2007/08 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships
Debbie Millman Award
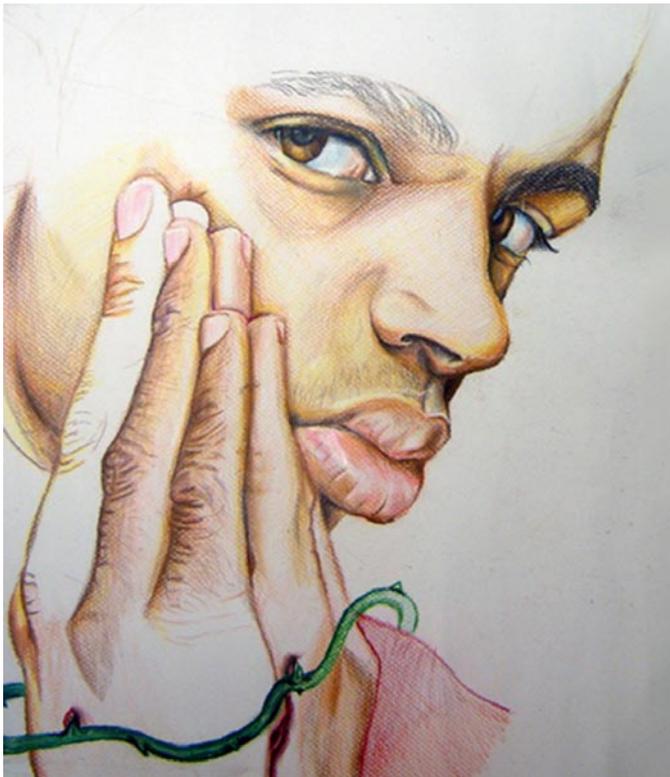## Kraus Family Foundation Award

JAMES FOSTER
Fine Art
Freshman
College for Creative Studies

Art has saved my life. I began creating art at a very young age, mostly when I was hurt, angry, scared or bored. I grew up in a troubled home in Detroit Michigan. My mother and stepfather were physically abusive. They would beat me because of things that I did, sometimes they would beat me for no reason at all. My escape was art. As a child I found refuge from all of the screaming and yelling with my imagination and a box of crayons. I would create vibrant cities to live in and happy families that loved me. I could go anywhere with those crayons. When I turned nine I was taken away from my family and was placed in foster care. I've been in various foster families ever since. I began drawing more and more, this time for recognition. I loved the feeling when my new family was impressed with my work. I finally felt loved and accepted.

I am deeply connected to my cultural heritage. I love to create art that honors my cultural history. I currently go to a high school where I am clearly the minority. As an African American I try to share my heritage with those who would otherwise rarely experience it. I like to create portraits of African Americans who are important or have affected my life. I try to push the limits of traditional portraiture to capture the essence of the person. My self portraits are my diary. After having faced so many hardships, they serve as a record of how I have grown.

I want to create artwork that has a social significance and value. I am pursuing my degree in fine arts. My goal is to become a successful painter. I want my art to create awareness and make people question inequalities that occur in their everyday lives. Although some of my ideas may be controversial, I never want my work to alienate any group of people. Instead I try to make my art accessible to everyone. For instance, at school I draw portraits for friends and family, cut peoples' hair for a fair price, I even enjoy designing clothes and airbrushing shoes. I always want my art to be of people and for people. If it weren't for my friends, family, teachers, and my art, I would have never made it this far in my life. I want to give back to people as much as they have given to me.