
GRIT&ROCK EXPEDITION AWARD

ENABLING FEMALE FIRST ASCENTS

Press Release

THE GRIT&ROCK FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF THE 2024 GRIT&ROCK EXPEDITION AWARDS

BACKGROUND

In September 2016 GRIT&ROCK FOUNDATION, a UK-based charity, established an annual international expedition grant award to promote female first ascents. The aims of the **GRIT&ROCK EXPEDITION AWARD** are to encourage female participation in pioneering alpine ascents and to further the understanding and exploration of the unclimbed peaks. The Award is open to individuals and climbing teams of any nationality with a majority female participation.

Since its inception eight years ago, the foundation has contributed grants to over 30 female-led expeditions totalling USD 70,000.



GRIT&ROCK

PERFORMANCE CATEGORY

- An all-female team of Chantel Astorga and Fanny Schmutz to open a new route on east face of Mount Shivling in India (USD2,000).
- An all-female rope team of Fay Manners and Michelle Dvorak towards their exploratory expedition to Sikkim in India (USD1,500).
- An all-female team of Lise Billon, Raphaela Haug and Babsi Vigl to attempt a full traverse of Moose's Tooth in Ruth Gorge in Alaska (USD1,500).

EXPLORATION CATEGORY

- An all-female team of Olga Lukashenko, Anastasia Kozlova and Daria Seryupova for an exploratory expedition to Ashat Wall to attempt first ascents of Argo and Sabakh peaks in Kyrgyzstan (USD1,500).
- An all-female team of Canadian climbers, Flavie Cardinal and Jasper Pankratz, for an exploratory big wall climbing expedition to Turbio valley in Argentina (USD1,000).

APPRENTICESHIP CATEGORY

- An all-female team of six UK based climbers Elizabeth Porter, Martha Gutteridge, Charlotte Krishik, Isabel Jones, Caitlin McHale and Jinjie Cheng for an exploratory expedition to Rushan range of Tajikistan(USD1,500).
- Having reviewed its long and impressive track record of coaching young female alpinists, the jury decided to renew for the fourth time a general funding grant to the French National Female Alpine Team (ENAF) (USD 2,000).
- In the same spirit, the jury chose to continue their



support of the female members of the UK's Young Alpinist Group (USD1,000).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- American Chantel Astorga is best known for her pioneering ascents in Alaska, including a solo ascent of Cassin ridge, solo ascent of the Nose and a first ascent of SW face of Mount Nilkantha in India. A daughter of a mountain guide and a guide herself, Fanny Schmutz grew up in Chamonix. She has climbed extensively around the world with notable ascents of Cerro Torre, first alpine style ascent of Lagunak ridge of Ama Dablam and Bhagirathi III.
- Chamonix-based British alpinist Fay Manners and American Michelle Dvorak have climbed extensively as a rope team. Their partnership was cemented during their climb of Cassin ridge on Denali in the summer of 2022. In the summer 2023 they opened two new routes in Greenland.
- A team of three European guides Lise Billion (France), Raphaela Haug (Germany) and Babsi Vigl (Austria) have climbed extensively together, most recently in Nepal's region of Langtang. The team combines many 'firsts'; Vigl became the first woman to join the Austrian National Team of Alpinism, Billion was the second woman ever to be honoured with Piolet d'Or award in 2016, Haug, a first woman to train a German Expedition Team.
- Olga Lukashenko Daria Seryupova and Anastasia Kozlova have climbed extensively across Central Asia and the Alps. In 2023 Lukashenko, an



IFMGA aspirant guide, made a first ascent of Peak Ulun in China and accomplished a first all female free ascent of Perestroika Crack in Karavshin. Kozlova and Seryupova climbed extensively together in Ala Archa, Ergaki and Karavshin.

- A Canadian team of Flavie Cardinal and Jasper Pankratz have shared many wild adventures and shiver bivvies. They cut their teeth climbing long routes alpine style in their native Squamish in British Columbia.
- French National Female Alpine team (ENAF) has been formed in 2007 on the basis of the French National Young Alpine team (FFME and ENJA). Next cohort of the team is the sixth one since its inception. ENAF has graduated some 35 female alpinists, with more than half going off to become guides or performing at a high level in alpinism. Its objective is to advance female performance in high mountains by providing rigorous training and expedition experience. The team is trained by three French guides, Lise Billon, 2016 Piolet d'Or recipient, Fanny Schmutz and Jonathan Crison.
- British Young Alpinist Group has been set up to advance development of the next generation of UK alpine climbers.

The 2024 chair of the jury, Victor Saunders, said: 'Our nominations this year are a testament to the spirit of times: sobriety, realism and sustainability. We picked the teams who have skills to execute on their plans, traveling on modest budgets, some human powered, and climbing in good alpine style.'



Masha Gordon, the founder of GRIT&ROCK, said: 'Once again we are happy to champion and enable development of female alpine talent. Much has changed in the past 8 years since we launched our expedition grant pool. Women are finally getting more media recognition and sponsorship spotlight. Still a lot remains to be done in the field of development of confidence and skills. That is why we are renewing our general grant funding to the formidable French National Female Alpine team (ENAF) that has done so much over the years to raise attainment of female alpinism to the next level and making a contribution to the British Young Alpinist Group.'

