

# 2011/12 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Young Photographer's Alliance Award



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Photography  
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Graham Greene wrote, "Hate was just a failure of the imagination". In Greene's novel, *The Power and the Glory*, the priest comes to this conclusion as his journey prompts him to observe and reflect the people he encounters along the way. Simplistic as it may seem, the quote serves as a reminder of why I am attracted to photography and the power of creativity n- the triumph of the imagination. I believe artists are sympathetic and involved characters in a society that is plagued by indifference, as creating imagery entails a journey of engagement and identification with humanity similar to Greene's protagonist. At the same time, successful art works twofold - in its requirement of both practitioner and viewer. It is not only a reflection of society, but it also asks society to reflect upon itself.

I was raised by Mexican immigrant parents, and like many first generation immigrants, the experience of not always fitting in with mainstream society has had an ineffaceable effect on me— that is until I discovered photography. My work reflects Mexican-American identity, and I see this as a lifelong project. It has arisen from my need to understand immigration beyond border walls and illegal border crossings, images pervasive in our mainstream media and national dialogue, and a desire to share this understanding with others in order to create an antidote to our current



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hostility against immigrants in general. My images challenge the current polemic created by the dichotomy of illegal vs. legal by showing that in a global economy the trade of goods in a market economy is inseparable from an exchange of people across borders as well. Taking this transnational perspective, I show where Mexican culture has introduced itself into the U.S.-American landscape, and vice versa, places where U.S. culture has equally penetrated itself into the Mexican landscape. In Mexico, the photographs show a geographic area where migration has occurred for the past hundred years, resulting in an adoption of U.S. American culture. In the United States, it shows us where many of these Mexican diasporas have not only formed, but continue to form as migrants live out the American dream in search for an often elusive piece of their American pie. Despite our constructed borders, these two nations share a history, and its people share a common experience.



I am the only woman in my photography class, which presents its own challenges, but also presents an opportunity to learn from. The history of my life experience suggests that I may reside outside the status quo – I am a woman, an immigrant, and a Latina, but I am also not alone. It is not enough to create artwork that deals with social issues. I must follow through with action to create the ideal world that I envision. For this reason, I have involved myself in work at school that exemplifies these ideals. I am currently volunteering as a Fulbright Ambassador, in order to encourage diversity in the Fulbright program. I also served as a Compass mentor, tutoring first generation college students. I am working on a sustainability initiative to help implement sustainability curriculum into the college. Graduating will prepare me for a lifetime of work in creating photographic images that deal with socio-economic and cultural themes, and teaching others to do so as well.

