

"Spectacular, thrilling
and sublime"

MARGARET POMERANZ

"Breathtaking...
A stunning achievement"

THE AUSTRALIAN

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF **SHERPA** WITH THE
AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

MOUNTAIN

NARRATED BY **WILLEM DAFOE**
A CINEMATIC & MUSICAL ODYSSEY



SAVAGE CINEMA
FESTIVAL DE SAN SEBASTIÁN
2017



22nd **BUSAN**
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A **STUDY GUIDE** BY MARGUERITE O'HARA



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MOUNTAIN IS A DAZZLING EXPLORATION
OF OUR OBSESSION WITH MOUNTAINS.
IT IS A STORY OF EPIC PROPORTIONS.

OVERVIEW

Mountain is a unique cinematic and musical collaboration: an epic odyssey through the earth's most awesome landscapes, showing the spellbinding force of high places – and their ongoing power to shape our lives and our dreams.

ABOVE: CLIMBER LOOKING
ACROSS PEAKS TO SUN

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Running time:
74 mins

SYNOPSIS

Only three centuries ago, setting out to climb a mountain would have been considered close to lunacy. The idea scarcely existed that wild landscapes might hold any sort of attraction. Mountains were places of peril, not beauty. How then have mountains come to hold us spellbound, drawing us into their dominion, often at the cost of our lives?

By the time Mount Everest was vanquished in the mid-twentieth century, mountaineering had become a quest for mastery rather than a search for mystery. Mountains were seen as adversaries to be overcome, places where fear could be taken to the edge – or beyond.

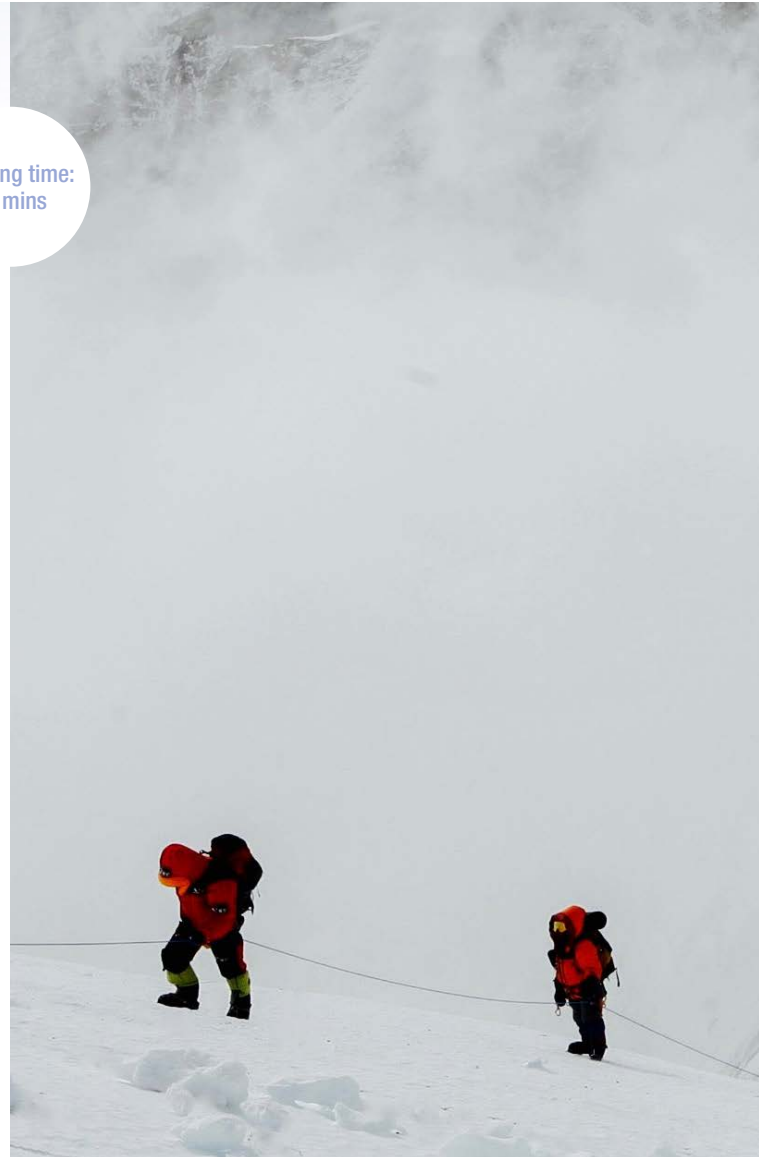
Millions are now enchanted by the magic of mountains. And where once their remoteness protected their purity, mountains have today become theatres for recreation: managed and commodified as parks and playgrounds.

But mountains are so much more than an escape, or an enemy to be overcome. Their greatest value lies in their power to inspire wonder and awe: to remind us of the limits of our schemes and ambition.

Filmed by the world's leading high altitude cinematographers, with music by Chopin, Grieg, Vivaldi, Beethoven and new works by Richard Tognetti, artistic director of the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the film is directed by Jennifer Peedom, one of the co-creators of *Mountain* with Richard Tognetti.

Mountain is a feature documentary.

A short preview can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VvTk8L4tgQ>



