

CC SLAUGHTERS PRESENTS THE 5TH ANNUAL RED PARTY 2007

Retr0's 80s
Flashback



IT'S BACK
LIKE TOTALLY!

MUSIC REMIXED BY
DJ ALEX HOLLYWOOD

HOSTED BY
BOLIVIA CARMICHAELS

SATURDAY
2.10.07

NIGHTCLUB & LOUNGE
WWW.CCSLAUGHTERS.PDX.COM
\$5 COVER 9PM

GOT BEADS?

5 days of prizes
\$100 prize each night
Thurs • Fri • Sat • Sun

\$500 grand prize

awarded Feb. 15-20, 2007
grand prize winner will be crowned

Mr. Dixi Normus 2007!

with free cover to all events for 1 year

hosted by

Bolivia Carmichaels

music by

DJ Alex Hollywood

Doors 9PM

WHO WILL BE CROWNED
MR. DIXI NORMUS 2007?

5 DAYS OF PRIZES
\$100 PRIZE EACH NIGHT
THURS • FRI • SAT • SUN
\$500 GRAND PRIZE
AWARDED FEB. 15-20, 2007
GRAND PRIZE WINNER WILL BE CROWNED
MR. DIXI NORMUS 2007!
WITH FREE COVER TO ALL EVENTS FOR 1 YEAR

red model: Zdenek Mardi Gras Model: Rafael Verga

david petit/digital euphoria

Through a Lens Darkly

African-American filmmaker discusses 'the gay gaze'

Thomas Allen Harris says he's always been blessed by double vision—the ability to see both the reality in front of his eyes and the spiritual dimension that hides behind it.

The filmmaker—who was raised in New York City and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania—is coming to town this month to present two deeply personal documentaries about his time in Africa, “seen through a gay lens...the gay gaze...queering these issues that talk about homeland.”

Jim Radosta: What made you decide to put all of this footage from throughout your life into a film?

Thomas Allen Harris: I've actually been making films that featured me or my larger community since '91. The first feature documentary I made was called *Vintage: Families of Value*, and it's a look at three African-American families through the eyes of gay and lesbian siblings, including my brother [Lyle Ashton] and myself. In the late '80s he had just tested HIV-positive, and everyone at that point thought it was automatically a death sentence.

The second one is called...*That's My Face*. I went to Brazil kind of looking for a face that I had in a dream and then made this film about...my mother's journey when she took me and my brother to East Africa to live when we were kids. We were really kind of flamboyant and flaming boys, and it was totally accepted in Africa for us to be any way we wanted to be. There wasn't the kind of restriction we felt when we came back to the United States.

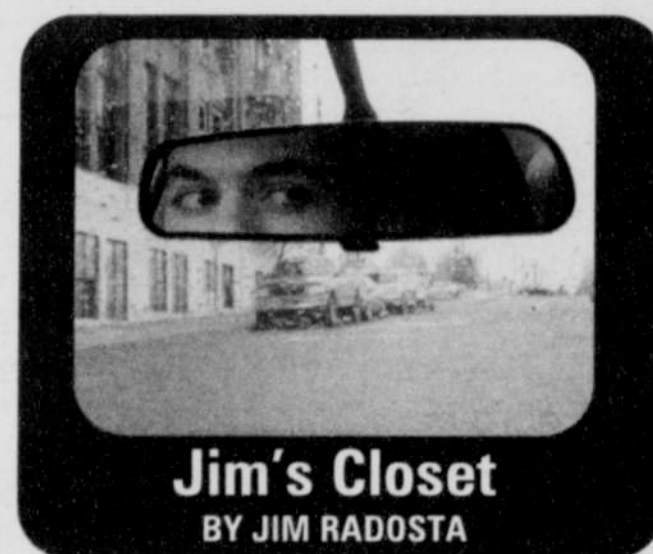
I was in the middle of finishing that...when my stepdad died. My mother married him in the '70s. We had a difficult relationship, and because of that, in part, I didn't visit South Africa when he and my mother moved there permanently in '95. I went to South Africa to say goodbye to him and support my mother and I realized, “Oh my God, this man—who I had rejected as a father since I was 9 years old, when he came into our lives—actually I love him.” I'd been in denial about how I felt about him. It goes against so much of the classic queer coming-out stories where the boy comes out and the father rejects him. In this case, there was this cultural clash between me and my dad. He was [an African National Congress] revolutionary and an exile, and I was this American kid who was gay. In some ways the new film [*The Twelve Disciples of Nelson Mandela*] is like a love letter to the man who raised me and my embrace of him, piercing the boundary of life and death.

