

2010/11 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Kraus Family Foundation Award

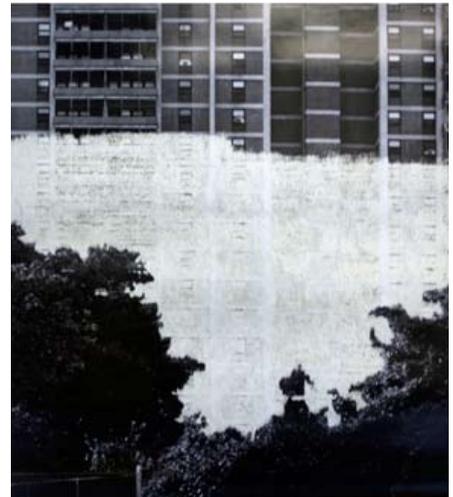


JESSICA VAUGHN

Fine Art
Graduate Student
University of Pennsylvania



Growing up in a multi-ethnic household on the north side of Chicago, I experienced the contradictions of gentrification. My upbringing in the city was diverse, the neighborhood I grew up in was changing, and the gentrification of these spaces I frequented shaped my interests experiences and expectations. By the time I was ten my neighborhood had changed from a multi-ethnic working class community to a predominately upper-class homogenously white neighborhood. I grew up with family and friends who lived on the opposite side of the city in homogenously black communities. Having experiences and an awareness for these occurrences shaped my consciousness that is about black political/social awareness, being multi-ethnic and growing up middle class. After graduating from high school I attended Carnegie Mellon University, where I completed an interdisciplinary degree in Studio Arts and Social History, with an emphasis in painting and printmaking. During the summers of college I returned to Chicago to work, and interned at non-profit spaces – providing administrative and programming support to their exhibition spaces.



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One way to bring diversity to the arts is to provide consistent and challenging resources that allow for the production of art, and provide discussion and the making of art across disciplines and experiences for economically disadvantaged communities. Between my undergraduate and graduate studies I was the Coordinator of Studio Programs at a non-profit visual arts organization in Chicago that provides free arts courses to underserved youth in the city. At Marwen I managed and developed educational programming and exhibitions for underrepresented artists and youth. I developed and taught classes and a one-week art residency opportunity, allowing students to experiment with unfamiliar media to further their artistic and personal growth. These experiences have increased my understanding of how to enhance socioeconomic and multicultural diversity in the visual arts. My experiences at Marwen have led me to consider how specific visual representations establish an audience. I don't see a separation between practicing art and the everyday. I see the melding together of everyday activities and my studio work as potential opportunities to relate my experiences to challenge discussions about representation.



Given the structure of UPenn's program I am able to refine my skills as an artist and explore new media to contribute to the expansion of my practice outside of the studio. Currently I am a teaching assistant and a lecturer at the Institute of Contemporary Art for their youth programs where I lead literacy-based activities that combine the observation of art and writing. After completing my MFA degree, my professional objectives include a combination of pursuing an artist residency through the CORE Program that is part of the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, teaching and initiating arts programming in academic and visual arts institutions.

