

Diversity Scholarships Report

2017 AIGA Design Conference Design Fair

Diversify Design

Helping AIGA
make this year's
leading design event
even more accessible
to minority designers.

Summary

The Conference Scholarship, Diversity Scholarship, and Su Matthews Hale Women Lead award were launched this year at the AIGA Design Conference in Minneapolis. They all aim to reinforce AIGA's position on equity and its commitment to being an inclusive organization, that continually represents and advocates for the multi-faceted definitions of diversity – including gender, ability, cultural and ethnic origins, race as well as age and socio-economic conditions.

Conference Scholarship

This Scholarship was launched by the Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) initiative. Four members were selected by jury members Jacinda Walker, Chair of the D&I task force, and active task force leaders George Garrastegui Jr, Phim Her, and Jesse Singh. Funded by AIGA, it waived the conference ticket fee.

Diversity Scholarship

This scholarship was funded by Google, Amazon and an anonymous donor, as an opportunity to increase representation and recognize active members for their dedication and hard work volunteering on the task force. Four AIGA members of the D&I task force were chosen to receive this scholarship, which included waiving the conference registration fee and covering transportation and accommodation costs.

Su Matthews Hale Women Lead Award

This scholarship helps support talented, high potential female designers starting out in their careers by providing them with scholarships to attend the conference and a one-year membership to AIGA. Four AIGA student group members of the Minneapolis area were chosen for this award by lead faculty members.

Aside from the unique benefits previously mentioned, we made sure all awardees attended The Impact of Inclusion, the first ever Diversity & Inclusion symposium, curated by D&I task force lead Dian Holton. It addressed issues of gender identity, designing for ability, and diversity in the workplace. We also made sure they attended the annual report presentation, and got some one-on-one time with Jacinda Walker, other task force members as well as student scholars during lunch, drink breaks, and Design Fair activities.

Meet the Conference Scholars

We asked the scholars to share their experiences and lessons learned.

Conference scholars pictured at the 2017 AIGA Design Conference. From left to right: Naomi Silas, Arturo Jimenez, Michelle Knight and Ana Rice



Arturo Jimenez

Design Chair, AIGA Orange County

“The 2017 AIGA Design Conference was a transformative event for myself and my career. I wouldn’t have been able to experience all of this and more if it wasn’t for the scholarship I received. Thanks to the generosity and hospitality of the Diversity & Inclusion task force!

Meeting them and hearing about their advocacy inspired me to talk to my local AIGA chapter president and volunteer to head a new Diversity & Inclusion Initiative here in Orange County. With the brilliant example the task force has set I know I can encourage diversity in my own design community!”



Naomi Silas

D&I Director, AIGA West Michigan

“I was overjoyed to receive the scholarship. But I was faced with the tough decision that I might have to reject it. I did not have the money for airfare or accommodations. I started a GoFundMe to attend the conference. I was fortunate enough to receive generous support and accept the scholarship.

Meeting Jacinda, the task force, and the other Scholars was the highlight of the conference for me. I finally saw myself represented. I finally felt included in the design community. The key takeaway that I have, is that Diversity & Inclusion in Design, is so much bigger than us all.

I thank AIGA, and all the underrepresented designers who have paved this way for me.”



Michelle Knight

Member, AIGA Portland

“As a minority woman in design, it was powerful to connect with designers like me. The AIGA community at the conference was overwhelmingly positive and welcoming– I constantly felt like these are my people.

Attending as a conference scholar was a catalyst for my career and for my personal development, and I am thrilled to use this experience to propel me further in connecting with and helping the AIGA community in Portland.

Thank you again for the opportunity to attend– it’s changed my life in so many ways already.”



Ana Rice

Member, AIGA Virginia

“The Impact of Inclusion Symposium was by far the most memorable. Thinking about diversity and inclusion from every speaker’s point of view showed just how much more work we have to do.

Being in the conference environment has been the most inspiring thing I’ve experienced all year. Between the networking opportunities, meeting CEOs of companies, and having candid conversations with some of my absolute favorite designers and authors, I’m still overwhelmed by it all.

I connected with so many like-minded artists that I hope I can stay connected with for a long time. I am forever indebted to the AIGA Diversity & Inclusion team and the sponsors that made this opportunity possible”

A special thanks

Jacinda Walker, Chair of the D&I task force, and active members George Garrastegui Jr, Phim Her, and Jesse Singh – for taking the time to review a number of high quality submissions.

Meet the Diversity Scholars

We asked the scholars to share their experiences, lessons learned and their favorite quote from the conference.