ABOVE: TWO SHERPA CLIMBERS
ASCEND TO CAMP 2 ON EVEREST
IN TIBET. BELOW: ALEX HONNOLD
SCALING ROCKFACE

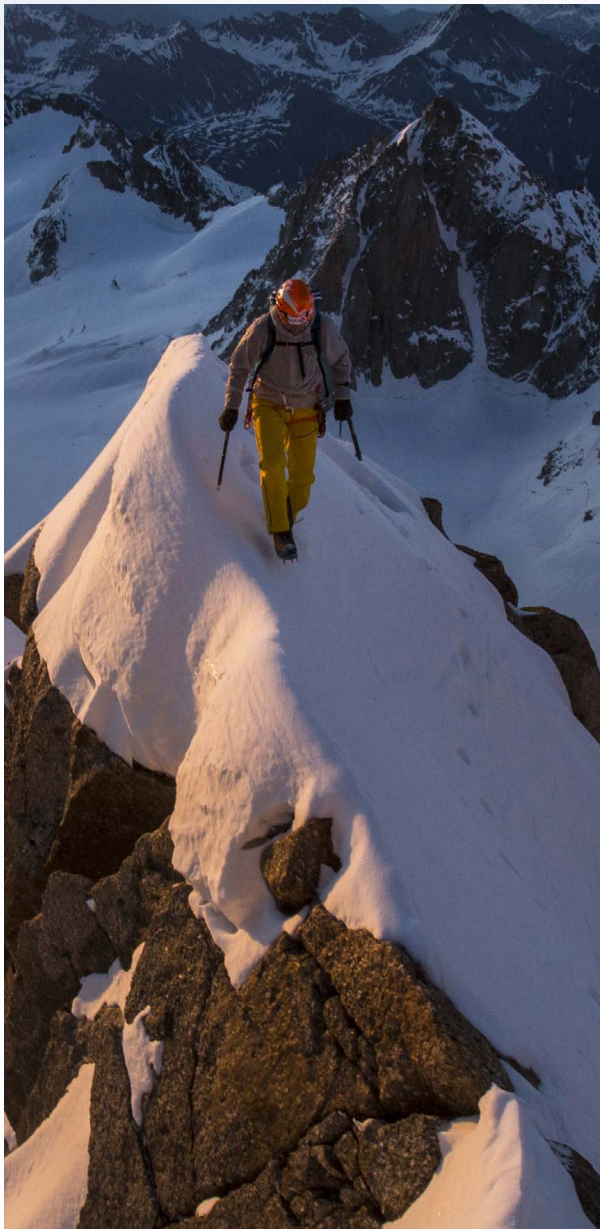
COLLABORATION

Australians Jen Peedom, director of the BAFTA nominated 2015 film, *Sherpa**, and Richard Tognetti, of the Australian Chamber Orchestra, drove this very international collaboration that also involved US-based cinematographer Renan Ozturk, British writer Robert Macfarlane and American actor Willem Dafoe who narrates the film.

**Sherpa* is a 2015 documentary feature film. It was filmed during the 2014 Mount Everest ice avalanche where 16 Sherpas died.

While most films are collaborative projects between people and groups with a variety of skills, *Mountain* is a totally collaborative film between the director, Jennifer Peedom, the musician Richard Tognetti, the writer of *Mountains of the Mind*, Robert Macfarlane and a number of cinematographers including Renan Ozturk. Writer, musician, cinematographer and director all worked together on different aspects of the film.





LEFT: EIGER SUMMIT WITH CLIMBER.
RIGHT: MT TOLL, COLORADO USA.; LONE
SKIERS ROPE WALKING UPHILL INTO SUN

CURRICULUM RELEVANCE

Mountain would be an exciting addition to any school curriculum. It would be relevant to students across a number of curriculum areas from middle primary to senior secondary. Mountains are some of the most ancient natural structures on earth. They continue to provoke both fear and wonder. The higher they are and the more inhospitable, the greater their allure and challenge as an adventure destination or for some, an astonishing playground where they can test themselves both with and against the elements and terrain.

In addition, it would be an inspiring film to show to students of film at upper secondary and tertiary level as an example of what film can do when filmmakers, musicians, writers and mountaineers work together on a project that honours all aspects of creative filmmaking, producing something that is both new and inspiring, real

and imaginative.

Mountain marries the old and the new seamlessly in its approach to its subject matter, using new technologies such as Go-Pro cameras and drones to capture moments, images and perspectives on mountains that have only previously been available to the most intrepid filmmakers and cinematographers, working at extreme altitudes. It also acknowledges and respects mountain pioneers and the mountains themselves that have been there for millennia.

Mountain can be linked to the following subject areas of the Australian National Curriculum as stimulus material rather than as a didactic exploration of specific curriculum topics and themes.

1. Science

Level 10 Science Content Descriptors relevant to a study of *Mountain* (with a focus on the impact of global warming on mountain environments) include:

Nature and Development of Science:

- Scientific understanding, including models and theories, are contestable and are refined over time through a process of review by the scientific community (ACSHE191)
- Advances in scientific understanding often rely on developments in technology and technological advances are often linked to scientific discoveries (ACSHE192)

2. History

Mountain can be used as a supplementary text at year 10 when studying Depth Study 3: The Globalising World: The Environment Movement (1960s to present), with a focus on the impact of global warming and human impact on mountain landscapes such as Everest.

- The intensification of environmental effects in the twentieth century as a result of population increase, urbanisation, increasing industrial production and trade (ACDSEH125)
- Responses of governments, including the Australian government, and international organisations to environmental threats since the 1960s (including deforestation and climate change). (ACDSEH128)

3. Geography

Landforms and Landscapes in Year 8 Geography.

‘Landforms and landscapes’ focuses on investigating geomorphology through a study of landscapes and their landforms. This unit examines the processes that shape individual landforms, the values and meanings placed on landforms and landscapes by diverse cultures, hazards associated with landscapes, and management of landscapes. Specifically:

- The spiritual, aesthetic and cultural value of landscapes and landforms for different groups of people, and especially Indigenous peoples who have lived in a range of remote areas for hundreds and even thousands of years (ACHGK049) and
- Geomorphic processes that produce landforms, including a case study of at least one landform (ACHGK050).

4. English

Mountain could be used as a supplementary text in English from Years 10 – 12, specifically when students are studying texts that deals with how individuals and groups respond to natural environments, with their beauty, wonders and extreme challenges, e.g. *Tracks* by Robyn Davidson or *Touching the Void* by Joe Simpson or *Reindeer in my*

Saami Heart, a documentary film by Janet Merewether.

It could also be used as an example of a text that offers a multi-faceted response to the natural world, principally through images and music without a traditional narrative based on characters.

5. Music

Senior secondary music students have opportunities to compose music as part of their course work. In *Mountain*, some of the music selected is from well-known classical pieces such as Vivaldi’s Four Seasons. It enhances the visuals and creates emotional responses. Other music was composed specifically for some sequences by Richard Tognetti, such as the pre-title music that accompanies the rock climber.

Would a particular style of music such as Rap, Jazz, Rock or Techno be able to be used effectively in a film such as *Mountain*? What style of music do you listen to when skateboarding or at the gym?

Students could be asked to compose a short piece of music that could be played in a scene in the film. They could also be asked to select a backing track from popular music that could be used to accompany some of the skiing scenes. Will the music chosen or composed echo the visuals, enhance them or offer an aural contrast to the images?

6. The Cross-curriculum Priority of Sustainability

The National Curriculum has identified the Cross-curriculum priority of ‘Sustainability’ as requiring particular focus for Australian students. It states that:

‘Sustainability addresses the ongoing capacity of Earth to maintain all life. Sustainable patterns of living meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Actions to improve sustainability are both individual and collective endeavours shared across local and global communities. They necessitate a renewed and balanced approach to the way humans interact with each other and the environment.

Education for sustainability develops the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary for people to act in ways that contribute to more sustainable patterns of living. It enables individuals and communities to reflect on ways of interpreting and engaging with the world. Sustainability education is futures-oriented, focusing on protecting environments and creating a more ecologically and socially just world through informed action. Actions that support more sustainable patterns of living require consideration of environmental, social, cultural and economic systems and their interdependence.’

Understanding several of the ideas and images presented in *Mountain* can provide students with ideas and images to explore the above concepts in relation to Sustainability.



ABOVE: CLIMBER IN RED JACKET WITH OXYGEN MASK.
BELOW L-R: AMA DABLAM, NEPAL; HIMALAYAS 3

AUDIENCE AND HOW TO BEST WATCH THE FILM.

