

## WISCONSIN FILM FESTIVAL

## ***El Topo* at the 2007 Wisconsin Film Festival**

*The bizarre epic screened Sunday at Cinematheque*  
*Bob Koch on Monday 04/16/2007 02:04:19.*

By Sunday afternoon of the Wisconsin Film Festival, you can often tell who the truly die-hard cinephiles are.

Probably the best place to find them this year was at 4070 Vilas Hall, as the fest closed down with an encore double-feature of two films shown earlier in the weekend -- Alejandro Jodorowsky's *El Topo* and *The Holy Mountain*. The folks who raised their hands when the person introducing the former asked if anyone was there to see both films likely left Cinematheque with their minds whirling in confusion, wondering what just happened.

Alas, I wasn't among the die-hard group.

Having previously seen *El Topo*, I couldn't even imagine signing up to view two Jodorowsky films back-to-back. I had planned to catch *The Holy Mountain* on Saturday night, but unfortunately wasn't able to make it. The fact that *El Topo* is such an amazing movie made up for it, however.

A good crowd was on hand for Sunday's screening, and unlike some other purposefully bizarre movies I've seen lately (ahem... David Lynch, what was *Inland Empire* about?), most of them stuck around for this one.

After years in legal limbo due to lawsuits involving notorious record impresario Allen Klein, both films were recently restored. Seeing *El Topo* in its proper aspect ratio and in good repair was a far cry from the old VHS tape version. It really did make a difference to see it in a theater, as the bizarre imagery of the film had a much, much greater impact on the big screen.

It's hard to think of a way to describe *El Topo*; it's sort of like if Leone and Fellini decided to make a movie together. There's not really a lot of plot and it's easy to get lost trying to figure out the symbdism, but that's how the film draws the viewer in.

It's like the most hypnotic inside joke ever perpetrated on filmgoers.

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