

Inspired by essence of photography

FILM photography might not be a popular choice these days thanks to the digital boom, but for one high school student the lure of a photograph's true "essence" has inspired her.

Laura Earl, a year 11 student at Chatham High School, spent a week in Sydney as part of the HSC Art Intensive Studio Practice workshops held at the National Art School.

"It was really good, I learnt lots," Laura said of her experience.

Her week in the July school holidays will be followed by another in September to build on what she has learnt.

One of only 15 students from New South Wales undertaking the Black and White Darkroom Photography workshop, it was an intensive experience that was 100 per cent practical.

The official overview of the course from the art school states that students learn about the traditional fine art medium of black and white photography, use 35mm SLR film cameras, create negatives and then print a series

of black and white photographs in the darkroom.

Students study composition, light, tone, subject matter and editing, and undertake structured projects and exercises.

Laura, who has studied film photography at school since year nine, applied for the course on the suggestion of art teacher Rebecca Humphreys.

She was thrilled to be accepted.

Laura said she prefers film photographs over digital.

"It's more traditional and captures the essence of a photograph.

"With digital you can hyper change it on computers but with film it's the true image and you can't change it."

She also gets a buzz out of the sense of achievement you feel when you get the perfect photo.

Laura prefers photographing nature and landscapes and chose to focus on those subjects while using the roll of film she had during her week in Sydney.

"We could choose anything as long as we directed the shot, for



Chatham High's Laura Earl with one of the photographs she has processed from her experience at the National Art School.

example purposely directed the people in it.

"I chose to photograph buildings from certain angles."

Her current assignment, to be complete by the time she returns

in September, is to shoot three rolls of film.

She has borrowed the school's film camera as she doesn't have one of her own and they can be hard to come by.