

Film brings surfing to the easy chair

Elizabeth Tobey
The Clackamas Print

Watching "Riding Giants" is a chance to live vicariously as a big wave surfer; you're on the edge of the seat in nervous anticipation as the story's best take on bigger and bigger waves.

The film, recently released on DVD, was the opening night selection for the 2004 Sundance Film Festival. It's easy to see why.

Like his earlier film, "Dogtown and the Z-Boys," did for skateboarding, Director Stacy Peralta's "Riding Giants" is a captivating and entertaining history of surfing.

Beginning with an animated section entitled "1000 Years of Surfing in Two Minutes or Less," the film quickly and comically shows surfing, beginning with its Polynesian roots, to suppression from Christian missionaries, its comeback and popularity in the 20th century.

From there the movie comes

closer to the present and divides into three sections as it focuses on individual people, the innovators of big wave surfing.

The first is Greg Noll, nicknamed "The Bull" for his relentless determination in Hawaii's big surf in the 1950s and his showy surfing style.

Next is Jeff Clark, the frontiersman who brought surfing to California after he discovered the immense waves of the dangerous, chilling Mavericks Beach near San Francisco and rode them alone for 15 years.

Chapter three is dedicated to Laird Hamilton, perhaps the best big-wave rider in history. He pioneered tow-in surfing, allowing surfers to reach speeds around 35 mph as they enter the lineup and catch waves as high as eight-story buildings.

Because the waves in this video keep getting larger, and the surfers face greater challenges, the adrenaline stays and the excitement builds throughout the film.

There are interviews with Noll,



Internet Photo

"Riding Giants" does for surfing what "Dogtown and the Z-boys" did for skateboarding. Above, a group of surfers waits quietly for the first great wave of the day.

Clark and Hamilton themselves, as well as surf experts and storytellers.

The casual, contemporary interviews are the most entertain-

ing part of the film. Hearing stories straight from the surfers, full of slang and surf jargon, provides plenty of laughable material.

They capture the feel of the

time and the attitude and rebelliousness of the people who were part of it.

Certainly the best documentary I've seen in a long time.

Portland Art Museum temporary home to native art



Photo courtesy of Portland Art Museum

Pre-contact figurine made of basalt.

Jeff Sorensen
The Clackamas Print

The Portland Art Museum is now providing temporary residence to roughly 200 artifacts originally created by the Native Americans of the northwest's own Columbia River Gorge, and those 300-year-old shirts and purses never looked so good.

The pieces themselves are all dated anywhere from A.D. 1000 to 1700. Most were collected from the late 19th to the early 20th century and, according to the museum's website, this is the first time many items have been displayed in view of the public.

First in line is a collection of anthropomorphic figures, some privately owned or on loan from other museums. What's amazing is how each one keeps its own individuality when the same lines and shapes are used on many of the figures. One private collection piece is carved of basalt, dated "Pre-contact," and keeps a consistent, nearly perfect curve down the spine of the figure.

What follows is anything from a baby's crib with images of animals carved into every piece of wood (including the rockers), to a collection of very intricately woven baskets, women's bags, colorfully beaded ceremonial regalia and, of course, decorative dinnerware.

The only pieces of the exhibit that left a little to be desired were the plaques that accompanied most of the

individual artifacts. There were a few bits of general information placed around groups of shirts or horse saddles or tools with elaborately carved handles, but most of it was vague at best and those who are as interested in the history of the culture as the art itself will probably find themselves looking for answers in the wrong museum.

Overall, the Portland Art Museum has put together an attractive collection of authentic Native American Art dating back hundreds, even thousands, of years. Even though it's clear their interest is more in the visual intrigue of the pieces rather than the historical significance, the art itself is attractive enough that the museum need not be ashamed of that fact.

"The People of the River" exhibit will be showing through May 29. The museum is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Thursday and Friday, and noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Usual entrance fees apply: \$10 for adults, \$6 for kids (four to 17), and \$9 for students and seniors.

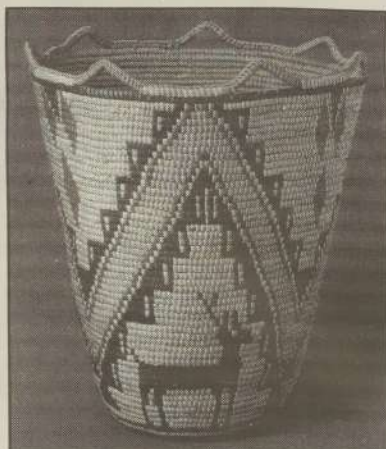


Photo courtesy of Portland Art Museum

A coiled basket, ca. 1900.

Play pokes fun at Mexican-American history, without drugs

Christa Danielson
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To some, the history between Mexico and America is fairly controversial. "The True History of Coca-Cola in Mexico" takes a comical jab at this history, and the audience even manages to learn something in the end.

This comedy takes place at the Miracle Theater on the east side of town. The main characters are Portland artists Pat and Aldo who want to make a film, so they turn to each other for help and end up making a documentary of Coca-Cola in Mexico.

As you all may know, Coca-Cola originally got its name due to the fact that cocoa leaf was in the ingredients; in this play, however, that is not the main focus. This play reminded me of watching the History Channel. While the actors were working up a sweat running all over the stage, I was working on trying to get myself warmed up to the fact this play was not going to be about the drug cocaine. We all know Coca-Cola came from cocaine, but I wanted to know when, where, what, and how—but no, that was not it. After I realized this play was about a documentary done by two radical artists,

I started to laugh. I don't know if it was the fact that Pat was secretly in love with Aldo or because the soundtrack included Ricky Martin tunes.

From the get-go, Pat and Aldo are off to Mexico. Upon arrival, they start changing characters and props constantly, whether or not the audience could see, which I found annoying. Just when a scene began to be funny, Pat and Aldo would go offstage and this lady would come out and change the scene. The lady also happened to be in the play as a salsa dancer and a soldier. Though her parts in the play were sassy and funny, to see her changing the scenes was a little confusing.

So the play goes back and forth between Aldo and Pat making their documentary and acknowledging how corporate America is screwing over Mexico, such as when Pat and Aldo meet a family whose land is being bought by the government for dirt cheap and they are forced to sell. Really, there are a lot of facts behind this play so you do learn a lot about the history Mexico and America, but in a comical way. If you're interested in a little history lesson on how we treat Mexico, with a twist of Coca-Cola advertisement, it is worth the laugh. But if you are want learn more about cocaine, you're better off renting "Robo Cop."

This play will be running through Feb. 26 at the Miracle Theater located at 525 SE Stark. The show starts at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Tickets are available at (503) 720-0397 or the door.



Internet Photo

Pat and Aldo show their disdain for Coca-Cola and the America it represents. "True History" is a little annoying, but funny.

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