

Prototype 2 – Artist as Engaged Scholar

CYNTHIA

I am an artist, an activist, and a scholar. I use documentary film as a creative outlet to give people a voice. When I applied to graduate school I wanted to remain local, so I would not have to uproot my family or leave my artist community. My advisor introduced me to his work and used the term publicly engaged scholarship. I now have the language to support the work I have always done. I am a publicly engaged artist tied to the academy.

My name is Cynthia. I am an artist, an activist, and a scholar. I use documentary film as a creative outlet to give people a voice that are otherwise overlooked and not typically heard in the community. My art keeps me engaged, grounded, and gives me a flexibility that I would not have in a typical 9-5 job.

After an art opening of a film I produced on immigrants and low-income housing, another artist shared with me his work on photography and refugees, he was doing at the university. It never occurred to me to use the university and education as a means to support my artwork. With his encouragement and my family's support, I returned to school. It was important I stay local because, I did not want to uproot my family or leave the local art community.

Thus, in fall 2008, I returned to school. Within weeks of being on campus, my advisor introduced me to his work and used the term publicly engaged scholarship. I now have the language to support the work I have always done. I am a publicly engaged artist tied to the academy. I cannot imagine doing anything else with my life. Publicly engaged scholarship makes sense to my research, my artwork, and my being. It makes me a better person and I am forever grateful.