Six years after graduating college with a geology degree, I found myself pursuing a goal I never would have foreseen while wearing that cap and gown: becoming a graphic designer. I had nursed a casual interest in art since my childhood in Kenya, where opportunities for arts in the schools were scarce. I learned drawing and painting in when I got to the States, but it wasn’t until college that I found myself drawn to typography, but by then I was immersed in science and could not see a way to reconcile the seemingly disparate interests of my right and left brain.

After college I worked as an assistant petrology curator at a museum, where I got the chance to create materials and tools to help me complete tasks efficiently and make resources visually accessible to others — in short, to design. I began how design is used to address key social and environmental crises and spur technological and cultural progress. I decided that was a world I wanted to join, and that I wanted to use my abilities to serve a greater interest.
Graphic design has the potential to be a greater, more incisive influence on our world and culture. My goal as a designer is to be in a position where I can pair my desire to effect social change with my visual communication skill to find creative, effective and lasting solutions to crucial problems. As I researched the graphic design history, I found that same urge expressed by countless designers, perhaps most articulately in the “First Things First Design Manifesto.” A small group of designers called for a shift away from commercial work and towards design that had more enduring meaning to humanity. It states: “There are pursuits more worthy of our...skills. Unprecedented environmental, social and cultural crises demand our attention....We propose a reversal of priorities in favor of more useful, lasting and democratic forms of communication.”

I found the Manifesto to be wholly compelling. It articulated not only the breadth of experiences in which design could play an invaluably edifying role, but also my need to find a way to use my talent to address a greater good. I can imagine redirecting the immense tidal pull of consumption in this country towards a nobler goal, and having as much recognition of and loyalty to a social or environmental cause as a brand name.

This is the kind of work I want to do. I admire, and hope to one day work with, groups like the Center for Urban Pedagogy, which with their Making Policy Public program brings together design professionals and community advocates and policymakers to devise educational projects about public policy. I am interested in using design as a way to discuss consumerism, inequity, and social and scientific progress. To that end, I plan to pursue opportunities to pair with non-profit organizations working for social and environmental improvements, and to further their efforts and expand their audiences by using design to “sell” innovative ideas that will benefit society.
I am everywhere. I’m the woman next to you on the subway. I’m the boy running with his friends in the park. I’m the girl in front of you at the market. Throughout your city, I’m there – a child of immigrants. We are many and we are all different, but our stories start the same: two people sacrificing everything they have just to give their children a better life, education and opportunities.

Like many Korean-American kids, my parents own a small business. Dry Cleaners, liquor stores, deli’s – the story is essentially the same. They each work 14 hours a day, their faces and bodies aged with exhaustion, trying to decide if electricity is more important than gas this month while struggling to make rent as they laugh at the thought of a break. It’s a heartbreaking sight that I have seen for over 20 years, and it’s what drives me to succeed so that I can one day help others who share my story.

For the past four years I have been trying to attend college. I have been accepted to three schools, but I’ve been unable to afford the expense. Although I did receive...
some supplementary government aid, it was insufficient to cover tuition. And so
months turned to years and I’d defer enrollment until I could no longer, and yet
I’d still try, hope, wish. This application is a mark of my persistence - another try,
another hope at a real shot at a future as an artist.

A few months ago I was accepted to Art Center College of Design - my dream
school. Unfortunately my excitement quickly met the grim reality with which I’ve
repeatedly been faced; how will I make tuition. If I do not attend this year, it will
be the third time I have watched my dream dissolved by financial difficulty. It’s
the most desolate feeling for which I do not want any child to experience.

If you bestow this scholarship upon me, you will set me on the path to my life’s
goal: to succeed as an innovative and socially conscious designer with thought-
provoking work, and to develop a program for low-income children who exhibit
a strong creative vision, yet do not have the means to go forward – a place where
professional artists and students can volunteer to teach kids how to draw, paint and
design - luxuries I, and many, could not afford. Through donor support, bi-yearly
art exhibitions/sales, community outreach, and an online store (featuring original
art to be applied to bags, shirts, etc.), I know I can make this endeavor grow into a
strong, nurturing program for these communities. It’s my wish to foster their talent
until they have the tools and drive to believe in their ability – maybe even produce
a body of work that will earn them a coveted scholarship, and one day come back to
share their talent and knowledge at the center that helped them.

I believe art has the power to bring life and meaning into the lives of the
disheartened, broken, lonely, and hopeless – feelings many children of low-
income families face every day. While poverty will always exist, it is my dream to
lessen the impact it has and increase the creative hope that is hard to see when
you’re struggling. I want them to know that through their art, anything is possible.
I’m a 24 year old male from Guayaquil, Ecuador. After a rough journey in my former country, my parents decided to immigrate to United States hoping for better living opportunities for me and my three brothers. We arrived in the fall of 1999 to the neighborhood of Bushwick with the hopes of finding an affordable place to live. Being a foreigner in United States is always a challenge, and my parents certainly had hard times finding a job to support our family due to their limited command of the English language. We were a low-income family without any opportunities besides government-assisted programs. On the other hand, since we were a low-income family and because we were new to America my parents did not know how the educational system was structured and how it could affect us in the future. This resulted in a poor choice of public school district for my brothers and I. Even if they were aware they could have never afforded a charter or private school.

