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Helen Schumacher
Notes from the underground

Elliott Smith's live act worth it

Many things should be taken into consideration when deciding where to go to college. Everyone has their own prioritized list of qualifications that the school must have. I had spent my entire childhood in a small town in Montana, and when it came time to fill out college applications, I only filled out those that needed to be sent out-of-state. I absolutely refused to spend another four years in Montana.

In my hometown the closest thing to a cultural event was the rodeo. I desperately wanted to be able to see a concert once and a while. So I was thrilled when I ended up at the University, only two short hours away from Portland, where if I wanted to invest the money and the time I could see a performer every night.

After arriving here, the first show I saw was Elliott Smith. He played at the Roseland Theatre, and the band Grandaddy opened. It was amazing. It was exactly what I had been missing in Montana. I had never experienced anything like it before. I mean, I had been to concerts, but it had always been some huge band in an even bigger venue, like Sugar Ray in a football stadium. There was never much of a relationship between the performer and the audience. But that night at the Elliott Smith show, there was.

The entire night I stood toward the left of the stage, awestruck as people threw notes and cigarettes on stage and shouted for his attention. I remember one man, who, as a sign of his undying devotion to Smith, stood with his arm straight in the air and a slowly burning cigarette in his hand — a one-person candlelight vigil. Smith's album "Figure 8" had just been released, and his set was mostly comprised of songs from it. But Smith still played favorites like "Needle in the Hay," "Waltz #2 (xo)" and "Say Yes." For the next month, the only thing I could bring myself to listen to was Smith's song "Between the Bars."

That show set the standard by which all

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Adam Amato Photo Editor

One of many pieces of art on display during the Day of the Dead weekend.

Día de los Muertos honors loved ones

After Halloween, families in Mexico and around the world will honor death with celebrations

By **Natasha Chilingirian**
Pulse Reporter

On Friday, Americans will scare one another by dressing as ghosts and ghouls and walking through spooky haunted houses with the morbid thought of death in mind. On Saturday and Sunday, people in Mexico and around the world will honor death with festive traditions for the Day of the Dead, or en Español, "Día de los Muertos."

Día de los Muertos is an ancient Mexican holiday that has been integrated into the Americas and other parts of the world. It is a time when families set up their homes with offerings for loved ones who have passed away, visit and decorate cemeteries and enjoy special meals with family and friends.

Celebrated annually on Nov. 1 and Nov. 2, Día de los Muertos is the time when spirits are said to visit their living families. University Spanish instructor Bryan Moore said Mexicans view death as a continuation of life, which makes the Day of the Dead a joyous holiday instead of a morbid one.

"It is the most spiritual family event in Mexico," he said. "They put out a lot of effort to see family members and spend time with them. There are some solemn moments, but mostly

joyous ones."

Día de los Muertos dates back to the Aztecs, who would devote the ninth and tenth months of their calendar to honoring the dead. In 1521, during the Spanish Conquest, the Spanish integrated Aztec culture into the holiday.

Several weeks before the holiday, shops in Mexico fill with festive paraphernalia, including tissue paper cut-outs of skeletons (and other symbols of death) and wreaths and crosses adorned with paper and silk flowers. Families traditionally shop for these decorative items along with marigold flowers, candles and incense. They create altars covered with offerings to the returning spirit of a loved one. Such offerings can also include photos of the person and their favorite foods.

"Spirits like the scents of flowers and food," Oak Hill School Spanish teacher Armando Morales said. "The incense is used to welcome them."

Nov. 1 is dedicated to children and infants who passed away, and Nov. 2 is in remembrance of deceased adults. On the night of Oct. 31, the graves of children are adorned with brightly-colored flowers, toys and balloons. The following night, adult graves are spruced up with flowers, religious amulets and food offerings. Community members often spend all night at the cemetery having picnics, socializing and telling stories about the people buried there.

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"This terrifically smart and solid piece of filmmaking lets the former Weathermen, now in their 50s and older, speak into the camera and reveal a bit of their personal histories as well as what the peace movement meant to them."
—The Mirror, NEW YORK TIMES

7:20 & 9:20 Nightly
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