



The Vanguard Youth Arts Collective Presents:

SPOT ON!



Photo of Lourdes by Fer Manzanares

Issue 11, June 2022

Interview with Lourdes Lasala

Edited by Alexei Ungurenaşu

The Vanguard Youth Arts Collective are a group of creatively driven youth who act as a voice for an emerging generation of the arts within the Windsor Essex region.

'Spot On!' is Vanguard's artist interview series edited by members Meaghan Sweeney and Alexei Ungurenaşu. These interviews offer a spotlight for emerging and established local artists who work in various media to discuss and promote their past and current art projects.

Lourdes Lasala (she/her) is a photographer and filmmaker raised in Windsor, Ontario, and now living and creating in Toronto, Ontario. Her love for photography sparked at a young age when her dad let her use his own camera, and it all unfolded from there. Her adoration for filmmaking came in her later years of university, where she discovered her love for documentary film. When it comes to the art she makes, Lourdes's main goal is to make sure people feel seen, which is why she aims to be as diverse and inclusive as possible with the stories she hopes to tell and the people she works with.

Who or what inspires your work ?

There are a lot of different things I am inspired by. The things I am influenced and inspired by have definitely changed and evolved throughout my life, but there are a few things that remain constant: music, family, and friends.

The relationships in my life and the people I encounter hold such value and

importance to me. The people in my life not only heavily influence the work I make, but they inspire me to keep on pursuing my biggest and wildest ideas. Music is also something that has acted as an early source of inspiration for me. Whether it be trying to visually portray how a song makes me feel or making a visual narrative from the lyrics, music has always been a constant. I'm also a concert photographer, so you can only imagine the amount of live music I'm hearing on a daily basis. The energy I get from both the crowd and performers is truly unmatched and it's something that keeps me going.

What does your creative process look like? Is there anything you seek to highlight in your subjects?

My ideation process is quite similar across all disciplines of my work. I'll do a lot of story boarding and concept sketches for photoshoots, films, and videos just so I have a concrete visual idea of what it is I want to do. A lot of the time, I'll scroll through Pinterest and make mood boards so I have a general feel of what it is I am trying to portray; it's also really useful for the people I'm working with so they know the vibe and overall what to expect.

Ever since high school, the main thing I always try to highlight is connection. There is something truly beautiful to me about connecting with an image whether that be a still or moving one. I always hope to portray my subjects and the moments I am capturing in the most honest way that I can.



"Twin Flame" (2020)



"Holding Onto You" (2022)

Highlighting the authentic experience and connection in a photo and film is far more important to me than aesthetics, so I always put that first in any decision I make.

What technology do you use in your photography and filmmaking? Do you prefer digital or film?

I'm a big Canon cameras girl through and through; that's the camera brand I started with and it's what I know and grew up with. I'm currently using the Canon R, but for the longest time I used my Canon 70D and my Canon Rebel t2ii, which was my first camera. A lot of my proudest images were made on my first camera which wasn't super high end by

any means, so with that being said, I can't stress this enough, the gear you use doesn't matter. What matters is your creative eye and vision.

In regard to film cameras, I have way too many to count. I love collecting them and reading about their history in the photography world. My mom let me use her first film camera and from there I started to grow my own collection.



"Meet Me at Charron's" (2022)

Preferring film vs. digital is a question I always get, and quite frankly, I don't have an answer as to which one I favour because I absolutely love them both. They both have their own ups and downs: for example, film is just costly, but with film I am able to slow down and become more intentional with my shots because of the limited frames I have. I have carried this practice into my digital work, but it's still not the same outcome visually. There is something about film that truly captures the image I'm trying to make. I love how hands-on the process is from start to finish. I choose the film, load it into my camera, and then develop and scan it myself at home. But like I said, it's a costly process. The beauty of digital is that I can keep on photographing or filming until I get it right, and it's also more flexible to edit. I can see how the shot looks like right away and can fix it right there and then.



"Arms Unfolding" (2020)



"I Wished Hard on A Chinese Satellite" (2022)

Do you use any specific filters, effects, or post-shoot editing techniques in your work ?

I always try to keep my edits as close to reality as possible, especially when I am making portraits. I'm not a big fan of how the industry photoshops people to fit a certain box of beauty, so it's always been my aim to make the people I work with feel good and confident about themselves through the photos I take.

Concert photography is a little bit different. Because I don't have control of the lighting conditions there, I really have to roll with it. A lot of colour correction goes into my editing process, but I also like to add layers of motion blur to really emphasize the movement and energy I was experiencing. I always try to make my photos stand out, so I'll make composites out of different images from the show that include the crowd.

Sometimes I'll try and make my photos glow or add different effects to make the image look dreamy. Unlike my portrait or documentary work, it's not so much an accurate depiction of what I saw but an accurate depiction of what I was feeling.



"ASHE" (2022)

You often photograph live music shows. How did you start?

This is my favourite story to recount. I really lucked out with my origin story, I guess you could say. It was during the Vans Warped Tour in 2016: I took a music photography workshop, and to my surprise, they gave us wristbands to photograph the rest of the festival. It was also super surreal because I was able to meet and talk to one of my biggest inspirations for why I wanted to pursue music photography, Ashley Osborn. She answered all of my questions and shared so much knowledge with me. It was so surreal to be photographing a show and to have her next to me; I'll never forget it.

What kinds of projects would you like to pursue in the near future?

I've focused a lot on my photography throughout my life, but I'd really love to make more documentaries in the future. I have a lot of ideas that I can't wait to bring to life. There is a lot going on in my head at all times, so I guess now it's only a matter of time before these ideas get to live outside of my head and for everyone to see. The biggest dream I have is to go on tour with a band: it's been something I've wanted to do for years and I really hope to get that opportunity soon.

We thank Lourdes for being our guest in the Spot On! interview series, and we look forward to seeing her upcoming work!

If you would like to see more of Lourdes's work, you can find her on Instagram @lourdeslasala.

For more artist interviews and other Windsor-based projects, follow the Vanguard Youth Arts Collective on Facebook and Instagram @vanguard.collective and stay tuned for our next issue as well as our first print volume of interviews coming out this fall!



"Self Portrait"