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BY JOE TYRRELL

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MOVIE REVIEW

It's impossible to come away from from the stirring new documentary "Into the Cold: A Journey of the Soul" without feeling

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deep admiration for Keith Heger.

Premiering at the Tribeca Film Festival, "Into the Cold etc." is the handiwork of photographer turned environmental advocate Sebastian Copeland, chronicling an epic trek across 400 nautical miles of frozen and semi-frozen

Arctic Ocean to the North Pole.

Conceived by Sebastian Copeland! Written by Sebastian Copeland! Directed by Sebastian Copeland! Filmed by Sebastian Copeland! Narrated by Sebastian Copeland! As the film's press handout puts it, Copeland has "only courage and determination to see him through a harrowing two-month journey... one of the toughest feats known to man."

Well, only courage and determination and Keith Heger. It's a two-man expedition. Heger is the Other Guy.

To be sure, Copeland is a man of genuine accomplishment. If you've ever leafed through a glossy magazine, you've almost certainly seen his work, which has also been exhibited at the United Nations, the Field Museum in Chicago, the Natural World Museum in San Francisco and other major venues.

Unlike the oil-fueled cult of global warming doubters, Copeland is willing to see the world for himself. In 2007, the International Photography Awards named him professional photographer of the year for his book "Antarctica: The Global Warning." He serves on the boards of Global Green USA and Shine on Sierra Leone, which educates children in war-torn countries.

"We will not save what we do not love," Copeland says early in the movie.

He's also quite a physical specimen, illustrated in early scenes as he jogs up the Hollywood Hills wearing a 100-pound weight vest in preliminary preparation for the trip.

He explains this quest for the farthest north was inspired by boyhood dreams of emulating the 1909 adventure of Robert Peary, Matthew Henson and four Inuit men — Ootah, Egigingwah, Seegloo and

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Ooqueah.

Copeland times his trek to match the centennial of that expedition, but with another clock ticking as well. At the rate the Arctic ice sheet is thinning, he says, no one will be able to make this journey in 2109.



But is it really necessary to show West Hollywood officials honoring Copeland with a proclamation, and his remarks thanking them? Slightly more compelling are scenes of training in the slush and sleet in Minnesota, where what seems to be a host of outdoorsmen quickly gets down to Copeland and Heger.

In fact, Heger is a veteran trekker, mountaineer, skier, sea kayaker and outdoor overachiever, with a particular speciality as an Arctic guide for Polar Explorers in recent years.

He always has a smile for camera, even when it's 30-below inside the tent and he's shivering in his sleeping bag. Like a Great White North McGyver, Heger offers practical advice, like how to whip up a bacon-and-cranberry bars to provide fat and energy later.

When the two men finally head north to their jumping off point, it's Heger who invites Inuit elders to dinner. Copeland and his camera seem more concerned that they "bless" his trip than in recording their thoughts about the state of the Arctic.

When the two reach the last vestige of "civilization," a base that seems to be a pile of leftover Soviet shipping containers fashioned into a building, the movie shows the local workmen eating but does not interview them.

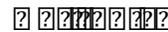
Once out on the ice, that "Journey of the Soul" threatens to take over, with Copeland's philosophical musings interrupted only occasionally by swelling New Age music.

But there's no denying the visual power of the setting, or the daunting task the men face. Often, obstacles line up for miles. Rather than an unbroken plain, there are ice debris fields in every direction.

Some of them are simply hedges for the men to maneuver over, dragging their aerodynamic sledges. Others are more like walls of boulders, angled and slippery. And yet others are like chain-reaction



Switch back to Sebastian Copeland to use th



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Winnebago crashes. For most of us, it would be an achievement to get one, every muscle straining, each breath shorter than the last.

?????o

Even more

dangerously, although the men have set out in February, they already encounter gaps in the ice, the equivalent of streams, rivers, even a bay. Copeland can marshall the occasional fact, pointing out that only 3 percent of the ice pack now remains from year-to-year, down from an estimated 88 percent a century earlier.

???

That means apparently solid footing may not be as solid as it once was. Copeland finds out first hand while on the march, camera running. The view suddenly tilts down to his feet, and follows them through breaking ice into green water.

Fortunately, Heger is there to pull him out (scene missing, understandably). Heger is still there at the end, as the men push on trying to make the pole before the melt means helicopters no longer can launch to carry them back to base. Copeland notes they are making good time, "although I knew Keith was having trouble with his hip."

It's the first and last time Copeland mentions this. Then it's back to talking about the benefits to his soul. For all the passion of his message, the beauty of his visuals and the physicality of his achievement, listening to Sebastian Copeland can be a chilly experience.

"Into the Cold: A Journey of the Soul" will have additional showings at the Tribeca Film Festival on April 30 and May 1. Information and tickets to festival films are available at [www.tribecafilm.com](http://www.tribecafilm.com)

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