

2012/13 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Kraus Family Foundation Award



JESSICA CHAN

Fine Art

Junior

University of California Santa Barbara



I am an artist. I am also a lower-middle class, American-born Chinese woman. My artwork stems from all the components of my identity, which comes with certain obstacles that I have had to overcome. Each difficulty shapes my character and opens my eyes to issues that need to be challenged and resolved.

I am proud to be an artist, but the journey was long and difficult. In most Asian communities, art is seen only as a hobby, due to the stigma that it rarely leads to financial security. I abandoned art after elementary school but returned to art late in high school and had to fight through those deep-seated fears. By applying to college as an art major, I chose to defy the negative messages and overcome my doubts.

I am a book arts major, a field I have chosen to pursue due to the democratic qualities of print- and book-making. I want to bring art to the people. I am increasingly aware of the injustices in this world and compelled to create art that goes beyond the visual to combat oppression. It carries the lessons that I have gleaned from living as a marginalized minority and empowers others to participate in the fight for equality.



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I recently completed a piece with a diverse team of six students. We worked together to carve a 5' x 25' linoleum cut and invited the community and campus to witness the inking and steamroller printing of it. The final print features imagery of hands coming together to weave a quilt from yarn balls that are chained down by "isms" such as racism, ageism, classism, sexism and ableism. We envision progress against oppression succeeding through the building of allies across different identity groups.



I also maintain a personal art practice. The starting points of my work come from my experiences as a student, woman and minority. One series is based on the traditional Chinese practice of foot binding and is a statement about the continual subjection—visible and hidden—of Asian women. I also do small installation works, one of which was a letterpress printed piece that addressed cultural stereotypes through the subversion of the familiar fortune cookie image. I am privileged to see the world through a bi-cultural lens and I want to use it to inspire and encourage others.

The work that I produce is an extension of who I am, what I have experienced, and communicates what I care about. I am committed to work in a position that allows me to use my art to serve others. I will continue on as an active participant in the community and expand on the work that I have successfully started in school.

