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Hot Docs 2013 Capsule Review: The Expedition to the End of the World

05.06.13 | by [Jay C](#) | [No Comments](#)



Only a day into my Hot Docs experience I already knew that *The Expedition to the End of the World* was going to be tough to top. Director Daniel Dencik provides further evidence that the Danes seem to have a real grasp on documentary cinema.

The film follows a crew of artists and scientists as they make their way through the melted massifs of North-East Greenland. Their mode of transportation is a three-mast schooner straight out of your favourite pirate film (mine would be *Cabin Boy*). As the men slowly traverse the winding, half-frozen rivers of the undiscovered country, they philosophize about the meaning of life and offer some unique commentary on the issue of climate change. One of them shrugs off the threat, suggesting that humans will adapt and simply move to areas of the world that aren't flooded. A truly Scandinavian proclivity.

Moments of comedy are scattered throughout as the explorers beat their boredom by shooting off guns — sometimes accidentally — and flying around in their unique hybrid dinghy/power paraglider. At times, their mission is truly threatened by stubborn ice formations, resulting in some harrowing seamanship that, in combination with the Mozart on the soundtrack, reminded me of Werner Herzog and Klaus Kinski uncontrollably floating down river in a steamboat in Les Blank's *'Burden of Dreams'*. In fact, much of this film could be classified as Herzogian and it would make for a great double bill with Herzog's own *'Encounters at the End of the World'*.

One of the strongest aspects of *Expedition* is the inspired combination of imagery and music. The film is beautifully shot and the contrasting use of Metallica and Mozart is a lot of fun. There film is exciting, kinetic, and fresh and provides a completely unique take on the environmental doc that ignores numbers and graphs in favour of focusing on the personalities and philosophies of its unique cast of characters to illuminate and inspire. However, this is an adventure film first and foremost. *The Expedition to the End of the World* was undoubtedly my favourite film at Hot Docs and will remain one of the best films of the year. — Jay C.

5/5

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