

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Summer Carlis – teen street photographer

Alexis Rhone Fancher · Wednesday, June 7th, 2017

The Magic of Mentoring

Teen street photographer, Summer Carlis, created her first book with guidance from prize-winning community arts advocate, Susan Hayden. I'm delighted to share their story.

— Alexis Rhone Fancher, *Cultural Weekly* poetry editor, creator of *The Poets Eye*



Union Station (photo by Summer Carlis)

Summer Carlis: “I got into photography a few years ago when I received my first iPhone. Last summer my mom signed me up for a street photography camp taught by Julia Dean. That really inspired me to become a photographer.”



Tourists (photo by Summer Carlis)

“When I assembled my photos for an exhibit last fall, stories emerged from the faces of my subjects, and from the composition of the frames. With the guidance of Susan Hayden, I was moved to write more poems and stories to accompany my photos, which resulted in my photo book.



The Thinker (photo by Summer Carlis)

“I’m inspired by photographers like my mentor, Julia Dean, and Alex Webb. I want to become a well-known street photographer. I want people to ask themselves questions about the people in my photos, and to be touched by what they discover. I want to send a message through my work.”



l to r Cristina Carlis, Summer Carlis, Susan Hayden (photo by Alexis Rhone Fancher)

Susan Hayden: “It has been my pleasure to give guidance to 8th grade street photographer, Summer Carlis as part of Wildwood School’s project, Into The Wild, in which students take on assignments that challenge them, culminating in a public presentation.

“The photos on Summer’s blog were testament to her ability to tell stories without words. When we met, I suggested adding poems to her photos, something Summer had already begun to explore.

We discussed writing exercises and I gave her Steve Kowitz's wonderful manual, *In The Palm Of Your Hand: A Poet's Portable Workshop*.

"Our conversation fueled the creation of a beautiful chapbook of photos and stories from diverse Los Angeles neighborhoods. Meeting Summer reminded me of the importance of mentorship. We forget that a simple conversation can instill belief and give direction in ways that cannot be underestimated."

—Susan Hayden, creator/producer of *Library Girl*, winner of the Artist In The Community/ Bruria Finkel Award, awarded by the Santa Monica Arts Commission

—Featured Image by Alexis Rhone Fancher

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