

NONPROFIT PHOTO GROUP A LAUNCHING PAD FOR TEENS

IN 1994, photographer Alicia Hansen turned a one-off class for disadvantaged teens into NYC Salt, a volunteer-staffed nonprofit that teaches professional-grade skills similar to what these budding photographers would get if could apprentice for a pro shooter. In the six years since, her scrappy program has blossomed into an important member not just of the kids' communities but also of the world of emerging photographers.

This past June, the Sputnik Gallery in New York hosted a benefit exhibition, and aspiring fashion photographer Devin DiSorio left the show with internships at both Sputnik and Diane von Furstenberg. "What they're capable of producing at a young age by learning as an apprentice would be really amazing," Hansen says of her students.

Notably, she has also taken care to instruct them on the entrepreneurial possibilities of photography. She recalls explaining to her students—most of them teenage children of single immigrant parents—that they could "make some money" by offering inexpensive headshots. Student Christian Rodriguez, whose photos have a painterly sensibility, swiftly set up shop in a local preschool, earning \$800 by offering packages to parents. "I'm so proud," Hansen gushes. "He has amazing talent and the willingness to go for it."

Hansen, who started out as Joe McNally's assistant 15 years ago, is now raising funds to expand and develop a curriculum that could be adopted elsewhere. "This program has completed my career," she says. "It's fueled my passion for wanting to become better at what I do." —KRIS WILTON



LEFT: "My main goal in this photo was to have an audience say, 'Wow, how did you do that?!'" says SALT student Danny Martinez of this photo of his cousin.

BELOW: A photo by Kedwein Valdez, created for an assignment to photograph living spaces.



OPPOSITE: A photo by Alicia Hansen from the SALT students' trip to Washington, DC, last summer.