



JAMES CHASSE AT HIS PORTLAND GROUP HOME

MENTAL ILLNESS AND THE POLICE

Alien Boy screens at the 4th annual Cinema Pacific Film Festival

Cinema Pacific, the annual festival featuring films from Pacific-bordering countries, is in full swing, and like any good film festival there is a dizzying array of options for movie buffs and casual cinemagoers alike to choose from. This year's focus will be on films and filmmakers from Singapore, Mexico and the U.S. West Coast.

"It's a yearlong process," Cinema Pacific Director Richard Herskowitz says. "This is a very curated festival." Herskowitz spends the year leading up to Cinema Pacific attending other film festivals, such as Sundance and Toronto, and combing through programs to find films he wants to bring to Eugene. He came home with a bounty: *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada* directed by Tommy Lee Jones and written by Guillermo Arriaga (*21 Grams*, *Babel*), *Singapore Dreaming* by Colin Goh and Yen Yen Woo and the animations and song accompaniment of San Francisco filmmaker Jerney Rourke, to name a few.

Herskowitz didn't have to go far to find one of this year's most poignant films: *Alien Boy: The Life and Death of James Chasse*, cosponsored by the Good Works Film Festival. The film, directed by Brian Lindstrom, premiered in February at the Portland International Film Festival, and Herskowitz says there was "an incredible response from the audience."

Alien Boy unravels the myths and misinformation that swallowed up the legacy of Portlander James Chasse, who died at the age of 42 in September 2006, while in the custody of the Portland Police Department. Three police officers (Chris Humphreys, Kyle Nice and Bret Barton) found Chasse, who had schizophrenia, urinating on the street in Portland and asked him to stop. When Chasse looked like he was going to flee, the officers tackled, beat and Tased him; Chasse was left lying in the street with 26 broken bones, drifting in and out of consciousness, his breathing stopping and starting, while the police sent the medics at the scene away, not informing them of the extent of physical trauma inflicted, and claiming that they were bringing him to jail because they had criminal charges against him. As the documentary reveals, James Chasse had a clean record. He died on the way to the hospital in the back of a police car that night.

The documentary elegantly and intimately weaves together the span of Chasse's life — his creative childhood, the onset of mental illness in adolescence, his role in Portland's DIY punk scene in the late '70s, his adult struggle with and management of schizophrenia — with the details of the fatal September night and its aftermath. Through interviews with his parents and friends, a tender, imaginative and thoughtful-yet-tormented man is formed. And through countless interviews with witnesses at the crime scene, a picture is painted of a slight (he was 5 feet 9 inches tall and 145 pounds), frightened man with mental illness — a very different profile than the potentially dangerous crack addict with a criminal record that Humphreys, Nice and Barton pegged him as. At one point, the officers enter into evidence a sandwich baggie filled with breadcrumbs that they initially claimed was crack.

And while the catalyst for the film is police brutality, *Alien Boy* is as much about society's misconceptions and mishandling of mental illness as it is about police corruption. One witness, playwright and director Randall Stuart, remembers thinking at the crime scene, "Are they going to throw him away?" The question not only reflects the indifference of the police officers that night, but also the indifference of a society to those who need the most help. ■

Alien Boy screens at 6:30 pm and 9:15 pm Saturday, April 20, at the Bijou with filmmaker Brian Lindstrom. For Cinema Pacific Film Festival's full line up, visit cinemapacific.uoregon.edu

	4/18 THU	for April 18 - 25	4/19 FRI	4/20 SAT	4/21 SUN	4/22 MON	4/23 TUE	4/24 WED	4/25 THU
		SPACE, LAND AND TIME: UNDERGROUND ADVENTURES WITH ANT FARM presented in coordination with the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art's West of Center Exhibit	7:00 w/filmmaker Q+A	6:00	12:10 6:00	6:45 8:45	6:45 8:45	6:45 8:45	
3:45	QUARTET	Final Week!	2:10	3:00	3:00	3:00 5:15	3:00 5:15	3:00 5:15	3:00 5:15
4:45 7:25	Nominated for Best Foreign Film NO	Final Week!	9:30	8:00	6:30 8:00	4:00 7:45	4:00 7:45	4:00 7:45	4:00 7:45
	locally-produced independent film KIND BUD \$3			10:30pm					
CINEMA PACIFIC FILM FESTIVAL for tickets and show info please visit cinemapacific.uoregon.edu no bijou passes accepted for CPFF screenings					COMING SOON: DISORIENT ASIAN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL REAR WINDOW (1954) THE COMPANY YOU KEEP ROOM 237				

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