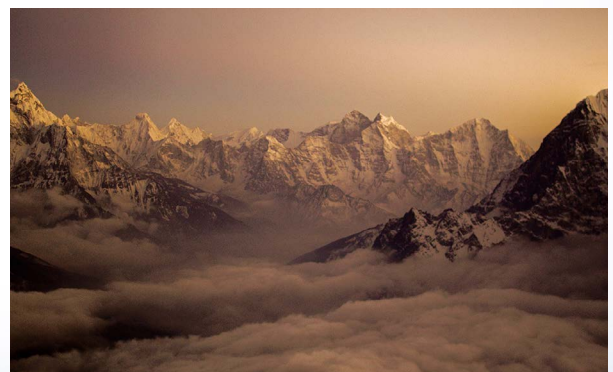
Mountain is a film that will appeal to people in all age groups in many different parts of the world. Its appeal is not dependent on words, characters and traditional narrative, but on images and music working together to take an audience on a thrilling journey around the mountains of the world filming the people who climb and ski, work, play and photograph in these high places.

If any film should be seen on the big screen, with surround sound, *Mountain* is it. It is hard to imagine people being satisfied watching it on a small screen, whether that is a phone, a tablet or an average sized television screen. While it is possible to watch films on a variety of accessible platforms of various screen sizes and quality, the very inaccessibility and scale of mountains can be best appreciated on a large screen.

While most of us may not have the opportunity to experience mountain landscapes and the extreme sports often played in them, this film takes us as close as possible to that experience.

Mountain was filmed in:

Antarctica, Argentina, Australia, Austria,
Bolivia, Canada, Chile, France, Greenland,
Iceland, India, Italy, Japan, Nepal,
New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea,
Scotland, South Africa, Switzerland,
Tibet, USA.



KEY POINTS ABOUT MOUNTAIN

- 1 **New rules of filmmaking were applied to *Mountain*.** The film has an intensity of feeling rarely found in cinema because the images, music and poetry are given equal weight and because of the very precise way they weave in and out of each other.
- 2 ***Mountain* is full of big ideas about deep time, nature and how the allure of mountains is a kind of madness.** These ideas are expressed with poetic brilliance by British writer, academic and conservationist Robert Macfarlane and articulated by Oscar-nominated actor Willem Dafoe, whose voice adds another dimension to the experience.
- 3 ***Mountain* is director Jennifer Peedom's follow-up film to *Sherpa*.** *Sherpa* screened at international film festivals in Telluride, Toronto, London, Sydney and Melbourne. The moving story about the deaths of 16 Sherpas on Everest was nominated for a BAFTA and won a slew of awards, including the Grierson Award for Best Documentary Feature.
- 4 **The music in *Mountain* is extraordinary.** The exalted music of Beethoven, Vivaldi, Grieg, Chopin, Arvo Part and Peter Sculthorpe was treated with utmost respect and every note recorded especially for the soundtrack by the world-renowned Australian Chamber Orchestra (ACO), led by Richard Tognetti. There is a cinematic version of the film with the music embedded and a version designed for live accompaniment by the ACO. The world premiere of *Mountain Live* was at the Sydney Opera House on June 12th, 2017, presented by the Sydney Film Festival and VIVID live. It featured the ACO playing the music chosen as part of the film's soundtrack. A *Mountain Live* tour by the ACO took place in a number of Australian cities in August 2017.
- 5 ***Mountain* is hard to define.**
 - It is a wild ride during the death-defying depictions of extreme sports.
 - It is a piece of art when the images, music and poetry sing at their loudest.
 - It is a philosophy class on the human condition when the narrative reveals its surprises.
 - It is a meditation track when it makes the spirit soar.

The Australian season of *Mountain*, the version of the film with the music embedded in the soundtrack, will be in Australian cinemas from 21st September, 2017. A 3D IMAX version will be produced for exhibition in 2018.

Mountain has recently been invited to screen at San Sebastian, London, Bergen and Busan Film Festivals (embargoed information until mid- September)



CLIMBER OUTSIDE TENT AT DAWN

WATCHING THE FILM

The first time you watch this film, it would be best to just watch it without taking notes so you can have an opportunity to get a sense of the wonder, beauty and challenges of the world of images and sounds that the film presents. A subsequent viewing will allow you to better appreciate the material and how it is presented in the film.

Elements of the film

HISTORY

To those who are enthralled by mountains, their wonder is beyond all dispute. To those who are not, their allure is a kind of madness.

- When did the fascination with mountains as places of curiosity and wonder begin?
- Up until this time, how do history and literature generally represent mountains?
- How does the archival footage from the 1920s of groups walking through the landscape represent the hikers? What do you notice about their gear, clothing and footwear? How has this changed today?
- What are some of the technologies, particularly in relation to travel, that have transformed people's opportunities to explore and climb mountains?
- How have new technologies made mountaineering, snow skiing and several other extreme mountain sports available to many people?
- In what sense was the summiting of Everest (and the return) in 1953 by Sherpa Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary a truly important human achievement?
- What effect did their achievement have on the growing climbing community of would-be adventurers and mountaineers?
- How is the queuing and controlling of the Everest experience shown in this film?



2 SHERPA CLIMBERS ASCEND TO
CAMP 2 ON EVEREST IN TIBET

GEOGRAPHY

Many who travel to mountaintops are half in love with themselves – and half in love with oblivion