Since then, I have been playing catch up with my education. In 2007, I enrolled myself in a two-year program at TCI in New York City by borrowing money and
working more than two jobs to cover all expenses. Thanks to the extra mile I was able to earn my first degree in Digital Media Arts. After a year or so from my graduation, I was able to relocate to a better job position and to continue pursuing a higher education. Although this time was not only towards my own needs, but for the needs of my family. Yes, I’m a young father of two beautiful sons. My first son Bryant was born in 2005 and three years later Daniel Jr. was born. My family is my greatest inspiration and the base of all my achievements. Bryant, Daniel and my beautiful wife Eva give me the strength not only to continue advancing towards a higher degree, but to become a better person. Because of them and diligent work ethic, I’m a junior student at The School of Visual Arts. Unfortunately, I’m financially unable to attend my senior year, putting my career on hold. I have used all the resources I could possible obtain to pay my tuition, but I still have a big gap to fill. Therefore, I’m desperately in need of scholarships like this one to help me on my way.

While attending SVA and working full time I have realized how lucky I have been, and recognized the strength my family and community have provided me efforts to succeed in this competitive industry. Unlike me, there are young dreamers that do not have the kind of support I have had, and cannot afford a higher education. For that reason, I have stayed in contact with the previous schools I’ve attended and we have set up few summer programs to help younger minorities to achieve a higher education. I have been requested upon my graduation, to become a member of the teaching staff at TCI. It will be an honor to give back to the community with all the help I have received from them. As of today, I’m a member of the students Alumni at TCI giving frequent speeches to encourage others to accomplish what I’m trying to achieve.
I have known my niche is graphic design for about 3 years now and it has been amazing working in school trying to better my design skills. In my last school my experiences there has got me ready to be a graphic designer and Moore College of Art & Design is going to make me a graphic designer. This is the great part of it. I have been able to see designers on two different levels. The designers in community college preparing us to transfer to four-year schools to be ready to design and the designers in four-year schools making us become successful designers.

The community college route has not only saved me a bit of money but also has saved me some time. My professors at The School of Art + Design at Montgomery College in Takoma Park, Maryland has made sure that before they sent me off to a four-year
CourTney lA PrInCe
Graphic Design

School that graphic design is actually something that I’m good at, and not something I just want to do. For me personally, I don’t want to waste time doing something career wise just for money or just because. I want to do something because I’m good at it and I have the passion for it. That’s how I feel about graphic design.

For my career goals, being a graphic designer/photographer is something that I would really like to be. I would like to work in advertising being both the designer and the photographer after I have graduated from school. However, my dream is to work in TV/Film doing the same thing. I would really like to work for Pixar and I’m going to be applying for their Internship in summer 2012. I would also like to own my own business but not just a graphic design business but a designers’ business. I would like to have a design firm that houses all the designers from fashion design, to the graphic design, illustrators, photographers, interior designers and even 2-D fine artists. I want it to be like one-stop shop type of thing, with some friends of mine that I will meet along that way into my career as a designer.

In the future I see myself as a designer who gives back to the youth, particularly the foster youth. I was a foster child from the age of ten until I aged out at 21. Only about 3% of foster youth go and graduate from college. I want to be that designer who can say that I was a foster child and I graduated from college. I want to tell the foster youth coming up behind me that they can also graduate from college and make their dreams come true. I also want to start a foundation for foster youth who are interested in art. Regardless of what kind of art that might be, my main goals would be to encourage them to finish school, help get them a mentor who is in that particular field and will allow them to shadow them, and also I would like to have scholarships for these youth to be able to go to any school of their choice. I wish I had that type of resource when I was younger but now I can make a resource like that for the youth that’s younger than me.
BREANNA ANDERSON-PEREZ  
Graphic Design  
Freshman  
California College of the Arts  

A junior in high school, no idea what I wanted to do after high school, I was referred by my young sister to take the visual communications class available at my high school. I had no clue what visual communications was but she had told me that I’d “be good at it”, whatever ‘it’ was. I walked into the class and Mr. Schaller, the instructor, was giving a lecture; I believe in that moment he had been explaining the golden ratio. I left class that day knowing that my life was making a turn for the better. Now a senior in high school, I do want to do something after I graduate. I want to go to college, I want to go to CCA. I want to become a designer.

I live in a small town that has nothing to offer, except for maybe the gift of life or taking the forbidden way to “reach the clouds”. I have seen the same thing happen everyday for as long as I have lived here, which unfortunately has been my entire life. I have had few opportunities to go see the ‘real world’, but I have dissected those visits and am doing my best to incorporate my new perspectives into my
BREANNA ANDERSON-PEREZ
Graphic Design

design work. I would like to get the chance to gain even new experiences, thus the reason CCA is my number one school of choice. In a city like San Francisco how can one not be inspired?

I am determined to become a designer and beautify the world we live in. It is personally frustrating seeing street signs with fonts that do nothing but confuse people. I have done everything I had to do so far to accomplish my goal of getting a degree in design, putting design before everyone and everything else.
My life has consisted of living and standing under the oath of the cultural rules that have been set upon me to follow. I couldn’t possibly describe the miserable outcome I had because of this. I am a Muslim. My parents are originally from Yemen where it has been to follow men. This corruption of culture bounded women to have less say than men. It always seemed to be the “men’s world.”

Years ago, I stereotyped my own religion asking myself, “Why is Islam so bad to women? Why did God put me beneath men’s feet?” I hated my this part of my life. My dad retired after suffering a severe heart attack causing him to have a heart transplant. Money was now an issue. My mom was taken away from me and 7 other siblings, and as the oldest, I was the one who had to take care of the household. It was the hardest time for me.

