

LONG AGO, FAR AWAY IS RIGHT NOW

22 June 2012 | Uncategorized | Tags: photography, Review, visual arts



Naoko Wowsugi, Group #002 University of Richmond Art Professors (Helde to Andy)

Naoko Wowsugi was born in Japan. So were her parents. And her parent's parents. Though none of them has been allowed to obtain Japanese citizenship. Wowsugi's great-grandparents were brought to Japan from Korea as laborers, but three generations later, her family still struggles for autonomy in their country of birth. This displacement and sense of being on the fringe of the established group informs Wowsugi's photography and film projects, especially *Group Portrait Journey*.

Group Portrait Journey is a series of large-format photographs in a traditional, almost banal, arrangement that illustrates how individuals from one group create connection to variable, often surprising, other groups. Wowsugi explains it best:

"In this project, I take portrait photographs of groups of people connected by some social and cultural tissue. From one group I ask a person to take me to another group to which he or she belongs. It becomes a relay. If there is a dead end, I go back to the same person and ask them to take me to a different group again.

Group Portrait Journey starts from the VCU Graduate Photography and Film Department where I belong to, and from this group, I followed my professor Heide Trepanier to the University of Richmond where she also teaches. The project expanded from there. Since the outset, I have met eighteen groups of people including young punk rock people, a bike gang, a Muslim community, suburban housewives, Girl Scouts, an anonymous company, and a Baptist Church."



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Wowsugi intends this project to be "a commitment to human kindness."

She graduated VCU in 2011 with an MFA in Photography and Film. Since then she has taught adjunct and worked within the photo and film department there. Wowsugi's multinational, multilayered, communication-focused vision brings together our vastly diverse Richmond communities in ways we would never be comfortable enough to do ourselves.



Naoko Wowsugi, Group #005 Crossroads Coffee and Ice Cream (dead-end)



Naoko Wowsugi, Group #009 Muslim Community Center (Jihad to Darcel)

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Places

- 1212 Gallery
- 1708 Gallery
- ACE Ensemble
- ADA Gallery
- African American Repertory Theatre
- Anderson Gallery
- ART 180
- Art On Wheels
- Art Works Richmond
- Artspace Gallery
- Barksdale Theatre
- Black Swan Books
- bnw dance
- Cadence Theatre Company
- Candela Books + Gallery
- CenterStage
- Chop Suey Books
- Crossroads Art Center
- Dogtown Dance Theatre
- Eric Schindler Gallery
- Firehouse Theatre Project
- Flippo Gallery
- Fountain Bookstore
- French Film Festival
- Gallery 5
- Gallery A
- Ghostprint Gallery
- Glave Kocen Gallery