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In the studio: Students get a chance to be creative

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Enterprise writer*

Jackson High School student Markie Carpenter carries graphite with her almost everywhere she goes. On her hour-long commute to and from downtown Everett each day to school, she draws while she rides -- sketches of the people in front of her, images in her head.

Sometimes the people she's drawing notice, or riders glance over or comment.

"If they see what I'm drawing they say, 'How cool,' or just stare a little bit," said Carpenter.

These days, she's drawing women's faces to get ideas for a year-long art project she's doing in her Advanced Placement Studio Art class at Jackson.

Carpenter is one of 15 in the class, which attracts a range of students. Some are aiming for art school after graduation. Others are trying to add more creativity into their lives and into a school day that's focused on academics.

Other classes don't give the same creative outlet as AP Studio Art, said student Alexandra Manéa, who's been doing art for over a decade. Three years ago, she moved to Mill Creek from Romania, where she'd attended art school since kindergarten. She had to take a test to get into that school, and choose a medium early.

Now she paints about five hours each weekend, and hopes to get into an art program for college.

"It isn't easy," she said of the class.

Students assemble 24 pieces --12 that follow a topic of their own choosing and 12 that are teacher-directed.

Manéa's topic is emotions.

"People talking, hugging, kissing," she said. Because it's an Advanced Placement course, the topic can be controversial, she said.

"We've been waiting for this moment in school when we get to express anything," said Pearl Townsend, a senior who discovered art when she took Drawing and Painting for a graduation requirement.

Earlier this week in class, she bent over a pastel drawing of three squash, shading in contours.

"I like your grapes," she told Manéa, who was doing the same across the table.

Kim Buno's topic is pioneers. This summer, she and about 100 people from her church walked in the footsteps of Wyoming pioneers who made their journey from New York in 1856.

"I was inspired when I was there -- the sights and the fields and the mountains," Buno said.

Macy Medema is another student in the class who spends hours a week on her art.

"I've always done art because my dad is an artist," she said. Her father, James Medema, is a firefighter in Kent who's been displayed at the Edmonds Art Festival and whose current project is painting motorcycles.

Macy Medema's work is different. She writes stories, then draws what the characters look like.

"They're fantasy stories -- I have a cartoony style," she said.

She enjoys the class.

"I can be creative in other classes, but in this class I can really do what I want," she said.