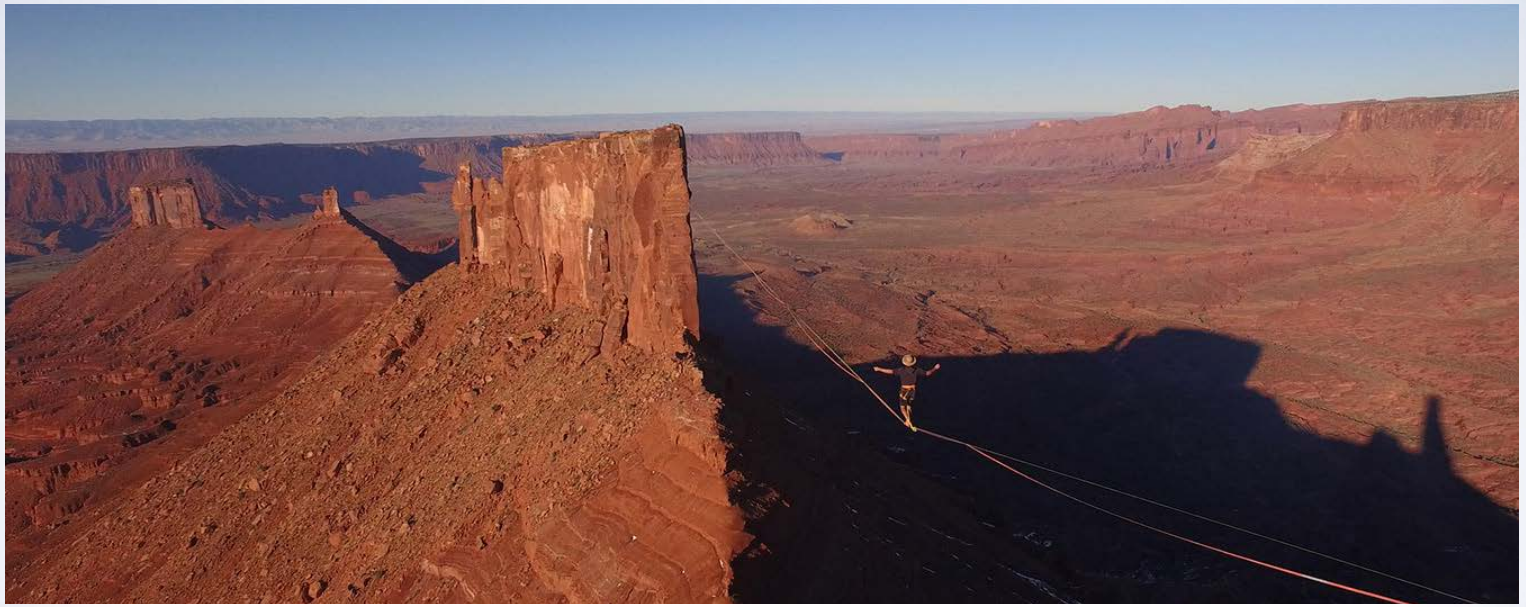
- Investigate where earth's most precipitous mountains are found and list them.
- On which continents are the earth's most precipitous mountain ranges?
- How are most mountain ranges thought to have been formed? What does a 'Geomorphologist' study?
- Of which mountain range is Everest the highest peak?
- Explain why the temperature decreases as we move higher into mountains.
- What is altitude sickness and why does it occur in areas high above sea level?
- How do the Sherpas who work as guides and carriers for would be mountaineers cope with the extremely rarefied air and conditions in these high mountains?
- How do the images of active volcanoes spewing fire, rock and molten lava illustrate the unpredictability of the earth below the surface?

SPORTS

We sought places that were intimidating and uncontrollable.

You never feel as intensely alive knowing that at any minute you could die.

- During what period of history was reverence for mountains replaced by curiosity and adventure?
- Which mountaineering activities have been around from the earliest days of alpine exploration and touring?
- How did people get high up in the mountains in the early years of mountaineering?
- List the many human activities and sports that people enjoy in mountainous regions. Make a list of as many sports or activities as you saw in the film, whether in snowfields or in other mountainous places.
- Which of these sports or thrill-seeking exploits are relatively recent activities?
- In what ways has technology made several of these activities possible?



ABOVE: SLACKLINE WALK
ACROSS THE DESERT.
BELOW: ICELANDIC CYCLING

MUSIC

- What do you think is the appeal of these high-risk mountain activities to many of the mostly younger people who take part in them?
- Explain what the wingsuit jumpers do. What activity has inspired this sport?
What thrills do mountain bike riders seek in snow covered mountains?
What do most of these extreme sports that we see in the film allow participants to experience?
Climbing sheer rock faces, sometimes without ropes, has a very particular appeal to climbers such as Alex Honnold, a free solo climber who appears in the opening scenes of *Mountain*. Despite the bloodied fingers and flesh freezing bitter cold, what is the allure of such extreme sports as free climbing?
- While there are several YouTube sequences of some of the more extreme sports shown in the film such as mountain bike parachuting and free climbing without ropes, how does the scenery, sequencing and music shown on a bigger screen amplify a viewing experience?
- How are the very real and ever-present dangers of coming to grief on mountains shown in the film?

Putting visuals with music can elevate music. It's what happens at the opera. You end up listening more with your eyes and seeing more with your ears – Richard Tognetti, Artistic Director of the Australian Chamber Orchestra and musical collaborator on *Mountain*.

Richard Tognetti has been experimenting with the alchemy between music and imagery for some years. One of these projects was *The Reef*, which the ACO toured around Australia and offshore. This celebration of big wave surfing and the ocean was filmed at Ningaloo Reef in northwest Western Australia.

Tognetti is both a surfer and a skier so both these projects about man and nature link strongly with his own passions.

There is a touring version of *Mountain* called *Mountain Live*, where the music we hear in the film is played live by the ACO.

Beethoven, Grieg, Vivaldi, Chopin, Arvo Part, Peter Sculthorpe and Tognetti are just some of the composers



whose work is performed in the film. The middle movement of Beethoven's fifth piano concerto is played in the film by Sydney pianist Tamara-Anna Cislowska. Listen for her interpretation in the final part of the film as cameras move slowly across the mountain peaks.

A soundtrack of the music played by the ACO for *Mountain* is available through the ACO website at <https://www.aco.com.au/buy/merchandise>, as well as through ABC outlets.

Music matters. Watch parts of this film with the sound muted. Now re-watch and listen to the same sequence with the sound on. Music plays a crucial role in elevating the visuals, throughout the film, such as during the skiing sequence at 34.17 – 40.20 and in other daredevil sequences such as the pre-title sequence with the rock climber. The following two sequences are just two of many that could be chosen to illustrate the marriage of images and music.

- Close viewing and listening activity, sequence 1 - 21. 47 – 27.30 - The Conquest of Everest.

- Watch this sequence with the sound muted. Now, watch it again with the sound on.
- In what ways do the music and images enhance one another?
- What is lacking in the muted silent version?
- What do we see in this sequence about the nature of the pilgrimage to Everest?
- How does the music both reflect some of this human chaos while also reflecting the sheer beauty of this Himalayan range?

- Close viewing and listening activity, sequence 2 – 41.00 – 48.00

This sequence could be subtitled *Headlong Pursuit of Peril*.

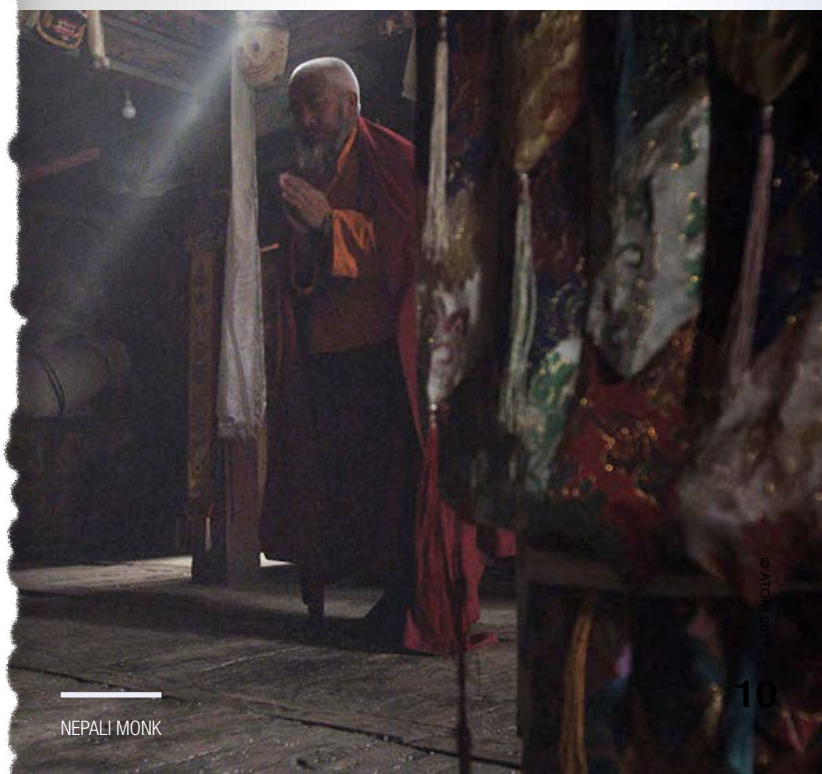
- As before, watch this sequence with the sound muted, then watch it again with the sound on.
- In what ways does the music chosen for this sequence (from Vivaldi's Four Seasons) express the intensity, danger and sublime terror of the risk-taking experience?
- Identify any points here where the music is a counterbalance to the edgy danger of the visuals - soaring and triumphant?
- Apart from the music selected, including some composed especially for the film by Richard Tognetti, what other sounds do we hear that are part of the life of several mountain communities?
- If you have been in a mountain environment what are some of the weather sounds that can be heard?
- The Robert Macfarlane script, read by Willem Dafoe, is spare, never insisting on a single reading of the images. How well do you think the music and narration mesh with the images or amplify and clarify them?

