



Friday, August 01, 2008

[Archive](#)[Search](#)[About YFile](#)[Contact Us](#)[Front Page](#)[Today at York](#)[York in the Media](#)[York Research](#)[Faculty Job Postings](#)[Staff Job Postings](#)

Headline News

Award-winning photography student wins trip to Milan

York visual arts student Joni Lui has just returned from an all-expenses-paid trip to Milan as one of 10 young photographers representing Toronto.

Five of Lui's images of Toronto were prize winners in the Mobile City urban photography contest launched by the city this past March. The project engages youth in community building through photography in the twinned cities of Toronto and Milan. The two cities signed a formal international alliance in 2003, undertaking to intensify their economic and cultural links.

Right: Joni Liu at the Milan Cathedral

Lui heard about the contest from a classmate in her third-year photography course.

"My friend encouraged me to enter because I do a lot of Toronto urban photography. She said the contest was perfect for me and it turns out she was right. When I told my photography instructor, Elaine Sharpe, the good news, she said: 'Go to Milan and be awesome.'"

She credits Sharpe for helping her hone her skills with the camera. "She's pushed me to accomplish something I'm proud of. Her classes made me think about photography differently."

Lui was in Milan for 11 days. It was her second trip to Europe (the first was to visit Paris), and she enjoyed every moment. "I feel so lucky to have had the chance to visit Milan," said Lui. "The architecture is gorgeous. And I really enjoyed the food. I've never eaten so much prosciutto and cheese, not to mention the gelato!"

"I was expecting a lot of glamour in the city, since it's the fashion capital," she said. "But people also seemed really laid back and relaxed. Everyone was extremely nice."

Lui's itinerary in Milan included taking in several lectures at the Contemporary Museum of Photography and attending two press conferences celebrating the launch of the contest and the winners from Toronto and Milan. Also on the itinerary were visits to galleries and museums.



Left: A shopping plaza in Milan

"The Triennale Design Museum was my favourite," Lui said. "But the best part of the trip was finally seeing *The Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci. I spent so many years in school learning about that painting and finally being able to see it was amazing."

It doesn't take a tourist attraction or timeless masterpiece to capture her photographer's eye; she's equally entranced by her own hometown.

Lui included the following statement about her work on her Mobile City profile page:

"Photography is about taking risks, exploring abandoned or busy places, and learning about yourself and others. On many occasions, I venture into the dangerous and cold night or through 12 inches of snow just to try to explore and document what a lot of people take for granted. What they sometimes fail to see is that Toronto is not just about the CN Tower. It is all the things that surround it, the things that we see every day but fail to notice. If we all just pay closer attention and appreciate what we have, we will see that Toronto is beautiful."

Right: Liu relaxing in Milan

Some of Lui's winning photographs will be published this fall in a book highlighting the Mobile City project. A public transit art exhibition called "Youth Art in Transit - A Festival on the Go!" will showcase some of the images in Toronto's subway, buses, streetcars and transit shelters during 2009.

More about the Mobile City urban photography contest

For the contest, youth aged 16 to 22 in Toronto and Milan were invited to share their dreams and insights about urban life through digital photography. Juries were appointed in each city to select the best 30 portfolios. From these, 10 photographers were chosen to travel to the twin city to participate in a group exhibit and further their photographic work.



"The Mobile City photo contest builds on our desire to build a Toronto where young people have a real opportunity to express their hopes for this great city through the arts," said Toronto Mayor David Miller.

"The contest engages youth through the art of imagery and thus gives them a platform to exchange ideas about challenges and opportunities in today's urban culture," said Rita Davies, executive director of the culture division of the City of Toronto. "Mobile City also encourages youth to develop skills and meaningful connections to their respective neighbourhoods while strengthening relationships between Toronto and Milan."

For more information, visit Toronto's Mobile City Web page.