



*** BEST BET**

Tim Murphy's photography is on display at Arts Alive Gallery in Breck for 1 more week! **PAGE B2**

ARTISTS and ATHLETES



Yin & Yang, or unanswerable dichotomy?

By Aaron Bible

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I've always been fascinated by the duality in the artist-athlete personality. What is it that drives someone to push their physical limits, as well as their creative ones, to the extreme? And how can these two parts of life exist so perfectly in the same people?

This seeming dichotomy between the athlete and the artist was documented in the 1974 film by

Warner Herzog called "The Great Ecstasy of the Sculptor Steiner." When I stumbled across this film on Netflix a number of years ago I was blessed with one of those 'Ah ha' moments where one realizes they are not alone in their emotionally intellectual quandaries.

In this seminal short film, Herzog documents his own lifelong exploration of what he refers to as "ecstatic truth." The film is about the famed ski jumper Walter Steiner, who shattered ski jumping (or as Steiner calls it, ski flying) records from 1970-1977 and worked during the day as a carpenter and wood carver. The duality of his art forms as a skier and sculptor is artfully deconstructed in what Herzog called one of his most important films.

The name of the film itself speaks volumes, referencing of course Irving Stone's biography of Michelangelo, "The Agony and Ecstasy," and the film work is solemn, monotone, and filled with contemplative, introspective moments of both wood carving and ski jumping, intermixed with violent crashes and egotistical rants, painting the picture of this potentially conflicted personality. It made me realize I was not the only one consumed.

"These two pursuits that at first glance seem at odds with each other really have quite a lot of similar things fueling them. The willingness to suffer, the ever-compelling jump between juxtaposing emotional states, the introspective knowledge that comes from experiencing them and the sense of accomplishment when the long

sought-after route is climbed or the piece that took months to paint is completed," said Marisa Ware, an athlete and artist who splits her time between San Francisco, Calif., where she is currently pursuing a Master's in illustration at the Academy of Art, and Boulder, and various climbing crags and campgrounds around the West.

"All this said, I do feel constantly torn between these two obsessions of mine. When I'm on a climbing trip surrounded by other

climbers, I feel that one side of me is being wholly satisfied. I love sleeping in the back of a truck, waking in the cold morning, eating breakfast cooked on a camp stove, spending the day totally exerting myself and watching my friends do the same, all of us witnessing each other's triumphs and defeats, then returning to camp exhausted to sit around a fire and fall asleep under the stars," Ware said.

"Yet within this partial version of my own paradise, I feel the absence of the other half," she continued. "I don't feel my artistic side being stimulated or nourished, so I return to the city, immerse myself in my classes, spend hours upon hours holed up in a dark room, inspired, solitary, engrossed in the workings of my own creativity," she said. "Eventually, I start to ache for the feel of rock on my fingertips and the sharp air of the desert."

"It's all about exploration," said John Gorman, a Portland, Ore., based product designer, sculptor, painter and cyclist. "I ride and race my bike to get a different perspective on life. Art and design thoughts run rampant after depleting the more visceral emotions."

After years of exploration and the depleting of emotions on so many levels, I know it has something to do with the need to push oneself, emotionally, physically, creatively. That truly

exhaustive feeling that can only be achieved by six hours of going hard in the saddle, battling raging rapids or clinging to exposed sandstone, and also by expelling the emotions of a brutal childhood onto paper, attempting to quell an insatiable urge to tell a visual or musical story, or by photographing and printing something that

speaks to who we are as human beings.

"Both pursuits require suffering," said Ware. "All of my teachers keep reiterating that point, as does my experience. There is joy, relaxation, and meditative states involved with creating art, but those enjoyable states are balanced by frustration, vexation, and dissatisfaction. The level of determination and concentration that it takes to sit through a six-hour figure drawing class is the same that a climber needs to train for hours at the gym in preparation for whatever route they're trying to climb."