JR: What was it like experiencing acceptance in Africa and then returning to the United States, where we're so far behind in terms of racism, as Hurricane Katrina recently exposed?

TAH: It's interesting that the media images of Africa have all been trying to show Africa as a completely impoverished state, decimated by AIDS. It's like this, “Aren't you glad that you're not there?” [*Laughs*] It's not like that! There's all these different classes. It's so urban, so contemporary. That's something I like to show in my films.

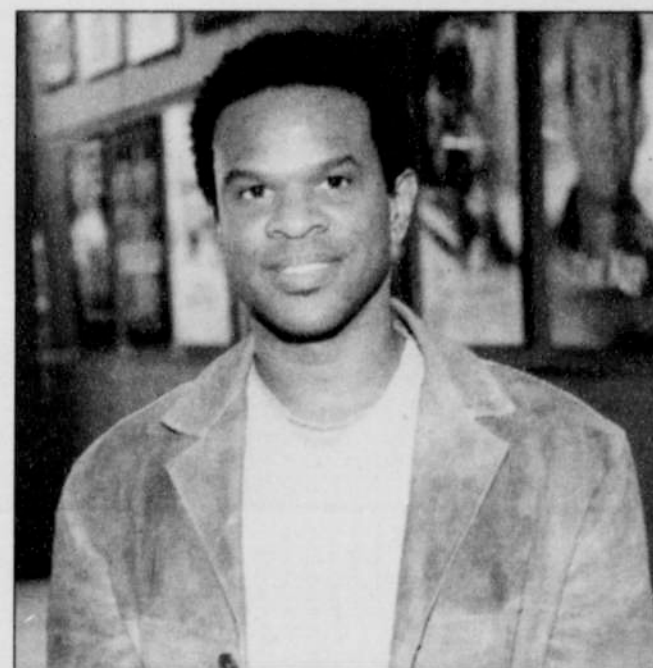
In terms of what Katrina showed, we're living in a class-based society here in America—an underclass made of poor whites and African Americans and Latinos overrepresented. We gave money to the victims of the tidal wave, but we've completely lost interest in Katrina. It's so American. We have so far to go to unite us as a country.

In South Africa you had a peaceful revolution,



Jim's Closet
BY JIM RADOSTA

and you had the Truth and Reconciliation [Commission], coming together where people can air their grievances. We never had that after slavery. It's very different than, say, the way in which the Holocaust is being treated. There's museums where we can really exorcise these demons that are part of the psyche of the people.



Thomas Allen Harris lives in Warwick, N.Y., with his partner of 10 years, writer/producer Don Perry.

JR: Are you working on any other projects right now?

TAH: I am working on a film...called *Through a Lens Darkly: Black Photographers and the Emergence of a People*, and it's basically looking at the way in which African-American photographers used photography—from its birth in the 1840s, when most African Americans were enslaved—as a tool for social change to fight the injustices of slavery and the aftermath in terms of Jim Crow and lynching.

I'm working on a film about this whole [“down low”] issue. It's kind of a sex comedy that talks about all this fluid fluidity and sexuality among this group of people who come together through both sex and also through blood. I'm working on another film about a West African woman who comes to New York looking for her brother who disappeared here. **JO**

The 17th annual CASCADE FESTIVAL OF AFRICAN FILMS screens *The Twelve Disciples of Nelson Mandela* at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 15 in Room 104 of the Moriarty Building on Portland Community College's Cascade Campus, 705 N. Killingsworth St., and *That's My Face* at noon Feb. 16 in Portland State University's Smith Memorial Student Ballroom, 1825 S.W. Broadway. For a complete schedule visit www.africanfilmfestival.org.

Arts and Culture Editor JIM RADOSTA needs your feedback. Write to jim@justout.com.