



Submitted photos
Top: A mysterious historic marker. A lost diary. The documentary “Voyagers Without Trace” is a treasure hunt to uncover what happened to three French adventurers — newlyweds Genevieve and Bernard de Colmont and their friend, Antoine de Seynes — who were the first to kayak the Colorado and Green rivers in 1938. The film will be screened twice during the Astoria International Film Festival.

Above: Genevieve de Colmont shoots film footage in 1938 during her adventure kayaking down the Colorado and Green rivers with her husband and their friend. The French trio’s adventure is retraced in the new documentary “Voyagers Without Trace” by Northwest filmmaker Ian McCluskey.

Story by CATE GABLE

Roll'em!

The ninth annual Astoria International Film Festival will light up the Liberty Theater screen Oct. 16, 17 & 18

Ron Craig, founder and executive director of the Astoria International Film Festival, now in its ninth year, says that his motivation is his passion for film. This is obvious when you talk to him. He is bursting at the seams with energy and enthusiasm both for Astoria and the films he is showcasing in this year’s festival, taking place Oct. 16, 17 and 18 at the Liberty Theater.

Walking into History

“There are two reasons, really, for the festival,” says Craig. “One is that when you walk into Astoria you’re walking into a history book — the Native American tribes, the Columbia River, the Pacific Ocean, Lewis and Clark — all of that. And our Northwest corner of Oregon didn’t have a festival to showcase important films. So for me, it was almost a spiritual link to bring films here. There is all this history and geography — think of all that energy!

“And the second reason is that, as a minority, I know that

there are so many whose stories are not being told — women, Native Americans, any minority,” says Craig, who is black. “They haven’t had a voice for their stories, and I saw that as an opportunity to tell them and show them.”

Craig is a documentary filmmaker himself and because he has lots of friends in the film industry, he knows how difficult it is to get a showcase for smaller independent films. Craig taught one semester of film at Portland State University — he lives part-time in Astoria, part-time in Portland, and “as much time as I can get, in Paris, France” — so he knows first-hand where-of he speaks.

“Teaching film gave me an opportunity to apply my philosophy,” he says. “It’s empowering when you tell someone’s history in film, when you give someone back their story, and it’s empowering for film goes too.”

Global Community

Craig emphasizes that he wanted the festival to be international, and he is as good as his vision. This year’s schedule features many films from other countries (a complete schedule

with film synopses is here: <http://astoriainternationalfilmfestival.com/>), and we’re not talking B-list obscure cinema. The slate of films Craig has gathered together is an impressive group of top-notch celluloid. (Can we still say that in the digital age?)

Wim Wender’s documentary “Salt of the Earth” focuses on the Brazilian photographer Sebastiao Salgado, long recognized as one of the camera’s great artists. This PG-13 film, which competed in the 2014 Cannes Film Festival and was nominated for Best Documentary at the 2015 Academy Awards, is narrated by Salgado’s son Juliano. The images are stunning on the big screen.

In a fascinating journey down the West’s own Colorado River, “Voyagers Without Trace” (Les Voyageurs Sans Trace), directed by Northwest filmmaker Ian McCluskey recounts the 1938 wild west as experienced by three French adventurers: newlyweds Genevieve and Bernard de Colmont and their friend, Antoine de Seynes. They traveled from France to be the first to kayak down both the Green and Colorado Rivers. In fact, Genevieve was the first woman to kayak the Colorado.

“This film captures a time of transition between the old west and the contemporary west that was developing in the middle of the last century,” Craig says. McCluskey, who stumbled across

the trio’s 16 mm color footage, tracks the kayakers down the rivers and back to their homes in Europe. “Voyagers Without Trace” will make its West Coast premiere at the festival and be screened twice: both Friday and Sunday. The filmmaker will be available after the showing for a special question-and-answer session. (McCluskey’s documentary “Eloquent Nude: The Love and Legacy of Edward Weston & Charis Wilson” was an Audience Award Winner at the 2008 festival.)

The “wickedly hilarious and delightfully deranged” Argentine film “Wild Tales” was the Portland International Film Festival’s 2015 opening night celebration film. “Wild Tales,” which was nominated for the 2015 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, includes six thematically linked shorts on the topic of social grievances gone wrong.

“Dinosaur 13,” directed by Todd Miller, documents what remains of the world’s largest, most complete Tyrannosaurus rex skeleton, unearthed in 1990 — and the battle for ownership of it. The film’s world premiere was an opening night special at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival.

“Finding Vivian Maier” captures the amazing story of a French nanny whose stash of magnificent street photos were left after her death in a storage locker, only to be found by chance by the film’s co-director John Maloof after he won a storage-clear-

ing auction. The film includes interviews with the people in her life “who thought they knew her” before Maloof began to print up her brilliant black and white images. Or how about “Ingrid Bergman: In Her Own Words”? This Swedish documentary compiles films reflecting Bergman’s personal life taken from Super-8 shots of her friends and family.

