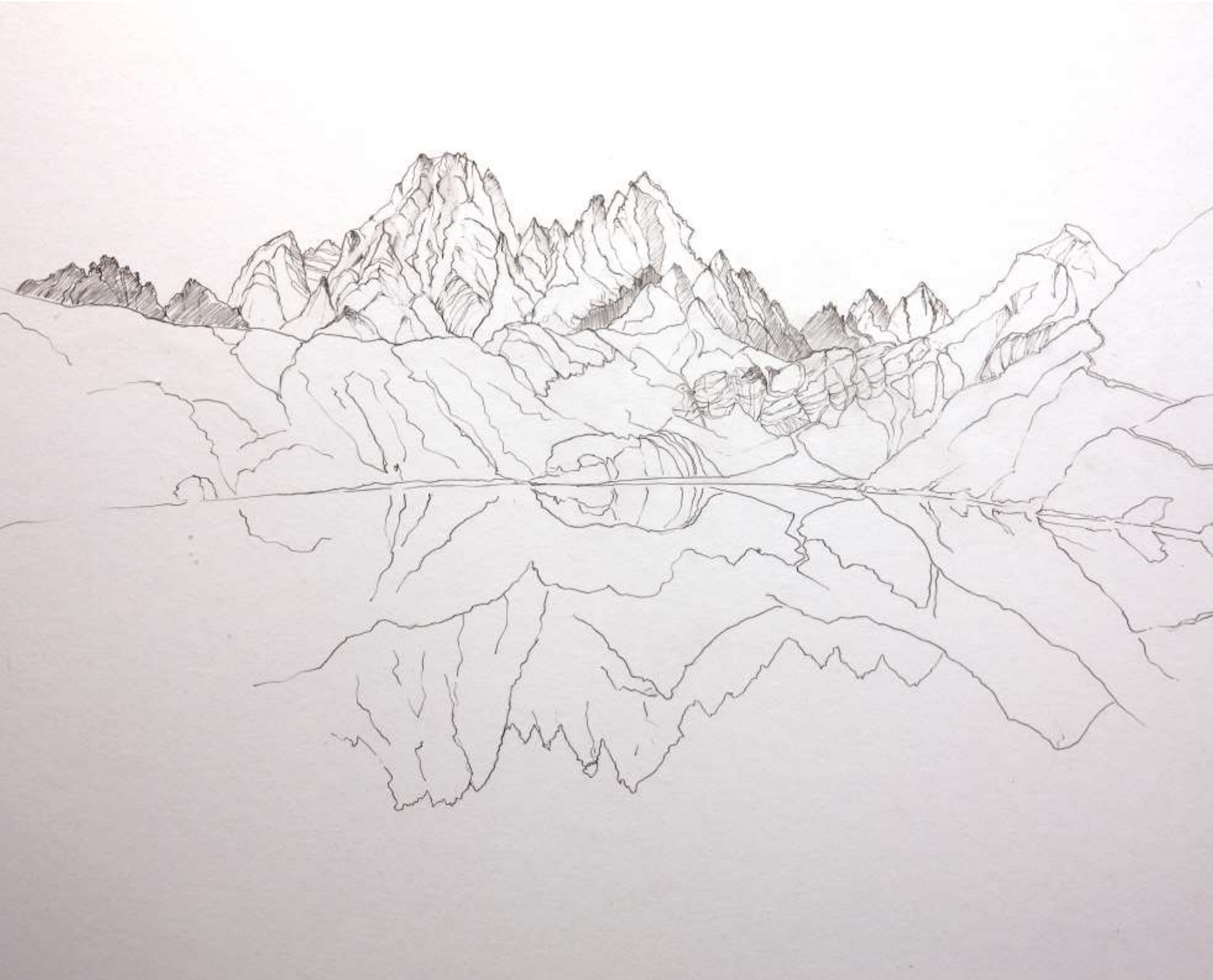


Pinnacles Ngozumba Glacier 2
acrylic on paper 42 x 28 cm





Makalu from the Renjola pass
acrylic on canvas 122 x 92 cm