Diversity scholars pictured with other D&I task force members at the 2017 AIGA Design Conference. From left to right: Aldrena Corder, Marq Mervin, Gaby Hernandez, Jesse Singh, Jacinda Walker, George Garrestegui, Lucy Bennett and Carlos Estrada



Carlos Estrada

Content and Awareness, AIGA Detroit

"In an atmosphere of celebration and learning, it was sobering to hear from other designers of color (even medalists) who are facing many oppositions and obstacles on different fronts.

The conference is a rare opportunity to be in the same space where so many accomplished designers and/or speakers are accessible: this made all the difference. I had moments that lasted less than 2/3 minutes with certain speakers, which were more impactful than a general session!"

"Keeping things taboo is like building walls between us." - [Daniel Cardoza](#), Commmand X Winner



Gaby Hernandez

Guidance and Support, AIGA Houston

"We all carry stories of exclusion and identify with related problems or with populations that have suffered it for being different.

I liked that sensitive topics are emerging in different spaces. We saw speakers on the main stage unveiling profoundly human topics and how they relate to our labor as designers. We need to see more of that, and to make sure those people feel safe talking about such topics."

"We need to guarantee that diversity is inherent in every aspect of life. Otherwise, it becomes invisible." - [Dian Holton](#), D&I Symposium Curator



Jasvir (Jesse) Singh

Guidance and Support, AIGA Minnesota

“Thank you so much for the opportunity to go to the Conference. I am humbled, inspired and driven having met and connected with designers, some of whom I have written papers about.

Unlike other events I have attended, I felt comfortable to be myself as there were people I could connect to.”

“Find a safe space with others.” - [ShawnaX](#), Main-stage Speaker



Marq Mervin

Education and Community, AIGA Jacksonville

“One thing I loved was meeting the task force, the Conference scholars, and other like-minded designers. It was a much needed, and very fulfilling experience.

For me, however the conference revealed how most designers don't understand what diversity and inclusion means, but it reinforced how important our D&I work is for both the design profession and design education.”

“I want to create a safe space where you recognize you're scared, but you'll act in spite of that.” - [Emily Pilloton](#), Designer as Entrepreneur Symposium speaker

A special thanks

Google

amazon

and an anonymous donor, without whom this award would not be possible.

Meet the Su Mathews Hale Women Lead Awardees

We asked the scholars to share their experiences, lessons learned and their favorite quote from the conference.

Women Lead scholars pictured with Su Mathews Hale at the 2017 AIGA Design Conference. From left to right: Amairani J Sanabria, Brianna Puckett, Dani Gates, Su Mathews Hale and Danielle Odeen



Dani Gates

Student Member, Concordia University, St. Paul

“At the conference I learned it’s important to sell yourself and your designs, that you can’t just sit around and wait for something to happen. You have to take an initiative.

I also learned it’s important to keep happiness and growth around you, to do something that makes you happy. That’s what leads to success.

I loved the different types of speakers. There was so much to learn and take away from everyone. I love the fact that they included people from a multitude of areas.”

“Just because it doesn’t make sense, doesn’t mean it isn’t helpful.” - [René Knip](#), Mainstage speaker



Danielle Odeen

Student Member, Concordia University, St. Paul

Thank you again for the honor. What a great conference and wonderful experience! I loved how many speakers and different areas there were to choose from. I also loved that I was able to connect with other women my age, I made great friends with Brie and am looking forward to staying connected to her.

“Every solution isn’t complex, but every problem deserves your full consideration.”

- [Jessica Gaddis](#), Mainstage speaker



Brianna Puckett

Student Member, Minnesota State University, Mankato

I learned that there are different levels of success for each person. So, no one is “better” than you because of a position or title. It all depends on how you define success for yourself.

I loved the diversity of speakers. Different people from different field and backgrounds all sharing their stories or perspectives really made for a well-rounded conference.

“When you are committed, you find opportunity in the most unexpected places. Be brave and start now.” - [Shani Sandy](#), Mainstage Speaker



Amairani Jonapa Sanabria

Student Member, Minneapolis Community & Technical College

I learned that I earned my spot to be at the conference and I was chosen with the Su Mathews Hale Women Lead award because someone saw me as a leader and that I’ve never been wrong when I say “the question is not, what is Graphic Design?, but what can Design be?” I saw proof that graphic design is everywhere, in different forms where you get to be expressive and build an identity.

I loved all the amazing speakers, they were diverse and because of that they all brought different perspectives into this conference to a level where, I think everyone was able to connect with them at some point.

“Not knowing everything is just as powerful as knowing everything” - [Louise Fili](#), Mainstage Speaker

A special thanks

to this year’s donors without whom this award would not be possible: Deborah Adler, Adler Design; Michael Bierut, Pentagram; Heather Stern, Lippincott; and Rick Wise, Lippincott.