PHILOSOPHY

The mountains we climb are not made only of rock and ice, but also of dreams and desire. The mountains we climb are mountains of the mind.

Daily life brought ample hardship and danger: there was no need to seek out more.

- In what sense can mountain climbing or trekking in wild places be seen as a way of testing ourselves against the uncaring power of the natural world? What do many people hope to achieve by making such journeys?
- Why might challenging ourselves in an unfamiliar and harsh landscape be regarded as the ultimate goal?
- In what sense is recreation, leisure, sports and travelling to other places and environments a relatively recent first world activity?
- Who do you think is being spoken about when the narrator says, 'those who have the least take the greatest risks'?
- How do local inhabitants benefit from the regular influxes of alpine and mountain tourists?
- How many places are left in the world where we can escape the crowded confines and noise of city life and go as close to flying as possible?
- What other places remain untouristed for individuals wanting to test themselves against the natural elements?
- Is Mount Everest still a place that remains relatively untouched by humans?
- Who are the people who live and work in the Himalayan regions of Nepal and Tibet? How do many of them make a living?



NEPALI MONK

SPIRITUALITY

High mountains were once considered the home of either the holy or the hostile: there was nothing in between... go around mountains if necessary, along their flanks, but not up them – for only gods and monsters dwelled at heights.

Like other high peaks in the Himalayas, Mount Everest has long been revered by local peoples. Its Tibetan name, Chomolungma, means 'Goddess Mother of the World'. The Sanskrit name Sagarmatha means literally 'Peak of Heaven'.

- How does the reported response to mountains as either hostile or holy by those who lived 200 years before us, reflect an understandable fear of the unknown? Are there parallels today to this fear that attracts some individuals? What sorts of risks and dangers do people seek in 2017? Can natural forces and landforms be described as 'hostile'?
- Where do we find unexplored places and challenges in the world today?
- In what ways are the mystical aspects of Buddhism shown in the film? Research the meanings of

mandalas and prayer wheels (both of which we see in the film) in the Buddhist religion.

- What do the local Indigenous people call Everest and what does this term mean to them? (Note: It is believed by many practising Buddhists that the Buddha was born in Nepal).
- While tourism certainly provides much needed income for Indigenous peoples such as the Nepalese Sherpas, what are its potentially damaging effects on the environment and on the lives of the families dependent on an income from tourism?
- How does the aspiration to climb landforms such as Everest or Uluru impinge on other people's spiritual beliefs and sense of their own world? Is it possible to resolve this conflict between two groups with different priorities and values?
- The peaks of mountains have been regarded as sacred places where gods dwell as they are closer to heaven or other celestial and sacred worlds. How might their inaccessibility and potential dangers have strengthened this belief in the spirituality of high mountains?

MONT BLANC, FRENCH ALPS



LANGUAGE

Robert Macfarlane's words provide a poetic narrative thread for the film.

While this is not a film dependent on words for its impact, there is a narration and a spare script that accompanies the images and the music. Mountains tend to make people think about their place in the world and what all this wonder might mean – they inspire us to express our feelings and even re-consider our place in the world.

Robert Macfarlane wrote both the script for *Mountain* and the book *Mountains of the Mind*. Macfarlane is a Reader in Literature and the GeoHumanities* in the Faculty of English at Cambridge University.

(GeoHumanities is a field of study that incorporates a number of different types of study, including: Environmental GeoHumanities; Spatial GeoHumanities; Creative GeoHumanities; Digital GeoHumanities and Public GeoHumanities. These projects often see

scholars and practitioners engaging with a range of partners across the cultural, creative and heritage sectors around the world).

Macfarlane says: *I thought of the words I wrote for the film as the weather: moving through and over the film swiftly, bringing changes of mood and light. The whole had to convey the epic nature of the film's journey. That was the challenge and I relished trying to meet it.*

Jen {Peedom, the film's Director} was a brilliant editor, really a co-writer. We obsessed for over a year about individual words, single commas, speech rhythms, pauses.

Actor Willem Dafoe narrates the script in the film.

Mountains don't seek our love, or seek our deaths. They want nothing from us.

TINY CAMP AGAINST SNOW
PEAKED MOUNTAINS

KEY CREW ON MOUNTAIN

Mountain is a co-production of Screen Australia and the Australian Chamber Orchestra, a Stranger Than Fiction Films Production in association with Camp4 Collective and Sherpas Cinema. It is a collaboration of:

Words: *Robert Macfarlane: Author of *Mountains of the Mind: A History of a Fascination*, Granta Books, 2003

Principal cinematography: *Renan Ozturk: One of the world's best professional climbers and cinematographers.

Music: *Richard Tognetti: Creative Director of the ACO - violinist, composer and conductor.

Sound Design: David White: Academy Award winner for best sound editing for *Mad Max: Fury Road*, 2016. Worked on *Sherpa*, *Snow Monkey* and *Zach's Ceremony*.

Editing: Christian Gazal and Scott Gray: Christian is currently working on *The True Adventures of Peter Rabbit*. He also worked on *Sherpa*. Scott has just finished editing four episodes of Series 2 of *Top of the Lake*. He also edited *Solo*, the documentary award winner at the 2009 AFI Awards.

