

“Deep Rising” Explores the “New Colonialism” of Ocean Mining

NEWS

January 21, 2023 9:00 AM



PARK CITY, UTAH – JANUARY 20: Jason Momoa, Sébastien Lépinard, Julie Lépinard, Director Matthieu Rytz, and Annie Roney attend the 2023 Sundance Film Festival | “Deep Rising” Premiere at The Ray Theatre on January 20, 2023 in Park City, Utah. (Photo by Frazer Harrison/Getty Images)

By Peter Jones

A mechanical “mouth” recalls a miniature *Star Wars* snow walker as it meticulously collects minerals from the seabed, placing each one in a waiting receptacle — like a bird feeding its offspring, but with stoic, matter-of-fact precision.

“We just pick them off the floor,” says Gerard Barron, CEO for DeepGreen, a corporation — also known as The Metals Company — that was founded on the idea that deep-sea mining is the key to a future in green energy.

Deep Rising, which premiered January 20 at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival, is a documentary that is as chilling as the ocean it seeks to protect. The film is a passionate exposé on the geo-political and often secretive business maneuvers that seek to exploit the Earth’s final frontier. *Deep Rising* is also an emotional reminder of the connection between a healthy ocean and life itself — on sea, land, and otherwise.

“It’s been a real journey,” director Matthieu Rytz said during a Q&A after the screening. “When I started, in my mind I was [just] doing a film about deep-sea mining, and I really didn’t know where we were going. . . But then I started opening up all this incredible deep-ocean footage, and I just needed to bring this to the screen. . . But there’s actually another layer on it.”

That third, more disturbing layer involves what Rytz calls the “brainwashing” of the public by industry interests.

“So it was a very challenging film to make in a way, because we had to intertwine all those different storylines,” Rytz says.

The documentary was a labor of love for actor Jason Momoa, who narrates *Deep Rising*.

“This is my passion. Acting is a job,” he says. “. . . This is what great storytelling is.”

Just as *Deep Rising* features the United Nations debating the worth of ocean treasures as a matter of public policy, a camera pans the strange universe of a cavernous ocean, exploring beautiful, gentle alien life, swimming with ineffable grace, yet also sadly vulnerable.

The “energy-hungry super organism” that is name-dropped in *Deep Rising* isn’t an ominous underwater metal crane. It is the developed world and an insatiable craving for energy. Is an unhealthy ocean the price we pay to power a “green” economy?

Deep Rising is a thought-provoking deep dive into man’s relationship with the sea.

“Look what we did to our own planet — mining just on the surface,” Momoa says. “. . . We’re in trouble.”

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