

Living their passion

Instead of clock-watching in a desk-bound job, some people find true career fulfilment by going the extra mile to live their dreams

Addicted to art

With her mechanical pencil, pen and digital tablet, 21-year-old freelance artist and illustrator Deborah Lim can literally draw the world.



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PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG

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Addicted to art

By Grace Chew

MS DEBORAH Lim, 21, is a self-taught freelance artist and illustrator specialising in digital, pencilwork, acrylic and ink designs.

Despite having just started out professionally, she was selected as one of Singapore's 20 student finalists during this year's Red Bull Canvas Cooler Challenge project — an effort to showcase aspiring student artists around the world.

Her final art piece The Lotus Eaters is now a permanent fixture at Indochine, Forbidden City at Clarke Quay.

Inspired by her grandfather, artist and potter Lim Chong Beng, Ms Lim would literally sketch on anything from corners of her textbook pages, magazines to even classroom desks.

To date, she has more than 50 sketchbooks filled with



ART ATTACK: Ms Lim enjoys experimenting with various art forms and improving her skill sets. PHOTOS: CHONG JUN LIANG



Halfway, a digital painting by Ms Lim.

sketches from when she was just six.

"I recall always choosing a diary without lines so that I could have free play on how I jotted things down," said the petite third-year Business undergraduate at Singapore Management University (SMU) who is majoring in Arts and Culture Management.

"I always felt like I was sketching with a vengeance."

From hobby to business

She began getting requests from her friends who saw her work to sketch for them. Ms Lim had no formal art training and drew on what she learnt from her O-level art classes.

From designing T-shirts and birthday gifts, she started making and selling her own artwork such as art prints, tote bags and lamp shades with her hand-drawn designs at events such as Artists' Day Out at Istana Park and other fairs.

What essentially started out as a hobby became a viable business. Now she does portraits, wall murals and tattoo designs among other sketch requests.

She has also designed the artwork for local band Oshiego and created a digital painting for Pastamania.

Her latest projects include commissions to paint a mural in a garage, to create artwork for another local band Disciple and to sketch a family painting.

Other than working on these projects, she enjoys experimenting with various art forms and has been trying other mediums to improve her skill sets.

"Pencil work is the medium I started out with," she said. "I then explored using ink when I wanted to adopt bolder colours and to test how far I could go skill-wise with a ballpoint pen."

However, it was when she received a digital tablet as a birthday gift that she discovered the limitless realm of digital drawing and painting.

With her tablet, she developed an inherent interest in adding intricate details to her existing pieces and creating new psychedelic artscapes.

Inspired by nature

While pencilwork is still the medium she is most comfortable with, she is now best known for her digital art designs.

Her last digital art series 'Who's Going To Stop Me!' was showcased at a collaborative art exhibition — Voice IV organised by Artdicted at SMU.

To align her works with the exhibition's theme of 'Trespassing', she combined traditional auspicious creatures like dragons and cranes in psychedelic colours to represent Singapore's multicultural society, which is a blend of western and traditional ideas. She draws inspiration from nature and natural wonders like sunsets and rainbows.

Her favourite artist is Dave McKean, who collaborated with Neil Gaiman on the graphic novel Black Orchid.

"His drawings are detailed and realistic," she said. "And although it tends to be a bit dark, I particularly like it that his drawings evoke deep emotions."

She has been advised to pursue art overseas, which was "a huge dampener" for her.

"However, I got a lot more support when people around me started noticing and appreciating my art," she said. "I realised that my art could put a smile on people's faces and that felt far more rewarding than I initially thought it would."

She intends to pursue a postgraduate degree in fine art after she completes her degree and wants to continue working on collaborative projects that can help spread awareness and love for art in Singapore.

"I find art extremely meaningful and pursuing it is what I love best."

For more information, check out www.deborah-lim.com.