

2007/08 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships

Mohawk Paper Honorable Mention



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Fine Art
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I am dyslexic and have had a phobia of books for nearly my entire life, stemming from ridicule received whenever asked to read or write under public scrutiny. I was often told I was stupid and that I would be lucky to graduate from high school. Throughout my education, I loved learning and tried not to believe the ridicule, while being sent to special education classes or just being ignored completely by teachers that didn't know what dyslexia was. Rather than fall into despair I made up for my literary failings by using my creativity—drawing posters, making dioramas, and dressing up for presentations—ultimately going far beyond the original assignments and graduating from high school at the top of my class with honors.

Since then, I have earned an AA in Behavioral Science and have nearly completed my BFA emphasis in sculpture, but still I am plagued by my phobia of reading and writing. In order to grow, however, I was pushed to take on my fear directly and my work has since evolved into an embodiment of my struggle with my disability, the most frightening thing I have ever taken on, and yet an altogether freeing experience.



As a sculptor I have fabricated objects from a variety of materials including metal, wood, fabric, ceramics, glass, light, and electronics. The found object, however, has become an important part of my work as I've developed my visual language. Most of these objects, such as books and desks, come from the institution of education and share an aged duality of beauty and cruelty. Incorporating a found object in a sculpture that shows years of use and relates a history can create a connection with viewers that otherwise might be absent in a wholly fabricated piece. At the same time I am careful not to let an object's intrinsic value overpower the concept of the sculpture. It is always necessary for me to manipulate the object in some way to make it my own. This can simply relate to its placement among other objects, or completely replacing it with another material, such as taking a mold of the object and duplicating it in cast metal.



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It is my goal to continue developing my artistic language and further explore concepts relating to my experiences in the educational system. I would truly love to be able to pass on encouragement to students with disabilities, as a professor, and let them know that they, too, can achieve their goals.

I grew up in a lower class home in a second-hand world, surrounded by minorities yet in a sub-minority of my own. I am a first generation American on my mother's side. My mother's ethnic background is of Chinese, Cambodian, and Vietnamese descent. My father's ethnic background is of Scotch-Irish and Iroquois Nation Native American.

I had never seen anyone that looked like me; I yearned to connect with others I could relate to. Having such a diverse background, I had a hard time finding cultural identity. Growing up in a poor neighborhood where social groups were divided across racial lines, I was never accepted as part of a race.

I always knew, though, that education was the way out of poverty. I have dreamt of getting a degree, and, although it has taken me longer to get my BFA than others, I have worked my way through school. My vision will not be complete until I earn my MFA so that I can teach art at the university level..

