

# 2009/10 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Kraus Family Foundation Award



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Film is a medium through which sustainable social as well as artistic change can be made. It is a medium that has been used to a certain extent, to produce and promote diversity on an international level, not to mention the power it has to challenge existing institutional systems. Although, film cannot go without criticism, since traditionally, mostly privileged or extremely lucky individuals have had the chance to reach the level of filmmaker. This has to do with how the social contracts we live under delineate specific statuses to those termed “whites” and those termed “non-whites.” “Whites” obviously occupy spaces of privilege—socially, economically, and politically—whereas “non-whites” are relegated to the existence of living as the “under-class.” However, we must keep in mind that these beings which occupy these specific spaces have a transitory characteristic that at times allows them to be brought in as “honorary whites” (Japanese business men in South Africa under apartheid compared to Chinese who were also considered part of the underclass along with black South Africans). This notion has real social, political and economic consequences. This also has to deal with the historical perception of how Western civilization views itself in light of its willful creation of an antithesis



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*the professional association for design*

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Film



embodied historically by the “barbaric Sub-Saharan African,” and currently by “Islamic fundamentalism.” Hence, if these social contracts exist and permeate public and private institutions, they will also carry over into artistic institutions. The most prominent examples include, but not exclusive to: the vilification of Islam and Muslim people, post-9/11, in Western-produced films.

Being born in a so-called “developing” country (Dominican Republic) taught me how to conceptualize the problems of the global south in relation to my experiences in the “developed world.” It showed me how historical memory is necessary to the understanding of certain systemic processes which plague “under-developed” countries. Film, like education, is an extremely important agent for advancing and creating historical memory, especially in societies where revisionism is popular. In colonial terms, revisionism consciously rewrites history in the image of itself.

Some filmmakers make movies about the oppressed and the other as an extension of a gaze that is more or less imperialist. Thus, the medium of film posits an almost annihilating quality in terms of how it can socialize or dissocialize.



My reason for getting into filmmaking is not make political commentary aimed at the West and its cohorts. Even if I do speak of them often, “I do not speak to them.” I would like to at least take part in the discourse on ways to create sustainable economic communities for the people who are extremely marginalized on a political, social and economic level. The modern capitalist system commodifies people on a physical as well spiritual level. Predictability, efficiency and control are the current models by which fast-food chains operate. It is sad to say that this model has been willfully permeated into most contemporary aspects of society including the criminal justice system (racial profiling), religion and war. The images that are churned out leave a lasting imprint on the psyche which therefore uses the same pervasive Eurocentric dialogue to analyze works ranging from art to literature to culture. Diversification takes time, and time is not a characteristic which exploitative capitalism wishes to nurture. I understand that my contributions might actually be a detriment since transcribing reality to film may sometimes seem like a futile attempt. Nevertheless, I will seek to do this through whichever medium seems appropriate. I wish to concentrate in directing and hopefully go on to make films.

