



5 THINGS WE LOVE

Double-duty hair bands, Hawaiian-language flashcards, fresh-picked scents, killer kitchen towels, and a world of chocolate >> D2

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Colorful SuperHeadz Slim and Wide cameras are on display at treehouse in Kakaako and are part of the shop's Slim & Wide Project. The SuperHeadz were the source for the photos in the exhibit, above, which features the work of five local photographers. The public is also invited to submit favorite images. The project can be viewed at treehouse through May 3.

By Nadine Kam
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Photography buffs are falling for analog gear and methods



Nearly six months after opening his Kakaako shop, treehouse, Bobby Asato still has trouble describing it. Ostensibly, he pays the rent by selling cameras and children's art kits, but he's really promoting inspiration and creativity.

A graphic designer with 11 years of retail apparel experience, Asato began to experiment with photography seven years ago when his children, now 11 and 8, were in their early developmental stages. As a creative parent, he worried that the rise of personal digital devices was zapping children's creativity, and wondered about the long-term effects on human development.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has advised parents to eliminate screen time for children younger than 2 over concerns about learning delays and disrupted sleep. And Psychology Today reports that because child development is optimized by providing sense-stimulating experiences, screens do not provide the kind of complex aural, visual and tactile exposure that come from playing with blocks and stuffed animals or banging on pots and pans.

So Asato did his best to push his children toward old-school play.

"Just the process is important. The finished project is what people get excited about, but the journey — all the steps from using your hands to getting dirty to using your imagination — is what makes the end product special."

Finding joy in providing an enriching experience for his own children, Asato said, "I wanted to create a space for parents who want to nurture kids away from iPads and (to be) more creative thinkers."

Treehouse also carries art and photography books, T-shirts for kids and

adults, and cruiser skateboards reflecting Asato's childhood passion.

"When you're young, you have your tastes and hobbies, and that's your world, but as I grew older I wanted to explore more," he said.

In addition to sewing, drawing, coloring and even bubble-making kits and supplies, treehouse offers a variety of children's workshops in everything from screen-printing and block-printing to drawing manga.

WHILE THE art kits and workshops have found their target, the cameras have captured the imagination of an enthusiastic audience of artists and hobbyists who admire their lo-fi results.

First of all, those analog or lomographic cameras — used for artistic or experimental pho-

tography — on display are nothing like those you'd find at Best Buy: They're 35-millimeter film cameras, usually made of plastic, that look, feel and work like toys. They are throwbacks in style and attitude to the pinhole camera up through the 1970s, when film and film processing were costly, which rendered every shot precious and demanded that hobbyists take the art of photography seriously.

The digital age has minted millions of "photographers" who can point and shoot at everything, view the results instantly and share the mundane. Yeah, your doggie is cute and your lunch looks delicious, but very few pet and food shots could be considered art. And when everyone is shooting the same subjects, it's difficult to differentiate one's work from the pack.

As if to acknowledge the soulless sterility of contemporary, consumer-friendly digital photography, people have turned to filtering tools such as those available on Instagram to add a romantic, retro, melancholy or edgy vibe to their photos. This is done

through use of such digital effects as vignetting, yellowing or aging by adding a sepia tone, or adding a color filter such as blue to render a photo cold, or red to add warmth.

Then there are some who have gone further, experimenting with analog cameras to get the same results on film. The cameras enable the light leaks, streaking and imperfections of pinhole-style photography.

EVEN IF folks are not familiar with the term "lomography," if they are active on social media, chances are they have seen or shared a photo mimicking its effects.

The lomography movement takes its name from the Lomo LC-A camera that inspired a group of Viennese students in the early 1990s.

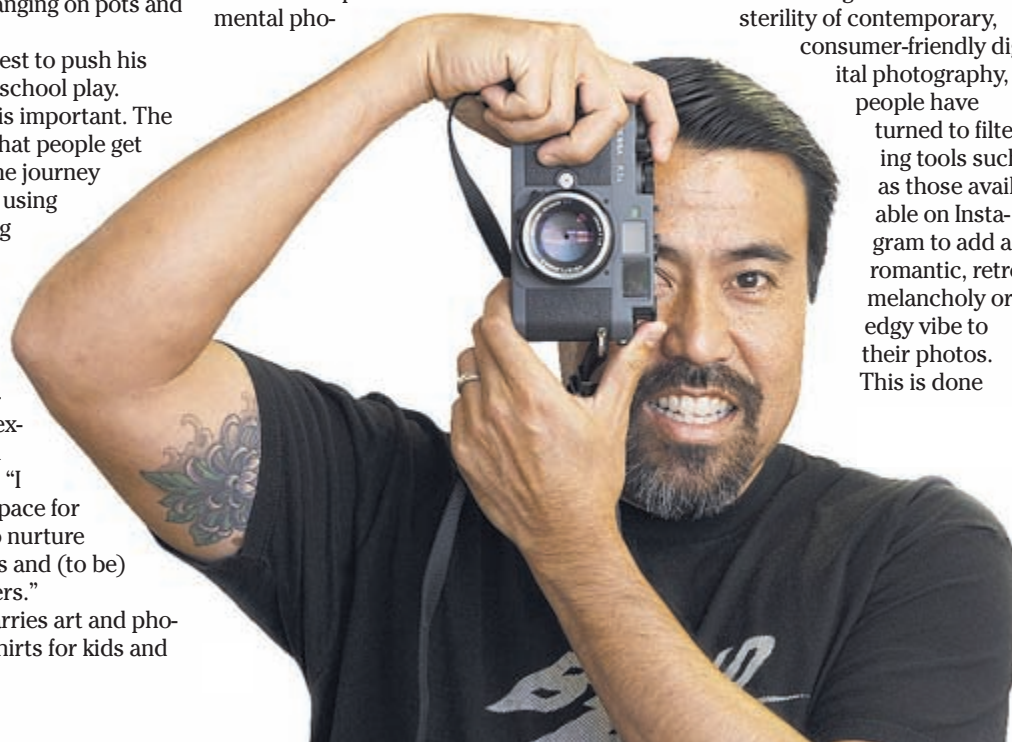
Treehouse's Asato became intrigued by the Holga and various lomo cameras after looking at photo blogs, and started shopping for them on eBay. Although he hadn't done much photography at that time, as a graphic artist he found "it helped with composition and refining one's eye."

To introduce a wider audience to lomography, Asato launched the "Slim & Wide Project," featuring the work of five photographers whose work he admired on Instagram. He gave each a \$30 SuperHeadz Slim and Wide camera to take photos, and the results are on view at treehouse through May 3.

He is also welcoming the public to submit favorite Slim and Wide photos.

The Slim and Wide camera is known for producing images with vignetting (dark corners) that are also full of contrast and saturation. The camera's

Please see TREEHOUSE, D3



Bobby Asato with one of his favorite film cameras, a Voigtlander Bessa. His shop, treehouse, offers a variety of different brands, sizes and shapes of lomographic cameras, plus types of film.

