

amazing feats that you can only imagine. When you read about them it puts you in their shoes. It compels you to think “What would I do under similar circumstances?”

What really drew me to the story was that mountaineering illustrates a much more universal problem that we are surrounded with every day, everywhere. History is always told from the perspective of the Kings and the Columbus, not through the eyes of the help. But mountaineering demonstrates that this kind of omission can lead to a disaster. When your life hangs from a knot you need to know who tied it. You need to know if it was tied well... For the rest of us who are not K2 mountaineers, we are kind of in the same situation. We are also hanging from knots other people have tied. We have mountains to summit and we are all surrounded by people that we often don't notice... we need to tell those stories. The Sherpas of every story, the unseen people of every story, need to be seen for who they really are because our lives depend on them.

JK: After I finished reading your book I reread the prologue and I have to say I still couldn't answer any of the questions that you pose. Why do you think that people are driven to take such risks as they do in this book?

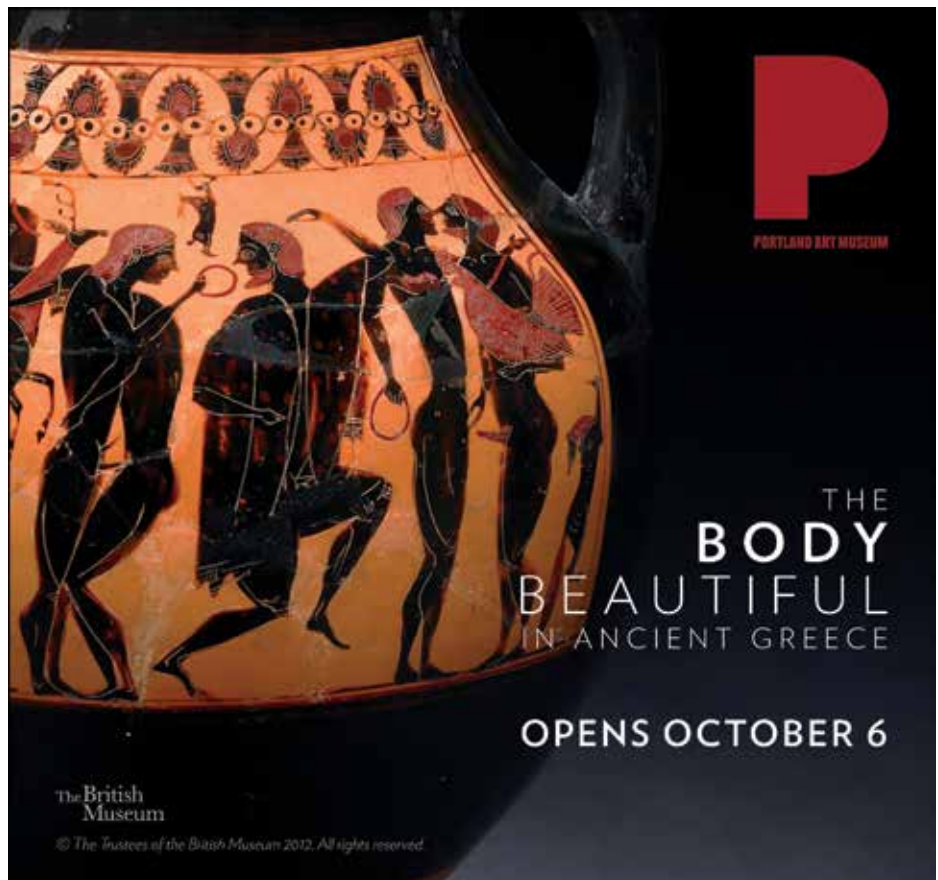
PZ: I think there are a variety of reasons. It depends on the person. Some people are just adrenaline junkies. The same reason you go sky diving; the same reason you just love adventure. Some people are trying to push themselves to the limit. They are trying to find out how far they can push themselves and who they really are. Kind of like war can reveal who you really are; climbing can do the same thing.

A lot of climbers are very wealthy and they are lost. And they love the sense of community. It can be a great group of people. They love the sense of purpose and they love something neat to do that they can come home and impress people with.

The Sherpas can also have those reasons, but it can be “I need the money. My family is desperate. We need to eat. I want my children to be able to go to school and not have to become mountaineers.”

It can be just “I love climbing.”

JK: Are you a risk taker? Clearly you are to a degree.



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