Majoring in Art and Religious Studies changed my view of the whole world. I studied Islam and came to realize how ridiculous I was. My religion was never the cause for this oppression. It was culture. I couldn’t believe how culture has misshaped Islam. The media blasting Islam to be this terror religion when in fact, it’s the complete
opposite. That is when I realized what I wanted to do with my life: Correct the stereotypes and misconceptions the world has for my religion and end this cultural corruption that caused my and many Muslim girls’ lives to be in complete anguish.

Sometimes I would hide my voice because of the side effects this culture caused me. After discovering what was happening to me, I couldn’t continue in this way. I convinced many Muslim girls to re-open the MSA, Muslim Student Association, in the University of CSUB. I devoted myself to spread the news of the true teachings and understanding of Islam to end the cultural rules against women and correct the misconceptions people worldwide had of Islam. As the publicist of the MSA, I advertise the club’s events with symbolic meanings. Graphic Design, Photography, Paintings, and Video Art always been my passion and basing my art on religion with such meaningful statements has always been my way of expressing.

I want to create an effective outcome with my art not only to the community but to the whole world, but I’m limited to what I have. I don’t come from a wealthy family. I try my very best to create any type of art with things I can afford. I want to have a meaning in my life. I want to spread awareness of sufferings behind closed doors of women who live their lives under cultural bounds. I want them open their minds and make them realize that there is another choice, not only to Muslim women but to every woman. Since there’s so much conflict in this world because of the corruption of “Islamic” religions, I want to help spread the real religion and to show that this life is not to be judged by others but only to God and to live life with full potential, and I want my art to be reason for this effect.
In the beginning, there was finger-paint. And crayons. And tape. I cannot remember a time when I did not want to be an artist. I think, dream, read, speak, act, dress, write and even worship visually. Both of my parents have artistic backgrounds. As my mother homeschooled me, I learned from her experiences in the visual arts and gained exposure to others from her networking.

As I grew up amidst Prismacolors and sketchbooks, I also spent many of my elementary days swimming and became a swim team competitor, swim coach, Red Cross lifeguard, and WSI swim instructor. This past summer, my enthusiasm for sharing this life skill motivated me to begin learning American Sign Language to be able to teach the deaf to swim in the future.

Raised in a multicultural, bi-racial family, I learned the value of diversity early on. My family instilled in me the importance of accepting others regardless of race, status, or disability. To maintain a balanced perspective, I grew up volunteering and tutoring at numerous local homeless shelters.
Living in the D.C. Area not only exposed me to those in need, but it also provided me with a wealth of museums, galleries, and creative opportunities. My mother and I would spend many hours drawing from the Masters at the National Gallery of Art. Public libraries also afforded me a plethora of gorgeous illustrations and inspiration. By the time I was twelve, I knew I wanted to illustrate children’s books.

Much of my work in recent years shows my feelings about aspects of the family, the connection of love, memories of water and relationships with children. My everyday activities, friendships, struggles and experiences with forcing myself to live beyond my comfort zone feed my art and play a huge part in my creative process. My inclination to work narratively points me toward illustration as a future career path.

Nothing gets kids involved in reading more than interesting pictures. I have often created and illustrated my own books for children that convey ideas like how a bill becomes a law, the differences between Socialism and Capitalism, and what World War I was all about. By giving this pictorial life to books on important social issues I will be able to help contribute to keeping our youth informed. As I work through college and my early career, I will strive to continue my involvement to support the homeless community, both in direct hands-on ways and through my art by contributing work that promotes public awareness of those in poverty.

When I first decided I wanted to be an illustrator, I yearned to create beauty. Now I realize I can help others learn about important issues like the significance of family or the challenges of homelessness with that creation. I will continue teaching, working, and creating towards this goal.
I was in second grade when my parents decided to move to a place called Los Angeles, California. How was I to survive in this foreign country when I didn't even know my ABC’s? While trying to get accustomed to the American lifestyle, I spent my spare time watching American cartoons. Saturday morning cartoons were a must. Later in middle school, Japanese anime and manga became an obsession. This led me to a conclusion about my future: to become an animator. I thought I had my future set.

In high school I attended art classes to begin my path to become an animator. Here, I saw some extraordinary work others did. It was amazing to see how much you could do with one pencil. Seeing and learning all these different types of art made me open my eyes to a whole new world. It wasn’t just Japanese anime anymore. I began to see how much significance art held in our society. And that left me in awe and set my mind explore art deeper. Art became not just a hobby but how I viewed the world. Unlike a math formula which gives only a single answer to a problem, art allowed me to bring many new and unique answers through experimentation.
My dad was a man of innovation and influenced my way of thinking. He used to be a pastor in Korea who had many eccentric ideas. Still, no matter how ingenious he might’ve been at work, my dad and I clashed at home. My art studio provided space for me to escape the strict and trapped-feeling environment. Mismatching cultures and viewpoints made a great impact on my artwork. In a way, I was never neither this nor that. Not fully American but not fully Korean either. It occurred to me that this is what makes me who I am. Irony is quite common in today’s society. I inquire new matters and express myself in a different way.

Innovative and risk-taking artists open doors for everyone to escape our dull and depressed world. By partaking in art, I also want to make a difference and contribute to society. There is much room left for me to mature, as a person and as an artist. To bring fresh ideas, you need to be curious; be willing to ask questions and respond with a proposal out of the norm. Through art, I found that I could show the public myself. So far, I have used my art skills in clubs and community services including in Art Club board, Journalism art editor and in church. I also have volunteered at Salvation Army, tutored younger age kids, and joined various clubs.

