

PROJECTING THE HUMAN SPIRIT

The 11th annual **Astoria International Film Festival** — Oct. 20-22 at the Liberty Theatre — features foreign films, American classics, documentaries and regional filmmakers' shorts

By **KATHERINE LACAZE**
FOR COAST WEEKEND

Ron Craig, the executive director and founder of the Astoria International Film Festival, feels such a strong connection to the city of Paris he believes he might have walked its backstreets in a past life. His affinity for the place led to a love of cinema that motivates him to this day.

“For me, it’s part of my roots,” he said of the French capital, which he visits habitually.

Craig’s fondness for France as the birthplace of cinema and a creative hub of artists from around the world endows the upcoming festival — taking place Friday through Sunday, Oct. 20 through 22, at the Liberty Theatre — with a multicultural richness. And his affection for the Pacific Northwest and its homegrown talent gives the annual event a local flair.

A self-described “black Bohemian” from Portland who has found success as a filmmaker and author — he bears his talent and accomplishments humbly — Craig feels education is an important part of what he can contribute to the region’s culture.

Now in its 11th year, the film festival is a “vehicle to deliver that education,” he said.

Viewers can check out foreign films, American classics, documentaries and shorts created by regional filmmakers, all threaded together by a theme: “The Human Spirit.”

SHOWTIMES

FRIDAY, OCT. 20

5 to 6:40 p.m. **A Man Called Ove**

7 to 8:30 p.m. **Whiplash**

8:45 to 10:30 p.m. **Dina**

SATURDAY, OCT. 21

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. **POW: Portland Oregon Women’s Film Festival** (shorts)

1:15 to 2:45 p.m. **I Am Not Your Negro**

3 to 4 p.m. Forum: **I Am Not Your Negro**

4:30 to 6:15 p.m. **Neither Wolf Nor Dog**

6:30 to 7:45 p.m. **America’s First Foodie, The Noble Spirit**

8 to 9:30 p.m. **A Tribute to James Beard** (at Baked Alaska)

SUNDAY, OCT. 22

11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. **Croissants & Coffee**

12:30 to 3:30 p.m. **Neither Wolf Nor Dog**

4:20 to 5:50 p.m. **The Defiant Ones**



‘I Am Not Your Negro’

Perhaps the most important aspect of the film festival is promoting social



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Ron Craig, the founder of the Astoria International Film Festival, poses with a statue of Sacagawea at Fort Clatsop in the fall of 2016. Craig incorporates local history and lesser-known historical figures as prominent features of the festival.

consciousness — bringing awareness to topics that are sensitive, controversial or ignored.

“I always felt I wanted people to scratch their heads going out of the door after seeing a film,” Craig said. “To be able to do that is really important.”

This year’s festival will feature “I Am Not Your Negro,” a 2016 documentary based on an unfinished manuscript by American writer and social critic James Baldwin.