The life of the artist, however, doesn't always lend itself well to the life of the athlete. Artists like to stay up late, dark emotions often lead to the best work, and this leads to the same feelings of ecstasy and deprivation we get from extreme sports. So how do we find a balance?

"I think the essential conflict here is the one we all face — striving

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PHOTO BY ANTHONY LAPOMARDO/SPECIAL TO THE DAILY
The artwork of Marisa Ware is equally as daunting as her climbing skills. This piece is pen, ink and prisma pencil, entitled 'Eclipse.' View more of her work at marisaware.com.

ABOVE PHOTOS: SPECIAL TO THE DAILY/ERIC VICKERS



***DRINK**

Check out these eco-friendly imbibements before making your Earth Day party purchases, **PAGE B2**

***ARTS**

The Art of Social Media is broken down into a language you can understand, **PAGE B4**

***EXHIBITS**

'Appropriated: The Chronicled West' is on display at Denver's Robischon Gallery through May 5, ideal for Western and contemporary art lovers, **PAGE B5**

*COLUMN SCENE

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for balance in all facets of life. The work/life dichotomy is a major struggle when you are an independent creative running your own shop," said Tampa, Fla., based freelance photographer and adventure motorcyclist Joseph Gamble. "Riding a motorcycle forces you to attend to the present moment. Trips can require great care and planning, maintenance of the bike, reservations and permits for campsites, but when you are on the bike, pulling back the throttle, there is a real symmetry between man and machine. More importantly, you are forced to reckon with the present moment, whether you are managing rush hour traffic or bombing through a sandy trail. There is no past and no present in these moments. For me, adventure motorcycling then becomes a system reboot, a defragging of the mind."

"There's a need for aesthetic in the person that's not dissimilar to the need for aesthetic in art. Practically speaking, I cannot do my art without being somewhat athletic...I have backpacked and hiked thousands of miles in my life to make my living from photography," Colorado landscape photographer John Fielder explained to me. "Mind and body are symbiotic: a fit body begets a fitter mind, and a fit mind underlies the discipline needed to care about one's body. I could not have made one tenth of the photographs I've made in 40 years without having remained reasonably fit and aware of my physicality and the part it plays in my life." Some are seemingly able to find a balance better than others.



Joseph Gamble the athlete, inset, and one of his fine-art portraits. Like many independent artists, Gamble balances his need for adventure with his need to create. See more at jcgamble.com.

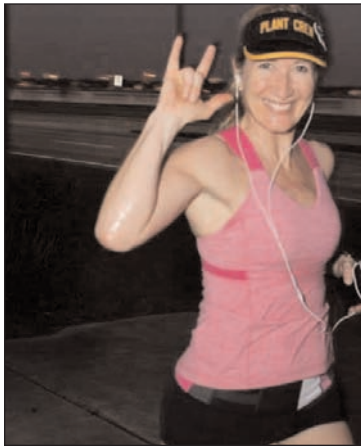
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replace something non-beneficial in their lives with an activity that gives them more strength and energy makes them happier and more productive in every part of their daily lives, including being a parent, spouse, employee, or even a customer. If you can take literally 20 minutes, working up to half hour, and then an hour (which is not that much out of your waking 16 to 18 hour day), one can make a notable difference in their energy level and consequently be more productive and happier. This has become a great balance in my life. I love to sit down and paint with that clear mind and motivation."

"I experienced a pretty radical paradigm shift a few years ago, realizing (among many



Jessica Conlan-Glover is pictured here in her seemingly non-conflicted roles as artist and athlete.



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"I think that on some level, the motivation must be coming from the same fervent source, but honestly, most of the time those

two aspects of myself seem pretty divided," said Ware.

"I would say it's in the desire to achieve perfection of form in

both," said Aspen-based cyclist, massage therapist and designer Shawn Hadley. "In athletics, as in art, that level of perfection is affected by so many different aspects, making it almost impossible without a little luck and tremendous dedication."

