

2009/10 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Microsoft Award



RODAN TECLE
Interactive design
Graduate student
School of Visual Arts

"Identity (= form + content) can be created through magic and mystery. All men and women need to do is get off their asses, accept and live fully within the modern world, no matter how bleak it feels, and shape it using both body and mind. Unearth new myth."

I was born in Kassala, Sudan the center point of the Bedouin Rashaida nomads, and grew up as one of the few Africans in Walla Walla, Washington. Every morning in the car, on my way to school, I would listen to Eritrean folk music with my single, three-job-working, former-guerrilla fighting mother. At home, MTV was my babysitter and a stack of coloring books my company. At the age of 8 I was lunged away to Sweden, where I attended one of the best high schools, completing the international science program. Playing the violin and drums I applied to study musicology at university. At the age of 20 I was working as a sound editor in NYC and a year later, in Sweden again, backstage at student plays and eventually received a BA in performance art production from Malmö University – a school rich and varied in its approach to visual culture that fundamentally opened up my eyes to light, space and perception in practice and theory.

I'm convinced that SVA will be a good home to bring my technology itch, my aesthetics and my infinite universes within together to create yet another universe inside the urban, post-modern nomad world that I, alongside other young people create for ourselves here in NYC. A universe where nomadism has become a luxury, and mobility is enhanced by technological inventions. Inventions that however don't



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necessarily challenge our comfort zones. This is the great paradox that I actively confront in my daily life—not to be too comfortable in my “freedom.”

I freelance as a video editor and will be contributing with my video experience in Ragnhild Ek’s project to establish a film school for children in Ethiopia. I will go back to research music and visual culture in Kassala, the city in which I was born and not been to since, the capital of the Rashaidas. I am visually very intrigued by their mysterious, independent, geometrical and colorful ways. The triangle especially interests me, as a shape and as a symbol, reoccurring in the fabrics and crafts of many nomadic tribes and also amongst many young fresh NYC artists “reacquainting themselves with long-lost civilizations, fantasy realms and ages yet to exist” (www.littlecakes.org/REessay.html).

The triangle represents three points in my existence: the Horn of Africa, Sweden and USA. I seek to budge the angles and color the spaces in between the lines in the most exciting and fulfilling of ways—like experimenting with the dynamics created between sound, visuals and words. This is, to me, the ultimate form of expression. This is how I will communicate and shed new light on the Eritrean/Sudanese nomads that I feel so deeply connected to, yet also, disconnected from. I feel it is very important to open up dialogues and channels between the people struggling in diaspora and the ones “back home.” Our struggles are obviously fundamentally different but by understanding how I feel we can build more common ground. I have a rich palette to work from and hope that I will find the funding for the Computer Art program at SVA that I have been accepted to. I wish to focus on video and interactive installations, challenging notions of perception and location.

