

Living outside the lines

By Hannah Zalewski & Amelia Nowicki
STAFF REPORTERS

When senior Demetri Gritsas was a kid, he used art as a creative outlet to express himself in a changing society.

"I felt like when I was younger I really couldn't express myself like any of the other kids," Gritsas said. "I wasn't really good at talking to people. I wasn't good at being social, so really music and art were the only ways I could communicate with people."

The artistic developments of Generation X are used to express new feelings and emotions, such as political representations or just the intricate detailing in a makeup look.

Gritsas' Instagram account, @demetri_gritsas, is an example of this. He has over 1,000 followers, and his following continues to grow daily. Recently, Gritsas' has focused his art on growing up in the LGBTQ+ community in the forms of 3D designs and sculptures, a topic that is important to him as a member of that community.

He said digital platforms available to young artists have revolutionized the way we create art. For him specifically, the instantaneous sharing speed has kept him prompt and allowed access to immediate feedback.

"When I post on Instagram I usually get likes and comments and I go through every single comment. I respond and it really does motivate me to keep creating pieces," Gritsas said.

"I love to hear everybody's opinions and get everybody's feedback and to just take it and apply it to my work."

Artists, like Gritsas, have begun to take advantage of the platforms by turning them into potential career opportunities. The photographic aspects of the platforms and style have developed into an age of opportunity, and unveiled new ways for aspiring artists to be discovered. His Instagram account doubles as a portfolio.

The importance of self expression in art and the media is very prominent, and according to Gritsas his account is no exception. Posts consisting of complex makeup designs and photoshoot takeaways exemplify the new style of art in the media.

Art teacher Michael Lamb has had Gritsas in class for the past two years. In that time, Lamb has seen him grow tremendously. He said Gritsas has

From mannequin heads to makeup looks, senior uses social media to post latest works of art

discovered his own personal style and technique, which in turn makes his art have deeper meaning.

"His art is very expressive. It is very personal," Lamb said. "In my computer graphics class, he uses his own image a lot—his self portraiture, his own image, his own photography, so it's really personal and expressive."

Sophomore Claire Loch, a friend of Gritsas who has been featured in makeup posts on his account, agrees that the digital age has changed art as we know it. As a fan of Gritsas' work, Loch said she appreciates the new-age contemporary feel of his social media art.

"(It's) very refreshing because you never see young artists, especially males, who are very confident and posting those kind of things," Loch said. "It's really beautiful because it makes dreams seem like more of a reality."

In regards to Gritsas' account, he said eye-catching visual attributes exemplify the true meanings behind his work, and really reflect on who he is as a person, as well as his society and personal values.

Gritsas' also said his Instagram account has opened the door to multiple modeling and promotion opportunities, such as working with design companies. Looking to the future, he hopes to study fashion and design in college.

He credits his success to supportive friends and family.

"I am very fortunate. I have a family that really supports me as person and the profession that I am going into. I know there are others that don't and I am very appreciative of my situation," Gritsas said. "There are other families out there that maybe not be so supportive of not just being an artist, but also a member of the LGBTQ+ community, and I really do acknowledge my privilege when it comes to my situation."



DEMETRI GRITSAS

Over-the-counter to under the table



By Michal Ruprecht, Erin Kaled, Ben Uram & Mackenzie Smith
EDITOR-AT-LARGE, WEBSITE EDITOR, STAFF REPORTER & INTERN

Freshman Lily Becker zones out as she listens to a history lecture. But this isn't a recurring problem — her loss of concentration at school only happens if she doesn't take Adderall, a central nervous system stimulant used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Becker was diagnosed with ADHD at a young age and takes the medication daily along with 8.6 percent of children ages 8-15, according to Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

"I'm usually really hyper, and it's always really hard to work out my school work if I don't take my medicine. Sometimes when someone's talking to me, I zone out, and I forget what they're saying," Becker said. "The negative effect, I guess, is not being able to focus on what the teacher is saying and focus on what people are saying to me most of the time."

While it's necessary for Becker to take Adderall, many students without ADHD take the drug, too. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, stimulants like Adderall are one of the most abused classes of prescription drugs. And according to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, illegal distribution of stimulants and ADHD misdiagnosis has contributed to negative repercussions. Another study from Michigan State University found that ADHD misdiagnosis wastes \$320-500 million a year on unnecessary medication.

Adderall abuse peaks during the school year, especially around exam time. Many

students use the drug to become more focused on homework and during lengthy tests. ScienceDaily reported that

Adderall abuse during final exams is becoming a trend among U.S. students.

Although science teacher Elizabeth Michaels said the issue isn't pervasive, it's

serious. Michaels tries to decrease students' stress about tests so that they are less likely to resort to using drugs like Adderall. She tries to give notices about upcoming tests and reviews material each day in class prior to big tests so students feel more prepared.

"I think just general organization skills and time management skills should be explicitly taught and paralleled with the curriculum to help students be successful as possible," Michaels said.

Becker said she found out about Adderall abuse during a commercial about drugs. She added that she was surprised by the

percentage of students without ADHD who take the drug.

"I don't know why people do it because probably if they don't have (ADHD), it'll make them sick," Becker said. "I think that people abusing the substance is bad when people are using it for drug purposes and need to stay away from it."

Adderall abuse could lead to loss of appetite, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, gastroenterological issues and inhibition of growth, according to WebMD. In severe reactions to the stimulant, it can also cause heart attacks, strokes and death.

Aside from the damages to health, Adderall use by a student without ADHD is prohibited on school premises and school-related events. The ACT and SAT tests also enforce drug-related rules to ensure fairness.

Students can become addicted to the calming and focusing effects of Adderall. The National Institute on Drug Abuse said anyone with a drug addiction should get an evaluation from a physician.

School psychologist Christine Kuhl said finding a professional who could help with therapy is important.

"I would hope that people with problems would seek the help and support of trusted people in their support circle," Kuhl said. "With the support of family and friends, have the courage to seek treatment."

Becker agrees with Kuhl. She hopes students who abuse stimulants get professional help. She added that substance abuse rules should be stringent, and school staff should be more aware of the problem.

"I think that people are damaging their own bodies, and that's bad enough punishment because it causes brain damage and stuff if you don't have ADHD and take the medicine," Becker said. "I just hope they get help and get proper punishment."

Adderall fast facts

Adderall is a central nervous system stimulant used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

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Abuse

of the drug peaks during the school year, especially around exam time. It is one of the most abused classes of prescription drugs, the National Institute on Drug Abuse said.

Short term effects

include mood elevations, increased focus and lower stress levels.

Severe reactions

to the stimulant can lead to heart attacks, strokes and death.

\$320-500 million

per year is wasted on unnecessary medications for misdiagnosed ADHD patients, a study from Michigan State University reported.

