

# 2013/14 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships AIGA-Tomoko Miho Award/Anonymous Award



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I am a designer. Plain and simple. Ever since I can remember, I have always had a fascination with typography, imagery and layout. I reflect back on one of my earliest design projects, a book I designed in 7th grade. Based on the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series, I remember collecting all the clipart graphics and laying out the text in Microsoft Word. I was so adamant about getting the cover design right because of all the terrible books I had seen from students in my class (where the type was extra large or was set in a weird WordArt style). I knew I just had to get this right. And I did. With my keen attention to detail, I was able to use my Magic Markers to replicate the Chicken Soup font on the front cover of my book.



Since that time, I have evolved greatly both as a designer and as a person. Through my school and professional experiences, I have learned my voice is important and what I have to say matters. And I have learned I no longer need Microsoft Word to do the job. One thing that has remained the same is my approach to every new design project. I want to make an impact on the viewer that will stimulate conversation and discussion. One example of this was my senior thesis project at the University of Connecticut.



## KELLY WALTERS

Graphic Design



It started as an exploration of my family ancestry and lineage. My thesis, entitled “Black,” was a collection of five printed books and one audiobook that explored various facets of my identity and the color black. Each book was an examination of my identity in terms of physical attributes, printed words, definitions, expressions and responses to being black; in terms of who I am, who I have become, how I perceive myself and how others perceive me as a young black woman. I attempted to demonstrate the complexity associated with, and the significance of, being black and American. I want to continue to create work like this, because I am forced to think critically about my own personal experiences both culturally and academically. I am able to raise questions on topics that are often too painful to explore, thereby strengthening the integrity of my design.



I am always thinking, assessing and engaging in design discourse—whether it’s hand-cutting my own pattern stamps, designing corporate work for my clients or more recently, teaching freshmen design students. As an adjunct graphic design professor at a very multicultural university, I am directly impacting the growth of student designers. It gives me the opportunity to impart as much information as I can to help inspire the next generation of designers (many of whom remind me of myself when I was an undergrad). After I get my MFA, I plan to continue to teach. I want to be thoroughly well-versed in all things design. I know this education will provide further foundation for me to continue to challenge and expand my design process and make me a stronger designer and educator overall.

