

PHOTOGRAPHY

# Taking on the Tragic in Unconventional Portraits

By WILLIAM MEYERS

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*David Zimmerman:*

*One Voice*

Sous Les Etoiles

560 Broadway, 212-966-0796, Through Nov. 30



'Nyiki Dolma,' one of David Zimmerman's Tibetan refugees portraits *David Zimmerman/Sous Les Etoiles Gallery*

Sous Les Etoiles is presenting a dozen of David Zimmerman's 73-by-55-inch color portraits of Tibetan refugees living in northern India. Mr. Zimmerman has been photographing these displaced people since 2011: They are shot against a black backdrop with carefully controlled lighting, so the pictures are both monumental and dramatic. The size makes minute details visible: individual strands of hair, single pores, reflections in the pupils of their eyes, and the textures of their clothes. "Lhaki" (all photos are 2012) wears a round pin on his lapel, and the face of the Karmapa, an important figure in Tibetan Buddhism, can easily be made out on it. On his lapel, the writer "Lhasang Tsering" wears a pin with the flags of free Tibet. The pain of exile is unmistakably apparent in their faces.

Except for his handsome features, "Tenzin Galtzen" is enveloped in a

burgundy robe; the others wear Western clothing aside from an occasional traditional scarf or item of headgear. The beautiful young girl "Nyiki Dolma" wears one earring and has a ballpoint pen clipped to the collar of her dress; she stares at the camera with practiced resignation. "Tenzin Kalzom," another young girl, turns from the camera; her roughly chapped hands are the result of a nomadic life. A scarf frames the face of "Tsewang Jigedol," whose expression shows her concern for the future. "Lhasang Tsering," with his long white goatee, simply looks tragic.