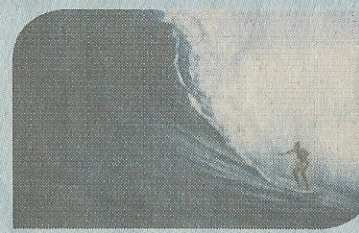


today



UNFORGETTABLE
Peter Cole's son paints
classic surf images
of his dad's era >> **F7**

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ART



PHOTOS BY **BRUCE ASATO** / BASATO@STARADVERTISER.COM

Artist Peter Shepard Cole at his art show with some of his paintings at ARS Cafe. Works behind Cole are "Bud Browne Film Still 7: Jose Angel & Peter Cole at Waimea" left and "Bud Browne Film Still 3: Kimo Hollinger at Makaha."

WAVES *of* PASSAGE

A painter honors his father, a famed big-wave surfer, with a new exhibit

By Mindy Pennybacker
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Thin, loose-jointed and 6 feet 4 inches tall, Peter Shepard Cole leaned toward the wall and ducked his head under the lip of a huge Waimea wave. He faced the relaxed, powerful frame of his father, big-wave veteran Peter Cole, also 6-foot-4, the older man's feet solidly planted as he turned at the bottom of the dark, 50-foot face.

Reality check: If you've watched surfers at Waimea Bay, you know this couldn't happen on that wave.

Which is why young Cole conceived of his new series of paintings, which bridge past and present while exploring how we perceive memory, legend and time.

The wave was in a painting, hanging on the wall in "The Artwork of Peter Cole," on view at ARS Cafe through the end of the month. His father rode it in 1967, and "he made it," Cole said with a proud smile. Each of six new paintings in the show is based on a still image from the Bud Browne film archives.

"This show is a tribute to my dad," said Cole.

No stranger to tributes, the elder Cole had been honored at a screening of Bud Browne's "Surfing the Fifties" at the Honolulu Surf Film Festival the night before his son's show opened. The California native swam competitively for Stanford University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in fine arts, honed his big-wave skills in Santa Cruz, then moved to Hawaii, where he won the 1958 Makaha International big-wave contest and competed in the 1965 Duke Kahanamoku Invitational, surfed Sunset into his mid-



Artist Peter Shepard Cole's "Bud Browne Film Still 5: Ricky Grigg."

70s and was inducted into the Hawaiian Watermen's Hall of Fame in 2011.

"He's been talking about doing a memoir for so long," Cole said of his father, 86.

The luminous paintings are filled with color, movement and the play of memory as well as light. They also showcase the personalities of his dad's surf buddies Jose Angel, Jim Blatta, Ricky Grigg, Kimo Hollinger and Buzzy Trent.

The most abstract of the works, in panels of grisaille and molten orange, shows three views of a ride by Grigg. "You see his confidence in his stance, with his arms raised in the air," Cole said.

The artist also interviewed his father about his surfing life, and transcripts are posted on the walls beside the paintings.

Although he has painted photorealistic seascapes for years, two of them included in the show, this is the first time Cole has painted surfers since 2008, when he was in the master's program at the San Francisco Institute of Art. His professor, he said, called his paintings "really bad hippie surf art and kitsch without irony."

After Cole changed his subject matter, delving deep into issues of identity, Hawaii's history and its fragile natural environment, the professor became a supporter. And the training and critical thinking he received are evident in Cole's work today.

This is far from standard surf art or photorealism. The work celebrates its medium with vivid and exuberant brush-

'THE ARTWORK OF PETER SHEPARD COLE'

>> **Where:** ARS Cafe, 3116 Monsarrat Ave.

>> **When:** 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 6 a.m.-9 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 7 a.m.-8 p.m. Sunday through Aug. 31

>> **Admission:** Free

>> **Info:** ars-cafe.com

strokes; the edges of the waves, deep blue barrels and fields of white water blur into abstract, geometric shapes, evoking "distances of the past." A burnished off-white light gives a sheen of memory and old film.

A recurrent theme in the paintings, many of which depict a moment before a wipeout, is one of fleeting control. "Bud captures these images, the wave in flux," Cole said. His paintings take off from there, conveying "the moment of the drop, the weightlessness — things are slipping."

Memory slips as well, he said.

For a long time, Cole said, he avoided depicting his parents in his work. But his outlook has changed now that he's the father of two young children. "Rather than be embarrassed at being in my dad's shadow, maybe that's my life's achievement," he said with an ingenuous smile.

"Those are moments that you never forget," Peter Cole Sr. said in the interview excerpt on the wall next to a painting in which he and Jose Angel share a Waimea wave. His son is helping to make sure of that.