

## Youth takes a picture

BY TYRUS CLUTTER

Questions about self and questions about how an artist communicates "self" to a broader

**Snapshots: Lives in Transition:**  
Stewart Gallery  
1322 Main St.  
433.0593  
May 15-19  
Opening reception, 6-8 p.m.  
Wednesday,  
May 16

audience frequent discussions about art. Stewart Gallery's new exhibition *Snapshots: Lives in Transition*

explores these questions.

The pieces are intimate portraits of at-risk youths from Boise's Work and Learn program. The program—run by the Boise School District, Ada County Juvenile Court and the Hays Shelter—is a unique secondary school. The artwork, while intimate, is also collaborative. Area artists Karen Bubb, Sharon

Church, Heather Ferrell and Noble Hardesty worked with these young people to help them develop their work. Media is mixed, including photography and text.

While the pieces in the exhibition are all "autobiographical" in some fashion, those parts of humanity that we all share rise to the surface and communicate effectively to the viewer.

All of the pieces in the exhibition retain a fresh, naïve quality, which has been highly sought after by many artists of recent decades. This makes these pieces quite contemporary, as does the documentary style that most of the young artists adopted. The mixture of personal photos and journal writing gives a glimpse of the personality and worldview of each subject.

The pressures from society that the artists fight and yet often succumb to are all too apparent within this body of work. The images are firmly rooted in the expected and accepted gender

roles of our culture. The males use images that are typically dark, hard, bold and tough. The females, alternately, are more colorful and decoratively expressive with flowery flourishes. The society in which these young people struggle is

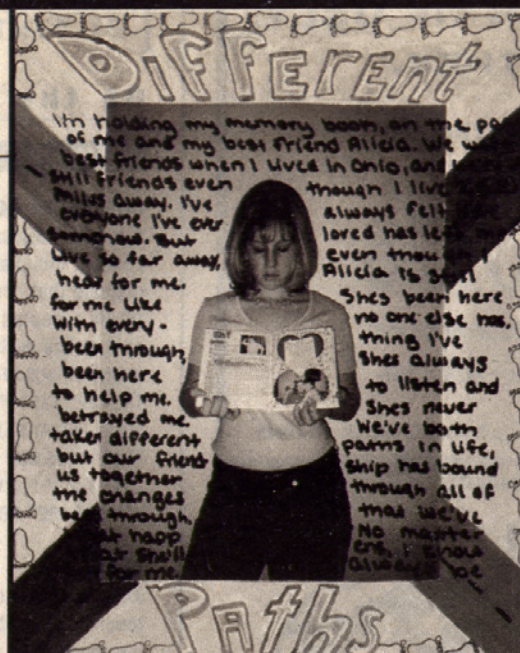
obviously a huge influence on them.

The "collage" technique of photographs, both opaque and transparent, layered with Mylar and writing becomes a metaphor. The layers are very like the layers of an individual persona.

The technique allows the viewer to separate and dissect the whole image, giving a better view of what truly makes up the full personality of the artist.

The layering is also metaphoric through the use of the opacity and transparency of images. These artists are allowing us to "see through them" at certain times. We are allowed a glimpse of what makes them who they are. However, there is not full disclosure as the aspects of opacity only allow us to see as deep as the artist will allow—some things may be too private to share.

No matter how each individual finished his or her respective piece, they themselves are the central images—they are *the* subject matter. **BW**



*Different Paths* by Lisa Gain (2001). The mixed media piece is included in *Snapshots: Lives in Transition* at Stewart Gallery through May 19.