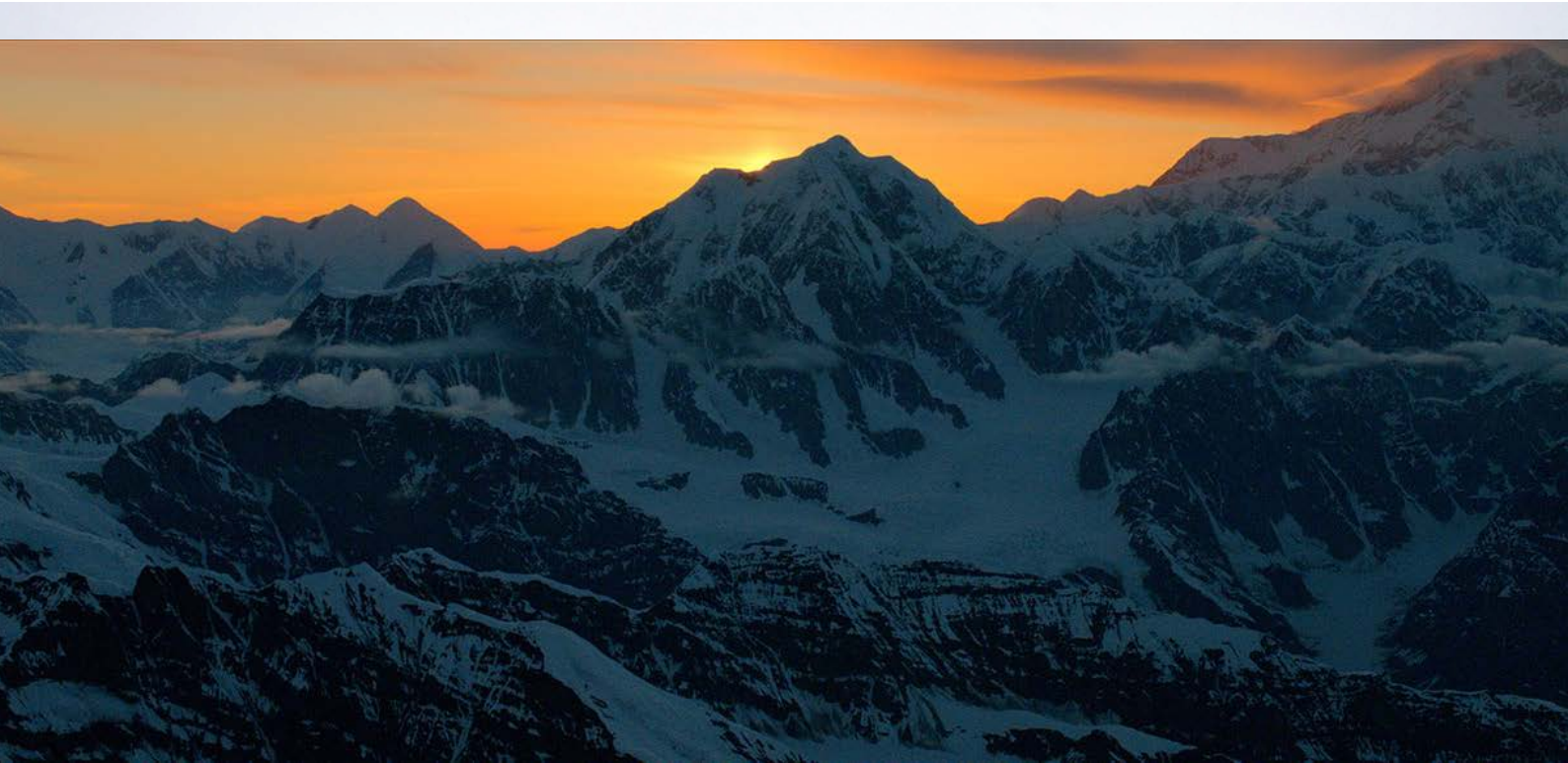
Narrator: Willem Dafoe: Multi-award winning American actor nominated for two Oscars.

Director: *Jen Peedom: Director of *Sherpa* and of many other documentary films.

Produced by: Jo-Anne McGowan and Jen Peedom: Jo-Anne McGowan has produced the feature documentary *David Stratton: A Cinematic Life*, which screened at Cannes Classics in 2017. She has also produced *Between a Frock and a Hard Place*, a documentary looking beyond the history of *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. In 2015, she and Jen Peedom established *Stranger Than Fiction Films*, their production company.

*Further information about the filmmakers can be found later in this guide.

Financing a film project as complex as this one requires a lot of money. The Australian Chamber Orchestra, Screen Australia and post-production company, Definition Films provided the backing that enabled *Mountain* to be produced. Camp4 Collective and Sherpas Cinema opened up their archives to Jen Peedom, enabling a wealth of footage to be included in the film. As you will see from the credits list at the end of the film, there were many individuals - musicians and athletes and filmmakers - who had a role to play in the final film.



MOUNTAIN PEAKS

A STATEMENT FROM JEN PEEDOM, THE DIRECTOR, ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE OF MAKING *MOUNTAIN*.

When Richard Tognetti of the Australian Chamber Orchestra approached me to collaborate on this project, I said ‘yes’ straightaway for three reasons.

Firstly, I knew the Australia Chamber Orchestra was an absolutely world class orchestra because I’d been to many of their concerts. I played violin until the end of high school, so I have some classical music training and a love of classical music. So, the opportunity to work with the ACO was an opportunity I wasn’t going to pass up.

Secondly, it felt like a unique creative opportunity. Collaborating with an orchestra was always going to produce a very different kind of film and I was interested in that as a creative challenge. Filmmaking is always about collaboration but I knew in this case, the collaboration was the most important aspect of the project. That idea was exciting.

I certainly had to flex my creative muscles in a very different way. Working with classical music presented a whole new set of creative constraints that we had to work through. But we approached these constraints as a jigsaw puzzle. It wasn’t always easy, but the result truly speaks to the trust and mutual respect of that collaboration.

The third reason I got involved was because, despite all of the films that I’d made on mountains and about adventurers, I still felt that I had something to say – there were ideas that I still wanted to express. There’s a line in the film: ‘To those who are enthralled by mountains, their wonder is beyond all dispute. To those who are not, their allure is a kind of madness.’ I was really interested in exploring the space between those two points of view and

how significantly our feelings towards mountains have changed in such a relatively short period of time.

Bringing Robert Macfarlane into the mix was an essential part of that collaboration. His book ‘Mountains of the Mind’ explored many of the ideas I wanted to express, so I approached him to write a very sparse, poetic narration script. Without Robert’s beautiful words I wouldn’t have been able to say what I wanted to say in this film. His script is breathtaking.

This project would not have happened without our principal cinematographer Renan Ozturk from Camp4 Collective, who I had worked with on my 2015 film *Sherpa* - a true mountaineer, whose images are utterly poetic. He was the third collaborator in this marriage of music, words and picture. He introduced me to a number of other cinematographers, whose images helped give us the vast international scope of this film.

Many of the images have been captured under the most extreme circumstances on the highest and most unforgiving mountains in the world using all sorts of new technology, including drones. So, a big shout out to our Renan and also to the team at Sherpas Cinema and all the cinematographers who worked so hard to capture these extraordinary images.