I can’t say I had the greatest years in high school with many misadventures but they have made me a bigger and stronger person by learning greater responsibility and independence. However, I can say that, if I am given the opportunity, I will make achievements by creating and spreading new ideas.
It takes courage to look someone straight in the eye and say, “I am not what you think I am”. When I tell people that I am transgendered – that I identify as a man although I appear female and embrace feminine qualities – they are moved. Some are moved to curiosity, or reverence, and others to unrest, insecurity, or hate. To an open-minded few, my gender nonconformity is inspirational. These reactions move me just as well. I will never forget the classmate who responded, “I admire that because you are really searching for yourself and won't stop until you find it.”

Self discovery is necessary for an artist to develop a personal voice. Likewise, living between genders involves challenging social expectations and deep self-reflection. These revelatory experiences inform my work on a regular basis. For instance, every portrait I paint is a self-portrait. Meanwhile, I depict a wide variety of people in my illustrations – from strong women and sensitive men, to wise elders and innocent youths. By representing myself through an assortment of characters, I gain an understanding of my identity through the people I embody. As observe archetypes within myself, I find I can connect with all types of people.
In addition to an intuitive sense of gender, my search for identity is strongly affected by my estranged heritage. Although I am blessed with a supportive family, there is something missing. Where other families may have stories and traditions, my family history is lost due to frequent displacement. To fill the void, I make friends with different cultural backgrounds, and immerse myself in their stories. With a sketchbook in tow, I glorify the details of peoples’ lives that are often taken for granted. This way, I can transform a typical family outing into a celebration of togetherness, or turn a frivolous party into a meaningful discussion group. Often I am the guest at dinner who starts a thread running for a memorable night of storytelling. Those stories remain with me, and are eventually immortalized in my work.

Throughout my career as an illustrator and a creative entrepreneur, I will continue to address the imaginary boundaries that divide communities. As a member of a marginalized group in society, I will take on the plight of all “second class citizens”. I will promote social acceptance through power of communicative arts. I will raise the status of creators with the establishment of an environmentally conscious design firm. Ultimately, I will share all that I’ve learned to motivate other young creators toward self-actualization.

After I changed my name, I changed my ways. Now I am preparing to change the world.
Four times I have moved overseas, but one thing remains: my artistic intentions. The artist may be a rebel, transgressing tradition, but I have retained my origins, the spirit of blood. Enshrouding me are the various radiant flags of my descent. I have been stamped with an incredibly rich ethnicity: the Hispanic heritage encompasses an entire continent of cultural differences, which I feel within me, adding character and definitely making me more compassionate, receptive, and intrigued to cultural forms of expression, inviting me to dig deeper back into the origins, the primal, primitive legends and customs that make up an identity. I am thrilled to think I can channel ancestors and be closer to the ritual, to the supernatural connection of creation and originality.

It thrills me to explore the occult, compulsions, alienation, memory, and loss. Identity and ritualistic acts of transcendence, redemption, and purification are also growing themes in my work. My interest stems from my upbringing, voyages, and religion, and a desire to contradict shallow consumerism by instead emphasizing
individuality. The darker and mystical side of Romanticism, the exploration of desires in Surrealism, and the rebellion and irony of Modernism and Dada are major influences in my artwork.

I have always said the real occupation of an artist is to serve as a voice that contributes to society. It thrills me to redefine, penetrate people’s minds, enchant, expose and offer a different point of view, fueled and colored by my varied heritable essences and experiences. I have always aspired to impact for I constantly experience influxes of ideas and cravings for creation. Sunrise compels me, knowing that I will have natural light to work with, and I aim for the euphoria and catharsis of creation, the documentation and communication that results. I dream of securing contracts with publications, being appointed to represent a country or movement, exhibiting in galleries, seeing my works preserved in museums, collaborating with artists and musicians, releasing albums, and writing and illustrating for music magazines. In the future, I see myself as a nomad, with a set sense of identification, but traveling to illuminate people’s lives and implant social change.
Whether it is a dark forest filled with wild things, a late snowy night, or a garden home to a particularly mischievous rabbit, the illustrations from children’s books still remain imprinted on my mind years after they were read to me. Not only the beautiful images, but also the lovely yet poignant feelings have become a part of who I am, as well as a part of my art. It is no wonder that I decided to pursue a degree in illustration, aiming to write and illustrate children’s books. I believe children’s literature plays a big role in shaping a child’s life, and I want to contribute to this.

Good stories teach children understanding, values, acceptance, and morals. Perhaps the most important thing children can gain from books is knowledge about how the world works. Books hold important messages, they tell children about reality. They help children understand what life is really like, which is not always sweet and fluffy. Life can be painful, but at the same time immensely meaningful. Children need literature that goes beyond entertainment, literature that reflects the world around them and life as it is.
Children need truth. When I illustrate and write children’s books, truth is what I will give them. How can children know reality when so many voices are telling them stories about immoral fantasy worlds where personal gain is more important than being a good person? I want to give children real and meaningful stories, stories that continue to influence them as they grow.

One issue that I am particularly concerned about is equality, in particular, women’s equality. The media does not represent women realistically; instead it turns them into objects or second class human beings. In my books, women will be presented as real people. I want girls to know that there are no limits to what they can do, and I want boys to view girls as equals. If I can instill these values in people at a young age, it is likely that it will stick with them as they grow up.