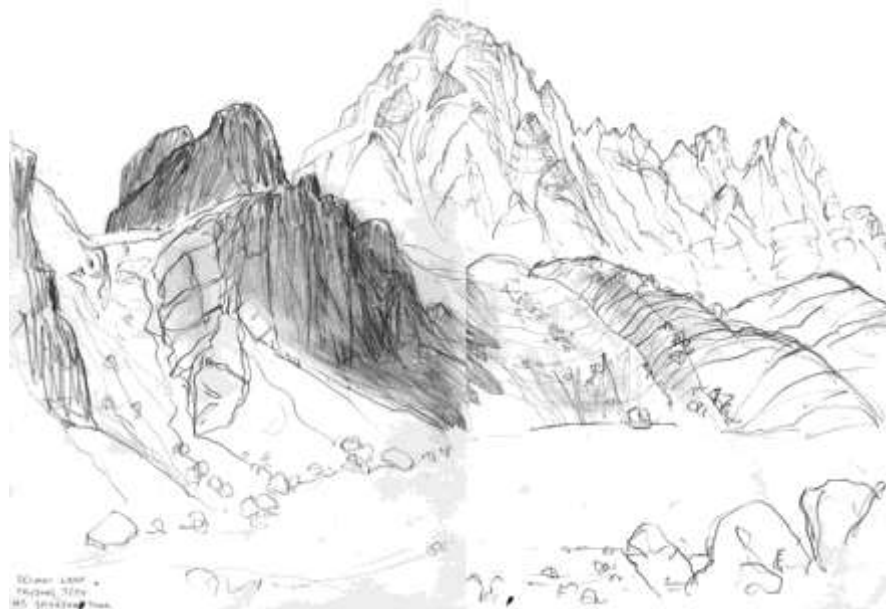




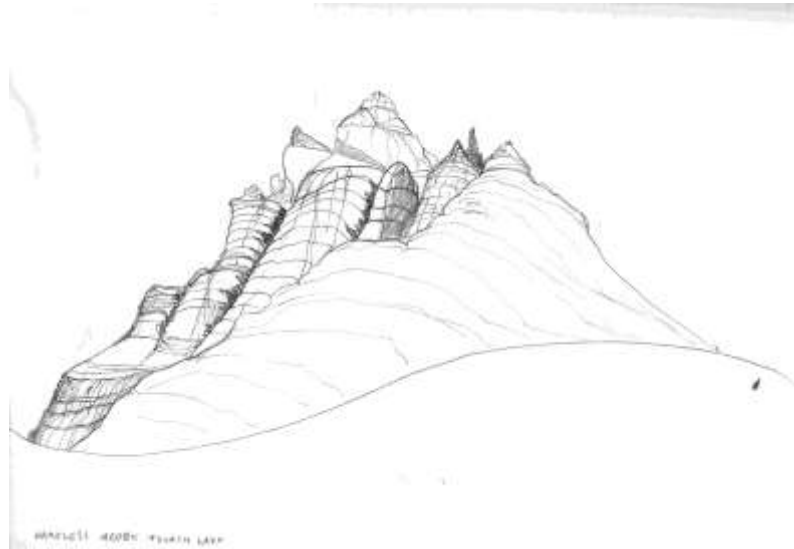
Phari Lapcha across Gokyo Lake
acrylic on canvas 122 x 92 cm



