

FEATURES

Ansel Adams exhibit presents classic, breathtaking images

BY EMILY SARKISSIAN
Staff Reporter



The Tetons and the Snake River, Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming, 1942. Photograph by Ansel Adams. Trustees of the Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust. Collection Center for Creative Photography, the University of Arizona.

The Ansel Adams exhibition currently at the Asheville Art Museum displays images that almost pop off the paper and out of the frame. Adams, one of America's premier photographers, mainly focused on the national parks of the west, specifically Yosemite. The 79 images in his exhibit come from the Classic Images: From the Ansel Adams Archive collection.

"This exhibit is all hand-picked (by Adams)," said Hayden Wilson, museum employee. "They show his strongest work."

Adams picked some of his most famous prints for the exhibit, including "Monolith, The Face of the Half-Dome," and "Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico." Both of these images are printed several times in different ways that highlight the variations that occur in printing an image from its original negative.

"It shows the progression and his technique shifting and technology changing, as well," said Wilson.

"Monolith, The Face of the Half-Dome," shot in 1927 and printed in 1927, 1928, 1939, 1959 and once again between 1972 and 1975. The biggest change is from the 1928 printing to the 1939 printing. The later print has fewer gray tones

and much more contrast. Every reproduction of the negative turned out a very different print.

Ansel Adams describes this in terms of a relationship to music.

"The negative is comparable to the composers score and the print to its performance," said Adams in a quote displayed on the museum wall. "Each performance differs in subtle ways."

Adams' work is famous for its clarity and contrast. In nearly all of the images a tiny flower in a field is as vivid as a large rock. All the nuances of a mountainside are noticeable and everything is in focus. He captured every detail.

"I'm impressed how each one is so absolutely crisp," said Cyndy Walker, nature photographer. "I don't understand how he worked his shutter and aperture to make them so sharp."

Part of the intrigue of Ansel Adams is the innovation he used for his time and place.

"For his time, for what he was doing, he invented a whole style of photography that, I think, wasn't happening then," said Marcela Ashburn, senior interdisciplinary studies major. "That's why it was such a big

deal."

The exhibit, a hit for the Asheville Art Museum, started on July 9th and attendance to see the photographs still soars.

The dim lights on the third floor of the museum make the room feel somewhat subdued, but the lights have to be so low to avoid the fading of the photographs.

"We've had a lot of people come in," said Wilson. "We've been having in the hundreds, compared to in the tens."

Adams' influence reaches not

only photography, but the conservation arena, as well. He was a long time board member of the Sierra Club, and appointed to President Johnson's environmental task force.

"I think his commitment to being outdoors and his love of nature and persistence was pretty amazing," said Ashburn. "He would literally sit with a camera on a tripod, for hours in the exact same location, waiting for the light to change. He would take a series of photos while the light was changing to get the perfect shot. So, he obviously loved being outside."

Adams' respect for nature gives his images a great deal of relevance and significance. As beautiful as the places he shot appear, they constantly change and may even disappear.

"For the young and for the future, it will define something of great value from a former time, now lost, that must be retrieved and reformed in different terms," said John Zarkowski, author of the Ansel Adams book, "Classic Images."

The captured images give the impression that is, one can only imagine, exactly the image before Adams' eyes.

"He spent most of his time in the national parks," said Erich Melville, museum employee and senior political science major.

All the photos at the exhibition are silver gelatin prints, though Adams did produce some color photography.

"All are black and white prints, which is pretty much what he was known for," said Wilson. "But, he did about 3000 color prints."

The Asheville Art Museum is located at 2 South Pack Square, Pack Place downtown.

The Ansel Adams exhibit runs through Oct. 24.

Admission \$5 for students, \$6 for adults.

review

Sharks attack! Kind of...

BY MARIBETH KISER
Staff Reporter

If you're looking for this season's shark movie, look no further than "Open Water," but don't be surprised if you want your money back. Shark lovers will benefit more staying home and tuning in to the Discovery Channel's "Shark Week."

"Open Water" brought in anticipated hype after its success at Robert Redford's Sundance Film Festival, becoming a surprising hit at the box office.

"Two ladies came up to me at the box office after the movie and said 'Well this is the worst movie we've seen, it wasn't worth our time,'" said Jason Follett, an employee at Carmike Cinema in Asheville. "The scenery was really nice, painting a picture of people going to the island to escape their problems, it was awesome in that sense."

Produced on a low budget of \$130,000, "Open Water" brought in \$23 million since its release in early August.

"I want my money back," said Scott Morehead, a recent UNCA graduate.

The basic premise of the film involves certified divers, Daniel and Susan, who charter a boat for a short scuba dive, only to surface to find that boat had left them behind, stranded in the middle of shark infested waters.

"Personally, I wouldn't see it again, because there was no point to the movie," said Follett.

For the most part, "Open Water's" storyline keeps the couple drifting along the current to fight off jelly fish and hungry sharks. Not to mention battling dehydration, starvation and over exposure to the sun, making it hard to stay coherent.

"The shark scenes weren't even that scary," said Morehead. "There was a random nude scene with the female co-star, that was a redeeming factor."

Terrible acting, boring story lines, combined with shaky cin-



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEN LAU

Actors Daniel Travis and Susan Ryan swim with sharks while shooting the low budget indie film "Open Water."

ematography from the handheld, digital camera contributes to "Open Water's" true value.

"From what I've seen of it, it's too much like the 'Blair Witch Project'" said Jason Fox, Carmike Cinema employee. "With the camera shaking, I couldn't stand that movie."

With no twist, big change of events, or scenery for that matter, makes "Open Water" predictable for audiences. No hope for the couple in the middle of the ocean, as you watch their struggle, you can't help but put yourself in that scary situation, to think: What would I do?

"Very boring, that would be the basically the way I would understand it," said Fox. "Two people floating in the water."

The shark scenes were intensified by the actors' real life fear of sharks, they didn't act for those scenes, using true feelings.

"I wished they would hurry up and die already so I could leave," said Travis Elliot, undecorated sophomore.

Daniel Travis and Susan Ryan, fairly new to the film industry, played "Open Water's" happy couple, Daniel and Susan.

Travis and Ryan spent 120 hours in the water, tied in with the boat to keep from drifting out to sea. Sharks used in filming, required the cast and crew to wear chain mesh under their diving

suits. The only interesting outcome of this film lies within the reality behind it that inspired Chris Kentis to finance, write and direct "Open Water."

Kentis and wife, both experienced scuba divers, took on the project and sold it to Lions Gate Films for \$2.5 million after a success at Sundance.

Real-life scuba divers Tom and Eileen Lonergan, the basis of "Open Water," created an interesting and terrifying tale of the couple stranded at sea.

One routine dive for the Lonergans became their last, after the boat left them in the middle of the ocean.

"I think I would be terrified if I was left alone out in the middle of the ocean," said Patrick Ragsdale, junior psychology major.

A month later, a wet suit, presumably of Mrs. Lonergan, washed ashore.

Apparently, the dive company miscalculated their head count before the boat left for land.

Although no one knows what actually happened to the couple, "Open Water's" portrayal of what they went through leaves many audience members feeling bored.

Web sites and professionals, dedicated to detailing speculation of what might have happened to the missing couple at sea, contribute different perspectives.

To UNC-A Students:



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