

Pollock film paints intimate portrait

The new film explores the artist's famed existence in complicated surroundings.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES - Jackson Pollock discovered his talent by gazing at a blank canvas and capturing beauty in a splattering of color.

While trying to tell the artist's story on film, a despairing Ed Harris found inspiration when he sat on a New York City curb.

On only the second day of shooting, the actor and first-time director had fallen behind schedule while trying to film a complicated scene on a busy street.

"We had to make a decision about what we weren't going to get that day and what we were never going to get - after working on the script for eight years," said Harris.

The 50-year-old actor, known for playing agonized tough guys in blockbusters like "The Abyss," "Apollo 13" and "The Rock," developed a passion for Pollock's story after reading a biography of the artist in 1986.

The movie Harris had in mind leaned more toward his work in smaller, independent movies like "The Third Miracle" or "Glengarry Glen Ross," and he spent nearly 15 years working toward the day when his movie would be complete.

That troubled day on the street was a turning point.

"I sat on the curb and thought, 'This is impossible,'" Harris recalled. "I was telling myself, 'This is just not gonna happen. There's no way we're going to be able to pull this off.'"

Harris describes that moment sitting in a similar pose - crouched at the edge of his seat, hands clasped prayer-like above his knees, his face resting on the fingertips.

"I just kind of just sat there and ... just wept for a while," he added with a laugh. "I said to myself, 'What are you doing here? You can sit up and get the shot. Just do what you gotta do.'"

Work continued, and Harris

got what he needed that day even if he didn't get everything he wanted.

As the lead actor, director and producer, he said, it was a constant battle to complete the film on time, within the budget and in a manner that did justice to the subject.

The movie chronicles Pollock's progression from a Depression-era painter living off a federally funded workfare program to the peak of his career as America's first internationally lauded abstract impressionist.

Pollock is best known for his so-called "drip paintings," huge canvases covered with multicolored splashes and drops of paint. Some art aficionados sneered - he became the target of "my-kid-could-have-done-that" criticism.

Pollock eventually found fortune and acclaim through the influence of art critic Clement Greenberg (played by Jeffrey Tambor) and collector Peggy Guggenheim (played by Harris's wife, Amy Madigan).

Pollock's wife - and greatest promoter - worked tirelessly and sacrificed much of her own career to keep him sober and working. He also suffered from a painfully fragile ego that led to alcoholism and temperamental outbursts that eventually cost him his life.

"This is not a fictional character," Harris said. "He doesn't exist in a book, he existed on the planet, you know? He woke up every morning, he faced what he had to face and went out to his studio to paint."

Pollock died in 1956 while driving drunk down a country road. His mistress, Ruth Kligman was hurt in the crash, and her friend, Edith Metzger, was killed.

Harris decided to direct the film "by default" because he had such a specific vision for telling Pollock's story.

Now that the movie is finished, however, he said he still had not excised the elements of Pollock that haunted him for so long.

"There's never really a moment of complete finality in some ways, you know? There is, but it gets lost," Harris said.

ASUN discusses lobbying efforts

Despite low turnout at the meeting, the Government Liaison Committee informed those who attended of its progress.

BY MARGARET BEHM

Student government could not take action Wednesday because of low attendance.

Only 14 senators showed up to the meeting. Seventeen senators needed to show up to have a quorum.

Joel Schafer, ASUN president, said several circumstances, including the weather, stood in the way of senators attending the meeting.

Schafer said he was upset that not enough senators made ASUN a priority in their lives.

"It's Valentine's Day. I think a lot of senators had other plans," he said. "I'm fairly upset about it."

The meeting was held, however, and Government Liaison Committee chairman Hal Hansen relayed details of his speech before the General Affairs Committee of the Nebraska Legislature on Monday.

Hansen was at the Legislature on behalf of ASUN lobbying against LB114 and LB582, and for LB574.

LB582 was introduced into the Legislature by Sen. Gene Tyson of Norfolk. Student government is against this bill because it provides for presumption of consumption. The bill allows the police to use their own discretion to determine whether a minor is drunk.

Also, the bill allows minors to act as undercover agents. They would be able to enter parties and report to police whether underage drinking was taking place. That would provide probable cause for police to enter the party.

The bill was introduced by Sen. Mark Quandahl of Omaha, and also provides for presumption of consumption. The bill requires that parents or guardians of the charged minor be notified of the offense. A minor's drivers license could also be taken away for three months.

