



AAC Publications

Asta Nunaat, South Ridge, Gioielli Viventi

Greenland, East Greenland, Schweizerland, Ikasagtivaq Fjord

Andrea Ghitti and I chose to visit East Greenland because we were looking for pure and exploratory mountaineering, a bit like climbers experienced in the Alps during the 18th and 19th centuries. In addition, a great Italian alpinist, Robert Peroni, has lived in Tasiilaq for the last 25 years. He would be able to give advice and help with boat travel. He directed us to a beautiful rock peak north of Ikasagtivaq Fjord. Asta Nunaat (65°55'37.49"N, 37°29'24.60"W) was first climbed in 2006 via the west face by Andreas Fichtner, Christoph Hainz, and Roger Scháli at 7b A2 (AAJ 2007). We hoped to climb a new route.

After a journey of one and a half hours by boat, we walked up to the snout of the Nialigaq Glacier, which flows southwest from the peak, and established base camp there, 300m above the boat drop-off. On August 8 we set off up glacier and waded through 40cm of poor snow to a campsite below Asta Nunaat. Next morning we awoke to a breathtaking view of fjords full of icebergs and in the distance the infinite ice cap. We left the tent and climbed a 200m snow couloir of 50–60° to reach the start of the south ridge.

The first four pitches on the ridge gave us relatively little trouble (V+ maximum). The rock was good enough, though not the best, and the climbing relatively well protected, thanks to numerous cracks. However, the fifth and sixth pitches took a slightly impending corner. We free climbed this to where a roof blocked our path, aided past this, then climbed more easily to the belay. Above, we followed a logical line of corners, chimneys, and cracks, past various VI/VI+ sections, to the summit. It was our first new route.

The rappel descent proved a real odyssey due to the exceptional friction of the granite. The rope got stuck on the first rappel, and we had to reascend and set up an intermediate anchor. The knot got stuck on the third. We reascended but simply could not free the rope. This had never happened in all our years of alpine climbing. We were eventually forced to cut the rope. After that things went a bit more smoothly and eventually we reached the tent at 1 a.m., spending the last hour in the dark, in the rain, with frozen hands. We left seven pegs and around 10 slings on the descent.

We named the route Gioielli Viventi (Living Gems, 320m, nine pitches, VI+ A1), a definition Robert Peroni uses to describe Greenlandic children. Greenland's population has been brought to its knees by imposed laws. Restrictions in seal and whale hunting, followed by the introduction of financial support to families so they need no longer to hunt, has destroyed the spirit of the Inuit. Consequently, they often feel useless, which leads to depression and alcoholism. Despite all this, each day the children find the strength to smile.

Fabio Olivari, Italy

Images



Andrea Ghitti climbing the wide crack on pitch five of Gioielli Viventi.



Approach up the Nialigaq Glacier, with the pointed spire of Asta Nunaat in the center. The new route climbed a prow falling center-left from the summit.



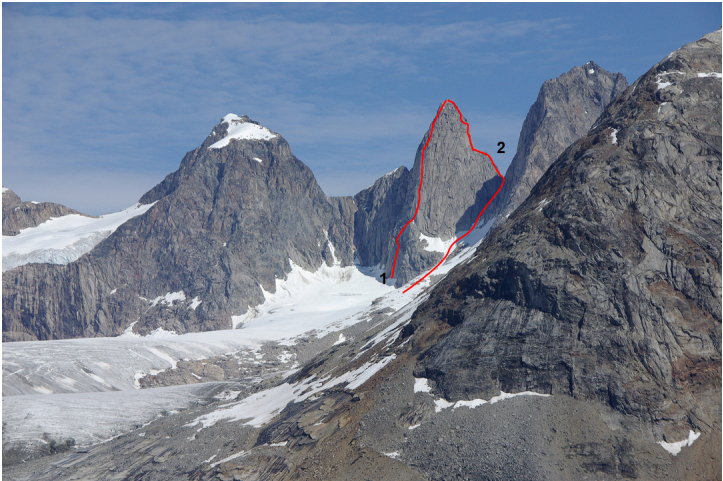
Fabio Olivari starting pitch eight of Gioielli Viventi with Ikasagtivaq Fjord behind.



Andrea Ghitti nearing the top of the crux pitch six of Gioielli Viventi.



The big terrace at the end of pitch four on Gioielli Viventi. The fifth and sixth pitches of the route climb the prominent left-facing corner system directly above the climber.



The sharp spire of Asta Nunaat with the lines of (1) Tartartuga (2006) and (2) Gioielli Viventi (2018).



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