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Friday, February 18, 2011

## Betsy Curtis: Capturing the Moment

by Jessie Bristow

**One, two, three... Say "Cheese" but don't smile. Look at each photograph and debate whether it is a part of history, something from a time capsule, or is it a blend of culture and artistic grace.**



jessie bristow / KA LAMAKUA

Betsy Curtis stands among her portraits, taken at the Honolulu Academy of Arts. Her other subjects include people at Waimea Bay and aboard the USS Missouri. Her exhibition, "The Visitors," is on display in the UH Manoa Art Building's Commons Gallery until Feb. 25.

With an age-like Victorian style portrait and detailed background environment, each photograph slows down the viewer's ADD like symptoms most people have today, questioning every out of place detail with interest.

The Visitors, a photography thesis exhibition by Betsy Curtis, is being displayed in

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the Commons Gallery in the art building at the University of Hawaii Manoa from February 13-25.

Betsy Curtis, 29, a graduate student in Studio Art Photography of UH Manoa, began playing with cameras while working at a camera shop during high school. Curtis found her calling in what she wanted to do with her photography skills during her sophomore year at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois.

"I realized I was doing projects that were not just for assignments, that I was just like doing stuff on my own," Curtis says.

Curtis' whole approach towards her current style in this exhibition is due to a childhood filled with scrapbooks made by her mother.

"Ever since I was a little kid, I have probably three or four volumes this thick on my life, she made," Curtis says, putting her hands about five to six inches apart.

Knowing how fast people peer through photo albums, glancing, commenting, then turning the page, Curtis wanted to create a portrait that caught the attention of all viewers. She approached her project with subjects of stern looks and backgrounds that draw attention.

"For this project, the location was...is almost as important as the person."

With her photographs consisting of the U.S.S. Missouri, Honolulu Academy of Arts, and Waimea Bay. Curtis wanted to portray images of culture, history, and nature that implied the message of a time capsule allowing the viewer to go back and forth between present and past. Each area shot has some kind of historical or cultural significance that Curtis wanted to display.

In the future, Curtis wants to focus on finishing her thesis, graduate, and focus on projects to submit to a number of residencies she plans on applying for. Her current style of photography is not her signature method. Curtis intends to try and work on ideas of collages and to take a break from her realistic style she has applied with her current exhibition.

As an experienced and growing photographer, Betsy Curtis suggests to aspiring students to drill down inside and find out why the medium they are using is important to them.

"I think, artwork works best when you are drawing from your own well and personal experience."

Visit the exhibition in the Commons Gallery or visit Betsy Curtis' website at <http://elizabethcurtis.com/>.



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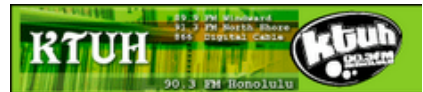
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