

# RSF native travels south for new documentary 'Sacred Geometry'

*Editor's Note: The following story ran in a previous issue of the Review, but the reporter was not able to include these photos, due to a family emergency.*

By Whitney Youngs

After spending three years in the Yucatán Peninsula and parts of Central America, RSF native Elizabeth Upton is just about ready to lock herself away in a dark studio for the editing and post production phase of her new documentary "Sacred Geometry," which examines the unique life and times of the Mayas as it relates to numbers, the universe, their architecture and their deep connection with nature. The documentary's music is scored by Rancho Santa Fe-based businessman Daniel Gonzalez. Upton is hoping to finish the work by late 2007 or early 2008.

According to the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, "Sacred geometry can be described as a belief system attributing a religious or cultural value to many of the fundamental forms of space and time."

"Sacred Geometry is nature's equation – it's what we can see and find in everything around us. It was a sacred science that lasted until the Renaissance and for some reason it dropped off, and I was curious to find out why," said Upton about her decision to produce the documentary. "It's looking at [the concept] through the lens of the Mayan consciousness, but also a great universal lens and what we can learn from that and why that's important to implement the knowledge in our lives."

Upton heard of Gonzalez, who migrated to the U.S. from Mexico City more than 10 years ago and now owns Smart Auto Detail in the RSF Village, from a friend in the business who is an independent producer and has worked with him in the past.

"I was living in Northern California at that point and I sent him an email, and he sent me one back, and it was just so warm. He later sent me a demo and I loved it and he invited me to have dinner at his house with him and his wife," recalled Upton about hooking up with Gonzalez. "Unfortunately, I wasn't in the area and so mainly it was corresponding through email for a matter of about eight months and then when we finally met it just felt like family."

Gonzalez has worked on film scores in the past and fairly recently finished one for a film called "The Enemy" that was to open in Berlin, Germany, this year. He also wrote music for a Logitech commercial and is now working on the music for "Sacred Geometry." Upton, 25, graduated from UC Davis with a degree in anthropology and film – as one of its first majors – in 2003.

"I helped create my own film major, Davis didn't have one before so I helped write and create it and now they have one," said Upton.

Upton, who speaks fluent Spanish, lived in Mexico as a foreign-exchange student to learn the language and live with a family. At that point, she had already produced a few documentaries, including one on the Grand Canyon. Upton has won awards at film festivals for her works "Romania: Paint the Door Open" and "Ecogeomorphology." The former is about the struggles of Romanian orphans and the programs that help them, while the latter is a about of group of Davis students majoring in various fields – ecogeomorphology is the combined study of ecology, geology and biology – traveling down the Colorado River as they conduct research.

"I went there and purposely didn't bring my camera," recalled Upton about her foreign-exchange experiences, and who visited a site named Uxmal that brought her to tears.

"There was this feeling I had that was just so very deep and I didn't know what it was or could understand it, but I was overwhelmed in all senses of the word and I knew I had to come back and figure out why."

On the plane ride home, Upton met a bona fide cryptologist who for the last 20 years had been working on dissecting the meaning of the Mayan numerical and symbolic codes and told her Sacred Geometry is the language of the universe.

"Mayans would build temples with the same design portions as our own bodies. You look at the structures, and it's aesthetically pleasing and you don't really quite know why but with Sacred Geometry you can break it down and see the dynamic proportions that are embedded within those buildings and it makes sense," said Upton. "It's the same thing that's on a nautilus shell or a pine cone, or an orange when you cut it open or a flower's petals, and somehow along the way that knowledge didn't get passed down enough, it's kind of outside of us."

She has since taken on the role of the traveling gypsy as upon graduation Upton decided to forge ahead with the documentary and lived in the Yucatán Peninsula for eight months and most recently traveled to the several Central American countries such as Guatemala. She was able to connect with some Mayans still living there who she said still speak an ancient dialect. A family invited Upton into their home and told her about the story of how they make their clothes and the meaning of the symbols on them.

"I wanted to get a feel of what they do on a daily basis and where they live on a more anthropological basis," said Upton. "It's kind of hard because they are very closed to the idea of cameras and filming, and I can understand why a lot of filmmakers don't go there."

In between her filming, Upton has been staying with friends in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York City and with her parents who live near the San Diego Polo Club fields in Rancho Santa Fe.

"Really, for three years, I've been on the road ever since I graduated college," said Upton. "Now I am looking to set up my studio so I am either looking at Los Angeles or San Francisco and when I get set up I anticipate seven months of editing and post production."

For more information on Upton and her new documentary, visit [www.elizabethupton.com](http://www.elizabethupton.com).



(Above) Elizabeth Upton (right) with a Mayan woman and (right) Upton filming.



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