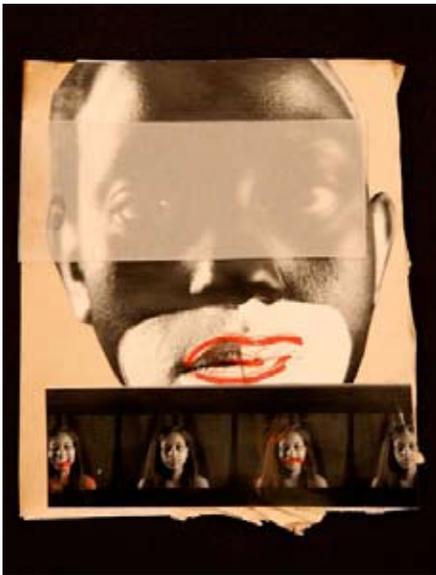


2009/10 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Kraus Family Foundation Honorable Mention



KAREEMA THOMAS

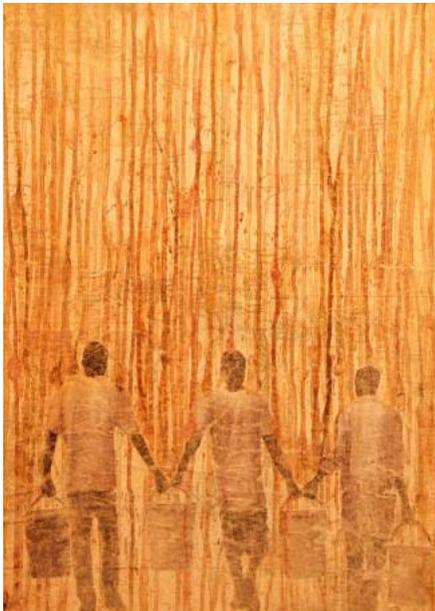
Fine Art
Junior
Santa Clara University



"No" was never an option for me. "Can't" was not in my vocabulary. Motivation acted as the passageway to success. Growing up in a female-dominated, single parent home meant that my psyche was formed around this idea of achievement.

It did not matter that the town I lived in was in an economic crisis to the point where the education budget was cut dramatically. It did not matter that my mother had been evicted from her home of 10 years. It did not matter that my father had been incarcerated since I was 2 years of age. I had a responsibility to myself and to my family to create a better life. And I did.

My personal background played an immense part in my journey to finding myself artistically. With hard work and dedication, I attended a private high school in Boston where I explored this hidden aspect of myself.



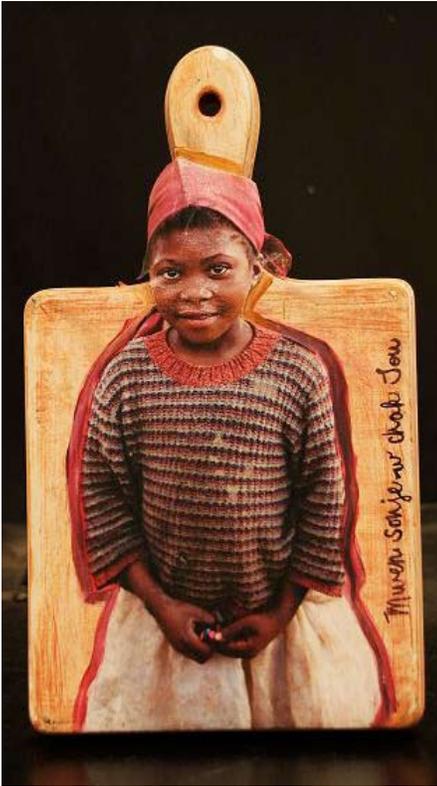
Worldstudio
FOUNDATION



the professional association for design

KAREEMA THOMAS

Fine Art



High school allowed me to explore and fine-tune my artistic abilities. I was a minority in a privileged, upper-class, predominately white environment. The title "minority" was a new and difficult concept for me to fully grasp. I was later shaped by experiences of white privilege, racism and discrimination, and I slowly discovered what my artistic calling was. I knew I had to be that powerful voice that spoke for the voiceless. I needed to be that role model for those who came from a place like I did – where broken families, drug use, teen pregnancy and violence in schools were not unordinary. I wanted to speak for other minorities at private schools, who too went unnoticed at times. That discomfort I felt is the same feeling I want to evoke in my own art by portraying issues of race and discrimination that specifically the African-American community faces.

As a visual artist, I will continue to confront society by paying special attention to race and the impact it has on people. My strong investment within societal issues stem from my upbringing and my life experiences that have shaped me. I will encourage our community to become engaged in the world, artistically.

My art acts as that bridge between society and the imperfections of reality that are swept under the rug daily. Yes, it makes you uncomfortable to the point where you shift in your seat and nervously wipe your mouth in angst. It is my interpretation of my reality, my history, our history. It is a testimony to what one can do with sheer opportunity. It is a product of what a person can do when they have nothing to motivate themselves, but dreams.

