

The photography of Greenland

A lot of tourists are photographing the traditional Greenland: The dog sledges, the hunters and the life in the small settlements are examples of photographs that the tourists bring back from the holidays in Greenland. The same subjects can also be seen in books, which officially presents Greenland and the Greenlandic society.

If you have not visited Greenland, you might get the impression that this is an underdeveloped society where the traditional way of life is a dominant characteristic.

Of course this is not the situation. The vast majority of Greenlanders are living in the towns. They use the same modern technology as people in other countries. There are fewer and fewer residents in the small settlements, and the relatively few hunters that are left read the weather forecast on the internet and orient themselves during the voyage using a GPS. In the towns you can watch 30-40 TV channels.

If I not just once in a while enjoy the view to the mountains and fjord

from my window, I could get the feeling that I was in my former home in Copenhagen. The housing standard are high and we have almost the same modern facilities that are available to the people of the North American and European countries.

So what is the characteristic photography of Greenland? This is an issue where we need to be careful. The Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg wrote the music piece Morning Mood in Peer Grieg. A great piece of music and how beautiful it is expressing the Nordic atmosphere and the Nordic landscape we think - then it turns out that the Norwegian composer was inspired to this music piece on a trip to Africa.

My answer to, what the typical Greenlandic photography is, has something to do with my own introduction to the country through the childhood and the primary school in Denmark. That is why I like so many others tend to prioritize photography of the tracks from the traditional Greenland. A view into my collection of photos, and you

will find photos of the modern Greenland - four-wheel drive cars, tower blocks and supermarkets. But there is a clearly tendency, which shows that my favourite subjects are photographs that shows the traditional Greenlandic.

The huge, wild Greenlandic landscape plays a central role in the typical Greenlandic photograph. And although the human impact of this vast country is still limited, the human beings or the manmade almost always are a part of the photographs of the Greenlandic landscape.

My instinctive feeling of how the Greenlandic photograph should consist of is best achieved when I use a telephoto lens. This photograph shows the man-made small abolished settlement in the Godthaabsfiord. The telephoto lens draws the mountains closer and intensifies the impression of the steep slopes in the background behind the small insignificant settlement in this vast landscape. This is probably the closest I now can get on explaining the photography of Greenland.



Qornoq, The Godthaabsfiord, June 2013