By illustrating and writing children’s books, I want to make a difference in society. I want to offer children values and understanding, but also beautiful images and feelings. I want to help children see beauty and I want to help them gain understanding about the seemingly strange world around them. I need to share my stories with them; I need to give.
I have struggled throughout my life with an overwhelming and unexplained sense of disconnect from the world I am surrounded by. In the simplest terms, I do not know how to overcome the persistent feelings of being alone, of being different and feeling misunderstood. I cannot remember a time in my life where I have not felt the presence of anxiety and depression. This depression and disconnect have now merged into one singular entity as I cannot see far enough into my past to decipher whether I became depressed due to feeling disconnected, or whether the disconnect was a result of the loneliness which accompanies depression. Regardless, I have come to accept and honor these feelings rather than to try and repair or cover them.

Within this disconnect I have found a sense of place. Although I have felt the negative effects of being marginalized in a society that does not accept queers, those margins created a structure wherein a queer subculture formed – where differences are celebrated instead of scorned and unite rather than divide. Here I found a place where I could finally be in my own skin and where I wasn’t alone anymore.
I am drawn to exploring gender dynamics and roles. I feel that society has split gender and sexuality into two defined boxes – male and female, when they are much more complex and fluid. We live in a time where there has been so much progress and change, yet at the same time none at all. I feel responsible as an artist to articulate areas of cultural concern. This includes having awareness, in my work, of how images may play into, or challenge cultural norms. In addition, as photography is a pastime activity often attainable to the general public, when used as a fine art form, it also becomes a more accessible means of visual expression.

When I take pictures I feel connected to the world around me. This connection creates a sense of peace, both spiritually and mentally, that I so often cannot obtain otherwise. For me it is cathartic. Being an artist gives one the ability to transform pain into meaning. For me personally, I was able to take the things that isolated me from others and turn them into an outlet to engage with and connect with others.

My images addressing gender and sexuality create opportunities for me to educate people who may otherwise revert to traditional stereotypes and misconceptions about differences in identity. I use the accessibility of imagery to break down binary norms and stereotypes. I hope my photographs will enable a visual space where a dialogue about the work and the figures in the work can be questioned and discussed. The ultimate goal is that the viewer gains a greater sense of awareness of the diversity and commonality that exists in the gray areas of gender and sexuality.

My hope is that my photographs will enable a visual space where a dialogue about the work and the figures in the work can be questioned and discussed. The ultimate goal is that the viewer gains a greater sense of awareness of the diversity and commonality that exists in the gray areas of gender and sexuality.
Graham Greene wrote, "Hate was just a failure of the imagination". In Greene’s novel, The Power and the Glory, the priest comes to this conclusion as his journey prompts him to observe and reflect the people he encounters along the way. Simplistic as it may seem, the quote serves as a reminder of why I am attracted to photography and the power of creativity – the triumph of the imagination. I believe artists are sympathetic and involved characters in a society that is plagued by indifference, as creating imagery entails a journey of engagement and identification with humanity similar to Greene’s protagonist. At the same time, successful art works twofold - in its requirement of both practitioner and viewer. It is not only a reflection of society, but it also asks society to reflect upon itself.

I was raised by Mexican immigrant parents, and like many first generation immigrants, the experience of not always fitting in with mainstream society has had an ineffaceable effect on me— that is until I discovered photography. My work reflects Mexican-American identity, and I see this as a lifelong project. It has arisen from my need to understand immigration beyond border walls and illegal border crossings, images pervasive in our mainstream media and national dialogue, and a desire to share this understanding with others in order to create an antidote to our current
hostility against immigrants in general. My images challenge the current polemic created by the dichotomy of illegal vs. legal by showing that in a global economy the trade of goods in a market economy is inseparable from an exchange of people across borders as well. Taking this transnational perspective, I show where Mexican culture has introduced itself into the U.S.-American landscape, and vice versa, places where U.S. culture has equally penetrated itself into the Mexican landscape. In Mexico, the photographs show a geographic area where migration has occurred for the past hundred years, resulting in an adoption of U.S. American culture. In the United States, it shows us where many of these Mexican diasporas have not only formed, but continue to form as migrants live out the American dream in search for an often elusive piece of their American pie. Despite our constructed borders, these two nations share a history, and its people share a common experience.

I am the only woman in my photography class, which presents its own challenges, but also presents an opportunity to learn from. The history of my life experience suggests that I may reside outside the status quo – I am a woman, an immigrant, and a Latina, but I am also not alone. It is not enough to create artwork that deals with social issues. I must follow through with action to create the ideal world that I envision. For this reason, I have involved myself in work at school that exemplifies these ideals. I am currently volunteering as a Fulbright Embassador, in order to encourage diversity in the Fulbright program. I also served as a Compass mentor, tutoring first generation college students. I am working on a sustainability initiative to help implement sustainability curriculum into the college. Graduating will prepare me for a lifetime of work in creating photographic images that deal with socio-economic and cultural themes, and teaching others to do so as well.
2011/12 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships  
Young Photographer’s Alliance Award

HAYDEN MYRICK  
Photography  
Freshman  
School of the Art Institute of Chicago

At an early age, I realized where I was living and growing up was a ludicrous attempt at a utopian society. My family seemed normal for the most part. We went to church, lived in a modest house, and even spent time gardening together with smiles on our faces. But something seemed wrong. Somehow I realized the life I was living was an artifice. I began to strive to escape from the confined, conservative thinking of the families surrounding me. Around that time, my perfect, gardening family came to an abrupt halt when my father filed for divorce. This opened my eyes to the lie I was submerged in. I saw countless smiles surrounding me. No matter what was going on in one’s life, they woke up, put a smile on, and when asked “How are you,” responded with “I’m great! How are you?” This is what led me to art. I wanted to create something real. I wanted people to gaze at my art and feel a sense of uneasiness. They go about their lives with naiveté, terrified to face anything that might make them question the worldview they have been spoon-fed by the elders and the authorities of their community. I believe art should be viewed subjectively. When one enters a gallery, they should leave all reservations and hesitancies at the door in order to get the most out of a piece. My work is meant to suggest varying concepts. I don’t want to
contribute to the spoon-feeding of my community. I want them to wake up to the world around them, embrace human diversity, and relinquish the brainwashed worldview they possess.

