

# 2009/10 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Young Photographer's Alliance Honorable Mention



**CLARENCE BAILLO**  
Photography  
Freshman  
Art Institute - Pittsburgh



I am the first child in my family to have been born on American soil. My parents came to this country from the Philippines, in search of a better life for their future family. I could write a book on my early childhood, and the hardships and obstacles my family faced trying to etch a life for ourselves, as immigrants in a new country, but this is not the central theme to this essay. Instead I'll focus on my motivations.

I first came across the world of photography through the pages of *National Geographic*. My parents never used poverty as an excuse for ignorance. They valued education, and instilled that value in me as well. In a home where money was scarce, my father's only guilty pleasure was his *National Geographic* subscription. Reading through these magazines, and looking at these amazing photographs from these far off and distant places changed my life forever. In my eyes, photography was the purest form of communication. No words, just an image. One frozen sample of time, can inspire such a multitude of emotions, or show a whole story. When a new issue came in the mail, I was more excited than my father, and would sit on the sofa and soak up every page. Looking at those photos, I wasn't a child living in a rough neighborhood. I was an archaeologist digging out the most recent pharaoh found, a researcher in the rainforest discovering new species of plants and animals, or a world traveler.



## CLARENCE BAILLO

Photography



In my home, art wasn't viewed as a way to pay the bills. My creativity was always forced to take a back seat to more important responsibilities. When I went to college "Major in something that earns a lot of money" was the driving thought from my parents. And I did, and I dropped out, because I felt such a hole in me, being unable to really pursue what I was naturally good at. Life without an artistic release wasn't life to me. Now at 30, finishing school is one of the few things in my life that I regret never having done.

I don't know and can't guarantee that my photography will change the world. I can guarantee that I do, and will always, strive to have it at least change people one person at a time. My major goal for going back to school is as a role model to my children. I wish to show them the importance of going to college, but also that it's ok to study something that you love. I wish to show them that you can change the world just as easily with a brush (in my case, a camera), as you could with any other career. I tire of living in a world where art is looked down upon like a second rate job. Art has helped mold this world just as much as anything else.

I want to use my photography as a tool to bring social issues and injustices to light. I believe people don't move to change, because they pretend that these issues don't really exist. I want to show people the Buddhist monks' plight in Tibet, the suffering of the people in Haiti torn apart by a massive earthquake, the hunger and poverty going on right here on our home soil. By doing that, I hope to show people that these issues are real, and we should come together to fix them.

