

Crazy for Thimbles

Under the Boardwalk: The Monopoly Story Directed by Kevin Tostado | Documentary, History, Sport | G | 1h 28m

By Neil Genzlinger

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By the end of this perky, quirky documentary by Kevin Tostado, you might think that Monopoly, the durable board game, ranks right up there with the Bible in cultural and spiritual importance. It doesn't, of course, but don't tell that to any of the people who appear in this film; they are obsessed with the game beyond all reason and seem darned happy to be so.

The film bounces around enjoyably, giving a history of the game, talking to people who love it and chronicling the 2009 Monopoly World Championships in Las Vegas.



Mr. Monopoly, at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, in the film. Michael J. Maloney

Despite Mr. Tostado's efforts to build tension, the tournament is the dullest part of the documentary; Monopoly, slow-moving and dependent largely on chance, is no spectator sport. And some of the comments he lets his interview subjects get away with overreach shamelessly.

"At some level you have to have some amount of belief in your own power to affect the world, to change the world," Stephen Balzac, a psychology professor, says, trying to explain the attraction of the game for youngsters. "And I think Monopoly has the potential to provide that to children at a time when there isn't a lot that they can do."

Happily, though, that kind of blather is balanced by the eccentric fanatics Mr. Tostado showcases. The couple with the Monopoly-theme bathroom, for instance. Yeah, you'll want one yourself.

UNDER THE BOARDWALK

The Monopoly Story

Opens on Friday in Manhattan.

Directed by Kevin Tostado; written, produced and edited by Craig Bentley and Mr. Tostado; narrated by Zachary Levi; director of photography, Jordan Guzzardo; music by Larry Groupé; released by Rhino Films. At the Quad Cinema, 34 West 13th Street, Greenwich Village. Running time: 1 hour 28 minutes.

Under the Boardwalk: The Monopoly Story

Director Kevin Tostado

Writers Kevin Tostado, Craig Bentley

Stars Zachary Levi, Philip Orbanes, Ken Koury, Matthew McNally, David Ulmer

Rating G

Running Time 1h 28m

Genres Documentary, History, Sport

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