Incredible Support

These are only a few of the treasures that Craig has assembled for this year’s festival. He is bringing films that have made it big in L.A. or New York or Europe right into our own backyard. “Having done this for nine years,” he says, “my goal is really to build our festival into a significant destination for film in the Northwest. I want people to come here and see the beauty and amazing history that we all know is here.”

Ticket prices are extremely reasonable given the usual cost of cinema these days. At \$5 per film or a ticket of \$40, which gives you access to all the films in the festival, this has to be one of the best entertainment values on the North Coast. “The people in Astoria are incredibly supportive of what we do here,” says Craig. “That’s part of the equation for why this thing works.”

See you at the movies!

Astoria International Film Festival

www.goaiff.com

All film screenings take place in the Liberty Theater

1203 Commercial St., Astoria

503-325-5922

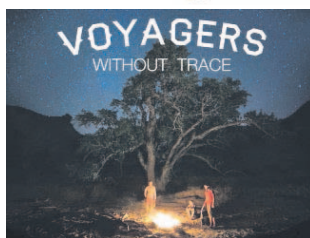
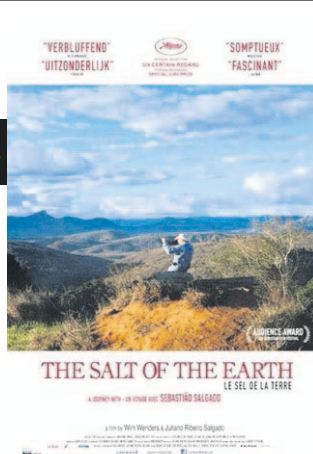
\$5

Schedule

Friday,
Oct. 16

5:15 p.m.

Right: 2014 French-Brazilian documentary “The Salt of the Earth” follows the career of photographer Sebastiao Salgado.



7:15 p.m.

Left: The documentary “Voyagers Without Trace” follows the journey of three French adventurers.

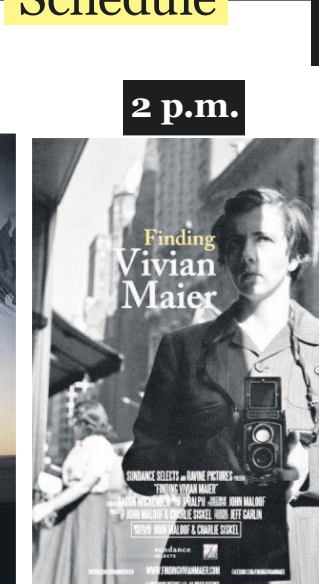


8:45 p.m.

Above: “Relatos Salvajes” or “Wild Tales” is an Argentina anthology film of six stand-alone short stories about violence and vengeance.



“Dinosaur 13” documents the discovery of the largest, most complete Tyrannosaurus Rex skeleton ever found — and the battle to possess it.



Nominated for Best Documentary at the 2015 Academy Awards, “Finding Vivian Maier” tells the story of a nanny — who is also an amazing photographer.



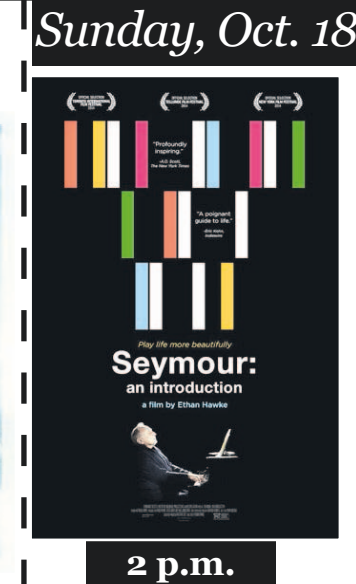
Swedish documentary “Ingrid Bergman: In Her Own Words” appears at the Astoria International Film Festival only 11 days after its North American premiere in New York City.



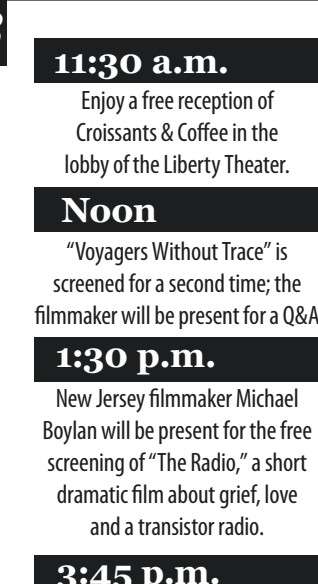
“Black Road,” directed by Northwest filmmaker Gary Lundgren, will have its world premiere in Beverly Hills, California on Oct. 14 before traveling to Astoria Oct. 17. The film, set in 2029, tells the story of a cyborg drifter risking his life to protect a woman from her ex in a lawless coastal town after Oregon secedes from the Union.



Academy Award winner Juliette Binoche, Kristen Stewart and Chloë Grace Moretz deliver career-defining performances in this film about being an actress in a youth-obsessed industry.



The film festival selected this documentary, “Seymour (Bernstein): An Introduction,” as a tribute to the achievements of the Astoria Music Festival.



Watch the classic 1942 romantic drama “Casablanca,” starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman.