

CAPI 2025 Project: Disposable Camera, Indisposable Memories

For those that haven't met me or read my blogs, my name is Tristan. I am a fourth year Pacific and Asian studies student, and was given the opportunity through CAPI to intern in Japan as a research assistant at Ehime University. Working under Shiba-sensei, a professor for the Interfaculty Graduate School of Regional Resilience, was a lot of putting together presentations, sitting in on lectures, aiding in English translation, joining in business trips/field research, and shadowing him throughout the day. Shiba-sensei, like the rest of the experience, was an unforgettable person to work under, and I am truly jealous of all future interns that get to meet him this upcoming year.

Now for my Capstone project. I'll be honest, I was scrambled and totally lost on what I wanted to do. I'm not the most creative person, and sometimes struggle when it comes to expressing myself. I loved doing photography, but felt that using my phone would be low effort, and uninspired. The first iteration of my capstone project planned to use an old digital camera I found at a second-hand store, but unfortunately modern day SD cards were too large and too fast for the camera, so it refused to power on whenever I would insert one. So it was back to the drawing board. After nearly a month of going back and forth on ideas, I finally started to bounce ideas off other interns to help get the creative juices flowing. After a while, I decided I wanted to do something similar to the digital camera, but maybe a little lower tech. The project I settled on ended up being the one you're looking at on this site! The goal of the project was to use a disposable film camera, and try to capture every core moment, memory, place, and person I could during my time in Japan. However, to capture an aged look for the photos, I decided to risk "damaging" the cameras' film to fade the colors, and make the photos more granular by having the camera go through several security x-rays at airports I was passing through. The reason I wanted to do this was mostly aesthetic, but I also wanted to toy around with this visual

style as it wasn't something I had experience with. Me and my mom are both very passionate about photography, but because film cameras are normally quite expensive, and phones/digital cameras were generally more convenient to use, I never had the chance to try out capturing photos with film. The other challenge I was forced to impose on myself was I only had one-shot to capture something. Due to being limited to 27 photos, every photo had to be special to me, and I wouldn't be allowed to see how well the photos came out months after they were taken.

Ironically though, I started out wanting to capture things and places from daily life; my home on a mundane laundry day, the university I worked at, places in Matsuyama I would often walk around, etc. I wanted to start off with this as I knew if I only took photos of "special" events, then I wouldn't have captured the essence of the city I called home. Matsuyama, compared to other cities in Japan I got to visit, is rather laidback. It still had that strong, determined, constantly working atmosphere you can find in other urban Japanese cities, but people seemed more relaxed. It was peaceful. Which is what I wanted to capture with the first set of photos. Unfortunately, a recurring mistake I made was trying to take photos at night or in rooms that were not "perfectly" lit. I was generally told to avoid taking photos at night, as even with flash they won't come out too great. Unfortunately, I elevated the issue by making the photos more granular, and fading the colors. This led to a "haunted" 7-11 photo, and the only picture I had with just me, Shiba-sensei, and Kakegawa-san, Shiba-sensei's assistant that I became close friends with during my placement, to become near unrecognizably faded.

Most of the other photos were of the people that made this experience special. This meant taking LOTS of group photos with the Thai students, my PBL team, Shiba-sensei's high school students, and my fellow CAPI interns. Each and every person in these photos has had a far deeper impact on me than I can even begin to describe. The Thai students were some of the funniest, and kindest people I've ever gotten to meet, and it tears me apart knowing I likely won't get another opportunity to be with them again. Shiba-sensei and Kakegawa-san quite literally MADE the whole experience, as I was with them nearly every single day of my placement. My

PBL team and Shiba-sensei's high school students, while I didn't get to work with them too often, hold a lot of my most unique memories from the placement, that gave me a lot to think about. Last but not least, there are the CAPI interns, my friends.

When I first met them, I honestly didn't know how to feel. They all seemed like super stars to me, all so passionate about their internship, confident, smart, and outgoing. I was intimidated, and wondered "why did Robyn even accept me into this program" many times when these people seemed so much more ready. Regardless of my thoughts on this, I got to learn more about them. Over time, they weren't just passionate, confident, smart, and outgoing. They were also nervous, some were scared to fail, some didn't make the wisest decisions, some had some pretty dark times, but all of us were able to overcome them, and all of us were able to cry. The people that I once held on a pillar as a goal to achieve became my equals. Rather, it is better to say we always were equals, even from the start. The last photos of the album are from the reintegration party, and was the last time we would all be in the same room together.

If there was one regret that I had during this project, besides the lighting, it was that I wish I could have taken more photos, captured more memories so that I could share them with you. 27 photos is nowhere near enough to capture everything that I got to experience. Thank you so much to CAPI and Robyn for the experience, and opportunity to do this. These memories will be indisposabe.