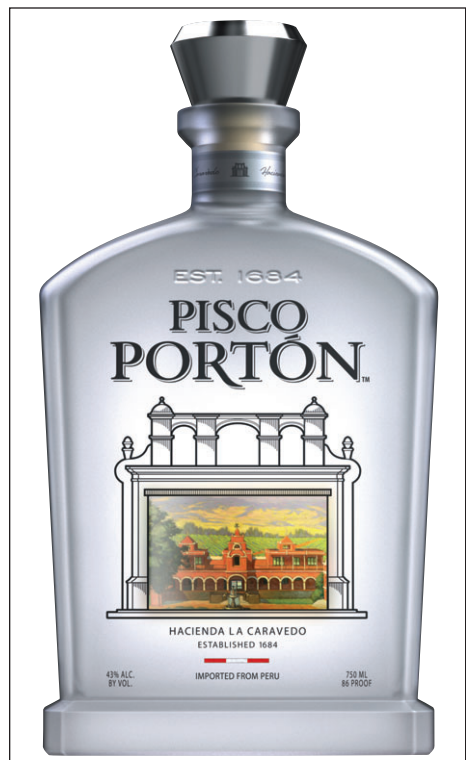
"I think that being physically active in a sport is very energizing for one's creative endeavors," said artist-athlete Jessica Conlan-Glover, a long-time mountain girl, runner, chef, and painter. "I feel I am happier and way more positive when I am healthy in all aspects...my body, my mind, my spirit. It gives me energy to be creative and actually more productive when I sit down to a canvas to paint."

Glover continued: "I think anyone that makes a point to

other things) that I needed to change my approach and focus my efforts," Ware continued. "It seemed clear that if I didn't simplify my pursuits, that I would never achieve any sort of greatness -- and that motivation, perhaps, is for me the common thread between climbing and art -- a desire to excel, to push myself to my own limits and witness the results. To chase genius."

Whether it the pursuit of genius, or a glimpse of Herzog's ecstatic truth, clearly there is something deep running through us all. Hopefully, in each person's individual way, they are able to find the balance, to create, to be outdoors, be happy, and to take the risks necessary to get there.

Eco-friendly imbibements for Earth Day weekend



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Pisco Portón is a Peruvian mosto verde pisco committed to sustainability. It is made at the oldest working distillery in the Americas, Hacienda la Caravedo.

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You love the earth and want to celebrate the 42nd annual Earth Day on Sunday. But why support an environmental catastrophe while doing so? Take a look at the following eco-friendly alcoholic beverages before making your partying purchases.

Pisco Portón is a Peruvian mosto verde pisco committed to sustainability. It is made at the oldest working distillery in the Americas, Hacienda la Caravedo. Combining age-old Pisco making traditions with eco-friendly modern technology, Hacienda la Caravedo features a roof garden that naturally converts carbon dioxide emitted by fermentation into oxygen, reducing environmental harm. The distillery also uses gravity-fed channels that decrease reliance on electrical pumps, and a water treatment system that recycles water from the distillation process into irrigation water for the vineyards. Visit: <http://piscoporton.com/home>

360 Vodka is premium eco-friendly vodka that has won awards not only for taste and quality, but also for environmentally responsible packaging. Each batch is quadruple-distilled and five-times filtered before entering the bottle. While creating

tasteful spirits, 360 Vodka strives to have the smallest carbon footprint possible. The Earth Friendly Distilling Company is based in Weston, Mo., and produces a huge variety of flavored vodkas for any palette. Visit: <http://www.vodka360.com>

American Harvest is organic vodka handcrafted in small batches from organic winter wheat grown on a family owned and sustainably managed U.S. farm. The vodka has no artificial additives or preservatives and is produced with a continuous column distillation process. It is distilled and bottled in Rigby, Idaho, using water from aquifers deep beneath the Snake River drainage. American Harvest is the creation of Sidney Frank Importing Company, Inc., a third-generation family owned U.S. business. One-third of the monthly electrical consumption at the distillery comes from local wind generated power. Additionally, unused materials from the distillation process are recycled

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