

Featured Artist: OLIVIA LINDSTROM

Experimenting with portrait art to
illustrate emotions



Sophomore Olivia Lindstrom sits at her desk after a long, busy day of school and swimming; she picks up a pencil, creates an image in her head and begins to unleash her creative energy. She sketches, draws and paints a diverse mix of portraits. Lindstrom spends her time creating both paintings and drawings and experimenting with a variety of mediums to bring her art to life.

Lindstrom's interest in art began during her childhood, when she constantly found ways to express herself creatively.

"I've always grown up drawing and doodling," Lindstrom said. "As a kid, I remember really enjoying making things and that sparked my passion and love for art."

One of Lindstrom's recent pieces is a self-portrait (pictured

left), created by drawing thin lines of pen. "Usually when I create a piece, I do the first sketch and then I go over the sketch with whatever medium I am using," Lindstrom said. "In this piece specifically, I actually took the photo of myself first and it inspired me to create a work of art around that photo."

Currently, Lindstrom enjoys experimenting with a variety of mediums, including watercolor, pastels and charcoal.

"I've never previously worked with pastels quite this much and it was a really unique experience to be able to learn and grow as an artist using this new medium," Lindstrom said. "I had a really fun time learning to adapt to this new medium and learn new technical skills to apply to the piece," Lindstrom said.

Many of Lindstrom's pieces, including this self-portrait, are made in her moments of highest need for emotional expression.

"A lot of my pieces are made when I am not the most mentally stable, and at strange times of day," Lindstrom said. "In this piece, I was feeling re-

ally tired and burnt out and I was definitely in need of a break. I used this piece to let out some of my steam by doing what makes me happiest.”

When Lindstrom initially began creating art, she viewed her pieces in a more critical way and often focused on others’ perceptions of her work.

“Before, I was [focused on] succeeding with technical stuff... and getting approval and validation from other people about my art,” Lindstrom said. “Now it’s about what I’m trying to convey in my art...and really getting my emotions onto the paper.”

For Lindstrom, creating art is a therapeutic experience and a way for her to work through the challenges of her everyday life.

“It gives me a way to express my emotions,” Lindstrom said. “I’m a very emotional person and this [art] is the thing that

I can do to [let my emotions out].
It’s a way to

express what I’m feeling and it’s easier than talking.”

Lindstrom has begun to prioritize art as a method of self-care but sometimes struggles to make time for it. To get out of creative blocks, Lindstrom puts aside extra time for creativity and avoids having overly high expectations for herself and her pieces. For Lindstrom, the most challenging part of creating a new piece is the initial stages—sitting down and beginning to draw or paint.

“Whenever I’m feeling particularly inspired or have a rush of energy to create at a random time, I’ll just sit down and make art, even if it’s not the best work I’ve ever created,” Lindstrom said. “I’ll just sit down and get everything out.”

One of Lindstrom’s regrets in her creative journey is that she didn’t prioritize her own feelings about art earlier on in her life. She felt like she wasn’t creating art for the joy it was

bringing her as an artist, but for others’ expectations.

“If I had just realized that it wasn’t all about the outcome and it was more about how you’re feeling while creating [a piece], that would have made all the difference,” Lindstrom said.

Recently, Lindstrom has been working on creating art that speaks to her feelings and plans to make this a focus during the rest of her creative journey.

“A lot of times I’m not really sure myself what exactly I’m feeling or why, but when I sit down and make some art it usually makes it easier to distinguish my feelings,” Lindstrom said.

In the future, Lindstrom hopes to inspire others with her art by conveying shared experiences and emotions that people can resonate with.

“This piece [the self-portrait] specifically was definitely more for me than for others,” Lindstrom said. “However, I’d love for people to look at my art and be impacted by it and realize that some of the emotions they may be having I might be too.”

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