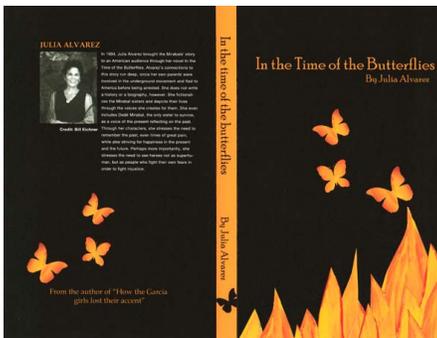


2012/13 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships AIGA DC Continuum Award



LAURA GUZMAN AGUILAR
Graphic Design
Sophomore
University Of Maryland, Baltimore



I came to America four years ago with the idea of making the best out of my future. I left family, friends and traditions and enrolled in college. I got into the graphic design program with an Associate's Degree being my short-term goal. I was living on my own and struggling as a full-time student with a full-time job. But to me, hard work wasn't a problem; it was my pathway to success.

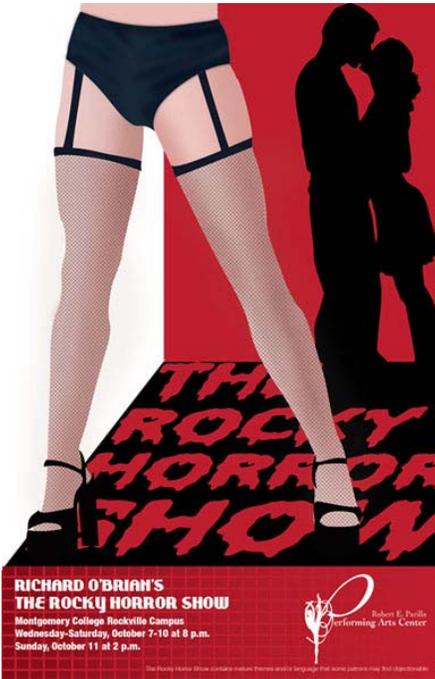


Soon, however, the real struggle began; I learned that being Hispanic had negative implications. I just couldn't leave my culture behind and simply blend with others. I had a stereotype on my shoulders. I was often judged by my accent. I was the victim of racist comments and attitudes that discouraged me from staying in America. A few months later I found out my younger brother was diagnosed with hearing loss. This challenge would change my family's life forever.



LAURA GUZMAN AGUILAR

Graphic Design



I had deeply fallen in love with my career and I knew graphic design was what I wanted to do. In 2011 I returned to Bolivia to complete a graphic design internship during the summer in an organization that works with people with disabilities. I was part of a new program for the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities. Using graphic design to promote a cause that was important to me was the most rewarding experience I went through. The realization that graphic design could be more than a passion and be used as a tool to promote a cause changed my life.

A few months later, my mom and brothers decided to come to the US to give my hard-of-hearing brother the best opportunities. I got a job offer as a Spanish interpreter—working with Hispanic families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children—while I transition from Montgomery College to earning my bachelor's degree in Visual Arts at University of Maryland, Baltimore.

When I first came to America, I thought I had left my family and culture behind to achieve a better life, but I was wrong. Life's twists and turns put me on the right path, where I am able to do what I love: design not only for an individual purpose but to communicate and promote positive changes and celebrate our differences. And that is what I will continue to do. As an interpreter, I interact with Latinos and I know that as great a country as America is, it still needs to better acknowledge diversity. I interact with the deaf community and I know people still need to know the beauty of being different. I could never turn my back on my family or my heritage. It is who I am and it is the best of me. I am going to tell it to everyone and I will do it the best way I know: by doing graphic design.

