

2009/10 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Mohawk Fine Papers Award



JONATHAN TORRES

Graphic design

Freshman

California State University Long Beach

When I recognized that I had skills at designing and drawing, I believed I was the only one with those particular talents, setting myself apart from everyone. However, by the time I reached my freshmen year in high school, I found I was wrong. A fellow student, Jordan Cahol, demonstrated the same traits as I had; this started a competitive atmosphere between us, which would last until our last year of high school, when we were assigned projects involving the medium of design and illustration.

When we reached our junior year I became eager to become better than he was. I sometimes felt incompetent when Jordan got awarded for his achievement, excelling with A's in all his classes. At that point, I became so overwhelmed and frustrated. Why was he being rewarded for taking mediocre classes, when I attempted honors and AP classes? Why would he always take the easy way out; why was it that every time I pushed myself toward recognition for my hard work, he would just get the upper hand at academics by not making his life complicated? The competition between us made me realize that I was not just trying to make him see that I was above his ranking; I was trying to prove to myself that I could do anything, and didn't need anyone to affirm I was better.



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the professional association for design

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Senior year, I realized how the level of competition between Jordan and me had changed. I began to see him as a reason for me to keep up the hard work I struggled so diligently to accomplish. It eventually paid off as I began to see the results. By applying to Otis: Summer of Art, I now had the upper hand and received a scholarship for my efforts. What I did had proved a point; the AP and honors classes inspired me to dedicate myself to not only academics, but to artistic efforts as well. By competing so much with Jordan, I gained a better sense of why I wanted to be in design. This may not have been possible without the high level of competition between us. For this, I will forever be grateful.

After graduating, I have been given the opportunity to work as an intern at Change Agent Productions at the YMCA of Greater Long Beach in California. This digital media production company has offered me a chance to learn new aspects about my career. They allowed me to contribute to my community, through the after school programs in middle schools and high schools in Long Beach. I taught kids how to work with

multimedia, whether it was using Photoshop to make movie posters, storyboarding their movie and filming them with video cameras or teaching them to use a camera to take photographs. By doing so, I gained a better idea of what I wanted to major in. Just by looking at the student's faces, I become inspired to continue and improve my skills, and influence kids to use technology, as a supplement towards their goals. That way, by knowing these tools they have an opportunity to explore the different careers and get a helping hand in academics. In addition to taking an interest in technology, this prevents them from getting involved in drugs or gangs. With that in mind I want to be able to establish myself in Change Agent Productions and work as a graphic designer full-time. I want to provide students a chance to learn and produce work that exudes creativity, while they maintain the drive to pursue what they want to accomplish in life.

