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French filmmaker trying to locate Ed Ruscha's fake rock in the Mojave

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Ed Ruscha pictured at his solo exhibition at Gagosian Gallery in 2011. (Kirk McKoy / Los Angeles Times)

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In the 70s, Ed Ruscha hid a fake rock in the Mojave. A French filmmaker is trying to find it.

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Sometime in 1976, artist Ed Ruscha made a fake rock and then he put it out somewhere in the middle of the Mojave Desert. There it has sat ever since, its location unknown, it's existence practically forgotten by time. But French filmmaker Pierre Bismuth has gone on a hunt for the sculpture — known as "Rocky II" — and he's making a film about it.

"Where is Rocky II?", as his project is titled, is the story of his search for this obscure piece of art. Bismuth discovered it while watching an old BBC documentary on VHS tape.

And the whole thing looks like it's going to be as quirky as you might imagine: Bismuth was one of the screenwriters on director Michel Gondry's idiosyncratic 2004 memory-erasing flick "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" (for which he won the Oscar). He is also an artist.

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"Rocky II," his directorial debut, will combine elements of fiction and real life. And for the hunt, he employs a private detective who leads him on his interrogations of a staggering range of Southern California individuals — from desert rats to pot-smoking burnouts to Michael Govan, the director of the L.A. County Museum of Art.

Bismuth launched an Indiegogo campaign last week to raise $150,000 so that he can finish the film, which is scheduled to be released late this year. Judging by the trailer (seriously, click through and watch it) this looks like it's going to be divinely absurd. I'll be giving the good man my money.

If you want to know a little more about how the project came about, Christie Chu over at Artnet has a good interview with Bismuth.

Get on it, people. I want to know what this rock is cooking.

Find me on the Twitters @cmonstah.