

An inspiring collection

ON DISPLAY: Snapshots by 11 youths capture a nation

Exhibit

Regeneration

Where: Arthouse Gallery at auto/ONE, 1755 W. 3rd Ave.

When: Until Nov. 25

Info: 604-612-7664

BY STUART DERDEYN
ARTS REPORTER

Original art needs original spaces and *Regeneration* — 11 *Disposable Cameras, 1 Indispensible Nation* fits the bill. It's an inspiring collaborative work by 11 youth, ages 11 to 14, from the Lax Kw'alaams band in the northern coastal village of Port Simpson and 20 contemporary multimedia artists.

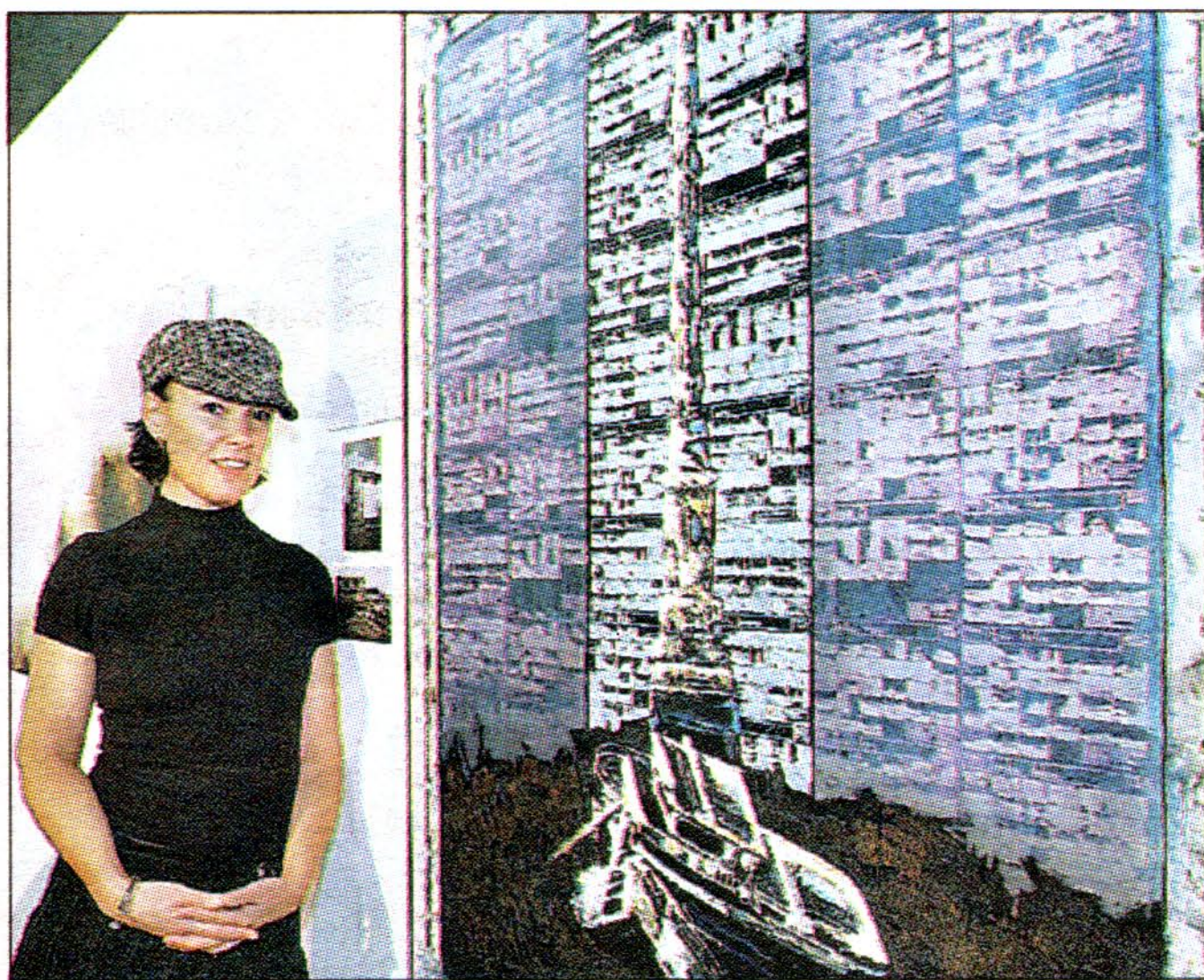
Atypically, the show is mounted in the swank auto/ONE boutique sales office.

Finally, an art opening where the work is displayed in a space where people who can afford it hang out.

Conceived by curator Julie Lee, a documentary filmmaker and founder of the mobile Arthouse Gallery, *Regeneration* has more than bridging cultures and communities in mind. With any luck, it can inspire confidence, economic and creative opportunities for this remote Coast Tsimshian Nation.

An anthropology major who studied photography at Emily Carr, Lee worked with band teacher/artist Crystal Clark to develop the project concept. Students were handed disposable cameras and encouraged to capture their world in a series of black-and-white images. These photos became the basis of paintings, sculptures and mixed-media works by the participating artists.

The results range from Graeme's bold oils based on dry-docked fishing-boat pic-



Julie Lee conceived the idea. WAYNE LEIDENFROST — THE PROVINCE

tures and Duncan MacCallum's 3-D metal representations of a gorgeous smiling girl to Jim Gislason's fascinating reverse silkscreen and acrylics based on students' contact sheets.

The kids' original images are framed next to the piece inspired by them, providing a fascinating opportunity to study how the work progressed from point-and-shoot to hanging in the gallery.

"I've always been interested in the culture of First Nations, in the historical and mythological areas more than the anthropological ones," says Lee. "I felt that the need for cross-cultural interaction could be the foundation of the show and the title came out of that because this generation is the generation of change in the community; it's full of both pain and promise.

"The struggle of assimilating their history into the 20th Century and breaking the cycle of poverty to move forward into their own destiny is something the band council is really striving for."

Lee pitched the idea to the

chief and council last April and travelled to Port Simpson — accessible only by float plane or water taxi — for further negotiation.

What she found was a community in serious flux and a perfect chance to put her belief in fair-trade art events into practice.

Proceeds from every piece sold at *Regeneration* are split equally between gallery, artist and student. The youths' photos are also available for purchase and most are sold. The money from the art sales goes to further art education initiatives in Port Simpson. The kids can keep the proceeds from the sale of their own photos.

"One girl printed up extra copies of hers when she found out she'd sold one. I think she gets the whole art and commerce thing already," laughs Lee.

An NFB documentary project on *Regeneration* is in the works. Watch for it, and other projects, from Arthouse (www.arthouse-gallery.ca).

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