

Architectural Foundation Gallery

Sylvia Abualy: Peru - People & Places

By Devon Peltengill / CASA

VISUAL JOURNALISM is what Sylvia Abualy calls her brilliant images of life around the world, because more than mere travel photography, each of her photographs has a story. Her current solo exhibit, *Peru - People and Places*, will be on display at the Architectural Foundation Gallery through May 29th.

“The best shots are the ones where you approach the subject and engage them, and it’s a mutual response,” shared Abualy. “And then you always have a story to tell. I love that.”

The photos in the exhibition are the result of a recent trip to central and southern Peru that she took with a professional photographer. During the trip, they avoided typical tourist destinations in favor of villages that tourists do not often visit.

“I want people to see what they might not see usually,” shared Abualy.

Abualy was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and lived in New York before moving to Santa Barbara in 1995. She earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Home

Economics with a special emphasis in clothing and textiles from Carnegie Mellon University. The influence of this education emerges in



Sylvia Abualy

her art as an attraction to shapes, textures, and vibrant colors, such as the ornately costumed Peruvian girls in the photograph titled *Two Girls*.

Abualy’s experience with photography started in her father’s darkroom, though it was not until joining a camera club in Long Island that her interest in photography took off. She started attending photography workshops around the country, and when she retired from her teaching career in 1994, she decided that photography would be her new occupation.



Two Girls by Sylvia Abualy

“It was kind of expensive, photography,” she shared. “I started with film. Now it’s all digital. It’s a whole different ball game.”

Abualy does all her own professional photographic printing, using skills in digital color management she obtained at Santa Barbara City College School of Media Arts, where she is a student.

In addition to Peru, Abualy has traveled to countries in Europe, Central America, and Asia. She has even visited the Arctic National Wildlife Center. Abualy prefers to travel with small groups in which photography is the focus, and she is not deterred by language barriers. She carries a phrase book relevant to the country she is visiting and is not afraid to use hand gestures to get her point across.

“Art is an expression,” shared Abualy. “It’s a way to synchronize different aspects of what you see and what you feel.”

There will be a First Thursday reception at the gallery on May 7th, 5-7pm. The Architectural Foundation Gallery, located at 229 E Victoria St, is open Tues-Fri, 9am-2pm and by appt. For more information, call 965-6307. To see more of Sylvia Abualy’s photography, visit www.PhotoArtBySylvia.com



Natives and Stones by Sylvia Abualy