

2007/08 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships

MTV Music Award



PILAR ORTIZ

Film
Graduate Student
Hunter College

I moved from **Santiago, Chile** to New York in 1999, shortly after graduating from Universidad de Chile with a MA in architecture. I soon realized that I was more interested in the observation of the city as a phenomenon than architectural projects in and of themselves. As an alternative to my formal architectural practice, I started exploring video and photography to record and study the urban environment.

During this process I have produced several projects that merge the investigation of urban and social dynamics, the study of cultural expressions, and the experimentation with visual elements as instruments of observation and communication. These videos and multimedia installations have addressed issues such as temporary cities, abandonment of urban areas, public housing, urban segregation, and public space as a backdrop of cultural and political expressions.



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the professional association for design

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Film

As a Harborview Art Consultant for NYCHA, (New York City Housing Authority), I have taught video workshops for senior citizens and teenagers in different community centers in Brooklyn, NY. This experience has allowed me to observe this particular urban environment through the eyes of its long-time residents. Their testimonies contribute to the understanding of the city and how this housing typology affects the construction of social relationships within a community.

The utilization of non-fiction media allows me to communicate unknown and marginalized situations to a broad audience. The documentation of cities today contributes to the construction of a collective memory and the preservation of this memory in time, which is particularly important in the developing world, where a fast process of homogenization tends to destabilize local cultures. With the realization of these multimedia documentations, I intend to address issues of social conflict, provoking reflection and discussion. I envision my work as a bridge between disparate realities.

I decided to walk away from constructing a formal practice in architecture because I felt compelled to create something more meaningful; I am more interested in the needs of common people than those of the privileged ones. It seems to me that the most powerful impact that we can have is through the work we do, and I hope that through my work I can contribute to changing the inequalities that are fundamental to the system we are all a part of.

