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STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHY ON DISPLAY AS PART OF GETTY'S COMMUNITY PHOTOWORKS PROJECT 2016

Students examine 'personality' through exploring portraiture with mentor Tomoka Sawada



LOS ANGELES -This fall thirty-five 10th grade students from University High School were invited to explore the diverse elements of portraiture with artist Tomoka Sawada as part of the J. Paul Getty Museum's Community Photoworks program.

The Museum partnered with Tomoka Sawada, whose work is currently featured in the exhibition *The Younger Generation: Contemporary Japanese Photography*, and the non-profit arts writing center 826LA to explore digital photography with students from LAUSD, University High School. Students explored the topic of personality and were inspired by the self-portraiture workshop led by Sawada. Under Sawada's guidance the class responded to questions like; what is personality, how is personality shaped, and how would you describe your personality.

"The Community Photoworks program gives us the opportunity to invite students to discover contemporary photography and the depths of their artistic and creative potential," says Christine Spier associate education specialist in the Getty Museum's Education Department.

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Tomoka Sawada has used self-portraiture to explore identity throughout her career. Her work is a cross between portraiture and performance and plays upon stereotypes and cultural traditions in order to showcase modes of individuality and self-expression. Sawada's series *OMIAI*, which is currently on view at the Getty, includes thirty self-portraits, each made to represent a different kind of woman.

"This whole experience with 826LA and the Getty has really helped me realize who I am as a person and an artist. It was a mind-blowing experience that helped me discover that it's ok to open up and express who I really am deep down, and to not be afraid of what others think," says University High School 10th grade student Taylor Itagaki.

Students worked with staff from the Getty Museum's Education department and 826LA volunteers to prepare their artworks and write artist statements. While at the Getty the students toured *The Younger Generation: Contemporary Japanese Photography* exhibition with the curator of the exhibition, Amanda Maddox. Students were then given digital cameras and explored the Getty galleries creating portraits and then were able to examine some of the photographs in the Getty's permanent collection. They were also able to spend time with Sawada who guided them on their post-visit project.

"The Community Photoworks Project allowed students to develop real-world learning skills through extending learning outside the classroom. It was a transformative experience as students explored their identities and examined what factors shape who they are and how they relate to each other and the world around them," says University High School 10th grade teacher Linda Yaron.

Click [here](#) to view more thoughts from the students about the project.

The portraits of the students from University High School will be on view in the exhibition, *Identity 37*, with an opening reception on Monday, December 7 from 2:00 -4:00pm at Coffee Connection (3838 S. Centinela Ave., 90066) and the show will continue to be on view through December 18, 2016.

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The J. Paul Getty Trust is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that includes the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Getty Foundation. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs serve a varied audience from two locations: the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Getty Villa in Pacific Palisades.

The J. Paul Getty Museum collects Greek and Roman antiquities, European paintings, drawings, manuscripts, sculpture and decorative arts to 1900, as well as photographs from around the world to the present day. The Museum's mission is to display and interpret its collections, and present important loan exhibitions and publications for the enjoyment and education of visitors locally and internationally. This is supported by an active program of research, conservation, and public programs that seek to deepen our knowledge of and connection to works of art.

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