

Shextreme – the World's first women specific extreme sports film festival

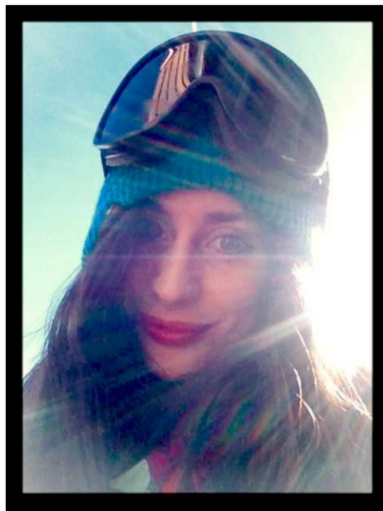
JAMIE EDWARDS × WEDNESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2015



Shextreme is the first Women's specific extreme sports film festival.

It's coming to the [Cube Microplex](#), Bristol on the 9th October at 8PM with inspirational films and talks. Tickets are [on sale now!](#)

[Monet](#) caught up with Shextreme founder Ruth to find out more.



Shextreme founder Ruth.

Monet: There's two weeks to go before Shextreme. Can you give us a little background on the team behind it and how the event was born?

Ruth: It was born out of a frustration of attending many mountain film festivals and realising often only 5% of the film line up featured women despite the audience being 50% men and 50% women. I decided to be the change I want to see so I've set up the world's first film festival dedicated to celebrating women in extreme sports.

"I decided to be the change I want to see"

Having recently completed a PhD in film practice and working in industry for clients including French Vogue, Discovery and Twentieth Century Fox, my background is in filmmaking and media production. In past few years, I've been lucky enough to be introduced to the awesome world of extreme sports. I love the sense of freedom and fun that comes with going climbing or surfing and have also fallen in love with mountain life having spent last Winter living and snowboarding in the Alps.

What can we expect at the first Shextreme?

The first Shextreme Film Festival will be a brilliant evening of watching inspiring films, lively discussions and supporting equality in extreme sports.



Emma Shoesmith.

Emma will be showcasing her new documentary 'Level' which explores the representation of women in extreme sports media.

And why did you choose Bristol?

We have some strong supporters of Shextreme Film Festival such as Women's Mountain Collective and www.chamonet.com in Chamomix, France. However, right now the festival is based in Bristol: officially voted the best and happiest city in the UK.

As a location, Bristol is a natural fit for our festival because of its people (Bristol is the hometown of Olympic medal winning snowboarder Jenny Jones) its independent creativity (from musicians Massive Attack to street artist Banksy) and its extreme sports community such as Bristol's active climbing community at centres like Bloc run by Steve Winslow: an influential advocate of women's climbing and another inspiring speaker at our festival.



Steve Winslow from Bloc Climbing Centre and Bristol Climbing Scene is a confirmed speaker for the panel discussion.

There's been a bit of an explosion of female led edits and documentaries in the last few years do you think women bring something profoundly different to the viewer?

Yes definitely. There are always brilliant exceptions to the rule. However having spoken to many male and female athletes on this topic, the general consensus is male-driven directed content focuses on physical feats with very fast edits whereas I find content directed by women really delves into the fascinating psychological insights on practising extreme sports. As a woman, I relate more to this kind of filmmaking which gives an honest insight into what's going through a woman's mind in getting to the top of the mountain over a flashy fast drone camera shot.

This is not just isolated to extreme sports films if you take into account Laura Mulvey's seminal text on the predominant male gaze in cinema. It's a collective effort to see real change in the representation of women in extreme sports media coverage.

Will there be a need for women specific content? Or do you hope its seamless across genders?

As a filmmaker, I find it's all about a person's story and this of course does not have to be gender-specific. However, as a woman practicing extreme sports, I feel there's little content out there I relate to that sincerely inspires me. There's a huge need for women specific content primarily because it's a pro-active way of improving equality in extreme sports media coverage.

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The festival will be screening work from Jen Randall (www.lightshedpictures.com)

Where do you see women's extreme sports in 5 years?

I'm an optimist at heart. I don't feel the need to look ahead five years to a greater future in order to envision exciting developments because they're already happening right now. With pioneering work from climber Jen Randall who's screening a brand new film at our festival, 583 film submissions for Shextreme Film Festival and successful nationwide campaigns such as 'This Girl Can' show we're ready for positive change right now not in five years time.

"please eschew the glossy model-like figures who have bizarre supernatural powers of keeping flawless make-up and bikinis in place while surfing"

What do you think riders, filmmakers, and companies can do to encourage more girls to take up adrenaline sports?

For filmmakers and companies: please eschew the glossy model-like figures who have bizarre supernatural powers of keeping flawless make-up and bikinis in place while surfing and instead go a little deeper by featuring real women practicing extreme sports. It makes the whole process feel far less daunting and more inclusive when you see real women in all their perfect imperfections going out of their comfort zone and going for it. One side note to designers and marketers at companies, I challenge you to push your creative boundaries beyond the pink / aztec prints / flowers paradigm.

For female riders, keep on keeping on. You have Shextreme Film Festival's full support and respect!

Shextreme is being held at the **Cube Microplex, Bristol on the 9th October at 8PM.**

Tickets are £7 in advance and available [here](#).



Rebecca Hughes is also speaking – she's a PR guru for professional female athletes and adventurers