

Multimedia arts workshop sharpen youthful focus

By WILLIAM ROLLER, Staff Writer | Posted: Sunday, July 9, 2017 1:00 am

CALEXICO — To stand out in visual arts the artist must emphasize his or her genuineness because no one else can be “you.”

The inaugural Imperial Valley Youth Voices Project launched with a series of workshops on Saturday helping students ages 15 to 18 to tell stories through journalism, photography, video, film and web design.

Nineteen students filled the Carmen Durazo Cultural Arts Center for a forum that will continue until November when they showcase their mixed media skills with a photo exhibit, a one-off 12-page newspaper, discuss their web design and screen short documentaries. Imperial Valley Youth Voices Project is a collaborative effort between Imperial County 4-H, Renaissance Journalism, The Vesper Society and Mi Calexico.

“We want to create content that’s relevant to our region,” said Angel Esparza, founder and design director of Mi Calexico, a website and magazine that aims to influence in a positive way.

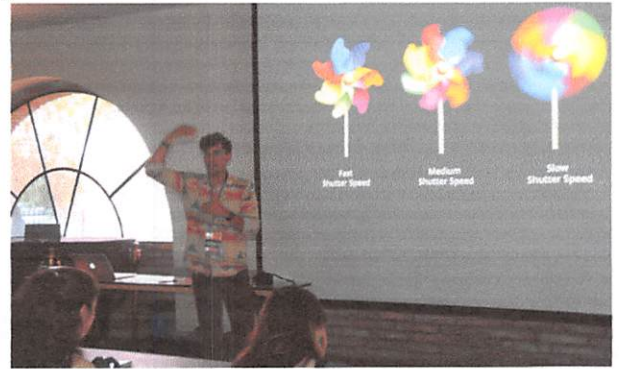
“The next couple of months we’ll assist you to express your stories. We won’t tell what to do but give you guidelines,” he told students.

Arriving from San Francisco where Renaissance Journalism is based, Jon Funabiki is also a journalism professor at San Francisco State University. “We do specialist journalism projects and I recently took a group of students to Fukushima to see what it’s like in the aftermath of the earthquake,” said Funabiki. “The Vesper Society is the main source of our funding and they have a history supporting education in the Valley. They also realize young people need a way to find their life’s work.”

Linda Sanchez, Imperial County 4-H volunteer noted 4-H long ago branched out beyond livestock. Today 4-H instructs in photography, public speaking and other critical life skills. “This workshop will open your horizons from TV production to the digital,” she said.

Kicking off a PowerPoint presentation on photography, Esparza explained there are three variables the photographer has control over: the ISO setting that measures the sensitivity to the image sensor. Also the aperture, the iris of the lens that controls the size of the opening that allows or blocks light expressed in f-numbers with F2.8 wider than F22. And there is shutter speed, the time the digital sensor is exposed to light.

“Be creative with light, I like to shoot in natural light, playing with lighting variables is important and for framing be conscious of your surroundings, try something different, visualize a grid that frames and brings out emotional aspects,” he said.



Youth Voices Project

LEFT: Angel Esparza instructs the first Imperial Valley Youth Voices Project in a mixed media workshop, Saturday in Calexico. WILLIAM ROLLER PHOTO

As for video, he cautioned against self-censoring. “Be expressive,” he said. “Look deep inside yourself and ask what is that you want to share that’s genuine. Nothing is better than being genuine. Not everybody is going to love it. But find something truthful, don’t try to be cool all the time.”

Recent Calexico High School graduate Ismael Arvizu is now enrolled at Imperial Valley College in the film, theater and production class. “I came for the video and story writing,” he said. “It’s always good to start with photography basics because you got to be a good photographer to be a videographer.

Valley Christian Heritage School sophomore Kayla Bravo is a fan of classic view cameras but hasn’t found one that’s operational yet. “I’d liked the explanation of the rule of thirds and quadrants,” she said. “I’ll definitely stick with this class it has a lot of good information.”

The 4-H volunteer Linda Sanchez noted the students will make a positive impact on the community. “This class will give them a broader vision of life,” she said. “With a broad vision you take on a world view.”