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Sense of adventure at Boulder film festival
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Boulder - Residents in this craggy town love to play more than watch movies.

Jonathan Copp wants to change that. Last month the goateed climber offered Boulderites their first adventure film festival, melding their love of mountain life, their passion for community activism and an outdoor sporting jubilee with adventure flicks that encompass the unique sense of place that thrives in Boulder.

"The idea is to make something bigger than ourselves, something that touches our communal sense of activism and our sense of adventure," Copp said while absorbing the recent scene in Boulder's Central Park, where the so-called Dirt Days event he planned kicked off his three-day bacchanal of film and adventure.

Young kids were rock climbing. Some were walking across a stretch of webbing suspended tightly between two trees, a balancing feat known as slacklining. Others were fly-casting and running and getting their face painted. A group displayed the culinary power of the sun by baking cookies in a solar oven. There were sign-up sheets f! or events and causes. The weekly Farmer's Market across the park bustled. The day was distinctively Boulder.

Across the West, ski towns and outdoor-oriented villages are launching their own outdoor-oriented film festivals, giving a stage to adventurers who have languished for years clicking through jaw-dropping slideshows in front of too thin crowds wedged in rock gyms or gear shops. Vail's got one. So does

Telluride, Aspen, Durango, Crested Butte, Breckenridge and Niwot. The king of the adventure film fest is Canada's Banff.

Copp's spin on his Boulder Adventure Film carnival is activism and Dirt Days, which he said tap the yen to get outside, get involved and play instead of sitting around all day watching movies.

"This is more of an adventure festival. The others are purely film festivals," said the 31-year-old.

But movies still anchor this event. And the Boulder event debuted with top-tier films that established the annual film fete as a contender among the growing roster of film-hosting towns. It's expected the Boulder collection of films, 23 finalists culled from more than a hundred by a heavy-hitting panel of outdoor judges, will soon hit the road and visit theaters across the country.

"It's about time Boulder had its own film festival," said Malcolm Daly, founder of Boulder-

based climbing gear company Trango as he kicked off the inaugural event before a woo-

hooing crowd at the Boulder Theater.

One of the lasting impressions gleaned from the film festival was the passion of the filmmakers. These are not artistically minded moviemakers. They are adventurers with cameras, sharing the euphoria that once was their sole domain. The exclusivity of filmmaking has dissolved in their hands, as they tote increasingly lightweight cameras and cut films on their home computers.

"These people are making killer movies out of their homes," Copp said. "This is the techno peasant festival."

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