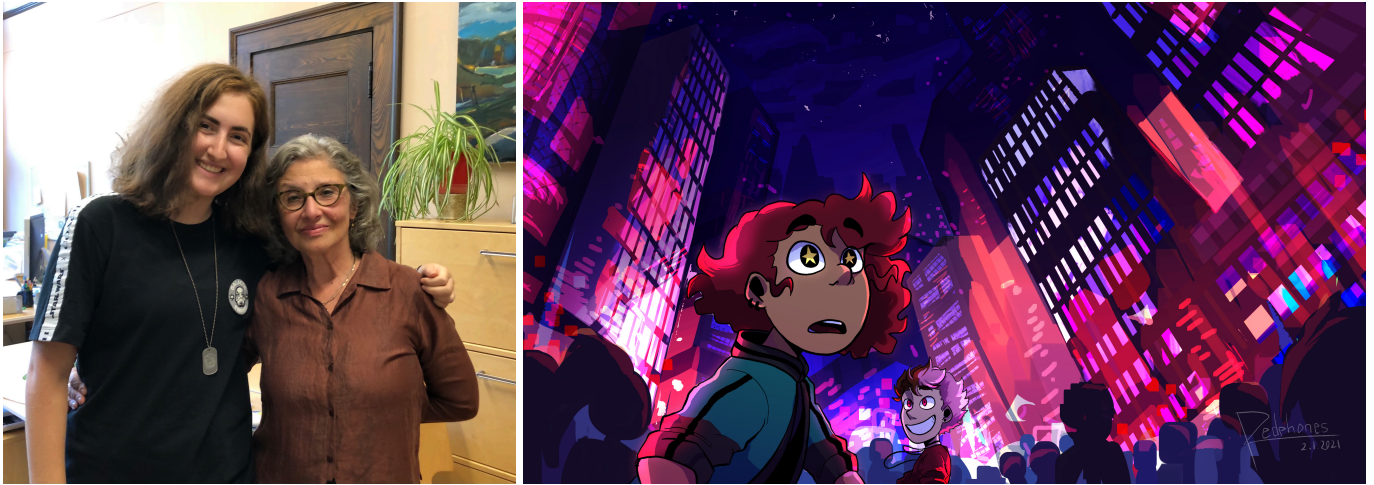


MAYA SILVERMAN DRAWS ANIMATION INSPIRATION FROM MUNROE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Interview by Pamela Rice, Munroe Center for the Arts



Comics are serious business for Maya Silverman. A student at Munroe Center for the Arts for over a decade, this Lexington High School Senior and talented bright star sat down with us to discuss artwork, internships, Munroe Center, future aspirations and more.

What are your first memories of doing artwork and when did drawing and cartooning become serious for you?

I remember being four years old, and my wonderful babysitter, who was from Argentina, would draw these beautiful mermaids. I wanted to draw mermaids just like her, so I did! After that, I really started getting into drawing and painting. In fifth grade I loved to draw cartoons like My Little Pony and by sixth grade my interests had evolved to YouTube Animators and I was completely inspired to get into cartooning and animation. I progressed from manual drawing to computerized programs around the time of ninth grade.

How long have you been taking classes at Munroe?

I've been taking all kinds of classes at Munroe since I was a little kid. I've taken a lot of visual arts classes, theater classes, and attended Munroe's Summer Camps and school vacation programs. I also have fond memories of being a member of the Dance Inn for ten years (Hi Thelma!). Munroe Center has always been a great place for me to express my creativity. It's such a great outlet!

How long have you been studying with Munroe's Laurel Smith, and what do you like best about her classes?

This is my seventh year studying with Laurel. I've literally grown up with her. I often describe her classes as providing a "comfortable silence." By that I mean that she provides a peaceful and serene space in which to take class. When I'm at Munroe, art is my central focus. Laurel helps me focus and is excellent company when I want to draw. I especially love it in the winter, as it is such a cozy place to draw. Laurel is not only excellent company when I want to draw, but she also makes many different materials available to her students, including watercolors, charcoal, acrylics and canvas. I can use any materials that I want to create my pieces. Laurel's Friday night classes are such a great way to start the weekend!

What's your favorite project that you've worked on in Laurel's classes to date?

I am about to release a forty page sci-fi themed comic book called "The Gadget Project". I've worked on it a lot during Laurel's classes. The comic is centered around this concept I like to call Gadget Fighting, and the main character is obsessed with it. She moves to a big city via a scholarship from a mysterious donor, and as she familiarizes herself with the city and the people she meets, things start to get crazy. (You'll have to read the comic!). My comic book explores themes such as conflict, betrayal, and political strategy, and has superhero tones. It is basically the opposite of my daily life experiences, which is why I am so fascinated by it, and find it super interesting. It is definitely a creative endeavor and draws from many aspects of my imagination.

We understand that currently you have an internship cartooning. That's pretty impressive and exciting for a seventeen year old! Can you tell us a bit about it?

I currently intern with a mentor who has written for Marvel Comics and has helped create several successful, well known comics. I have been interning with him since July of 2020. It's super exciting, because we were able to finish a full draft. As a first time comic maker, I plan to self publish it and hope that it gains the interest of some agents, at which point I hope to sell it.

Who and/or what are your biggest influences with respect to your artwork? What inspires you the most?

I am incredibly thankful to my parents. They've always been a huge source of support to me in my wanting to do artwork and animation. I've also had some great teachers and mentors, like Laurel, my comic editor, and even some friends of mine. In terms of which animators influence my work, I'd have to say, currently, Ethan Becker and Radford

Sechrist are two of my favorites. These animators help me with motivation and inspire me to take my art to the next level. I especially love Sechrist's Netflix Series "Kipo and the Age of Wonderbeasts." Also, I really like watching Original Character (OC) Animatics on the internet. OC Animatics make me think about my own characters and how I want to animate them in the future.

Tell us more about your future plans with respect to your artwork.

I plan to attend university and major in Visual Development and Animation, while minoring in Business. I want to work on video games, live action movies, television series, animated shows, and anything that basically shows motion. My two dimensional artwork has always shown motion. I definitely prioritize it in my illustrations, I hope it's obvious! I'm excited about the future and feel the possibilities for creating a successful career in animation are endless.

What advice and words of wisdom would you give to young artists?

For young children, I would say keep drawing. It's all good practice, and the more you draw, the better you'll get at it over time. For older kids who are more advanced in art and looking to improve, I say don't forget to draw what you like! It's easy to go down the rabbit hole of drawing what you think you are "supposed to draw." Draw what you love! If you ever feel blocked, it's the best way to get out of that. Also, listening to music can be really inspirational. I often listen to music when I draw, which helps me a lot.