

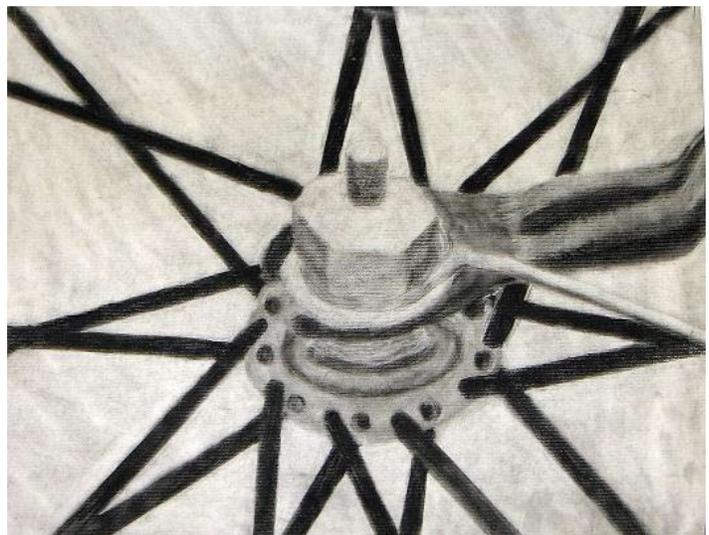
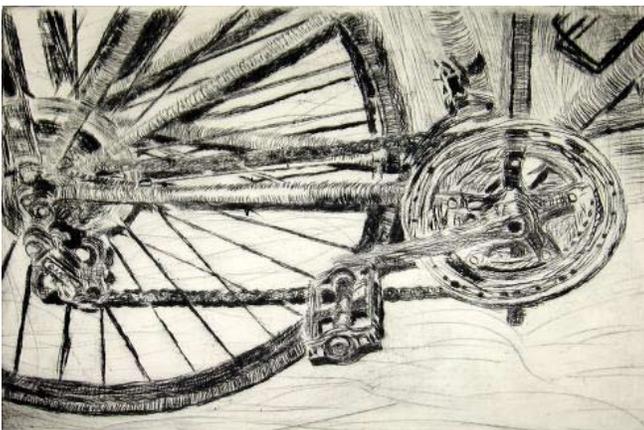
2009/10 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships School of Visual Arts Honorable Mention



MARY ADAMS
Fine art
Freshman
Tyler School of Art

My family has never had much money, I am the oldest of five, my mom has schizophrenia and my siblings and I have had to live in foster care or with relatives at times. Before high school I had always lived in areas where the majority of families were economically unstable, and many of my former friends and peers ended up dropping out and getting low-paying jobs answering phones at the local insurance company. I was lucky enough to move into a better school district right before high school, and to have found something I really liked, which gave me the motivation to pursue a college degree and a career in that field. But I often remember that the dropouts people scorn could have just as easily been myself or my sisters if we had not moved.

When my best friend from middle school dropped out, I started to really think about what it was that made some kids give up and some keep going. She was as intelligent as I, her grades were good and she had a lot of friends at school. But at my former school there were no interesting electives, no honors or AP classes and no one telling her not to drop out. At my new school I was finally learning things that really interested me, and so subsequently I was putting a lot more effort into my work.



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MARY ADAMS

Fine art

High school has still been hard for me; my mom is sick often, and my dad works sometimes 60 hours a week at a refinery. For a while I was working 30 hours a week while going to school, but I was still able to do reasonably well in school through the help and support of my school and community. I think if other high school students could have the same opportunities that I had, they would be more likely to find a career that they like and be motivated to do well in school. My plan is to open my own studio/gallery and offer free art lessons to the kids in Southwest Philadelphia, and through the gallery I could help them sell their work.

Last summer some friends and I were looking to possibly rent a home in the southwest section of Philadelphia, and that's when I got the idea. We were giving ourselves a tour of the neighborhood and we stopped at a playground. I struck up a conversation with a mother of two not much older than I, she told me that the father of her one son was in jail and the other's dad refused to pay his child support. She said she worried that her sons would turn out the same way, there being nothing around them to inspire them otherwise. I remembered an article I had recently read about a man in the Southwest who had opened up a ceramics studio near an Indian reservation notorious for its number of alcoholics, and started giving free lessons to the children. I thought I could do something similar but even take it a step further—by helping the kids to sell their work, this would offer them motivation to keep working at their art and is also a much more rewarding and legal way of earning money than a lot of the other jobs they may be being offered. I know that something like this would take a lot of work and would require a lot of donations, but it's definitely possible, and going to college will be the first step in meeting people that can help contribute to this dream.

