

Yonis' PlatteForum Story Current ArtLab Intern

At the tender age of six, Yonis Noor came to America as a refugee from East Africa, along with his eight siblings and mother. Although the move represented a completely new life, one thing that wholly survived the trip was his passion for the arts. Fortunately for Yonis and for his community, an ArtLab internship at PlatteForum proved to be the perfect outlet for his creative ambitions.

Since his arrival in the States, Yonis has participated in several youth-focused groups, but PlatteForum is where he feels most comfortable. His experience as an ArtLab intern was markedly different in that he now feels a part of something bigger than the individual; a group where everyone participates and ultimately shares the triumphs and challenges of every project.

This sense of belonging to a greater whole fueled his artistic passion and exposed him to many individuals with whom he shared this ardor and enthusiasm. Yonis also found that the group mentality and free exchange of ideas at PlatteForum enabled him to interact with artists working with media he would not have been exposed to in another environment.

"PlatteForum is like a family you meet up with every week. I love all the diverse personalities and how intelligent our conversations are. Everyone is so supportive, youthful and energetic, even the adults."
-Yonis Noor

Yonis also credits PlatteForum with helping him to develop maturity outside of his personal artistic growth, most notably in understanding societal issues and speaking out against injustice. His initial reluctance to recognize and deal with these concerns was overcome by his work at PlatteForum,

which afforded him a heightened awareness and allowed him to develop his own tools for progress. Platte Forum's emphasis on socially relevant art helped him understand both the cold reality of injustice and the power to create change, giving him the confidence and skills needed to express his opinions and to work for collective transformation.

Yonis plans to go to college after graduating Thomas Jefferson High School this spring to study economics, business, law and environmental science. As an outgrowth of his internship at PlatteForum, Yonis plans to become a socially conscious entrepreneur, using free market powers to bring attention to issues like income inequality, mass incarceration and global warming.



Yonis with his art installation during an ArtLab exhibition.

