

2009/10 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Kraus Family Foundation Award



MARIA FRANCO

Fine art

Senior

School of the Museum of Fine Arts

I was born in Colombia 21 years ago, being the second child of a family of five daughters. When I was 15 my father decided that we had to move to the city and live in a small apartment while he started his business. Meanwhile, with his life savings, he started building a summerhouse outside of the city in a little town, but what we did not know was that this town was full of guerrillas. After it was finished, on a Saturday afternoon, more than 20 men with guns surrounded the house, they called my father, took him into a car and left. These days were the worst days that we had ever had, no one could sleep or eat, and the anger and anxiety were consuming us. Days later my father came home and we could not believe it. It was the best thing that could have ever happened to us, but then I realized that life could be very contrasting sometimes.



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Fine Art

As soon as my father came back home, my parents decided that we had to move out because these people knew where we used to live and they used to call on the phone harassing my mother. Suddenly my father found a nice house that seemed to be the right place for us. Ten days after we moved, someone knocked on the door and my sister ran to open it up, when five armed men and three women entered into the house and started taking everyone downstairs into a tiny bathroom outside of the house. I just had finished dressing up when someone knocked on my door and ironically asked me very gently to go downstairs and join my mother. After 10 minutes we heard a car leaving and realized that they had left. They sure left but they took everything valuable that we had. The only thing that we could do in that moment was to thank God we were alive. After all, nothing seemed so bad because we still had each other.

On January 20th of 2004, my family and I moved to the United States. I went into college with a concentration in photography, and then I transferred into The School of The Museum of Fine Arts, focusing on painting and drawing. Through art I believe there is a way to approach people and to let them know that there is a lot of us that care about them. In my paintings and drawings I address social issues that concern all of us, and my subject matter is usually manifestations and protests around the world. I am also interested in working with the psychology of the problem and the emotional charges that lead us to certain behaviors as a result of today's lifestyle. Most of my drawings are part of a personal exploration but not disconnected from others' emotions, since we all share common anxieties.

Although it can be a very idealistic goal, I believe there can be change. After everything that has happened in my life, which I do not consider unfortunate because it has helped to build up the person I am now, I have a strong need to communicate to others that life can be better if we aim to do so. I also believe that art offers the opportunity to teach young generations how we can contribute to stopping inequality, which is the first factor in a violent society. Finally, my goal before I finish school is to develop a consistent body of work that informs the public and helps them break through ignorance and start change.

