



The Final CALL

As seniors head off on their post-high school paths, they reflect on their artistic journeys



Alex Yan

From cartooning to graphic designing, Yan contributes his skills to the Paly publications

Flipping through the various Paly magazines, one is sure to see various art pieces from different outsourced Paly artists. Paly senior, Alex Yan, enjoys giving back to the Paly community by doing art for publications, such as Viking and C Magazine.

“I always did art because I wanted to, but none actually had a purpose,” Yan said. “Now I have the chance to enhance the publications.”

Yan’s love for art started at a young age when he began reading cartoons, and it has blossomed ever since.

“I wanted to get better at drawing because I read all these comic books, and I really liked that style of ‘Calvin and Hobbes,’” Yan said. “I wanted to become a cartoonist.”

Although Yan’s art style has changed from cartooning to sketching and graphic design, his passion has not wavered.

“It’s really relaxing and therapeutic,” Yan said. “I like the feeling of seeing my art finished and feeling satisfied.”

As Yan’s high school career comes to a close, he plans to continue his art career in college.

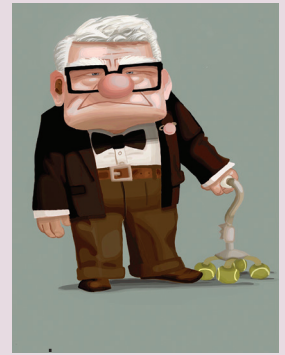
“I researched publications [my college] had and I’d maybe join those or take higher level art classes,” Yan said.

Perhaps shockingly, Yan has been a self-taught artist up until this year.

“I never took an actual art class until now,” Yan said. “That’s kind of embarrassing as a senior.”

However, Yan didn’t let his lack of formal education in art hold him back, and now urges others to follow their artistic passions.

“I just want to say if you want to do art, you don’t have to take formal lessons,” Yan said. “You can learn from looking at other artists and being inspired.”



Leena Hussien

Dedicated to dance through her high school career, Hussien considers her options and opportunities in college and beyond

For countless hours, several days a week, Paly senior Leena Hussien practices multiple genres of dance at the Cubberley Community Center.

Hussien has had a long journey through the arts. She started with choir at age six, but in middle school, she realized her passions had changed and that’s when she discovered dance.

“I did a lot of sports growing up, but I wasn’t into them that much,” Hussien said. “I tried swimming, softball, soccer, gymnastics and everything wasn’t working out. I think I fit more of the performing arts side of things.”

Hussien focuses on multiple types of dance: ballet, contemporary and jazz. As a competitive dancer, Hussien is forced to balance her rigorous practice schedule and competitions with her academic, social and personal life.

“I go to dance, come back and do homework, then sleep whenever I can,” Hussien said. “It’s about prioritizing, making schedules and using preps well.”

With her crazy schedule, Hussien is thankful for her teammates.

“It’s not like other sports, where you’re either good at the sport or you’re not good,” Hussien said. “[Dance has] different levels and there’s not a set expectation, but you still get the team aspect.”

Since dance is a team sport, there is pressure to not let the team down.

“It’s very difficult on your body, [injuries] like pulling muscles and bruises occur, so there’s the physical aspect,” Hussien said. “There’s also a mental toll because since it’s a team sport, if you’re lacking or you don’t have skills that other people have, it’s stressful.”

Protecting herself both mentally and physically is important for dance.

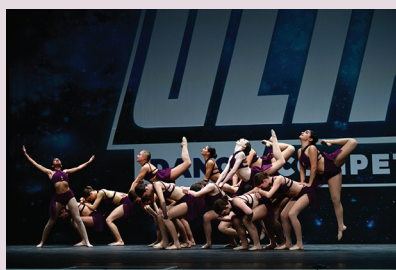
“Your sport is literally just your body,” Hussien said.

Despite the toll on her body, Hussien loves to dance and wants to stick with it past high school.

“I am planning to continue dancing through college because I think it’s such a fun and expressive way to release stress and maintain physical activity,” Hussien said. “I think I still have a lot more room for growth.”

Text and design by KYLIE TZENG and CASEY WALTERS •

Photos courtesy of LEENA HUSSIEN, REED JADZINSKY, KATIE MCCLUSKEY and ALEX YAN



Reed Jadzinsky

Jadzinsky uses ceramics to find relaxation and peace

Senior Reed Jadzinsky is a talented graphic designer and ceramics enthusiast. As such, he's practiced ceramics, specifically wheel throwing, for six years and graphic design for four.

In the sixth grade, Jadzinsky began to explore his interest in ceramics, first by taking a class at the Palo Alto Art Center. After that, he registered for ceramics classes in school, and he appreciates how ceramics lets him disconnect from academics.

"It's very therapeutic," Jadzinsky said. "It's something that I definitely want to continue doing."

Jadzinsky volunteers at the Palo Alto Art Center, assisting the loading and unloading kiln process, helping kids taking classes with their work, and keeping the studio tidy. In exchange, they give him volunteer hours and access to the adult studio.

"The adult studio is significantly better once you actually know how to throw because they have more clay and glaze options," Jadzinsky said.

One of the struggles that comes with ceramics is dedicating time to work on his pieces, but Jadzinsky finds that this art-school balance problem actually has a few hidden upsides.

"Prioritizing [ceramics] over schoolwork actually helped me study later, because I'm more relaxed," Jadzinsky said.

However, there are problems that come with spending so much time at the wheel. Jadzinsky often finds that his hands become dry, and his clothes are often covered in clay after he spends a lot of time working. However, Jadzinsky doesn't let this stop him.

"For me, the benefits of what I get out of ceramics are worth it," Jadzinsky said.



Katie McCluskey

McCluskey turns yarn into clothes and meaningful gifts

While most teenagers might choose to spend their free time scrolling on TikTok, senior Katie McCluskey finds solace in her crochet hook and yarn.

McCluskey's creative process is organic and intuitive. She comes up with her own unique designs and makes anything from tank tops to blankets and bags.

"I just kind of wing it and hope that it works out," McCluskey said. "I've done it for long enough to where I can make things work."

While the freedom to create her own designs is exhilarating, it also presents some challenges.

"Sometimes it's hard because you don't have the right amount of yarn," McCluskey said. "If you go by new yarn, and it's the wrong dye batch, there are different colors."

Despite these challenges, McCluskey has successfully created many beautiful and intricate pieces. One of her favorite creations is a blanket of 140 separate crocheted quilt-type

squares that she connected together.

"I didn't follow a pattern, which I thought was pretty exciting," McCluskey said.

McCluskey often gives her handmade works to friends as gifts, though it can be difficult to get the sizing right with clothing items.

"Sometimes my friends asked me to make them separate, random projects," McCluskey said.

Looking ahead to college, McCluskey does not see her crochet hobby leaving anytime soon.

"I think in college, it could be just a nice thing to have sometimes, like a little reminder of home," McCluskey said.

Her number one piece of advice for other crochet hobbyists is to expand their comfort zones.

"Go for it. Don't worry about it looking ugly," McCluskey said. "If it does, the worst thing you do is not wear or use it. And you just keep going until you make something cool."