



BY JOSIE GERESZEK
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Triple-majoring senior Janessa Marquette has a lot going on, but that hasn't stopped her from picking up a new hobby.

"I'm surprised I even found the time to draw," Marquette said. "It started off as a joke."

Her boyfriend was having a bad day, she said, so she drew a picture of a dog to cheer him up.

"It turned into me drawing pictures of fat little pugs," she said. "I got really into it."

She said she's not sure what she's doing, but she knows she gets a kick out of it.

"I've never taken art classes," she said. "I've never drawn."

Marquette talked about her art, flipping through pieces she created on her iPad through a free app called Paper by FiftyThree. The software digitally emulates art tools through a Bluetooth-connected stylus.

"This was the piece I did for my boyfriend," she said. "It's our spirit animals — a fat pug and a goat. Goats like to eat everything, and they're loud and obnoxious, so I feel like that's me."

Marquette recently signed a contract with Fargo craft store Unglued and opened her own Etsy shop to sell her work. It's hard being new to the craft, she said.

"It's really confusing going to these Etsy shops and stores where people sell their stuff. They talk about all the different weights of the paper and the ink, and I have no idea what they're talking about" Marquette said, laughing. "I don't know how to explain what this is. I'm not an artist, and I don't know what's happening."

Still, come mid-March, Marquette's simple prints will be making their way to Unglued's downtown storefront. She said she thinks they'll do best as cards.

"I do this in my spare time," she said. "It's not like it's taking time away from my real job, so I might as well see if I can

make it at Unglued."

She said she's still surprised when people recognize her pieces as distinct art.

"I personally think my work looks like it was drawn by a talented 7-year-old," she said. "You see art that's done by people, and they're so amazing and detailed, and I drew this pug. It's approximately four lines. But people like it."

They like it so much, in fact, that her art's come to serve a more practical purpose than she ever expected. Marquette works at Stepping Stones Resource Center

over school and all the stuff I have to do, it's easy to just take out my iPad and start drawing, even if I'm just drawing a random blob-of-fur-sort-of thing," she said. "It distracts me from myself because I'm just so focused on my goal of graduating and being done. When I look at some of the dumb things I've drawn, even looking at these weird critters makes me feel better."

Those aren't the only reasons drawing has found a special place in Marquette's heart. Decades ago, her grandfather attended and graduated from MSUM when

I was super attached to my family, but I wasn't related to them," she said. "There was this weird disconnect. Everyone in my family who was born into it has this amazing artistic ability — every single one of them."

Her grandfather's talents, she said, have been passed on through the generations.

"His artistic intelligence and musical ability was so powerful that everybody gets it," she said. "I like that I have some form of artistic ability, even though his is way better. I would love to be able to show him because he would love it."

Marquette said she's eager to improve her work. Lately, she's been practicing using the app's watercolor tool.

"I look at watercolor work that other people have done, and it looks like something that should be on a canvas — beautiful stuff, and I'm like, 'I drew this sea otter that's supposed to be my dog.' But to my credit, some of that stuff is drawn with my finger," she said. "Literally a finger painting not done by an 8-year-old."

She said she wants to get better at drawing things from real life, especially since finding a new muse.

"I just adopted a pug named Kirby," she said. "I just want to squish his little face and draw little pictures of him, but I can't draw things from real life ... When I draw the stupid pugs, it's a line and a line and here's the dog, but when I have to draw something that's an actual thing, I can't do it."

Still, in the meantime, Marquette's enjoying what she does.

"I like it. I have fun with it," she said. "I know my stuff is kind of goofy and weird, but that's okay. That's what I want it to be."

Marquette graduates in May with degrees in sociology, criminal justice and women's and gender studies. She plans to attend graduate school and study public health at the University of Minnesota next semester.



in Fargo, a space dedicated to providing shelter, basic needs, life skills education and advocacy services for disenfranchised youth.

"The youth that I work with will come over and watch me draw in my little app," Marquette said. "They'll give me ideas, so I draw things. Then they'll start talking, and that's good. It's a good ice breaker because they'll see me drawing and sit down and talk."

Marquette said her art helps her personally as well. She describes herself as "all or nothing" and said getting creative has given her an outlet for anxiety.

"When I start to get really worked up

it was still the teachers college. He left with degrees in music and art.