Image 1: Home on Laundry Day



Image 2: A view you won't get tired of seeing



Image 3: The stream back home



Image 4: A Fresh Fall start in Canada, but only halfway through the school year here in Japan



Image 5: “Now stopping at Sekijuji-Byoin-Mae”



Image 6: Stairs that I'd kill to climb again (but my knees might kill me)



Image 7: It's pronounced Okaido. Not Hokkaido



Image 8: Sunset near my favorite shrine and where I found true tranquility



Image 9: Fall at Matsuyama Castle and how I learned to love the disposable camera

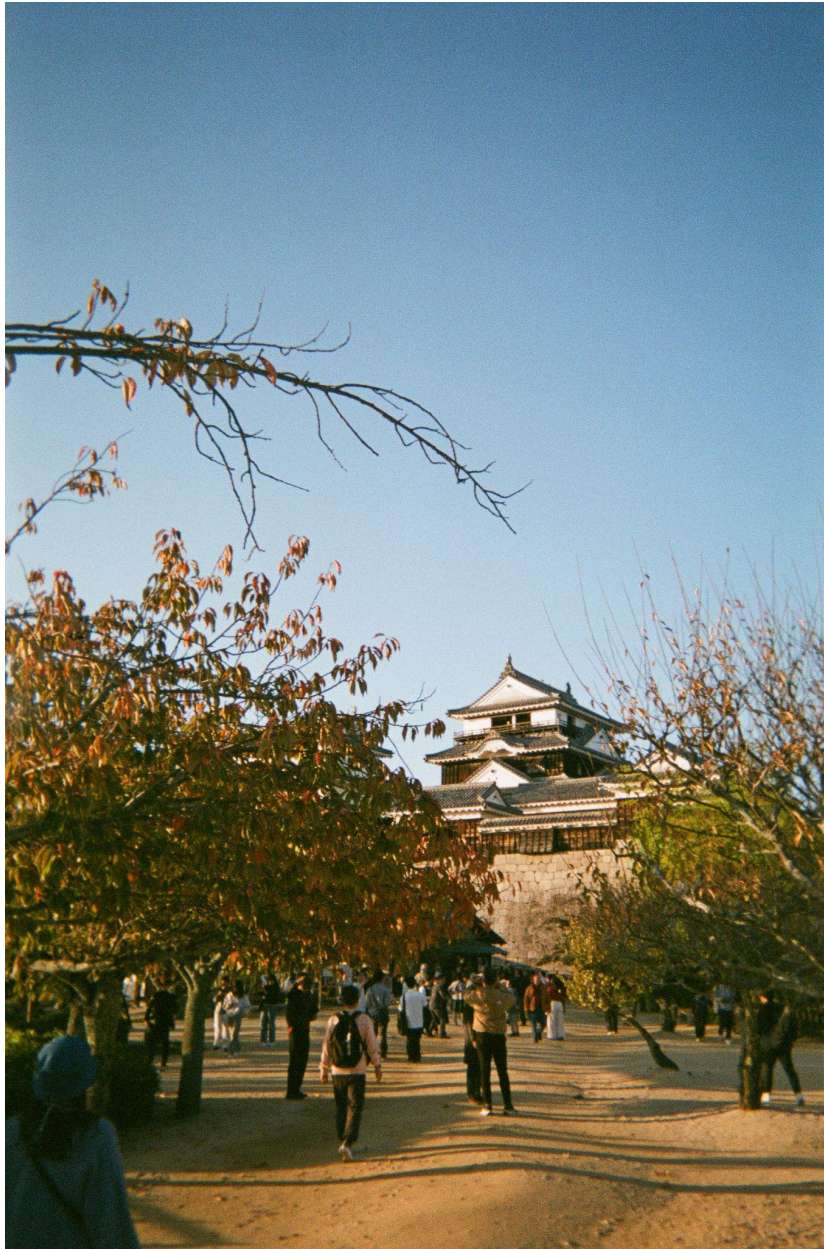


Image 10: Pachinko. A peaceful walk in Matsuyama's night life



Image 11: The ominous 7/11 (Home of the best Tamago Sando in Japan)



Image 12: Highschool Disaster Preparedness and Pizza time! Making pizza with water and a plastic bottle.



Image 13: Last Supper (with the Thai Students)



Image 14: Last Supper (with the Thai Students) reversed



Image 15: PBL Squad and vibe Coding friendship



Image 16: Instagrammable dock tracks [so Spirited Away]



Image 17: The consequences of Instagrammable dock tracks [not so Spirited Away]



Image 18: Shimonada Station, A thoughtful day full of thoughts



Image 19: The last photo I have to remember Shiba-sensei and Kakegawa-san (never take photos in a dark alley)



Image 20: Sayonara Matsuyama (and a very merry Christmas to you)



Image 21: HI ROBYN! Kabukicho with a surprising guest!



Image 22: I swear the room wasn't THAT dark (Reintegration party)



Image 23: Just a bunch of cozy interns



Image 24: Oi who stole my camera! (Malcolm 🙌, Hannah 😊, Mirai 👁👁)



Image 25: Santiago Jump Scare



Image 26: CAPI 2025 Interns (I promise this room was well lit)



Image 27: I will seriously miss all of you. Thank you for making this experience so special.

