

2008/09 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Kraus Family Foundation Award



MUGI TAKEI

Fine art
Graduate student
Cranbrook Academy of Art

I was born in the United States and grew up in Japan. My mother almost died of blood loss after she gave birth to me. I heard that she was found bleeding and passing out on the bathroom floor of our apartment. I heard this so often that I began to visualize the scene as if I'd actually seen it. All through my childhood, I was haunted by the image of my mother dying. Therefore, I've become concerned about the meanings of childbirth and womanhood in general. Womanhood has been the prime subject of my work. As a child, I was attached to my mother and liked to be around her. I would watch her cooking, cleaning, shopping, taking care of my younger brother, leaving house for work, bathing, getting dressed and other things. I made a series of watercolor paintings of my mother doing chores and connected them together like a long scroll painting. That's how I started painting and drawing regularly. When I was 15, I was sent to school in the United States. For the first few years of high school, I had a difficult time communicating with others because my English was limited. Since I couldn't verbally express myself, I started putting more time into making art as a way of self-expression.



MUGI TAKEI

Fine art

I went to Massachusetts College of Art to pursue my study in painting. There, I grew a passion for printmaking as well as painting and drawing. In 2001, I traveled to Brussels, Belgium, where I took a French language program, college-level Russian history and philosophy programs. Later, I studied printmaking at a local art academy, and book-binding under a local artist. In 2003, I moved to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to live with my mother. There, I regularly organized painting and printmaking workshops for youths. In 2005, I organized an independent film festival in support of young Japanese filmmakers and to support cultural exchange. I screened 19 films throughout the four-day festival, which was held at the cultural center at the Japanese Embassy in Brussels. The film festival was registered as part of the 2005 EU-Japan Year of People-to-People Exchange. After the screenings, I arranged interview sessions for audiences to communicate with the film directors. I published and distributed a film festival catalogue, financially supported by a Japanese nonprofit organization.

I currently live in Japan. Living in Japan again, I feel reconnected to my origins and my family culture. I have been spending time lately communicating with my older relatives. They talk as if there is no clear line between the past and the present and between the everyday life world and the spiritual world. I find it interesting that they have their own way to relate to the reality. My family culture and family members have been sources of inspiration for me. My most recent two-dimensional work is about women waiting. I feel that women are always waiting for something in Japanese society. This intrigued me. I thought their waiting might involve something positive like having faith in the future, not just passiveness. I will produce a wide range of work in combined media in the MFA program. I'm interested in print making because it allows me to recycle images. As well as producing artwork, I will concentrate on presentation in order to find effective ways to present individual pieces and how they contribute to the whole in a show. I plan to teach college-level studio art after my MFA study and also continue creating my own artwork and exploring different cultures.

