Fans of classic western movies are invited to attend “The End of the Trail – How the Western movie rode into the sunset,” a lecture featuring Robert Horton and hosted by the Snohomish County Arts Commission. The presentation begins at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 16, at the Cole Gallery, 107 5th Ave. in downtown Edmonds.

The Western was America’s bedrock mythology – and greatest movie genre – for the first 70 years of film history. During a tumultuous period in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the “revisionist” Western took up a fiercely critical argument with the past: In the disillusioned age of the counterculture and Vietnam, you could no longer distinguish heroes from villains by the color of their hats.

Movie critic Robert Horton will lead a discussion asking how movies reflect the history and culture of their times. Because of the dramatic changes seen in Westerns, the genre forces us to look critically at our own myths. Why do we need the clarity of “good guys” and “bad guys” at certain times? Why do we sometimes embrace a more ambiguous view of human nature? How do these movies challenge our way of thinking – and what happens to us when a movie forces us to question our long-cherished beliefs?

Robert Horton has spent more than 30 years writing and talking about film. A graduate of the University of Washington, he reviews movies for The Herald in Everett and KUOW-FM in Seattle, as well as a number of national publications. His books on film include “Billy Wilder: Interviews and Frankenstein,” and he co-authors the zombie Western graphic novel Rotten. Horton also curates Magic Lantern, a film-discussion series at the Frye Art Museum, has taught film at Seattle University and blogs on movies at The Crop Duster.

Established in 2004, the Snohomish County Arts Commission fulfills its obligations as codified in county code by developing and maintaining programs and processes relating to the development of the cultural arts in Snohomish County. For more information, please contact Wendy Becker, Cultural and Economic Development Manager at wendy.becker@snoco.org or visit www.snocoarts.org.

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