GLC is lobbying for LB574. This bill calls for digital drivers licenses.

Hansen said the state senators treated him and the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska unfairly during committee meeting.

For example, Quandahl accused ASUN of being advocates of underage drinking, Hansen said.

"It was very good that I was there, if only to defend our good name," he said.

Hansen said he felt the senators on the committee also asked biased questions.

"I thought they were disrespectful and rude," he said.

The only hope for the bills not to pass is if Sen. Ernie Chambers threatens a filibuster, Hansen said.

"Maybe we'll luck out," he said.

Schafer also spoke to the ASUN senators about the two candidates for chancellor, Interim Chancellor Harvey Perlman and Bill Hogan, a member of the University of Minnesota Board of Regents.

Schafer said he approved of both candidates.

"I think that both individuals would make great chancellors," he said.

Clinton's final pardon invokes scrutiny

Fugitive financier Marc Rich's former wife contributed heavily to the Clinton family.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK - Federal prosecutors have opened an investigation into President Clinton's last-minute pardon of fugitive financier Marc Rich, a source familiar with the case said Wednesday.

U.S. Attorney Mary Jo White in New York "is trying to determine if there was a transfer of money to buy the pardon," the source told The Associated Press, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

In a statement issued through a spokeswoman Wednesday night, Clinton said: "As I have said repeatedly, I made the decision to pardon Marc Rich based on what I thought was the right thing to do."

"Any suggestion that improper factors, including fund raising for the (Democratic National Committee) or my library, had anything to do with the decision are absolutely false. I look forward to cooperating with any appropriate inquiry," he said.

Rich's former wife, Denise Rich, has been a major contributor to the Democratic Party, the Senate campaign of Hillary Rodham Clinton and the Clinton Presidential Library Fund.

White is expected to examine bank and telephone records and other documents to determine whether there was a link between the contributions and Clinton's decision to grant the pardon, the source said.

A spokesman for Denise Rich did not immediately return a call.

White, who was appointed to her post by Clinton in 1993, has said the pardon was granted without consultation with her office, which indicted Rich in 1983.

A spokesman said White had no comment and a Justice Department spokeswoman in Washington also declined to comment. Mrs. Clinton, through a spokesman, referred questions to her husband's transition office.

The Constitution gives presidents the right to grant pardons. But Rich's pardon, one of 141 granted by Clinton on Jan. 20, his final day in office, has prompted sharp bipartisan criticism and hearings by House and Senate committees.

Before his pardon, Rich was wanted by the Justice Department on charges of evading more than \$48 million in taxes, fraud and participating in illegal oil deals with Iran.

He was indicted on federal charges in 1983, shortly after he left the country for Switzerland.

The indictment was filed

when Rudolph Giuliani, now the Republican mayor of New York, was running the office.

Rich and his lawyers, who include former White House Counsel Jack Quinn, flooded the White House with calls and letters supporting the pardon just before Clinton left office, documents show. The pardon application and letters show those efforts date at least to 1987.

The application characterized the 1983 indictment, which alleged a tax fraud scheme on oil transactions, as based on U.S. government energy controls that were later deemed "unworkable, incomprehensible and counterproductive" and eventually abolished by President Reagan.

Clinton has insisted that Rich deserved the pardon, saying last week: "Once the facts are out there, people will understand what I did and why, even if they may not agree with it."

Critics have noted that Denise Rich contributed an estimated \$450,000 to the Clinton library fund, more than \$1.1 million to the Democratic Party and at least \$109,000 to Mrs. Clinton's Senate campaign. She has refused to answer questions from the House committee, citing her constitutional right against self-incrimination.

The congressional inquiries

have largely focused on how the pardon decisions were made.

Of Clinton's total 177 clemency actions on Jan. 20, 32 were not reviewed in advance by the Justice Department's pardon attorney, something that is not legally or constitutionally required.

In testimony Wednesday before the Senate Judiciary Committee, that attorney, Roger Adams, said the White House initially failed to tell him Rich was a fugitive.

"I was not told," Adams said. "I learned that from the FBI."

After discovering that Rich and his indicted partner Pincus Green were fugitives, Adams sent a fax to the White House summarizing the facts of their criminal case. The White House then asked Adams to fax over the materials that he received from the FBI.

The revelations prompted several Democrats to question Clinton's decision to pardon Rich. Sen. Richard Durbin of Illinois said the pardon raises the appearance of impropriety.

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