

2009/10 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships

Mohawk Fine Papers Honorable Mention



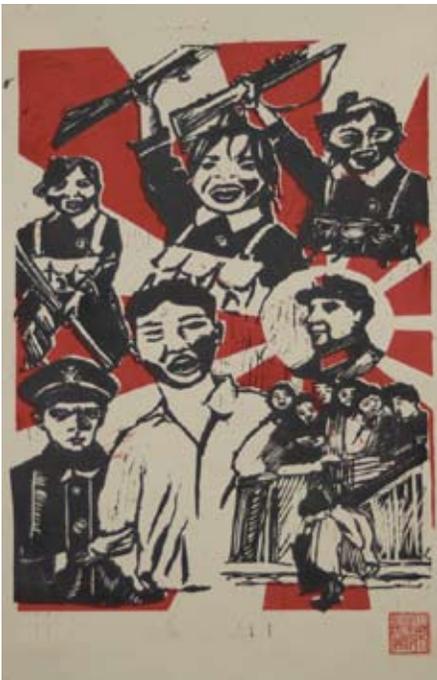
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It was during a trip to China, a motherland I've never visited, that opened my eyes about self worth. In the summer months China is very humid, usually hot and rainy; my friends and I were in a taxi going towards the city from rural Fuzhao. It was drizzling and the streets were coated with dampness. I was just in awe of the amount of people living in China and maneuvering around us on cars and bikes. Everyone just became a blur around my window and within minutes there was a collision. Our cab hit a cyclist! The cyclist flew off his bicycle and landed in the middle of the street, cars were still rushing past around him. Our cab driver just sat in the car watching but didn't do anything. I was telling everyone that we should call for help and see if the cyclist was okay. Nobody cared and just watched. Then finally the cyclist got up, and to my surprise he picked his bicycle up and rode away! I was expecting a full confrontation or even some compensation money being paid out, but nothing. That was when I started to question the value of life, and if America was so decadent or if China's population was the cause of such nonchalant attitudes towards an accident?



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I have studied art my whole life. There was a time in my life that I had a falling out with art and was stuck in a depression. The only thing that helped me out of the depression was attending a painting/pastel class at the local neighborhood YMCA. Since then, I have tried many mediums and found an art form that has finally called to me in printmaking.

Graffiti influenced my artwork a lot. Growing up in NYC during the 1980s I was fascinated by the explosion of graffiti culture. That led me to want to paint murals and create posters.



When I had the chance to study abroad during the summer at China's Nan Jing (Nanking) University last year, I jumped at the chance. I was extremely emotional about the opportunity because Nanking was an unacknowledged historical site during the Japanese invasion of WWII. This opportunity was offered to me by two Chinese scholars who had connections with Nan Jing University. I wanted to know more about the Nan Jing Massacre and why it happened. These scholars have seen some of my work and were excited for me to go, especially since I told them my intentions of painting a mural and donating some of my artwork to the University. Then in May 2008, the earthquake shook China, and my opportunity was delayed. This is what I see in the future for me, to educate myself and travel to places where major incidents and destruction have been forgotten, and educate the community with mural and visual print work.



I am torn between a China that needs to be educated and a China that misused its power and tortured its people. My family was one of these families, ridiculed for being educated and successful. My mother told me stories of what the Red Soldiers did to her and her family when she was 3 years old. Her father, a 23-year-old school principal and business owner, was taken away and tortured. He was not to be seen or heard from ever again. Children were not spared the carnage and inhumane acts of political "justice."

Questioning how, why, and if it could be prevented from happening in the future led me back to school and to pursue a career in art to educate people visually.