

2013/14 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Coyne Family Foundation Honorable Mention



DOUGAN KHIM
Graphic Design
Freshman
School of the Art Institute of Chicago



I was admitted to college for the fall of 2009 but deferred for two years because with both my parents unemployed, I was unable to attend. During the summer, I interned as an ad designer at a clothing boutique. As the summer ended, I was hired as a graphic designer at a firm in Rochester, New York. My boss was impressed and chose me over 100 college graduate applicants, noting my potential as a professional designer. At 18, I moved to Rochester alone for six months and developed my skills in web, print and presentation design. My boss, who was my first mentor, was very important in developing my foundation in professional design.

In early 2010, I moved back to Chicago and began working as a freelance designer. I was hired by start-up companies and created a reputation in small business circles. I reconnected with an owner of a clothing brand I admired. He helped me expand my network in Chicago and allowed me to create apparel for “Ends/Wealth Corp.” Throughout 2010, I supported myself through a variety of different design projects



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for investment firms, businesses, musicians and popular music festivals. Hungry to express myself as an artist, I learned traditional oil painting under a mentor in Chicago. He exposed me to a foundation in fine arts and helped me realize the importance of an education in art school despite my modest but consistent professional success. Since 2010, I've painted on a daily basis.

In 2011, I was approached by a friend from my high school about developing the brand image for his socially conscious start-up, Moral Fibers. Fashion is often adopted from art in the third world and the true artists never get credit. Our goal was to create a direct relationship between the consumer and poor artists by creating clothing and giving most of our profits back to the artist. He presented me with a variety of art works he bought in Haiti and asked me to develop the brand image. I designed the logo, clothing and website and controlled all other visuals for the company. While I was with Moral Fibers for half a year, my experience in creative directing and managing expanded; I learned a lot about starting an arts-based company and developing a solid, structured brand image.

After Moral Fibers, I continued to find work as a designer and was asked to join a creative firm in Chicago, Creative Circle. Creative Circle is my safety net and finds work for me if I need it. I met with a shoe company and designed a shoe for them. They presented the shoe at a fashion trade show in Las Vegas and it was the most asked-for Bucketfeet shoe.