I believe that art is the medium for all change. Politicians can strive to change the world but unanimous change rarely occurs. Artists have become the only effective vessels of change. I have been surrounded by extreme conservatives my entire life. As much as they would like to believe they are flawless, they are far from immaculate. One major change I strive to bring about is the acceptance of homosexuality. In my community, homosexuality is a joke. People throw around the word “faggot” relentlessly. I even hear the administration at my school degrade and make homosexuality seem like the boogeyman: a foolish invention that should not be given merit or respect. Because I have close friends and family members that are homosexual, the dehumanizing insults strike a highly sensitive chord within me.

It is immeasurably important for me to challenge the personal and moral beliefs of those who view my artwork. For the few seconds or minutes I have the attention of the viewer, it is my opportunity to bring about change. It should not be about displaying a pretty picture that causes solely tender feelings of security and comfort. It needs to unhinge their soundness and challenge their world views.
Like most artists my work is deeply connected to my personal life. I started pursuing photography after a year spent struggling with depression. My initial motivation to take photos came from a desire to document the beauty of my life to make me want to live it. Having a camera in my hand gave my life a sense of validity that nothing else ever has.

I have always been interested in the idea of activism through art. I think the first time it manifested itself in my work was when I was capturing the economic injustice I found in my daily life through Street Photography. Later I began to focus on the way women think and feel about their own bodies and sexuality as part of my commitment to social justice. The older I was the more frustrated I became with most of the depictions of female sexuality in our society and the fact they were largely created by men. I have made it a point to document the reality of women I know and the struggles that permeate their lives. I felt a responsibility to capture desire and longing from a feminine perspective in an honest way. I find it empowering especially as a woman to photograph women as they really are as opposed to perpetuating sterilized and airbrushed images of who we think we should be. I realized at this point my role as artist has a sense of responsibility for the images I create and how they make other
people view their world. I have an opportunity as a creator to challenge aspects of our society I do not agree with and offer an alternative.

During my last year at Cleveland State University I was sexually assaulted by someone I considered a close friend. This experience left me with emotional and physical wounds and through trying to recovery from it I found a deeper sense of direction in my work. Instead of trying to forget what had happened to me I wanted to share with people exactly how that experience made me feel and ultimately hoped to spark conversation about an issue most people would prefer not to discuss. I feel a sense of responsibility to speak out about what happened to me and let other people who struggled with similar things know they are not alone. I based my senior project on the plot of the film Roxanna where a woman is shown in a variety of sexual situations that ultimately leads her down a road of insanity and loneliness and ends with her tearing herself apart. I identified with the title character and decided to make a series that followed the story while explicitly referencing my own experiences that have traumatized me. I felt I had the opportunity to take these experiences that could have defined my life and redefined them in my art. I see myself going on to educate others and help them find their voice the same way photography has helped me find mine. I want to return to Cleveland and work as an educator and start my own non-profit organization.
One night in 1981 my mom got in a fishing boat. It was rickety I’m sure. I imagine the wood was rotting, the paint was flaking. It had a motor, but not anything any rational minded person would feel safe using for a voyage across the South China Sea. But when you’ve spent the day hiding in tall grasses, waiting for the night, about to flee a country—the only life you’ve ever known—rationality tends to be trumped by fear, fear by desperation, and desperation by the only way to make it through it all—hope. So my mom, with two young daughters and pregnant with me, got in that boat with a couple dozen other refugees and headed out into the water—towards that hope. That’s the story of my mother. The night she fled Vietnam.

Not too long after my own story would begin—born in a refugee camp in Kuala Lumpur, a small four-walled wooden structure—then a childhood spent amongst the fir trees of Oregon. Having been fortunate enough to have been raised in this country for most of my life, it’s easy to mistake my current circumstance as something that just happened. I really do believe I can accomplish anything I want in life. The opportunities I have been given, every door that has been opened for me and every window cracked, are things that have been fought for. It’s all a testament to my mother—a single mom who raised three
children on her own—a woman who went through so much just to get me to this country, to give me opportunities, to save me from the desperation and fear she felt in a life she once had. And it has been this conscious acknowledgement of my mother’s own sacrifice that has inspired me to try my best to pay it forward.