Each of us brought our own ideas to *Mountain* and it really was like a master class in collaboration. Each of us raised the bar, inspiring the others to do the same. The result is a testament to that alchemy. It has been one of the most challenging, but enriching projects of my career. I hope that the experience of seeing, and hearing, *Mountain* will be a very moving, dare I say, transcendental experience!

MEDIA AND FILM STUDIES

Documentary films are only likely to draw an appreciative and engaged audience if they are entertaining, whatever their underlying position or point of view might be.

- In what ways does *Mountain* entertain and engage viewers?
- If the film has any underlying messages, what might they be?
- What do you think was the vision of the filmmakers in creating this film? (See the Director's Statement earlier in this guide).
- What special filming difficulties would the filmmakers have encountered in making this film, particularly in relation to locations and collaborations between groups?

Renan Ozturk, the film's principal cinematographer, is a specialist high altitude cinematographer. He is also an accomplished climber. Jen Peedom, the director, met Ozturk when she was making her film *Sherpa*. He has tested for manufacturers the

top-end equipment that is used in high altitude filmmaking such as the tiny GoPro cameras that can be mounted on helmets and a camera stabiliser called MoVi that was used in Peedom's 2015 film, *Sherpa*.

- How can new technologies such as drones and GoPro cameras provide opportunities for new perspectives when filming in isolated and often precipitous terrain?
Give some examples where the cinematographers are able to create extreme closeness to their subjects, whether mountains or individuals.
- What are some of the advantages filmmakers have over writers or even stills photographers when they are making films about the natural world?
- What difficulties might the editors of this film have encountered?
- What are some of the sensory experiences experienced in the outdoors that it is impossible to convey on film or in words?



DP RENAN OZTURK HOLDING
CAMERA, ROPED ON MOUNTAINSIDE

THE KEY CREW ON MOUNTAIN

Jen Peedom, Director

Jen Peedom is a BAFTA nominated director, well known for her gripping, intimate portraits of people in extreme circumstances. Her credits include the internationally renowned documentaries *Sherpa*, *Miracle on Everest*, *Living the End* and *Solo*, which played in the Official Selection of major documentary festivals including IDFA and Sheffield and won numerous awards including an AFI for Best Documentary.

In the case of *Sherpa*, Jen went to Mt Everest during the 2014 climbing season to make a film from the point of view of the guides who help foreigners reach the summit. Tragedy struck while she was there when a huge block of ice crashed down and killed 16 Sherpas. *Sherpa* was the only documentary selected for Official Competition

in the 2015 Sydney Film Festival before a successful run on the international festival circuit, including Telluride, Toronto and London. It was nominated for a BAFTA and won the Grierson Award for Best Documentary Feature at the BFI London Film Festival. It became the third highest grossing Australian documentary in history.

A one-time commodities trader, Jen's filmmaking career began when she was one of the competitors in the series *Race Around Oz*, broadcast on ABC-TV in 2000. She has been general manager of IF Magazine, a publication about film and television for practitioners, was New South Wales Young Business Woman of the Year in 2003 and was the inaugural recipient of the David & Joan Williams Documentary Fellowship in 2010, which recognises creative ambition, intellectual rigour and innovation in documentary cinema.



DIRECTOR, JENNIFER
PEEDOM & CREW
AT EVEREST BASE
CAMP, NEPAL

Robert Macfarlane, Writer

Robert Macfarlane is the author of internationally prize-winning and bestselling books including *Mountains of the Mind: A History of a Fascination* (2003), *The Wild Places* (2007), *The Old Ways* (2012), *Holloway* (2013, with Stanley Donwood and Dan Richards) and *Landmarks* (2015). He is particularly known for his writing about landscape, nature, wilderness and the environment. His work has been translated into fourteen languages and is published in more than 20 countries, and his books have been widely adapted for television, film and radio. His books have won prizes around the world, including - most recently - the 2017 EM Forster Award for Literature, awarded by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His many essays and reviews have appeared in the Guardian, The New Yorker, Granta and the New York Times. He is presently completing *Underland*, a book about underworlds real and imagined. Macfarlane is a Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

Richard Tognetti, Composer

Australian violinist, conductor and composer Richard Tognetti was born in Canberra and raised in Wollongong. He has established an international reputation for his compelling performances and artistic individualism.

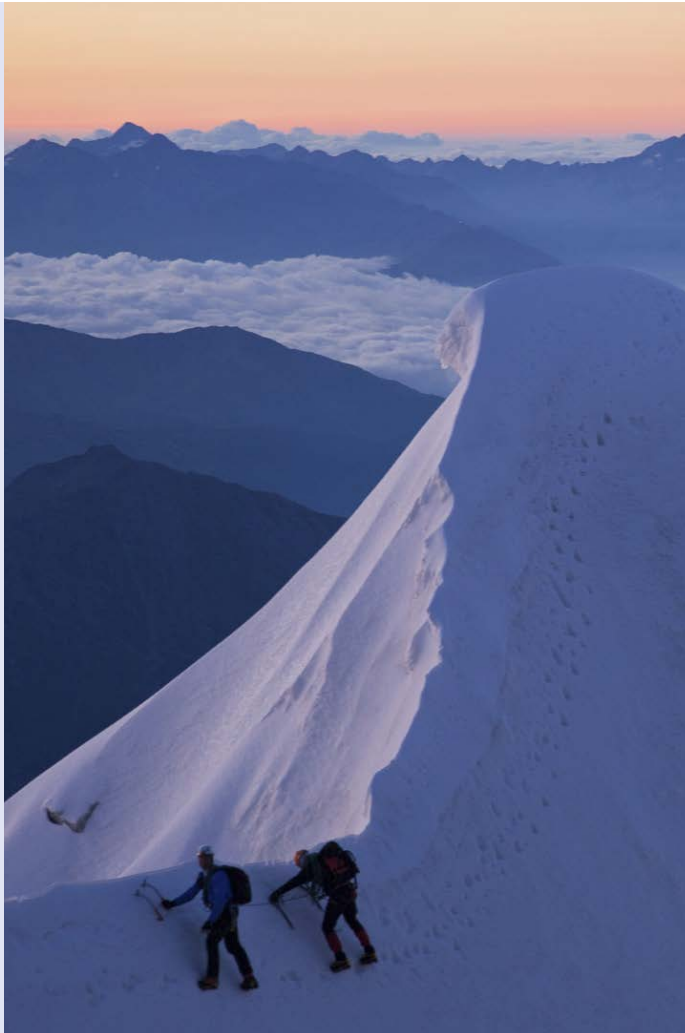
He began his studies in his home town with William Primrose, then with Alice Waten at the Sydney Conservatorium, and Igor Ozim at the Bern Conservatory, where he was awarded the Tschumi Prize as the top graduate soloist in 1989. Later that year he led several performances of the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and that November was appointed as the Orchestra's lead violin and, subsequently, Artistic Director. He was Artistic Director of the Festival Maribor in Slovenia from 2008 to 2015.