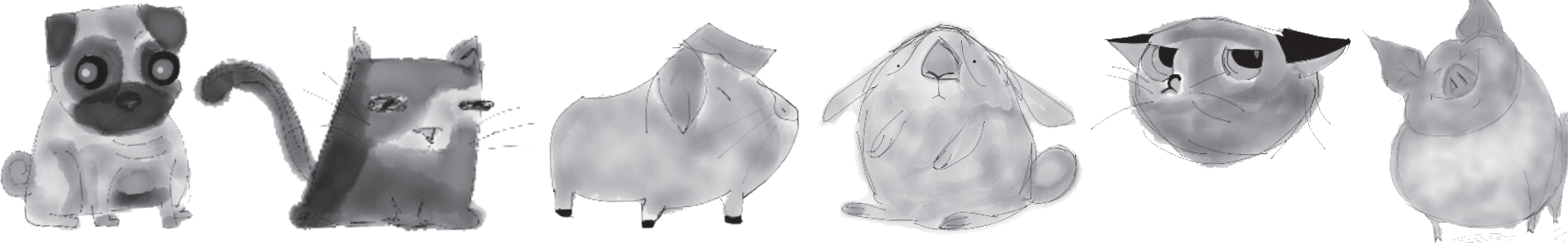
"He was an incredibly talented artist," she said. "I always wanted to be like that. I wanted to play the piano and draw, but I didn't have the patience as a child."

When she received Unglued's email with her commission contract, she couldn't wait to tell her mom.

"She told me my grandpa would be proud," she said. "He was such a good artist."

She said taking up art has connected her to her family in a new way.

"I was adopted, so I was very confused about life when I was younger because



"I don't know if it's a rabbit or a chicken," Marquette said, pointing to a piece of digital art she'd created on her iPad. "I don't know what I was drawing, but that one always makes me happy ... I draw slightly stupid artwork, but I guess I want my weird little artwork to make people smile."

Reviewer deems “Everyone’s Crazy” a pleasant surprise

BY CAMERON SEIBOLD
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Praveen Sharma only started releasing music under his solo alias, Braille, roughly four years ago. Previously, Sharma was known for his collaboration with popular underground dance musician Travis Stewart (aka Machinedrum) in their short-lived duo, Sepulchre.

The release of his EP, “Everyone’s Crazy,” functions as the precedent to Braille’s forthcoming full-length, “Mute Swan,” to be released on label Friends of Friends. The first release by Sharma’s solo moniker showcases his affinity for deep rhythms, dance music, hip hop and R&B. While keeping things fairly dark, the album showcases a solid pop mentality, making the EP fairly progressive and accessible.

On the opening and title track, Sharma starts off with an ultra slow-tempo, futuristic R&B vibe. The track showcases his smooth and sultry style with shimmering synths, organic and creative percussion (comparable to electronic duo Mount Kimbie) and pitch-shifted vocals manipulated to create a collage of ambiguous and sexy lyrics.

The low-key, driving-with-the-windows-down vibe rolls into the next track. The EP is cohesive, working together from song to song. The transitions are seamless, the tracks different enough to warrant a listen of each one.

“I Know” continues in the same vein, with more of the same vocal cuts singing soulful ambiguous phrases over the top of brilliant analogue synths and hip hop-influenced sampled rhythms. Just as you get comfortable with the track being a slow roller, Braille subtly switches it up just enough to create an interesting change of pace, with more warbly synth work reminiscent of English artist Lone.

“Small Downs” is the only track that really goes off the rails on the EP, and like so much of electronic music these days, it plays into pure ‘90s rave nostalgia. Big, bold synth stabs dominate the track, building from tribal rhythms into a jungle/hardcore-infused beat, with Braille’s Burial-esque vocal samples sprinkled on top. While it’s not exactly an original idea at this point, it’s definitely not an unwelcome addition to the EP, and I can’t help but love this style of track even though it may be getting just a little bit overdone.

“Too Forward” brings the tempo back down, returning to

what we heard in those first few tracks. Braille is cutting out a nice, slow-rolling, analogue-driven R&B style all his own with this first release on Friends of Friends.

The final track, “I Was Gonna Make It,” slows things down even further to cap it off. The vocal style on this track ends on a high note, switching things up from previous tracks. It sounds like the same vocal track played at an octave higher and an octave lower, cutting out the original pitch in between. It’s Madlib-esque, very textural and satisfying to listen to. The chant becomes almost hypnotic over time. Complex textures and ear-pleasing percussion bring this EP to a nice, strong finish.

As a big fan of Sepulchre and Machinedrum, I couldn’t recommend this short debut EP by Braille enough. If you enjoy artists like James Blake (at least his instrumental side), Mount Kimbie and Lone, you should give this one a shot. It’s a short listen, clocking in at just around 25 minutes, but it’s a big start nonetheless. If this is any indication of Braille’s forthcoming release on Friends of Friends, it’s going to be a really strong follow-up LP to a pleasantly surprising EP.