

MAORI CULTURE AND CLAY ART

Visiting artists teach workshops, honor indigenous neighbors

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
FOR COAST WEEKEND

Local ceramicist and instructor Richard Rowland is again inviting Maori “Muddies” across the Pacific Ocean next month to share their culture and clay art with the North Coast.

The invite is also a chance for the indigenous artists to name Rowland’s newly constructed anagama kiln to honor two of their fallen members.

Nga Kaihanga Uku, founded in 1986, is the national Maori clay workers’ association in Aotearoa, the Maori name for New Zealand. Colleen Waata Ulrich and Manos Nathan, two of the association’s five founding members, visited Rowland and his famous anagama Astoria Dragon Kiln during a tour of the Pacific Northwest more than a decade ago.

“I immediately clicked with them,” Rowland said of Ulrich and Nathan.

Rowland, a native Hawaiian, traveled to New Zealand in the early 2010s for a global gathering of indigenous artists. The exchange continued 2012 and 2015, when a contingent of Maori artists, including Ulrich and Nathan, visited Astoria for a special exhibit, workshop and other cultural events. Shortly after they returned to New Zealand, Ulrich and Nathan died within weeks of each other.

The artists will return next month for a series of cultural and arts events spread over three weeks. The artists will start their visit with a formal greeting by the Chinook Nation, a mark of respect to the local indigenous group.

Clatsop Community College’s ceramics studio will host the Maoris for two days of clay working workshops from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 3 and 4. The workshops are free to high school and college students, and open to the public for \$20. From 1 to 4 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 17, the Maoris will present in the college’s art building about their work and home in Aotearoa.

Continued on Page 16



EDWARD STRATTON PHOTO

Richard Rowland’s newly constructed anagama kiln will be named by visiting Maori clay artists.

COURTESY CLATSOP COMMUNITY COLLEGE
‘Kaitiaki,’ by Baye Riddell.



EDWARD STRATTON PHOTO

Faded photos of Maori clay artists Colleen Waata Ulrich, top, and Manos Nathan grace a post at Richard Rowland’s original Astoria Dragon Kiln.