

2010/11 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships

AIGA DC Continuum Fund Scholarship



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Graphic Design
Senior
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I was born in a small farm town of Hue, Vietnam. My parents immigrated to the United States when I was two. They wanted their children to have a better future than they had growing up. Moving to a new country wasn't the easiest way to achieve this goal. I grew up on welfare, food stamps, and just about every other kind of government-assisted program possible. Though my parents had no formal education, they knew that school would be the way their kids could make something of their lives.

Early in my education, my teachers recognized a creative energy in me. I took this encouragement and went to an art magnet high school, where I focused on drawing, painting and design. When applying for colleges, the only school for me was the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) in Baltimore. My parents are really conservative and didn't like the idea of me going to an art school. They thought the only way I could be successful was to pursue a career in medicine or law. So, with no support from my family emotionally and financially, I had to figure out a way to fund my own education. I began to research organizations that helped students fund degrees in the arts and this is how I am funding my education today.



Worldstudio
FOUNDATION



the professional association for design

I never knew what graphic design was until I came to college. For my entire life, I was surrounded and influenced by design without realizing it. Now, as a designer, I have the power to affect the way people perceive things and reach a broader audience. A new passion for visual communication is emerging, and it is up to me to use it in a way that has impact.



I am now into my junior year of college and working at my second internship. I currently work at a local design firm, doing publication design for nearby universities. Clients for this design firm usually request annual newsletters or mailers. As much as I love designing beautiful things, this internship really makes me question the role designers play in the grander scheme of social responsibility. Are we only using our innovative thinking and problem-solving skills for corporate benefit, or can we have a greater impact on society? This question led me to explore different classes and causes that bring a new perspective to my role as a designer.



I am now part of MICA's Design Coalition. We are dedicated to helping the citizens of East Baltimore find resources to help sustain services for their community. We work directly with the Men and Families Center to re-strategize their brand identity so they can develop more funding to help former inmates in need. This kind of design is not only satisfying, but is design for the greater good. Coming from poverty, I know what it's like to live in a community where you feel like a stereotype and can't escape from the circumstances you were born into. I am proof that dedication and hard work can get you where you want to be. Art education and design thinking have encouraged me to pursue my passions and I am committed to doing the same for others. I will continue to work with design organizations to strategize development for low-income communities like East Baltimore.