Cho Oyu from Gokyo Lake
acrylic on canvas 92 x 62 cm



Fourth Lake Gokyo
acrylic on paper 59 x 42 cm

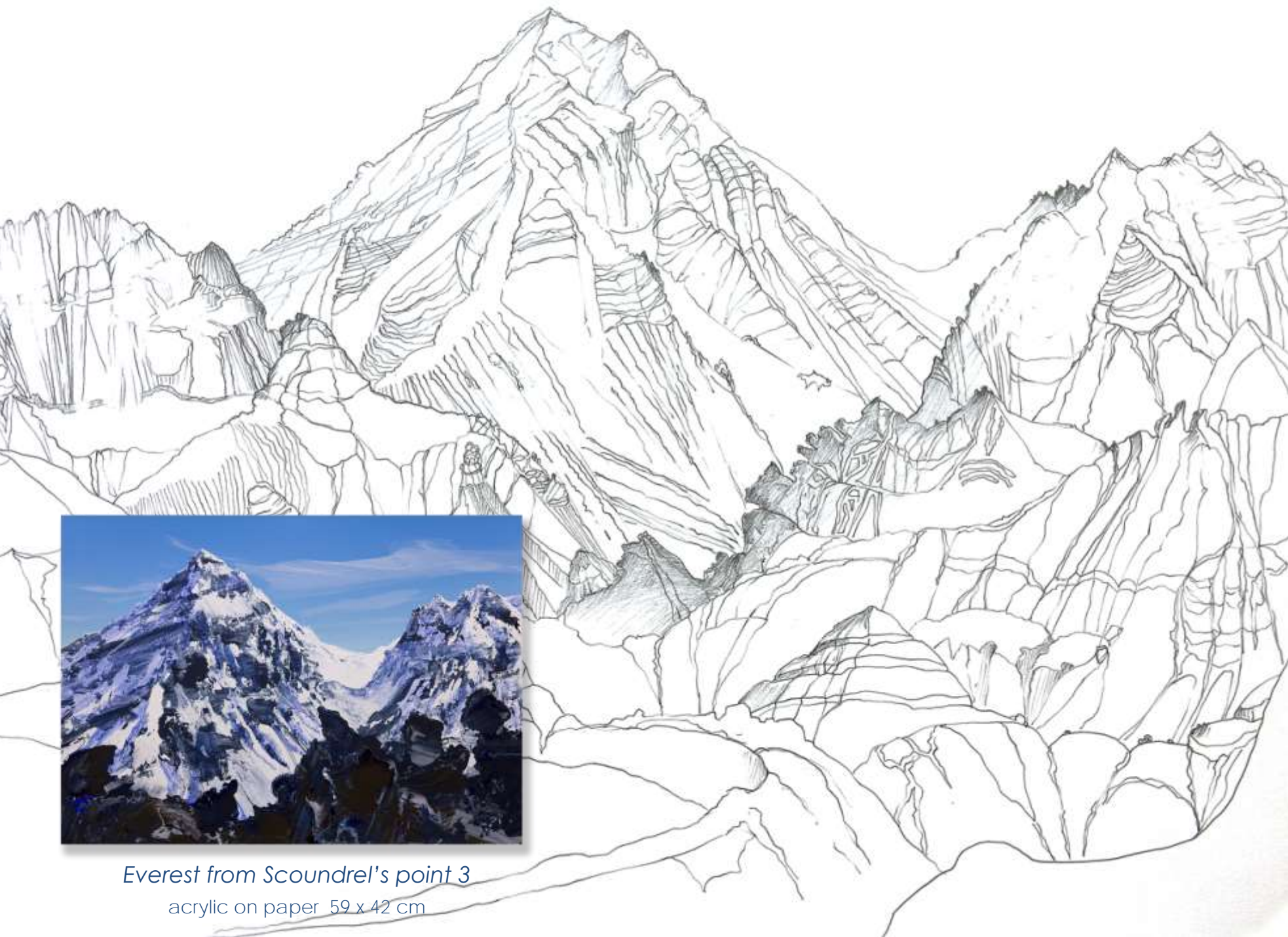


The Nameless Pinnacles
acrylic on paper 41 x 29 cm



Glaciers joining, below Scoundrel's Point

acrylic on canvas 122 x 92 cm



Everest from Scoundrel's point 3
acrylic on paper 59 x 42 cm



Everest across the Gaunara Glacier

acrylic on canvas 102 x 77 cm



Clouds below Kangtega and Thamserku

acrylic on canvas 102 x 77 cm



Kangtega and Thamserku
acrylic on paper 42 x 29 cm





Machermo from Lake Chosyol Tso
acrylic on canvas 183 x 122 cm





The Khumbu valley from above Tengboche
acrylic on canvas 244 x 144 cm



When my friend, Tashi Lama, and I established Tengboche Trekking and The Little Sherpa Foundation in January 2015, we did not envisage how much our lives were about to change.

We offered treks in the Mount Everest National Park with only 5 part time, local, qualified and insured guides. The profits from this funded our charity which supports families affected by accidents in the mountains. The catalyst for this being the tragic deaths of 16 locals just above Everest base camp in April 2014. This left 16 women and 54 children without a husband or father. For almost all of them, it also meant no income whatsoever.



We are now close to extending our trekking agency to include treks throughout the whole of Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet. We will also be offering trekking peaks like Mera Peak and Island Peak. We aim to employ nearly 50 guides and, as the number of trekkers and climbers increases, the more money will feed into the charity. In addition, interest in the charity has been extensive, both in Nepal and the UK. This has led to a whirlwind of talks and presentations as well as featuring on BBC Scotland's Adventure Show, national radio and in newspapers and magazines.

Since the earthquakes in 2015, our charity has expanded to meet the needs of the Sherpa people. As well as offering 50 scholarships per year to young people to enable them to remain in education, employing Sherpa teachers and financially supporting widows, we have rebuilt homes, stupas (google it!), monasteries, water mills and the original Edmund Hillary Primary School. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would say that!

This year alone we anticipate building a brand new primary school and bringing running water and sanitation to about 600 people. A huge thank you to Rotary Inverkeithing/Dalgety Bay for their partnership on these projects. This has led to a great amount of hard work from a lot of people but the rewards are immense when you see those smiling Nepalese faces!

Finally, BAFTA award winner, Richard Else and I aim to make a film about the Sherpa people and why they believe their way of life is under threat. We hope to raise the funds ourselves through crowdfunding so we have no constraints on film content. We have the support of Doug Scott, Stephen Venables, Cameron McNeish and Phirba Tashi, who has climbed Everest 21 times, on this project. Details coming soon.

If you are inspired to help, you can contact us through www.tengbochetrekking.com .

James Lamb Sept 2018



RHUEART



Evening light on Nuptse
acrylic on canvas 52 x 43 cm