



Art in all colors

It's an idea that took off after a Pan-Asian retreat put together by community leaders and organizers. But in reality, Colored Pencils Art and Culture Night has been incubating for some time in the heart and mind of creator Nim Xuto, a Portland artist originally from Thailand.

The inaugural event brought together artists and performers from newcomer communities all over Portland — Arabs, Cambodians, Palestinians, West Africans, Ukrainians, Nepalese, Mexicans, and Samoans. People proud to share the gifts of culture and talent, all showcased in one event in newcomer Portland's living room: the Center for Intercultural Organizing (CIO).

People from the community came out in droves to the first event last month. It was an eclectic mix of people gathered in one room to celebrate their cultures, and celebrate America. We heard singing from a Khmer Rouge survivor, a Nepali student, a choir of refugee children from Burma, and an Iraqi doctor. A local high school student performed a mixture of classical and Bollywood dance. There was lyrical slam poetry from a Samoan and a Somali in addition to essay readings from a Ukrainian physicist and a Polish writer.

For that night, one corner of Portland had a different vibe. Expression was not filtered to conform to the expectations of the mainstream. There were no martial arts demonstrations or cute little girls waving gigantic fans. Colored Pencils went beyond, far beyond, the clichés of culture that have contained much of our artistic expression into neat little origami boxes.

Colored Pencils was raw and cosmopolitan, yet unpretentious. It wasn't trying to be hip or cool, nor promote a fusion/multicultural porridge that no one would dare swallow.

Seattle Iese's spoken-word performance provided a glimpse into the experiences of colonized Pacific Islanders upon first contact with Europeans. Kilong Ung's reading from his upcoming book, *Golden Leaf: A Khmer Rouge Genocide Survivor*, was a heartfelt

unveiling of the horrors suffered by a young boy at the hands of the Khmer Rouge. The Karen community youth choir, newcomers from Burma, shared their beautiful rendition of faith songs, performed in English and in their native Burmese. Ronault L.S. Catalani (known by most as Polo), *The Asian Reporter's* very own, served as the master of ceremonies for the culture show.

The aroma of curry filled the room. Food was provided by a multiracial Indonesian family that runs a food cart in north Portland. The art show included watercolors created by day laborers, perhaps the most marginalized group of people in our country today. It goes to show even the most "unlikely" artists can bring so much raw creativity and expression of beauty.

At the end of the night, organizers had an envelope full of dollar bills folded in all ways, and some change. They collected \$170 from people attending the three-hour event for the Community Relief Fund, an alliance that includes the United Way, the Oregon Food Bank, and community action programs in the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area. The Colored Pencils folks were proud to do even just a little for people in our community who are struggling to meet basic needs:

food, rent, and utilities. One hundred percent of the monies raised at the event will go to agencies helping people in the community, including agencies that help communities of color: the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, Self Enhancement Inc., the Native American Youth and Family Center, the Native American Rehabilitation Association of the Northwest, and the Cowlitz Indian Tribe.

The arts and culture exposition will be held each last Friday of the month. The next Colored Pencils Art and Culture Night is scheduled for March 27 at CIO, located at 700 N. Killingsworth Street in Portland. The art reception starts at 5:30pm and open mic performances begin at 7:00pm. The

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(Photos/Charles C. King, courtesy of Colored Pencils Art and Culture Night)

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admission fee of \$3.00 helps pay for the venue, art exhibit materials, and equipment rentals.

Come early, come hungry, and come with your checkbook. Local newcomer artists need your support. And consider making a donation to the Community Relief Fund.

For information about Colored Pencils Art and Culture Nights, visit <www.coloredpencilsart.com>. To learn more about the Community Relief Fund, visit <www.give10tell10.org>.

Portland's war on graffiti nets results

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were “FEVER” tagger Ethan Moreschi, “SOIL” tagger Terrence Melson, and “GOAM” tagger Daniel Zatarien.

“Without a strong collaborative effort on the part of the Multnomah County District Attorney’s office and the follow up by officer Matt Miller and others in the police bureau, we could not have achieved these kind of results in so many cases,” said Marcia Dennis, graffiti abatement coordinator. “We hope the

community will realize how much time and effort has gone towards holding people accountable for this criminal activity.”

In our continuing efforts to keep Portland a livable and safe environment for all residents, the Graffiti Abatement Program encourages everyone to report, document, and remove graffiti as soon as it appears. Graffiti can be reported by calling the graffiti hotline at (503) 823-4824 or visiting <www.portlandonline.com/oni>.

Low birthrates spell doom for world's rarest rhino

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As a result, an average of one calf is born every year — near to the number of animals dying, and four times fewer than would be needed to sustain a healthy, growing rhino population, he and others say.

Williams said the park may have reached the maximum number of rhinos it can support and the animals may also be struggling to compete for scarce resources with growing populations of

wild cattle.

The government is working with conservation groups to find a suitable second site for the Javan rhinos, which would help protect them from catastrophic events such as disease or natural disasters, Williams said.

Researchers say a smaller population of Javan rhinos in Vietnam does not appear to be breeding anymore.

To learn more, visit the International Rhino Foundation’s website at <www.rhinos-irf.org>.