I spent four years working in nonprofits—getting books to kids in Orange County, CA; directly working with at-risks youths and Somali refugee children in Portland—I even worked in New Orleans with children directly affected by Hurricane Katrina. This work meant a great deal to me, but I felt my natural creative talents weren’t being best utilized. So in 2008 I returned to school to pursue an education in the fine arts. As a photographer, it is my intent to marry my passion for social awareness and my belief in the power of art as a tool for visual communication. As a staff photographer for an after-school children’s literacy program in Brooklyn, I am already doing this. I visually document the experiences of these children and give them a platform to bring their stories to a larger audience. I also feel it is important to work within the communities with which one belongs. I’m currently doing a series of portraits of gay men in New York City, with the intent of showing the many diverse faces of gay men, both physically and metaphorically—hopefully to break down inaccurate stereotypes that may exist. I use my art as a catalyst for discussion, and to help give a platform to those who need it. I want to seek out and share stories like that of my own mother—stories that need to be told.
As a person who engages in a type of disciplined creative practice, it is crucial for me to take part in the conversation surrounding the importance of the creative act in the postmodern world. The need to compose a response to my experiences leads me to employ the creative act. I seek to rouse an intimate relationship with the organization of society in order to digest and better understand the constructs of the world we live in. This perpetual necessity and subsequent examination is of great importance as it is the genesis point for advancement and transcendence in the cultural fabric of our civilization.

To fully channel this urgency I engage in a creative practice that exceeds conventional definitions of disciplines. In my studio, I proceed by means of a conceptual approach that prioritizes ideas above the limitations and seductions of a medium. My approach requires an interdisciplinary practice that allows artistic sovereignty. This is important for an informed decision making process essential for the manifestation of an idea. My hope is to make the right choices in the studio that suit the demands of my ideas.

My ideas are embodied by forms chosen with the intention to instigate a type of sociopolitical dialogue about the role of alienation in our world. For the most part, my
work draws from the reality of living under the Western hegemony. I make art that petitions for an endowment of the marginalized through symbolic value and poetic significance. In the case of Piñata Piece (2010), a sculptural gesture is employed to instigate a post-colonial conversation about extraction and commoditization of the new world – perforating a symbol of post-colonial life to extract and empty a commodity (sugar) serves as a metaphor that addresses the consequences of colonial establishment.

Attending Cooper Union not only guaranteed a wonderfully intense experience but it also taught me the value of studying in New York City. I have learned to have a close relationship with my surroundings. As a teaching assistant at the Cooper Union Outreach Program I have the opportunity to collaborate with high school students of all backgrounds. Introducing the students to creative methods through discussion, workshops, classes and lectures expands their artistic lexicon. It is a hugely rewarding experience. Many disadvantaged individuals have been essentially deprived of a complete learning experience by a system that does not embrace the significance of an arts education. I sincerely hope that my contribution through the Outreach Program broadens the potential for an individual to access their role in the creative practices.

I will continue assisting cultural endeavor seekers with the aim that they gather the tools to become proficient thinkers. My personal objectives include further analysis of personal experiences unique to my condition as a Latino immigrant in the contemporary USA. I will investigate the manner in which our civilization functions despite the presence of urgent political issues such as alienation, marginalization and oppression.
My work is a reflection and an examination of human existence; past, present and future. It examines beliefs and practices, both religious and secular that have survived from generation to generation. It also questions how life is valued in a society, be it one’s own or that of another. My work seeks to reveal life in its many complexities. Through the use of metaphorical symbolism and iconography, I communicate layered messages. My research, ideas, ideologies and subconscious have fostered my work towards the artistry of life, survival, religion, death and the afterlife in a contemporary world.

Born in Nassau Bahamas, I discovered my ability to draw at an early age. Drawing, coloring, paper cutouts and paint by number became subconscious practices. At the time I did it because it was an enjoyable and fulfilling hobby. As time progressed, my hobby became a compulsive passion. It was then that I realized that art is what I wanted to pursue as a life long commitment. At the time, I didn’t know that art could be a career; I simply knew I would do it regardless.

At a workshop in the Bahamas I was exposed to numerous materials and techniques, many of which were foreign to me at the time — from acrylic painting to glass blowing.
Many of the practical and theoretical lessons I learned there I have embedded in my thought process. Today, I find most of what was taught viable to my practice. I enrolled in the College of the Bahamas, majoring in basic Art and then transferred to the Savannah College of Art and Design. There, I earn a BFA in Illustration. Since then, I have dedicated my time to pursuing a career in the arts. I have contributed my work to various causes and have received various awards and recognitions.

For the past three years, I have collaborated with the Bahamas Humane Society’s animal outreach and awareness campaign. Animal-themed images were composed and produced by me and then printed as Christmas Cards which were sold through the Humane Society’s facility. Proceeds went to the organization, aiding in the care taking of the many animals housed at the facility and further education of the public on animals’ rights.

I have also contributed my art to Amnesty International, in specific the case of Troy Davis, an African-American man facing execution for the murder of a white police officer in Savannah, Georgia. He has been on death row for more than 15 years. The image I produced first appeared in the South Magazine in 2008. I then gave Amnesty International the copyrights to use the image in any way they found necessary to aid in their fight for justice for Troy Davis.

As I move forward, I will continue to seek opportunities to use my work in ways to help build awareness of social issues both nationally and internationally.
I was sitting in art history class when my teacher turned on a DVD featuring Yinka Shonibare. We had been studying a series of artists, including Mickalene Thomas, Hank Willis Thomas, Nick Cave, Jeff Sonhouse, and others. At that moment, I realized that they had changed the way I think of the world around me and myself. I realized that I too am able to create strong conceptual pieces. I am the creator. I believe you have this creative aspect of yourself, and are able to interpret what comes to mind. I am heavily inspired and impacted by art that speaks to me, and that gives me ideas. When I am given knowledge that I consider powerful I always come up with ideas to create that visual image. I love the fact that I am able to create my own ideas that relate to others, leaving an impact on them. I want to create pieces that reflect my identity, my thoughts, and use the knowledge that I acquire to pursue my goals.

