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Oceanside Museum of Art Director Ed Fosmire and Jeannine Guarino of Interfaith Community Services view a student photo exhibit that opens Saturday. RAY HUARD | rhuard@nctimes.com

OCEANSIDE

WORLD VIEWS

Museum displays photos taken by Oceanside, Colombian students



Oceanside High School senior Lahana Valez, 18, describes her photographs displayed at the Oceanside Museum of Art. Courtesy photo

By RAY HUARD
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Oceanside High School senior Lahana Valez never thought much about taking pictures, but starting Saturday, three of her photographs will be on display at the Oceanside Museum of Art.

"It's awesome," said Valez, 18.

She is among 42 students from Oceanside and 12 from Cartagena, Colombia, who collaborated in a photography project sponsored by the Transitional Youth Academy of Interfaith Community Services.

Each student was given a camera along with a crash course in photography by a professional.

They were then set loose to take pictures of whatever stuck their fancy — "things all around the

community that represented beauty, happiness, sadness — anything that spoke to them," said Interfaith program manager Jeannine Guarino.

"We just encouraged them to take lots of photographs to capture what they feel," Guarino said.

The 100 most compelling photographs are now on display in an exhibit called "Parallel Visions."

The photographs will be unveiled to the public at a 6 p.m. Saturday at the museum, 704 Pier View Way. The event is a fundraiser for the youth academy, which works with high school students who might be having trouble in school for a variety of reasons.

The photographs are stunning, said museum director Ed Fosmire.

See **World, B3**



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"As a museum, we're pretty discerning with what we put on the walls," Fosmire said. "I'm proud to hang these in the museum."

Fosmire said some of the students' work is on par with that of professional photographers.

"These are such gorgeous images," Fosmire said.

One of his favorites is a colorful photo of a purple pickup with its hood open, shot looking up from the front of the truck.

"This person took a really nice angle and cropped it nicely," Fosmire said.

Guarino was drawn to a photograph of a well-worn purple sneaker resting in mud and grass. It was taken by a 17-year-old Colombian student identified only as Miguel.

"It really tells the story of that place where they live, the poverty," Guarino said.

She also was fond of a photograph by a 16-year-old Colombian student, Diana, which shows a middle-age

woman wearing a red and yellow flowered dress and carrying a steel bowl of fruit on her head.

Although the students from Oceanside and Colombia might seem worlds apart, Guarino said it's striking how similar many of the photographs are, which is where she got the "Parallel Visions" title for the exhibit.

"Really, the only way you can tell them apart is the Colombian pictures have Spanish titles," Guarino said.

There are a few that are recognizably American, such as the photograph that Oceanside High School senior Terrance Nealy, 17, took looking up at the sky through a basketball hoop.

The idea was to show how sports could open a world of opportunities, said Nealy, who hopes to be a psychologist or a professional bowler.

Santos Penaflor, 17, said the photos he took of flowers in Balboa Park weren't meant to convey any inner message beyond the beauty of the flowers, "just the way they were formed or shaped."

In contrast, Valez, who was awestruck by the thought of having her photographs

shown in a museum, said she's hoping her work evokes an emotional response.

One photo is a stark shot of an abandoned Encinitas apartment building viewed through a rusting chain-link fence.

"I just liked it because it was empty, vacant," she

said. She wondered about the people who once lived in the building.

"I'm pretty sure there are memories in there and they just closed it down."

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