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Photography students share portfolios

Anyone who has ever wandered through the lobby of the Visual Technology Building on the Clarkesville Campus of North Georgia Technical College has been able to enjoy an impressive array of images captured by students in the Photography Program. Though always on display, once a year the doors to the studio are thrown open wide and the public is invited to come in and get up close and personal with the budding photographers.

“Every year, this show is completely different from the years before,” said NGTC Photography Instructor Jeff Gulle. “Each student here has an amazing and inspiring personal story to go along with their incredible talent displayed during our Portfolio Show.”

Charles Morrow of Gainesville found a love for portraiture which is evident in the variety of beautiful images that capture the subject in unexpected ways. Along with brides, seniors, and individuals, Charles also had several wildlife photos taken during the class field trip to the Atlanta Zoo. The son of Jim and Pam Morrow, Charles will be graduating from the program in December.

Shalisha Martin of Hartwell has been commuting back and forth across the counties to follow her dream of becoming a professional photographer. “I love portraiture, and I particularly love the shots that are up close and tight,” she said. For her, it was the instructors that made the program easy. It was during a field trip to a photography studio in Gainesville where she made a connection for an internship this summer. Shalisha will graduate from the program in December.
Kellas of Dahlonega emphatically says, “Photography saved my life.” After a military career, he went into law enforcement until five years ago when a horrific traffic accident changed everything. “I couldn’t go back to what I had always loved doing, but photography was my off-duty passion.” Taking advantage of a Veteran’s assistance program, he enrolled in the program at NGTC because he had met Gulle through the Georgia Professional Photographers Association. Though still recovering from the old injuries, he has persevered every day. “It was a battle worth fighting for and I couldn’t have made it without the support of my wife, Angel.”

Lindsay Marie Galliher of Mt. Airy focused her love of art and fashion into the pursuit of a career in fashion photography. Her talent has already started paying off as she recently won a free apartment for a year in return for posting photos in a blog about a mixed development in Alpharetta. She attributes her success in the program to Instructors Jim Loring and Jeff Gulle. “They are the best,” she says. Lindsay Marie, the daughter of Jackie Galliher, completed her program of study the day of the portfolio show.

Megan Shead of Appling displayed her portfolio which focused on graduating seniors and weddings. During her years at North Georgia Tech, she has received many accolades including a Silver Medal at the recent Georgia SkillsUSA Contest, a scholarship awarded by a local contractor for her commercial architectural photography work, as well as induction in to the National Technical Honor Society. For her, the original internet search for “best photography school in Georgia” certainly brought her to the right place.

Alexandria Velazquez of Cornelia has enjoyed coming to the North Georgia Technical College campus for many years. While in High School, she attended the Entrepreneur Summer Camps. After completing her core college classes, she selected the photography program to grow her skills and artistic talents. Using a variety of digital techniques, she creates fine art and digital paintings. In particular, her work capturing children in portraits is showing great promise for her future career.

Maria Gonzalez of Clarkesville is originally from Spain. She and her family came to the United States about ten years ago as missionaries, and as a family they all have a passion for photography as well. Maria has won awards for architectural photos and has had many high profile portraiture opportunities including the Bishop in Florida. Upon graduation, Maria has an opportunity to work at the Vatican as their official photographer.
Blakeley Sheriff of Dawsonville has translated her family’s long-time association with the racing industry into her own career focused on motor sports photography. Graduating in August, she has a busy summer lined up with her final full-load of classes and a full-time job at Anderson Motor Speedway in Anderson, South Carolina. With her sights set on the photographing for NASCAR one day, this daughter of Tammy and Clinton Sheriff is definitely off to the races.

Victoria Boyce of Toccoa says that she has grown professionally and personally through the Photography Program at North Georgia Tech. Though she originally enrolled in the health care courses, she soon realized that her hobby was where her heart was. Taking full advantage of the opportunities in the program, some of her favorite and most creative experiences were during fieldtrips to places such as the Atlanta Zoo and the Atlanta Railway Museum. Victoria is the daughter of Victor and Conswalla Boyce.

Katie Dowis of Dahlonega graduated from Dawsonville County High School and was pleased to find fellow classmate Blakely Sheriff among those headed to North Georgia Tech. “When I met the instructors here, I knew this was where I wanted to be,” she said. Her childhood interest in photography has bloomed into a career path that will grow from an internship with Jessica Pendley in Murrayville to the eventual goal of opening her own studio. Katie thanked her parents, Melissa and Joe Bochez, for their love and support.

Georgia Zumwalt of Jefferson is an advocate of technical education and the opportunities it affords. She explains that, as a professional film photographer several years ago, she put down the camera when the digital era hit. Finally facing her fears, she embraced the technology and, combined with her previous experience in the business, her clientele is growing by leaps and bounds. Some of her professional commitments include being a partner in an acting headshot venture called the Goat Farm Studio in Atlanta, creating the images for the Erin London catalog, and getting her new studio in Sautee ready to open this fall.

Colleen Gearty of Hoschton has developed a unique and edgy style of photography that is all her own. She brings this to her love of portrait photography using unconventional shooting angles, posing, and cropping while maintaining the highest technical standards. Her commercial photography also has added interest because she first develops a creative concept before making an image with careful attention to the use of studio lighting and props. Her images are never boring and always bring a different perspective on the world and to those she photographs.
“It was a fantastic experience to watch each of these students explore new ways to use their tremendous talent,” said Instructor Jim Loring. “They inspire us with their creativity and imagination and courage. We are very proud of what they have accomplished and what their future holds.”

For more information about the North Georgia Technical College, visit the website at www.northgatech.edu.

Picture: Left to right (Front): Colleen Gearty, Alexandria Velazquez, Lindsay Marie Galliher, Victoria Boyce, Katie Dowis, Maria Gonzalez, Georgia Zumwalt; (Back): Charles Morrow, Megan Shead, Kevin Kellas, Blakeley Sheriff, and Shalisha Martin

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