Richard performs on period, modern and electric instruments and his numerous arrangements, compositions and transcriptions have expanded the chamber orchestra repertoire and been performed throughout the world. As director or soloist, he has appeared with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Academy of Ancient Music, Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra, Handel & Haydn Society (Boston), Hong Kong Philharmonic, Camerata Salzburg, Tapiola Sinfonietta, Irish Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, Nordic Chamber Orchestra and all of the Australian symphony orchestras, most recently as soloist and director with the MSO and TSO. Richard also performed the Australian premieres of Ligeti's Violin Concerto and Lutoslawski's Partita. In November 2016, he was London's Barbican Centre's first Artist-in-Residence at Milton Court Concert Hall.

Richard was co-composer of the score for Peter Weir's film, *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*, starring Russell Crowe; he co-composed the soundtrack to Tom Carroll's surf film *Storm Surfers*; and created *The Red Tree*, inspired by Shaun Tan's book. He also created the documentary film *Musica Surfica*, as well as *The Glide*, *The Reef* and *The Crowd*.

Richard was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2010. He holds honorary doctorates from three Australian universities and was made a National Living Treasure in 1999. He performs on a 1743 Guarneri del Gesù violin, lent to him by an anonymous Australian private benefactor.

Hear more from Richard at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SPK0IELQ38>



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Renan Ozturk, Cinematographer

Renan Ozturk is recognized as one of the world's best professional climbers and as a cinematographer who gets extraordinary results when he pushes the art of film-making in extreme locations, including at high altitudes. He was the cinematographer on Peedom's BAFTA nominated documentary *Sherpa*, which documented events before and after the most devastating tragedy on Mt Everest – it happened during the 2014 climbing season and left 16 Sherpas dead. Renan is fluent in Nepali. He was one of the cinematographers on and starred in *Meru*, which won the US Documentary Audience Award at the Sundance Film Festival in 2015. Renan was also heavily involved in the ski movie *Into The Mind*, which was released in 2012.

Renan is co-founder of the Camp4 Collective, a production company specifically launched to tell stories about adventure sports. His video 'dispatches', produced during expeditions, bring adventure to a worldwide online audience in near real-time. He has been recognized by North Face – as one of their professional athletes – and was named National Geographic 'Adventurer of the Year' in 2012. He is also a landscape painter. Renan is married to Taylor Freesolo Rees and they often work together.

Hear more from Renan about his work on the film at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AO7yBJQJTxo>



ABOVE: MOUNTAIN BIKER OFF CLIFF
EDGE IN UTAH. RIGHT: YAKS WITH
STRAW LOADS AND SHERPA IN SNOW



THE YAK IS A VALUABLE ANIMAL TO THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE IN THE HIMALAYAS. YAKS SUPPLY TRANSPORT, MILK, PROTEIN, FUR, HOOF, DUNG, BONE, SKIN, AND TAIL. TEA IS MADE WITH YAK MILK AND IS A STAPLE PART OF THE DIET OF YAK HERDERS. MILK IS ALSO ADDED TO MUSHROOMS TO MAKE A MILK-MUSHROOM STEW. THEY CONVERT THE SPARSE GRASS OF THIS HIGHLAND INTO CLOTHING, BUTTER FOR TEA, FUEL FOR THE STOVE, AND MEAT ON THE FIRE. HERDING, IN ADDITION TO SMALL SCALE AGRICULTURE AND TRADE WITH TIBET AND LOWER FOOTHILLS, ENABLED THE SHERPA TO LIVE IN THIS LAND OF ROCK, ICE AND SNOW¹.



POST VIEWING ACTIVITIES

There are a number of activities and research projects students could undertake in relation to this film. They could be completed by students at various levels with a number of different skills and interests. The results could be presented to other students using whatever technology or 'show and tell' props as best suits their learning style. Equally, they could be used as a stimulus for discussion of aspects of the film. Activity 6 is probably best undertaken as a group project where students have different roles reflecting their skills and capacity to collaborate.

- 1 Identify the highest mountain ranges and peaks in Australia. Which State or Territory has the most mountainous areas and which the least?
- 2 How many different alpine/mountain sports and activities could you identify in *Mountain*? Describe any snow related activities or sports you have ever done? Are there any you would like to try? What do you think is the main attraction of many snow based activities such as skiing, skating and bobsledding? List the sports that are now part of the Winter Olympics.
- 3 Investigate the changes occurring in the world's coldest regions such as near the two poles – the Arctic and Antarctic - that are believed to be related to man-made climate change. How might the popular tourist cruises visiting these remote areas either harm or help these places to not only survive but to thrive?
- 4 We see some animals in this film, such as the teams of yaks, used as pack animals and to provide milk and butter for people living in and visiting the region, but what other animals can survive in mountainous places across the world? Why is grazing and herding so challenging in these regions? How might the difficulties for animals to live at high altitudes be similar

to those of humans?

Research and describe any animals or birds that have adapted to living in mountain regions across the world, apart from the yak. How have these creatures evolved to survive in the cold temperatures?

- 5 Through the extraordinary filming of a range of mountain areas, whether rocky or snow-covered or volcanoes spewing molten lava, we can observe many natural patterns and colours in this documentary. Students of Visual Arts subjects such as Colour and Design or Printmaking may be able to transform some of these images into patterns or create a number of works that express some of the visual aspects of mountain landscapes. Other students could try painting or drawing snow covered landscapes where line and texture and light become crucial elements.
- 6 If you were commissioned to make a documentary film focussing on one aspect of the natural world, such as rivers or deserts or forests, how would you go about either filming or finding footage?
 - Would you focus on a single river or desert or forest area you are familiar with or range further afield interstate or to another continent?
 - Would you construct a narrative film with characters in the landscape or a more free-ranging film with a largely musical soundtrack to match the images?
 - Describe your intended audience.
 - Some businesses and shops now have video running on a loop to attract and inform clients and customers. Where might you decide to offer your film that showcases a part of the natural world. How could places such as banks where people often queue and wait for service, display artworks such as *Mountain*?

LONE SKIER, JAPAN

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

MacFarlane, Robert, *Mountains of the Mind*, Granta, 2003.

Della Dora, Veronica, *Mountain: Nature and Culture*, Reaktion Books, 2016.

Sherpa, director Jennifer Peedom, 2015, a documentary film about the lives of the Sherpas who work on Mount Everest.

The ACO website with links to various *Mountain* websites and details of all the music played throughout the film.

https://www.aco.com.au/whats_on/event_detail/mountainpremiere

A good place to start to get a reasonable overview of the history, geography and cultural significance of Mount Everest.

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Mount-Everest>

A review of the film published in The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/jun/13/mountain-a-sublime-rush-of-adrenaline-and-orchestral-beauty-from-the-director-of-sherpa>

Touching the Void, Kevin MacDonald, 2004, a documentary film based on a terrifying mountain expedition where things went horribly wrong.

Marguerite O'Hara, 1st September, 2017

(Endnotes)

1 <https://moonlightinthehimalayas.wordpress.com/yaks-in-the-himalayas/>



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