

ARTS & VARIETY

Featured Artist: *Madison Buchanan*

BY BROOKE STEIGAUF



*Photography provided by Madison Buchanan
Pictured above is the artist herself*

MADISON BUCHANAN is a CSP artist whose work you have probably seen before. Her illustrations are eye-catching, intriguing, playful, and sometimes disconcerting, and that is exactly why we print them on the back cover of *The Sword*. You may have thought that they were digitally made, as her lines are remarkably straight, her colors are extraordinarily uniform, and its appearance is near-perfect. Unbelievably though, Buchanan's featured illustrations are hand drawn.

If you are a person who finds themselves insecure about their artistic abilities, Buchanan's story might put your emotions in perspective. Despite Buchanan's undeniable talent and profound creativity, she too has struggled to be confident in her capabilities. "The most frustrating part about being an artist is the pressure that you put on yourself," she states. "I'm my own perfectionist; Generally when someone says, 'You're a perfectionist,' it means you're making things look good for others but for me, it is about my personal standards. If I can't make it to my vision, it puts me down."

Buchanan disclosed that this feeling of inferiority began when she compared herself to someone else. As a budding artist, she found herself surrounded by people who were interested in making highly realistic artwork, while she found herself more compelled toward drawing cartoons. While her best friend at the time, a more advanced artist, received lots of recognition for her work, Buchanan yearned for the same support and appreciation from her peers.

The result of this discouragement is something from which she now benefits, but also still struggles with today. Buchanan put hours upon hours of work into her crafts(wo)manship in order to build her skills. Even with her increase in ability and the encouragement of her peers, Buchanan admits that she still feels self-doubt. "Perfectionism pushes me to make things better, but it also strains me to achieve things that I know are not obtainable... at the moment." Buchanan is still refining her skills, remaking old ideas, and hardest of all, working toward building her confidence.

Making artwork isn't all fun and games, but it's not all head-banging and paper-crumpling either. At the start of my interview with Buchanan, she was busy with a piece for her senior art exhibition appearing in CSP's gallery next Spring. For her showing, she is creating artwork to synthesize the challenges and rewards that each day of the week presents. It was a Monday, and she was working on — "Monday." Near the end of my interview, she displayed it on her easel and said, "I am done, and I like it."

Buchanan explained the satisfaction she feels when she finishes a piece that she approves. She is most proud of her overall style, as it is something unique and her own. Her hope for her work is that someone else will be inspired by it and that it will contribute to their own style. Buchanan's advice for others and herself is to remember that you can only get better, but it takes practice. †

