

# 2009/10 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Young Photographer's Alliance Award



## BONNIE MILLS

Photography  
Freshman  
Academy of Arts University

I was born into art. My mum always jokes that she played me the Beatles and Beethoven in the womb, so I was destined for the artist's life from the beginning. I found my medium in photography. When I picked up a camera for the first time I was home. Growing up working class, I had been angry most of my life. I attended an upper class school, giving me access to better art programs. But I soon learned that money always matters. When I found photography I finally found a use for my anger. I began taking on projects in my photography relating to class and economic disparity. I was drawn to the Punk community, documenting the scene and photographing shows. My fellow punks taught me to embrace my individuality, and that the greatest crime was not speaking up about what you believed. Looking through the lens I was able to realize my vision, and see beauty in sadness. It was agony and ecstasy to chase that perfect shot, but instead of chasing perfection for a grade, I was hunting it for something I really believed in.



Where I live, things are so narrow. Every community has its own bubble, with no room for difference, new ideas, or anything outside the norm. I want to break out



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Photography

of that. I want to learn more and be heard. I have been a misfit my whole life, no friends because I didn't have the patience for juvenile interests, looked down on because of my zip code. I have been invisible to my school peers, but I won't be invisible to the world. With my photos I make, others care about what I care about. I want to be a photojournalist to make others see. For the past few years I have freelanced for local papers, and I view everything I see as a story. I try to bring a passion and lust for art every time I shoot a new frame. I strive to affect change, and I believe art is the best and most effective way. I want to make people think, to amaze, offend, to make someone laugh or cry. I want to be the best photographer I can be. The worst emotion, to me, is indifference. The best reason I can give for why I deserve this scholarship is: Money has been an obstacle for everything I have ever wanted to do. But it is never the be all, end all. Scholarship or no scholarship, I will make my dreams real. At the end of my bed I have a poster with a quote by Martin Luther King that reads, "The greatest sin of our time is not the few who have destroyed but the vast majority who sat idly by." That quote reminds me every day to make a difference, and never to commit the crime of blending in.

