

## **Cameras inspire 4 youthful visions**

Housing complex classwork by boys 8 to 15 displayed at L.B. library.

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LONG BEACH - One found beauty and texture in the smallest pockets of nature. Another found expression in a roadway veering off to the landscape beyond. Still another was interested in people. And a fourth displayed an eclecticism of still lifes at home and in the neighborhood.

These are the visions of brothers JoLon, Jae and Jaylen Clark, and Kennedy Collins, the four photographers who had their work displayed at the Main Library Monday in the Northpointe Photo Project Presentation.

The four boys, ages 8 to 15, participated in a series of photography classes offered at the Northpointe Apartments affordable housing complex in North Long Beach, which were taught by Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Marissa Roth.

JoLon Clark, a 15-year-old student at Poly entering his sophomore year, said his photo essay of vibrant flowers and plants was meant to express the beauty that could be found in his neighborhood - if you looked.

"It's just the nature you see outside, but put into a frame," JoLon said of his photo essay. "It's just shots you could treasure."

JoLon said the class helped him to see the world and his environs in a new way and find hidden gems.

Jae, a 12-year-old seventh-grader-to-be at Hughes Middle School, tried to transpose modern transportation and natural surroundings into his photography. His mother, Joy Clark, said her son would also create drawings of his photos, thus creating art in two media.

Jae said because of the class he was considering pursuing photography as a profession.

Jaylen, an 8-year-old at Birney Elementary School, was attracted by places where people congregate and preferred pictures of the Northpointe pool, because that's where he found the most people.

Kennedy Collins, 15, who will be a Jordan High sophomore, was unable to attend the show because he was baby-sitting his younger sister. His work was some of the most diverse, including portraits, several still lifes and a haunting image of an abandoned basketball in a

field.

Roth, who was recruited to teach the class as a volunteer, loosely modeled the curriculum on an extension class she teaches at UCLA. She was part of the photography staff at the Los Angeles Times that won the Pulitzer Prize for spot news coverage of the L.A. riots in 1992.

The students used disposable cameras for their projects, which were storytelling essays in images.

Roth says the images the kids produced were "stupendous." From the use of light, to adjusting shutter speeds, to framing, Roth said they mastered both the technical and artistic elements of the craft.

"I believe they have an innate ability to be visual," Roth said of the students.

Originally the class was slated to have 15 students. In fact, Joy Clark said her boys were on a waiting list but went to the first class anyway. By the end of the sessions, only her boys and Collins remained.

"I don't give up easy and I teach my kids the same thing," Joy said.

Joy not only brought her kids to each lesson, she participated. In fact, she sneaked one of her images, a gorgeous backlit picture of koi, into the brochure for the art show.

In addition to receiving certificates for taking the class, the brothers were presented a camera package from **Las Palmas Housing**, the owners of the housing complex, which helped sponsor the class with the Long Beach Housing Development Company.

While Joy Clark appreciated the gift she said, "I'm going to have to get two more, because they won't share (the camera)."

Joy said she and her sons are not done with their photo exploits either.

"We're going to take one day a month to out and shoot," she said.

Joy added that she was already looking forward to a reunion of the class next year. She bought a photo album where she will display her sons' work and artistic growth in the intervening months.

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