Everyday after school, I attend Words, Beats and Life’s DC Urban Arts Academy (WBL). WBL is an arts oriented non-profit organization focused on youth advocacy through hip-hop. WBL has classes for DC youth in DJing, MC’ing, breakdancing, and graffiti.
The program has exposed me to other ways of being, thinking, and making art that exist outside my classroom. In the past two years, I have showcased my art in shows, graffiti mural installations, breakdancing battles, and DJed several events. Through Words Beats and Life I have been exposed to other arts organizations. I have taken photography, stenciling, wheat pasting, mural arts, and a stenciling class; while being able to utilize those skills in the various projects that involves the community and other artists.

I am interested in doing illustrations for fashion magazines and contemporary art magazines. Also, I would love to have the opportunity to do art instillations in different places, from outside on walls to inside condominiums and coffee shops. In addition to collaborating with other artists for gallery shows, I hope to travel the world and meet artists from other countries and learn about their culture. This would be an extension of the bilingual education that I have received since my early school days. These experiences will strengthen my style and vulnerability to being open to other styles.

In the near future, I hope to earn my BFA and become a professional artist. I believe that attending college will continue to enhance my creative thinking skills, and how I physically create it with tools. Being exposed to opportunities through course instruction, interactions with professors and classmates, will inspire me and push me even closer to achieving my goals of further master techniques, and gain exposure to various careers within the fine arts community.
I will never forget the sound of 40 children laughing and singing while passing through the Qalandia checkpoint on our way to the Golan Heights, and they had permits to enter Israel for the first time, and dance at the first Art festival between the Golan Heights and Palestine. I think of those young artists resilient and joyful as I write this. I think of the man who had organized the festival, knowing he would not enjoy the fruits of his labor. This man has a Gaza ID and for fear of being sent back to Gaza has avoided check points for the last nine years. One cannot travel far in the West Bank without crossing a checkpoint. His physical world is small. Art gives him space, art makes his world large. It is for him, the children, and others like them, that I keep making art.

It’s not only in Palestine that I’ve felt this way towards artists and community organizers. When I lived and volunteered in Oakland, Santiago, Rio de Janeiro, Sevilla, and Berlin, I also marveled at the ways artists come together to engage and empower their communities. The problems they face in these various communities are often similar and the resolution through art also binds them. This combined with the way
that electronic media allows me to continue to collaborate with them, in conjuring new art, in finding new forms of catharsis, make the great distances that separate us feel small. And once again art makes space insubstantial. We are part of one community, a supranational community, and they are my heroes in it.

I contribute to this community in the ways I can: pedagogy, performance, printmaking and other practices. My contributions fall within some social-political discourse. For me, the political can be personal. Though I do not deny the importance of art for art’s sake, and foster this love in my students, I believe it’s my role as a member of the educated class to work with the intent of these marginalized groups. Art can be a powerful tool for education, innovation, political discourse, to enable the marginalized to find a voice and be heard. I say this not as an intellectual, but as a marginalized person, a first-generation college graduate, and an African-America woman.

Education is my art, art is my voice. My ink tells of sickness and its grief, of prison, addiction and death, of the child who grows too fast, of blood and burdens inherited. Yet my palate is bright, even for dark subjects: echoing the strength found in life and within myself. I build community to overcome those burdens. And I engage stories beyond myself, beyond my country, beyond my time at the intersection of past and present. I seek to intervene in the life of my audience through Performance, that we may see no distinction between our humanity and the humanity of others.

At times my performances, activism, and prints seem to be separate activities. I am finding ways to integrate the personal and political content. The same is true of my pedagogy and civic participation. Graduate study will give me the time, resources, and flexibility to come together with artists and scholars in a collective learning environment, while, still contributing to that supranational community I hold so dear.
My desire to create my best art started at a young age. The drawing I included of a young boy fully concentrating on the picture he is drawing is of my little brother, but it could be me. I loved to draw and make pictures, and I still do. Put a pencil in my hand and I start itching to create. Art is at the core of me; it is what gives me the confidence to just be me, not one of the crowd. I don’t fully know where the art I create will take me yet or what value society will put on it, but it will always express the core of me.

As I grew, my passion to create art also turned outward. I want to teach other students art so they can feel that sense of satisfaction, achievement, and confidence that putting your thoughts, feelings and ideas on paper, canvas, or clay can bring. I feel that art broadens and deepens the educational experience. It pushes you to think beyond yourself and express who you are. It is almost therapeutic to create something unique and personal from a blank piece of paper or a lump of clay and it takes a significant amount of bravery to put that little piece of you out there for the world, including your peers, to critique.
and comment on. Art develops sensitivity, compassion, confidence and personal insight in the students who participate. It brings societal awareness to the artist and is the catalyst for much of the social changes that happen throughout the world. Art reflects the condition of present society, both the positive and the negative. I want to personally be a part of this process as well as help high school students develop their own sense of self through art.

While teaching is an important goal, I also want to continue to develop my own personal voice in the world of art. Ever since I can remember, I get great joy through making someone smile when they look at a drawing I’ve made. But I also get a lot of self-satisfaction when I look down at a piece of paper that was blank many hours ago and now is filled with my own unique statement about life. I love to capture a moment of everyday life, and take you there with me through the emotion on the paper or canvas. I want you to be transported to a similar everyday moment in your life and smile, frown, “react”. Art is definitely a journey, ever evolving, ever improving, ever-changing. I am interested to see where my art will go as I continue to add to my life experiences.